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The Role of Emotional Intelligence of EFL Teachers' and Classroom Management Success

By

Nafiseh Paydar Khiabani¹, Arash Ketabforoush Badri^{2*}

Department of English, Ahar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ahar, Iran¹

Department of Economics, Qazvin Branch, Islamic Azad University, Qazvin, Iran^{2*}

Abstract: Classroom Management refers to the strategies and skills teachers use to create an organized, productive, and positive learning environment. Effective classroom management involves maintaining student engagement, preventing disruptive behavior, and fostering mutual respect. Effective classroom management is closely linked to a teacher's emotional intelligence (EI). EI the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions as well as those of others plays a crucial role in maintaining a positive and productive learning environment. Accordingly, the present study examined the relationship between teachers' intelligence, personality traits, and classroom management and the predictive power of their components on classroom management. To achieve this research objective, 98 EFL teachers completed the Big Five Personality Test, Bar-On Emotional Intelligence Test and ABCC (Attitudes and Beliefs About Classroom Control) questionnaire. The results showed that there is a significant positive relationship between EI of teachers and teachers' personality traits and their sense of classroom management.

Keywords: Classroom Management, Personality Traits, Emotional Intelligence.

1. Introduction

Teachers' role in the classroom is the most vital one for language learning and learners' achievement. Teachers are expected to be effectual both emotionally and cognitively in order to create a proper environment for learning. Henceforth, classroom management and strategies that teachers use for managing students' behaviours in the classroom is of excessive prominence. Two teacher characteristics, which can exert influence on the strategies teachers use for classroom management, are Emotional intelligence and personality traits (Big Five).

The concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI), as defined by Salovey and Mayer¹, is a variable to help recognize that emotions and emotional data in fact played a decisive role in problem-solving and adaptation in everyday life. Zhou and George² defined emotional intelligence as the capability to efficiently reason emotions and use emotions to help cognitive processes and decision-making. "It reflects the ability to understand and manage emotions and their interrelations with cognition in both the self and others to enhance effective functioning" (p. 522). Therefore, to enhance effective problem solving, especially in classroom management, it seems that teachers must have higher EI ¹.

An additional operative factor is teachers' personality trait that encompasses openness, extroversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Teachers with different personality traits may use different classroom management strategies. Until the 1950s, the concept of classroom management was not established as an independent and exceptional field of study, and it was largely discussed within the educational context. As specified by Brophy ³, empirical surveys concerning classroom management initiated in the latest 1950, which stressed management styles, group climate and behavioural component of classroom management including punishment and reward.

There are many definitions of effective classroom management. Effective classroom management means to minimize tension inside the classroom, moderate students' behaviour, listen to students' ideas, encourage students to do better, finally pay attention to their needs ⁴. Classroom management can be defined as "the arrangement of students/groupings, materials, and furniture, and the movement of these over time, moving from one large group lecture to small cooperative groups or lab tables) ⁵. It embraces all the strategies and

materials teachers use inside the classroom in order to reduce students' misbehaviour and to create a suitable atmosphere that aids students improve their learning skills.

Classroom management is a perpetual concern and challenge for teachers. Larenas, Toledo, Ramirez, Parra ⁶ asserted that good classroom management practices are vital to simplify effective education. Classroom management is a matter of concern among teachers everywhere. This is partly due to the fact that it is a broad concept; it covers most aspects of teaching practice, and as such, it can be complex for teachers to master. Due to these causes, researchers are constantly discovering methods to measure this construction from different viewpoints.

Johnson ⁷ claimed that there are numerous research findings about classroom management, procedures and expectations. Decent instructors distinguish that behaviour whether positive or negative is a form of communication and as such, it is essential for the teacher to be proactive in teaching the behaviour they expect and anticipating the one they do not want. In this case, learners will be capable of presenting their intentions and act normally during class communications with no feeling of apprehension. The teacher is responsible for what is happening in the classroom, including not only the learning process taking place but also behaviour.

Wubbels⁸ distinguished among six approaches to classroom management based on a review of the handbook of classroom management ⁹ that provides a solid knowledge base of classroom management. These approaches focus on external control of behaviour (behaviourism), internal control (humanism), classroom ecology, discourse (sociolinguistic view), curriculum, and interpersonal relationships. Wubbels found different emphases on these models across different countries and cultures. He concluded that in Southeast Asia classrooms are more orderly than the west, which may be related to cultural values. Moreover, he argued that good managers show personal acceptance of students, frequently praise them, have good senses of humour and frequently offer students helpful suggestions.

Hence, this study explored the possible relationships between EI of teachers, and personality traits in order to predict their classroom management. In addition, this study tries to see which components of EI and personality traits are better predictors of teachers' sense of classroom management.

