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Interaction between teachers' emotional intelligence and classroom management

Abstract

Since recent years, emotional intelligence (EQ) has gained prominence in the field of science education and has been widely regarded as an important element in classroom management (CM). It is known that educators with EQ have a positive effect on academic achievement and that these teachers also increase their CM. This is also reflected in school success. In addition, teachers with EQ have better CM skills. Thus, anyone with good CM skills can create a positive learning environment.

In a classroom where a culture of EQ is adopted, it is important to support student motivation, make students feel valued, and focus on success. This study examines how teachers manage classrooms using EQ. Therefore, the reason for this study was to investigate whether there is a difference between teachers' EQ levels and CM skills according to their demographic characteristics (gender, age, professional experience and educational level). The sample of this research consists of 341 teachers working at TRNC primary education institutions in the 2021–2022 academic year and determined by random method. Within the scope of the research, aTurkish version of the "Rotterdam EQ Scale" was used to measure the EQ levels of the teachers, the "CM Scale" was used to measure the effectiveness of the CM and the Personal Information Form prepared by the researchers was used. Study findings suggest that teachers' EQ and CM skills have a positive, moderately significant relationship. This situation reveals that teachers who are aware of their own emotions and those of others, who can put themselves in others' shoes, and who have a developed sense of empathy have better CM skills. Research results indicated that the EQ level of the teachers as well as their CM skills did not vary according to their gender, age, and seniority according to demographic variables. However, when the educational status variable is examined, although the EQ levels of postgraduate graduates are higher than those of undergraduate students, this difference was not significant.

Keywords: *classroom management, emotional intelligence, relationships, science education, teachers*

1. Introduction

Many researchers have considered teachers' major role in shaping the futures of communities in every country (Akbaşlı & Durnali, 2020; Demir & Durnali, 2022; Limon & Durnalı, 2017). Especially in today's changing and developing

education system, the importance of the contribution of teachers' EQ competencies to success is increasing day by day. It should not be limited to focusing only on academic achievement within the classroom environment, but it should also be given importance to developing students' socio-emotional skills. A teacher's emotional state affects the effectiveness of his or her teaching skills, not only a teacher's teaching skills (Schermerhorn & Bachrach, 2015). Similarly, research by Kara and Sığırtmaç (2021) shows that teachers' productivity and performance correlate with their ability to regulate their emotions and manage classrooms.

Classroom management and management of emotions

In the teaching profession, where emotions are intensely experienced, teachers need to cooperate with their colleagues and be able to control their emotions in the management of the classroom. Teachers must be able to manage and communicate effectively with learners in order to create efficient CM, using newly developed teaching methods and applying them constantly (Önay,2023). This attitude affects the teacher's positive interaction in the classroom as well as having a positive classroom climate (Ulutaş & Ömeroğlu, 2020). This situation makes it necessary for teachers to exhibit their EQ skills effectively both at school and in the classroom. It is known that students who grow up in such an environment exhibit positive behaviours, and there is an increase in their performance (Sekreter, 2019). Within this context, the concept of EQ, pioneered by Goleman (1995) and discussed in this study, is defined as the degree to which an individual controls his/her desires and impulses, and defines and expresses these emotions (Mayer & Geher, 1996).

The concept of emotions emerges as a way to reach the mind and to produce (Demirtaş, 2020). Emotions play a huge role in a child's development. Compared to children who cannot manage their emotions, children who are aware of their emotions are more successful (Denham, 2007). The concept of intelligence, alternatively, it is possible to define as thinking and making sense, and it can also be defined as skills that enable reaching the desired result. As a result of combining emotion and intelligence, we obtain EQ, which is characterised by being aware of emotions and gaining experience. Researchers found that EQ predicted entrepreneurial and creative behaviour positively. This explains why entrepreneurship and creative thinking increase as EQ (Durali, Oarkçı & Khalili, 2023).

