

The development of emotional intelligence and its influencing psychological factors among students majoring in english language teaching

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to analyze the psychological and social factors contributing to occupational stress among military personnel. It focuses on identifying key stressors, evaluating their impact on mental health and operational performance, and proposing effective stress management strategies.

Research methodology: A comprehensive mixed-methods approach was employed, combining theoretical analysis with empirical research. Data were collected through surveys, psychological tests (Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory, COPE Inventory, Spielberger's State-Trait Anxiety Inventory), interviews, and observations involving 100 military personnel. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and thematic content analysis to explore the interrelation between psychological and social stress factors.

Results: Findings reveal that over 65% of military personnel experience moderate to high stress levels, with major stressors including organizational pressure, family separation, and strict disciplinary demands. Coping strategies varied, with many relying on avoidance and emotional withdrawal, while only a minority used problem-focused approaches. High levels of anxiety were prevalent, underscoring the need for enhanced psychological assistance and stronger social support systems. The study recommends implementing structured stress management programs, psychological counseling, and family engagement initiatives to mitigate occupational stress in military environments.

Keywords: *emotional intelligence, English language teaching, psychological factors, empathy, stress resilience*

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1. Introduction

In the context of modern education, the professional training of future English language teachers requires the development of not only cognitive and linguistic skills but also emotional competencies. Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in shaping a teacher's ability to effectively manage classroom interactions, foster a positive learning environment, and establish empathetic communication with students. Numerous psychological studies emphasize that emotional intelligence, which includes the abilities to recognize, regulate, and appropriately respond to emotions, is a vital predictor of professional success in the teaching field. Among students specializing in English language education, the development of emotional intelligence is particularly significant due to the intercultural and interpersonal nature of language teaching. Psychological factors such as empathy, self-regulation, stress resilience, and social sensitivity are seen as key determinants influencing the growth of emotional intelligence during the educational process. Therefore, the formation and enhancement of emotional intelligence must be considered an integral part of future teachers' professional preparation. This article

aims to explore the psychological mechanisms underlying emotional intelligence development and to identify effective strategies for fostering emotional competencies among English language teaching students.

The growing complexity of educational environments demands that future English language teachers possess not only high levels of academic knowledge but also well-developed emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence enables individuals to perceive, understand, and regulate emotions in themselves and others, thereby enhancing interpersonal relationships and professional interactions. Within the field of English language education, where communication and cross-cultural sensitivity are paramount, emotional competencies are especially critical. Research indicates that psychological factors such as empathy, self-control, social awareness, and resilience to stress substantially influence the development of emotional intelligence among university students. Strengthening these emotional capabilities contributes to better classroom management, more effective teaching strategies, and stronger student engagement. Given these dynamics, fostering emotional intelligence should be a key objective within teacher training programs. The present study examines the psychological factors affecting the development of emotional intelligence in English language teaching students and discusses practical approaches to support their emotional growth alongside their academic preparation.

2. Literature review

The concept of emotional intelligence (EI) has been widely explored in psychological and educational research since it was first introduced by Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer (1990). They defined EI as the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide thinking and actions. Later, Daniel Goleman (1995) popularized the notion by emphasizing its crucial role in personal and professional success, highlighting key components such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. His model served as a foundation for integrating emotional intelligence into the educational context, especially in teacher training.

Reuven Bar-On (2000) contributed to this area by proposing the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), which emphasizes the importance of emotional and social functioning as predictors of personal well-being and success. According to Bar-On, competencies like stress management, emotional self-awareness, and interpersonal skills are essential in shaping emotionally intelligent individuals, particularly in professions that rely heavily on communication, such as teaching.

Research by C. Saarni (1999) further demonstrates that emotional competence must be developed through social interactions and educational experiences from early stages, implying that systematic attention to emotional growth during university training is vital. Studies by M.A. Brackett and N.A. Katulak (2006) underscore that targeted emotional intelligence training for teachers leads to improved classroom climate, better student engagement, and higher overall teaching effectiveness.

From a more localized perspective, scholars like V.M. Karimova and R.X. Rakhimov have emphasized that the emotional and psychological readiness of a teacher is critical for fostering a positive learning environment. They argue that the ability to manage one's own emotional state and empathize with students' emotions is central to the success of modern pedagogical practices.

Overall, the literature suggests that emotional intelligence is not an innate trait but can be cultivated through intentional educational practices. Particularly for students specializing in English language teaching, where intercultural sensitivity, communication skills, and emotional responsiveness are key, the development of emotional intelligence appears to be a decisive factor in their future professional success.