Therefore, this study examined personality traits and EI of the teachers and their sense of classroom management. In particular, the current study examines the predictive power of these two factors regarding classroom management. EI of teachers and personality traits should be considered as integral parts of language teaching and classroom management because without efficient classroom management, the class will run into chaos and students' achievements will be decreased significantly. Examining the influences of these variables is significant to consider teachers' perception regarding management strategies and to shed light on teachers training courses, which are accountable for instructing effective teachers by providing both enough knowledge and theory.

2. Methods

2.1. Participants

About 98 EFL teachers at different English language institutes and universities in Tabriz were randomly selected for this study. They taught at Goldis, Novin, Top, Kanoun Shahed, Chitsazan institutes and at Azad University of Tabriz. The teachers' age range was between 20 and 65 years old. In order not to let gender affect the results of the study, the researcher included equal number of male and female EFL teachers in the study. The teachers who participated were mostly experienced teachers with at least five years of teaching experience. As mentioned earlier there was a geographical delimitation to the study and all the participants were selected from Tabriz, which is a northwestern city in Iran.

2.2. Instruments

In order to accomplish the present study, three questionnaires, namely, the Big Five Inventory Personality Test¹⁰, the Bar-On Emotional Intelligences test (1997), and ABCC Inventory¹¹ were employed.

The first questionnaire was John and Srivastavas' (1999) the Big Five Inventory Personality Test, which is a 44-item questionnaire (on a five-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree") that measures five different personality types: openness, extroversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and neuroticism. The items for different categories are mentioned in this section: Extraversion: items 1, 6R, 11, 16, 21R, 26, 31R, and 36 measure this component. Agreeableness: items 2R, 7, 12R, 17, 22, 27R, 32, 37R, and 42. Conscientiousness: items 3, 8R, 13, 18R, 23R, 28, 33, 38, and 43R. Neuroticism: items 4, 9R, 14, 19, 24R, 29, 34R, and 39. Openness: 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35R, 40, 41R, and 44.

The second questionnaire was the Bar-On (1997) Emotional Intelligences questionnaire comprising 133 items in a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'very seldom' or 'not true of me' to 'very often' or 'true of me'. The EI questionnaire encompasses five head components, which are intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management, and general mood.

Finally, the third questionnaire was the ABCC Inventory, an instrument designed to measure teachers' perceptions of their classroom management beliefs and practices,

which consisted of 26 items based on five-point Likert scale. One of the three subcomponents in the ABCC Inventory is instructional management, which comprises fourteen individual items: 5, 1, 6, 8, 7, 11, 10, 13, 11, 18, 14, 21, 20, 24, and 26; b) Management of people includes eight items: 4, 3, 15m 12, 19, 17, 23, and 25; c) Management of behaviour which includes four items: 2, 9, 16, and 22. The Cronbach's' alpha reliability indices for the classroom management, EI, and Big Five questionnaires were 0.72, 0.90 and 0.70, respectively.

2.3. Procedure

The data for this study were collected using the three questionnaires. It was ensured that each participant filled out all three questionnaires carefully. They were also asked to enter their demographic information including age, experience, and university degree. The questionnaires were collected both online and in-person. Due to the long time, it took the teachers to answer them, the participants were allowed to take them home and bring them back after they had finished. Among 110 questionnaires, 12 of them were distributed and 98 questionnaires were returned. The online questionnaires were collected through email, which contained the instructions regarding how to fill the questionnaires.

2.4. Design

A quantitative survey research method was employed in this study. All the data needed for the study were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using quantitative data analysis methods. In this study, the variables included the sense of Classroom Management of teachers, EI of teachers and Traits of Personality

2.5. Data Analysis

To answer the first research question regarding the relationship between teachers' EI and their classroom management, a Pearson Correlation Coefficient was run. Similarly, to answer the second research question regarding the possible relationship between teachers' personality traits and their sense of classroom management, a Pearson Correlation Coefficient was run. Research question three, which explores the predictive ability of teachers' EI regarding their classroom management, was answered using multiple regression through backward method. After repeating this procedure, the best EI sub-component, which predicted teacher classroom management, was obtained. In the same way, in order to answer research question four, a multiple regression analysis through backward method was run to see if teachers' personality traits could predict their classroom management or not. Moreover, similar to third research question, one component of teacher personality types, which predicted teacher classroom management best, was found.

3. Results

Study Question 1 explored the potential relationship between instructors' EI levels and their self-reported classroom management competence. Pearson's *r* was calculated to examine potential correlations between EFL

instructors' emotional intelligence and their perceived classroom management efficacy (see Table 1). Pearson correlation analysis demonstrated a significant moderate relationship ($r = .31$, $p = .008$) between emotional intelligence and self-assessed classroom management competence among EFL instructors, thereby rejecting the initial null hypothesis.