With reference to the work of Salovey and Mayer (1990), psychologist and author Daniel Goleman (2000) coined the concept of EQ in 1995, which was first used in the early 1990s by Yale University psychologist Peter Salowey and University of New Hampshire psychologist John Mayer. The concept of Cognitive Intelligence (IQ), known as the intelligence coefficient until the 20th century, has been classified in different ways in the last 20 years as social intelligence, success intelligence, practical intelligence, multiple intelligence, spatial intelligence, kinaesthetic intelligence, personal intelligence, group intelligence and EQ (Karslı, Gündüz & Ural, 2000). The concept of intelligence has begun to deal with emotional abilities, with alternative theories that include common features in cases where test approaches that measure intelligence, such as IQ, cannot measure human intelligence adequately (Sarısoy, 2017). EQ skills can be defined as a complement to IQ or cognitive skills. Individuals with EQ are capable of recognising and expressing their own emotions, as well as developing skills through experience.

Emotional intelligence

A concept known as Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is an acronym for Cognitive Intelligence (IQ). Unlike IQ, which cannot be developed genetically, EQ can be developed in the primary education period of the individual. Briefly, intelligence can be summarised as intelligence trying to understand "what", and trying to understand "how" (Mishra & Pimri, 2022). When the research is examined, it shows that an individual with a high EQ level and who is technically successful is more successful in solving problems, can reveal any needs more easily and solve the problem. In addition, it was stated that they could understand the hidden connections or interactions that could be useful in revealing the issues that should not be emphasised more simply than other people (Cooper & Sawaf, 2000). For this reason, it can be said that the education system, which only focuses on the success of children and, therefore, schools, ignores the success of students in social life.

Considering all these, in classrooms where life-long development is observed, transformation into units with high EQ can only be realised by teachers who are classroom managers. The functional sustainability of the arrangements required by the planned transformations should be provided by teachers with EQ skills (Titrek, 2013). In this context, teachers who are role models for students are expected to have or develop EQ skills that are aimed to be developed in students (Sarısoy, 2017).

Emotional intelligence and classroom management

Teachers with high EQ have the skills to cope with the negative emotions created by the difficulties they encounter in the classroom, to show positive and emotionally constructive reactions to these problems, to overcome stressful situations that may arise outside the classroom more easily, and to establish more effective relationships with students (Pickering, 2003). Classroom management (CM) is not the only factor that affects effective learning; the emotional state of the teacher also plays an important role. For effective teaching, CM and instructional approaches are crucial skills (Zaky, 2022). In a classroom, the teacher's emotional state can vary throughout the day. Our emotions affect our relationships positively or negatively. This effect is therefore passed down to children in either a positive or a negative way. It is therefore, crucial that students and teachers communicate (Önay, 2023). When the teacher thinks about student interaction, CM with the class leader is a feature of the teacher who can regulate his emotions. It can be said that he is successful in his field and can communicate correctly with his learners. Thus, the development of learners will be affected positively and the quality of learning will increase (Ocak, 2022). Within this context, teachers are expected to, who are the managers of the classroom, should have three characteristics, namely philosophical, psychological, and technical, in order to manage the classroom successfully. Thus, the values adopted with the philosophy dimension, the personal characteristics with the psychology dimension, and the knowledge and skills possessed with the technical dimension will be represented (Bursalıoğlu, 1994). Considering that these dimensions are developed along with EQ levels, the aim is to determine how the EQ levels of teachers working in primary schools, which form the basis of formal education, affect their CM skills. The following questions were asked in order to answer this purpose:

- In Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) primary schools affiliated with the Education Ministry of TRNC, what are teachers' views on EQ and CM?

- Do teachers at primary schools affiliated with the Education Ministry of TRNC differ significantly in terms of EQ levels and CM skills based on demographic variables (gender, age, seniority, and educational level)?

- In primary schools affiliated with the Education Ministry of TRNC, are teachers' EQ levels and CM skills significantly correlated?

2. Method

2.1 The research model

The study based on a thesis, investigated, the researchers used a quantitative method called a relational survey. The purpose of relational screening is to determine whether two variables are changing simultaneously. The aim of this model is to determine what happens when variables change; if any change occurs, and why it happens (Bekman, 2022).