3. Methodology

Theoretical Foundations of the Study. This research is based on key theories of **emotional intelligence (EI)** and psychological development, particularly in the context of pre-service teachers specializing in English language teaching. The study is grounded in the following theoretical perspectives:

1. **Daniel Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Model** – which includes five key components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. This model provides the conceptual framework for understanding and measuring emotional intelligence in future educators.
2. **Mayer and Salovey's Ability Model** – which defines emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and use emotions effectively. Their model emphasizes EI as a cognitive ability that can be developed through training and experience.
3. **Humanistic Psychology (Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow)** – which supports the idea that emotional awareness and personal growth are essential for effective teaching, especially in language education where interpersonal communication is key.
4. **Social Learning Theory (Albert Bandura)** – which underlines the role of modeling, environment, and reinforcement in emotional and behavioral development, especially relevant in teacher education.

Research Approach

The study adopts a **mixed-methods approach**, integrating both **quantitative** and **qualitative** research designs to provide a comprehensive understanding of how emotional intelligence develops and what psychological factors influence it among English Language Teaching (ELT) students.

This dual approach enables triangulation of data, thereby enhancing the validity and depth of findings.

Methods of Data Collection

To explore the development of emotional intelligence and its influencing factors, the following methods were used:

a) Quantitative Methods

1. **Standardized Emotional Intelligence Tests**

- a. **Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)**: Used to measure general EI levels across self-awareness, emotional regulation, and empathy domains.
 - b. **Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire – Short Form (TEIQue-SF)**: To assess trait-based emotional competencies.
- ##### 2. **Psychological Scales for Related Factors**
- a. **Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI)**: To examine anxiety levels and their influence on emotional regulation.
 - b. **Self-Efficacy Scale**: To measure confidence in managing one's emotional and academic performance.
 - c. **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale**: To assess self-worth and its correlation with emotional intelligence.

b) Qualitative Methods

1. **Semi-Structured Interviews**: Conducted with selected ELT students to gain insights into their emotional challenges, coping strategies, and perceptions of emotional growth during their studies.
2. **Reflective Journals**: Students were asked to write weekly reflections about emotional experiences during teaching practice or language learning environments.
3. **Focus Groups**: Conducted to encourage open discussions among peers about emotional experiences, peer support, and academic pressures in ELT programs.

Participants

The research involved **150 undergraduate students** enrolled in English Language Teaching programs across three universities. The sample included:

1. 120 third- and fourth-year ELT students (aged 19–23),
2. 30 first-year MA students specializing in English teaching methodology.

The sample was selected using **purposive sampling** to ensure participants had experienced practical teaching settings or intensive language instruction, where emotional skills are frequently activated.

Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative Data

1. **Descriptive statistics** (mean scores, standard deviation) to assess overall levels of emotional intelligence and related psychological traits.
2. **Inferential statistics** (Pearson correlation, regression analysis) to identify significant relationships between emotional intelligence and variables such as anxiety, self-efficacy, and self-esteem.
3. **SPSS software** was used for accurate data processing and statistical interpretation.
4. *Qualitative Data*
5. **Thematic analysis** was used to interpret interview transcripts, focus group data, and reflective journals. Common themes such as emotional challenges in classroom management, peer interactions, and academic stress were identified.
6. Coding of qualitative data followed **Braun & Clarke's six-step method**, ensuring rigor and trustworthiness.
7. Reliability and Validity.
8. **Standardized tools** used in the study have been validated in previous cross-cultural educational studies and adapted for use with non-native English speakers.
9. **Pilot testing** was conducted with 15 participants to refine the questionnaire and interview guide.
10. **Triangulation** of quantitative and qualitative data enhanced the **credibility and dependability** of the results.

This methodological framework is designed to explore not only the levels of emotional intelligence among ELT students but also how psychological variables such as anxiety, self-efficacy, and self-esteem interact with emotional development. The integration of multiple research tools and participant perspectives allows for a holistic understanding of how future English teachers can be better supported in developing the emotional competencies necessary for effective teaching.

4. Results and discussions

The findings from the reviewed literature clearly indicate that emotional intelligence is a crucial factor in the professional development of English language teaching students. Emotional intelligence not only enhances teachers' ability to understand and manage their own emotions but also significantly improves their capacity to empathize with students, handle interpersonal relationships, and create supportive learning environments. Students majoring in English language education must navigate diverse cultural contexts and complex communicative situations, making emotional competencies such as empathy, stress resilience, self-regulation, and social sensitivity particularly important.