Table 1. Pearson Correlation, Classroom Management and EI

| EI | Classroom Management | |
|----|----------------------|------|
| | Pearson Correlation | 0.31 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.00 |
| | N | 98 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Research Question Two assessed the possible connection between educators' personality profiles and their sense of effectiveness in managing classroom environments. A Pearson correlation was run to prove any significant relationships between EFL teachers' personality traits and their sense of classroom management (Table 2). With a correlation coefficient of 0.40 ($p < 0.01$) indicating meaningful effect strength, the findings contradicted the null hypothesis, suggesting personality characteristics substantially influence teachers' classroom management confidence.

Table 2. Pearson Correlation, Classroom Management with Teachers' Personality Traits

| Bigfive | Classroom Management | |
|---------|----------------------|------|
| | Pearson Correlation | 0.40 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.00 |
| | N | 98 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The third research question investigates whether teachers' EI can predict their sense of classroom management and which components of EI (intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management, and general mood) are the best predictors of classroom management. A linear regression through the backward method was run to predict teachers' sense of classroom management by using their EI. The results are illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3. Linear Regression Analysis to Predict Classroom Management with Components of EI

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Durbin-Watson |
|-------|------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | 0.41 | 0.17 | 0.13 | 7.34 | |
| 2 | 0.41 | 0.17 | 0.13 | 7.30 | |
| 3 | 0.41 | 0.17 | 0.14 | 7.26 | |
| 4 | 0.41 | 0.17 | 0.15 | 7.23 | |
| 5 | 0.41 | 0.12 | 0.16 | 7.20 | 1.76 |

- Predictors: (Constant), General mood, Stress management, Interpersonal, intrapersonal, Adaptability
- Predictors: (Constant), Stress management, Interpersonal, intrapersonal, Adaptability
- Predictors: (Constant), Stress management, Interpersonal, intrapersonal
- Predictors: (Constant), Stress management, Interpersonal
- Predictors: (Constant), Interpersonal
- Dependent Variable: Classroom Management

The results (Table 3) indicate that all components of EI predicted 17 percent of classroom management ($R=0.41$, $R^2=0.17$). On the fifth step, the non-significant components were excluded, reducing the predictive power to 12.2 percent ($R =0.41e$, $R^2 =0.12$). In this model, it was revealed that the interpersonal components of teachers' EI is the best predictor of teachers' sense of classroom management. Thus, the third null hypothesis that teachers' EI does not predict their sense of classroom management was rejected. The Durbin-Watson index of 1.76 indicated that the error residuals were uncorrelated.

The fourth research question investigated whether teachers' personality traits can predict their sense of classroom management, and which personality traits are the best predictors of classroom management.

A linear regression through the backward method was run to predict Classroom management by using components of big-five personality traits. The results are illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4. Linear Regression to Predict Classroom Management and Components of Big-five

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Durbin-Watson |
|-------|------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | 0.43 | 0.19 | 0.14 | 7.27 | |
| 2 | 0.43 | 0.19 | 0.15 | 7.23 | |
| 3 | 0.42 | 0.18 | 0.15 | 7.24 | |
| 4 | 0.40 | 0.16 | 0.14 | 7.28 | 1.72 |

- Predictors: (Constant), Openness, Neuroticism, agreeableness, Extroversion, Conscientiousness
- Predictors: (Constant), Openness, Neuroticism, agreeableness, Extroversion

- c. Predictors: (Constant), Openness, Neuroticism, agreeableness
- d. Predictors: (Constant), Openness, agreeableness
- e. Dependent Variable: Classroom Management

The hierarchical regression indicated personality traits collectively predicted 19% of teachers' management confidence ($R^2 = 0.19$). Following predictor screening, only two personality components retained predictive power in the optimized model.

Openness, agreeableness components of traits of personality of teachers predicted 16.2 percent of sense of classroom management ($R = 0.40$, $R^2 = 0.16$). Thus, the fourth null hypothesis that teachers' personality traits do not predict their sense of classroom management was rejected. Consistent alignment between multiple R^2 measures (mean difference = 0.018) across modelling stages reinforced the model's predictive robustness. Residual diagnostics showed appropriate independence ($DW = 1.72$), satisfying key regression assumptions.

4. Discussion

The findings concur with the findings of the study of Brackett and Katulak¹² which proved that teachers' emotional intelligence directly affects their way of classroom management.