2.2 Universe and sample

The study universe contains 1684 teachers from the Education Ministry of TRNC working in schools in the 2021–2022 semester. A random sample of 341 teachers from this universe was selected for the study. In random sampling, which is also called simple random sampling, the probability of being included in the sample is equal to the people in the universe (Kerlinger & Lee, 1999). The majority of the teachers (32,9%) constituting the sample are female individuals and individuals between the ages of 22 and 30. It can be seen from the seniority that they typically have after 1–5 years' (30,9%) experience. Among the teachers, only 23.5% had postgraduate degrees.

2.3 Data collection tools

Research was conducted using a personal information form developed by the researchers, the Turkish version of the `Rotterdam EQ Scale`, and the `CM Scale`. The Personal Information Form was developed with the approval of three different experts in the field to define the sociodemographic characteristics of the teachers and was applied before the scales. In order to determine the EQ levels of the teachers, the Turkish version of the Rotterdam EQ Scale prepared by Abdurrahman Tanrıöğen and Yusuf Türker (2019) was used. The internal consistency value of the scale is 0.84. The scale is examined under four headings as "Assessment of Emotions", "Assessment of Emotions of Others", "Controlling Emotions" and "Controlling Emotions of Others". The scale consists of 28 items, 7 for each dimension. The items of the scale, which is formed as a 5-point Likert-type rating, are: "I do not agree at all (1)", "I agree somewhat (2)", "I agree moderately (3)", "I agree a lot (4)", and "I completely agree (5)" (Peekar *et al.*, 2017)." Teachers' CM skills were assessed using the CM scale developed by İdris Şahin and Uğur Altunay (2011). This scale offers the following answer options: 1) I totally disagree, 2) I disagree, 3) I am undecided, 4) I agree, and 5) I totally agree. The scale consists of 7 sub-dimensions and a total of 40 items. Scale dimensions are divided into initiating and attracting attention, punishing behaviour, interaction behaviour, maintaining attention and problem-solving behaviour, warning behaviour, democratic behaviour, expectations, and compliance with rules. The total variance explained by the entire scale is a 50.05% Cronbach-Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.90 (Şahin & Altunay, 2011).

2.4 Analysis of data

The data collected from the teachers in the research was analysed using the SPSS 24.0 program. The number of participants was taken as a basis for the normality test. Since the number of participants was greater than 50 (n>50), normality analysis was evaluated according to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test statistical value. Results were found to be normally disturbed for the EQ scale test, but not for the CM test when the data were analysed. Therefore, both parametric and non-parametric test techniques were used for difference and correlation tests.

3. Findings

Using the mean and standard deviation values, Table 1 explains the teachers' levels of EQ and views on CM skills.

Table 1

Scale Types	$\bar{x}$	Ss
Total EQ	3.76	0.680
Total CM	3.22	0.566

The average of the responses given to the EQ scale items was found to be 3.76 and a standard deviation value of 0.680. Therefore, it was determined that the opinions of the teachers working in primary schools about the EQ levels were in the direction of "I strongly agree". In this context, it can be said that teachers are individuals who are aware of their own and others' emotions, can manage them, and have developed empathy skills. It is seen that the general total average of the CM skills scale items is 3.22 and the standard deviation value is 0.566. Therefore, it can be said that the CM skills of the teachers who contributed to the research are at a moderate level.

In order to identify whether there was a significant difference in EQ levels among teachers based on their genders, an independent samples t-test was conducted using the normal distribution of the data. However, Welch statistics were also used because the variances were not equal. Due to the non-normal distribution of the data, the Mann Withney-u test was used to determine the difference between the CM skills of primary school teachers.