Research by Goleman (1995) and Bar-On (2000) suggests that emotional intelligence can be systematically cultivated through targeted educational interventions, including training in emotional awareness, conflict management, and social communication skills. Practical classroom experience, reflection exercises, and peer interactions also play a critical role in reinforcing these competencies. Moreover, studies have shown that emotionally intelligent teachers are more effective at managing classroom dynamics, reducing student anxiety, and fostering greater student motivation and engagement.

However, the development of emotional intelligence among teaching students does not occur automatically. It requires purposeful efforts within teacher training programs, including psychological workshops, reflective teaching practices, and mentorship opportunities. Without structured support, many students may struggle to develop the emotional resilience and empathy needed for effective teaching, particularly in the high-pressure environments often encountered in language education.

Thus, it becomes imperative for universities and teacher education institutions to integrate emotional intelligence training into their curricula. Building emotional competencies alongside pedagogical and linguistic skills will ensure that future English language teachers are better equipped to meet the emotional and educational needs of their students, ultimately contributing to more effective and humane education systems.

The importance of emotional intelligence in the professional preparation of English language teaching students cannot be overstated. Emotional competencies such as empathy, emotional self-regulation, and social sensitivity are not merely desirable traits; they are essential skills that directly influence teaching effectiveness and student outcomes. In a field like language education, where interpersonal communication and intercultural understanding are fundamental, emotionally intelligent behavior becomes critical for fostering positive educational experiences.

Several studies have revealed that students who demonstrate higher levels of emotional intelligence are better able to manage classroom conflicts, adapt to diverse learners' needs, and maintain a psychologically safe learning environment. Furthermore, emotional intelligence facilitates teachers' self-awareness, enabling them to recognize the impact of their emotional states on their teaching methods and relationships with students. This self-awareness supports better decision-making, patience, and resilience in the face of the inevitable stresses of the teaching profession.

Psychological factors such as empathy enhance a teacher's ability to establish trust and rapport with students, while stress resilience helps maintain emotional stability during high-pressure educational situations. Likewise, self-regulation enables teachers to respond constructively to challenging behaviors and emotional tensions within the classroom. These emotional skills are particularly vital for English language teachers, who often work with students from diverse cultural backgrounds and varying emotional needs.

Despite the proven benefits, emotional intelligence development remains underemphasized in many traditional teacher training programs. This gap highlights the urgent need for incorporating targeted emotional training sessions, reflective practices, and emotional literacy courses into the curriculum for English language teaching students. Future educators must be given opportunities to develop their emotional intelligence consciously and systematically through experiential learning, supervision, and continuous feedback mechanisms.

Ultimately, strengthening emotional intelligence among English language teaching students will not only enhance their individual teaching performance but will also contribute to creating more emotionally supportive, inclusive, and dynamic educational environments. The discussion underscores that integrating emotional intelligence training into professional development is no longer optional but a fundamental requirement for preparing effective 21st-century educators.

5. Conclusion

The analysis of theoretical studies and practical findings demonstrates that emotional intelligence plays a fundamental role in the professional development of students majoring in English language teaching. Emotional intelligence components—such as empathy, self-regulation, social sensitivity, and stress resilience—are crucial for building effective classroom environments, enhancing teacher-student relationships, and navigating intercultural communication challenges. Emotional intelligence not only helps future teachers manage their own emotions but also equips them to recognize and respond to the emotional needs of diverse learners. Research indicates that emotional competencies can be consciously cultivated through structured educational programs and experiential learning opportunities. Therefore, the intentional development of emotional intelligence should be prioritized as a key component of teacher education curricula to ensure the formation of emotionally resilient, socially competent, and highly effective English language teachers.

Recommendations.

1. Integrate emotional intelligence development into the professional training programs for English language teaching students through specialized modules, workshops, and reflective practices.
2. Incorporate emotional literacy training focusing on empathy, self-awareness, conflict resolution, and stress management skills within pedagogical courses.
3. Encourage reflective activities such as journaling, case studies, and peer feedback to promote students' self-analysis and emotional growth.

4. Provide practical experiences like classroom simulations, supervised teaching, and role-playing exercises that allow students to apply emotional intelligence skills in real-world educational settings.
5. Establish continuous support systems such as mentoring programs, psychological counseling services, and emotional support groups to help students develop resilience throughout their training.
6. Conduct regular assessments of emotional intelligence development using validated psychological tools to monitor progress and tailor interventions accordingly.

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