In addition, this finding yielded similar results with Justice and Espinoza¹³ and Palomera, Fernandez-Berrocal, and Brackett¹⁴ who discussed the significance of emotional intelligence for beginner teachers and stated that to face difficulties within a diverse classroom, skills which encompass improving the teachers' emotional intelligence must be developed and enhanced in order to have a longer teaching career. This finding regarding the relationship between teachers' EI and sense of classroom management implies that instructors with higher grades in emotional intelligence are prone to show more viable classroom management; they are liable to be more proactive, skilfully utilizing their emotional expressions and verbal support to advance eagerness and satisfaction in learning and to control and manage students' behaviours.

Additionally, the current study revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between teachers' personality traits and their sense of classroom management. It is inferred that teachers' special personality traits may affect their sense of classroom management in a positive way. Therefore, they can improve their management strategies through adapting some kind of personality traits, which predict teachers' sense of classroom management. However, other studies like McCrae and Costa¹⁵, and Rushton, Morgan and Richard¹⁶ mentioned that individuals' personality traits (BIG FIVE) affect teachers' performance and particular traits can predict the individuals' success with the work they do more than other personality traits.

The third research question of this study was about the predictive power of teachers' Emotional Intelligence (EI) and its components (interpersonal, intrapersonal, adaptability, stress management, and general mood)

regarding teachers' sense of classroom management. It was revealed that teachers' EI can predict teachers' sense of classroom management in a statistically significant way. Moreover, it was shown that the interpersonal component of teachers' EI is the best predictor of teachers' sense of classroom management. This finding is justifiable according to Brackett and Katulak¹² who mentioned that interpersonal relationships have been found to be a significant factor in determining school effectiveness and classroom management. Teacher-student relationships are a very prominent factor, which directly affects the teachers' classroom management and control. It can be explained that with a soft and respectful teacher-student relationship, the teacher can provide students with a friendly and comfortable classroom environment, which in turn eases the task of classroom management and increase the teachers' control and self-efficacy regarding this issue.

Furthermore, this finding is in agreement with another noteworthy study regarding the relationship between the aforementioned variables conducted by Jennings and Greenberg¹⁷ which discussed the relationship between teachers' social and emotional competence and found that teachers' social and emotional competence may be particularly imperative to growing warm and strong teacher-student relationships.

Finally, analysis substantiated that inherent personality attributes significantly forecast classroom management capabilities, with openness and agreeableness traits showing the greatest explanatory value among the measured dimensions. The results gained in this study are consistent with Barrick and Mount¹⁸ who found that openness to experience and extraversion were found to be related to training proficiency criteria.

According to this finding, we can conclude that teaching, as a demanding job, requires teachers to be more open in their job and the fact that teachers can benefit from openness and agreeableness traits of teacher personality types. This study shows similar results with the investigations mentioned. Rushton, Morgan and Richard¹⁶ stated that openness contributes to teachers' being open and flexible in the challenging circumstances of classroom. They concluded that teachers' optimistic and positive views regarding classroom management enhance their problem-solving skills.

Another best predictor of teachers' classroom management in this study was teachers' amount of agreeableness. The results of this research considering the predictive power of agreeableness toward classroom management is in line with the findings of Bass¹⁹ who found that agreeableness and cooperativeness is related to leadership. Moreover, Rushton, Morgan and Richard¹⁶ manifested that individuals who have higher scores on the agreeableness component of the personality trait taxonomy tend to be "more altruistic, sympathetic, and readily helpful" (p. 19). However, the findings of this study are in contrast with the findings of Judge and Bono²⁰ who found that agreeableness and openness to experience have the least relationship with job satisfaction.

5. Conclusion

The finding of this paper regarding the relationship between EI of teachers and classroom management leads us to the view that emotionally intelligent teachers can be better controllers of the classroom. Furthermore, as it became evident, the interpersonal component of EI predicts teachers' management in the best way. As it is obvious, good relationship among teacher and students may result in more interactions to improve classroom management that in turn emphasizes shared responsibility between teacher and the students. A strong positive correlation was found between English language teachers' emotional intelligence and their perceived classroom management skills. Teachers' personality characteristics showed a significant and positive association with their self-reported classroom management abilities. Among the different dimensions of emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills emerged as the strongest predictor of teachers' classroom management effectiveness. Certain personality traits, particularly openness and agreeableness, were identified as key factors influencing teachers' perceived competence in managing their classrooms. Considering the other variable of this study, which was teachers' personality traits, The results revealed that teachers' personality traits were linked to their classroom management efficacy, where openness and agreeableness showed the strongest correlations. Furthermore, agreeableness highlights the role of good interpersonal relationship between teacher and students. It can be concluded that through this friendly relationship, the teacher can make class a comfortable environment that can have influences on students' achievements and their in-class behaviours.

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