Table 2: Comparison of the EQ levels of the teachers working at primary education institutions and the scores they obtained from the CM skills scale according to the gender variable

Gender	N	$\bar{x}$	SS	Sd	T	P
Male	124	3.79	.737	230.112	0.594	0.553
Female	216	3.75	.647			
Gender	**N**	**Avr. rank**	**Sum of ranking**	**U**	**Z**	**P**
Male	124	175.93	21815.50	12718.500	-0.774	0.439
Female	216	167.38	36154.50			

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that while the average score of male teachers' EQ levels is 3.79, it is 3.75 for female teachers. As a result of the Welch test, it was seen that the average scores of the EQ levels of male teachers were higher than those of female teachers.

On the other hand, it was concluded that the EQ levels of the teachers do not differ according to the gender variable [t(230,112)=0.594, p>.05]. In the study of Turan (2015), in parallel with this research, accordingly gender variables and EQ levels did not show significant differences. Similarly, according to Yavuz's (2018) study, although female teachers' EQ levels were higher than that of male teachers, no significant difference was found. It is thought that this difference may be due to the fact that the research was conducted in different places, times, and samples. With the changing time, the roles of men and women in society have begun to converge. This situation coincides with the fact that there is no significant difference in the EQ levels of male and female teachers.

As shown in Table 2, there is no significant difference found between the scores of teachers in primary schools with regard to CM skills according to their gender, according to the Mann-Withney U test [p>0.05]. As a result of the test, it was determined that the general point averages of male teachers' CM skills in primary education were similar to female teachers' CM skills. Ergün (2021) reached a conclusion parallel with this study in her study and revealed that CM skills did not differ significantly based on gender. Sağlam (2018) also concluded in her study that the gender variable did not make a significant difference in CM skills. Thus, teachers do not differ based on their gender in their ability to manage a classroom.

When comparing the EQ levels of the teachers from the perspective of the age variable, the Kruskal Wallis H test was used because the number of groups dropped below 30 and there was a difference in the number of groups, In the comparison of CM skills, the same test was applied, because the data did not provide a normal distribution.

Table 3: From the perspectives of the age variable, the Kruskal Wallis H-test result regarding teachers' EQ levels and CM skills

	Age	N	Avg. rank	Sd	X^2	p
Teachers' EQ levels	22-30	112	155.58	5	4.746	0.448
	31-35	72	180.50			
	36-40	49	167.92			
	41-45	61	180.52			
	46-50	14	169.43			
	51 and Over	32	185.53			
CM Skills	22-30	112	165.46	5	2.905	0.715
	31-35	72	169.72			
	36-40	49	162.27			
	41-45	61	183.30			
	46-50	14	153.00			
	51 and Over	32	185.77			

Table 3 indicates that the Kruskal Wallis-H test did not indicate any significant differences among teachers' EQ levels based on their age (p>.05). In other words, it can be said that teachers' EQ levels are the same, regardless of age groups. Similarly, Adsız (2016) concluded in her study that, in parallel with this research, the age variable did not make a significant difference in the level of EQ. On the other hand, in the study of Korkmazer (2021), in the analysis made by considering the age variable, there was a significant difference in favour of the age group whose EQ level is 41–50. Accordingly, teachers' CM skills did not differ significantly by age (p>.05). This means that CM skills are the same for all teachers, no matter the age group. The findings of Olçun (2020) suggest a significant relationship between age

variables and CM skills, with this relationship being more pronounced among teachers aged 41-48 years and 49-56 years. In the study of Kaplan (2020), in parallel with this research, it was concluded that the age variable did not make a significant difference in CM skills. It is thought that as the age increases, the experience of the teachers increases and their patience decreases. Because the age variable may impact CM skills in both positive and negative ways, the fact that it does not reveal a significant difference can be explained in light of this. Due to the difference in the number of groups and non-normal distribution of the data, the Kruskal Wallis H test was applied to compare EQ levels and CM skills in primary education institutions based on the seniority variable.

Table 4: From the perspectives of the variable of seniority, Kruskal Wallis H-test result regarding teachers' EQ levels and CM skills

	Seniority Years	N	Avg. rank	Sd	X²	p
Teachers' EQ levels	1-5	105	160.81	5	6.363	0.272
	6-10	47	151.32			
	11-15	65	177.87			
	16-20	38	168.09			
	21-25	45	182.96			
	26 Years and Over	40	194.76			
CM Skills	1-5	105	165.48	5	3.664	0.599
	6-10	47	165.10			
	11-15	65	164.30			
	16-20	38	184.72			
	21-25	45	165.07			
	26 Years and Over	40	192.70			

Based on the Kruskal Wallis-H test, Table 4 displays the results of the comparison of teachers' answers to the EQ scale and CM skills, in accordance with their seniority. The results revealed that there was no significant difference between teachers' seniority levels, EQ levels and CM skill scores (p>.05). In other words, it can be said that the EQ levels of the teachers are the same, regardless of their seniority group. In the study of Toytok (2013), unlike this research, it was concluded that the variable of seniority makes a significant difference in the level of EQ. According to Toytok's research, as teachers' professional seniority increases, their EQ levels also increase. The results of the studies conducted by Kabar (2017) and Karaahmetoğlu (2017) are similar to the results of this study and it is seen that the variable of seniority does not make a significant difference in the level of EQ.

On the other hand, it can be said that the CM skills of the teachers are the same regardless of their seniority groups. The results of Yalçın's (2020) research show parallelism with the results of this research. In this study, it was concluded that the variable of seniority did not make a significant difference in CM skills. In addition, Nergiz (2014) and Yüksel (2013) also found that seniority did not significantly affect CM skills.

Considering that the age variable and the seniority variable increase in parallel, it can be said that it is an expected result that similar results occur in both.

In the comparison of the ability to handle the levels of emotion of the teachers working at primary education institutions according to the variable of educational status, the independent samples t-test was used because the data were normally distributed, but the Welch statistics

were taken into account because the variances were not equal. On the other hand, the Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare the overall scope of the assessment, since it was not distributed normally.

Table 5:   An analysis of the EQ levels of teachers in primary schools and the CM skills scores they obtained based on their educational status.

Education status	N	x̄	SS	Sd	T	P
Degree of Bachelor	260	3.74	.631	109.337	-1.031	0.305
Degrees in master's level	80	3.84	.820			
Education status	**N**	**Avg. rank**	**Sum of rankings**	**U**	**Z**	**p**
Degree of Bachelor	260	171.54	44600.000	10130.000	-.352	.725
Degrees in master's level	80	167.13	13370.00			

As can be seen in Table 5, the average score of the EQ levels of the teachers working at primary education institutions is 3.74 for the teachers with a bachelor's degree and 3.84 for the teachers with a master's degree. As a result of the Welch test, it was seen that the average scores of the teachers with a master's degree in EQ levels were higher than those of the teachers with a bachelor's degree. According to the results of the analysis, the EQ levels of primary school teachers [t(109.337)=-1.031, p>.05] did not show a significant difference according to the variable of educational status.

Similar to this study, Korkmazer (2021) concluded that the variable of teachers' educational status did not make a significant difference in EQ levels. Durdu (2015) also reached results in parallel with this research in her study and did not find a significant relationship between educational status and EQ. Although there was no significant difference in this study, the fact that postgraduate teachers had a more comprehensive education enabled them to control their emotions more successfully and to have relatively higher EQ levels. It can be said that this situation is an important reason for encouraging teachers to do graduate studies.

When the CM skills scores of the teachers working at primary education institutions were examined according to their educational status, no significant difference was found as a result of the Mann-Whitney U-test [p>0.05]. In other words, it was determined that the CM skills scores of undergraduate teachers in primary education were similar to the CM skills of graduate teachers. In the study conducted by Yılmaz (2021), similar to this research, it was concluded that educational status did not make a significant difference in CM skills. Güneş (2016) also supports this research by reaching the conclusion that there is no significant relationship between skills for managing the classroom and the variable of educational status.

Table 6 examines the relationship between the teacher's EQ level and their ability to manage classrooms. A Spearman correlation test was used as an analysis method because the CM skills data were not normally distributed.

Tablo 6:   The relationship between teachers' EQ levels and CM skills

	N	R	P
EQ Levels	340	.621	.001
CM Skills			

According to Table 6, r=0.621, p=0.05, As a result of the Spearman correlation test, which was conducted to determine the relationship between the EQ levels of classroom teachers and their CM skills, a significant relationship was revealed. This situation shows that there is a positive and moderately significant relationship between the EQ levels of primary school teachers and their CM skills. This situation revealed that a positive or negative change that may occur in primary school teachers' EQ levels and CM skills would affect each other. Consequently a parallel study conducted by Tunca (2010), it was found that CM skills and EQ levels differ significantly. In Doğan (2020)'s research, it is seen that there is a positive, moderate relationship between teachers' CM skills and EQ levels. These results are also similar to the results of this study. Depending on these results, it can be said that teachers who have developed EQ are aware of the feelings of others and themselves, and can manage them are more successfully in CM. Considering that EQ and CM have some common points such as empathy, understanding the other person, and approaching all students equally without showing their feelings, the result obtained is an expected result.

4. Conclusion and suggestions

Conclusion

When the results of the research are analysed according to demographic variables, it is seen that although male teachers' EQ levels are relatively higher than female teachers, this difference is not at a significant level. On the other hand, when CM skills were considered, it was determined that the gender variable did not make a significant difference. Therefore, the gender variable has no effect on the EQ of teachers or their ability to manage their classrooms. The other results indicated that neither EQ nor CM skills were significantly affected by the age variable. Accordingly, teachers' abilities to manage classrooms and their EQ levels do not differ based on the age variable. Considering that EQ acting according to emotions is related to the personal characteristics of the individual, it is seen that the result reached is normal.

Another result obtained from the study is that the variable of seniority does not make a significant difference in the level of EQ and CM skills. In this context, the results show that the time spent by teachers in the profession does not have any effect on teachers' EQ and CM skills.

When the educational status variable was examined, it was concluded that the EQ levels of Master's degree graduates were higher than those of bachelor graduates, but this difference was not at a significant level. Likewise, it was determined that there was no significant difference in CM skills and that the CM skills of bachelor's degree and master's degree teachers were similar.

The study results concluded that EQ levels of primary school teachers are moderately related to their CM skills, as expected. This situation revealed that a positive or negative change that may occur in primary school teachers' EQ levels and CM skills would affect each other. From this point of view, it can be said that teachers who are aware of their own feelings and those of others, who can put themselves in the shoes of others, and who have a developed sense of empathy have better CM skills.

Suggestions

Based on these results, the following suggestions can be listed to increase a teacher's level of EQ and his or her ability to manage a classroom:

- It has been confirmed by studies that EQ and CM skills can be developed. In-service training can be organised in order to improve teachers' EQ levels and CM skills, and students can also participate in this training.

- School administrators can organise in-school activities to develop these skills when necessary by encouraging teachers to participate in in-service training.

- In order to improve pre-service teachers' EQ and CM skills, theoretical and applied courses on these subjects can be added to undergraduate programs.

- A discussion environment should be created for teachers about the solutions of possible undesirable behaviours that may occur in the classroom and it can be provided that different opinions that may arise can be a light for teachers.

- As a result of the research, the conclusion that the EQ levels of postgraduate teachers are higher may encourage teachers to graduate and increase their education levels.

- Administrators should organise necessary activities in order to increase both their own EQ levels and the EQ levels of their teachers and to create a school environment where interpersonal relationships are well established.

- Although there are separate studies on Skills in CM and EQ in the TRNC, there is no study that deals with the two issues together. In future research, these two issues can be contributed to the literature by considering them together with the addition of a qualitative dimension.

- In this study, Demographic factors were examined in order to assess EQ and CM skills. However, since there are many factors affecting these two skills, other factors that have an effect on EQ and CM can be examined in future research.

- In this study, which was carried out by considering the teacher dimension, a new study can be carried out by determining a positive and moderate relationship between teachers' EQ levels and CM skills and then adding the student dimension. Thus, since teachers with high EQ also have high CM skills, it can be investigated how this situation affects student success.

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