

EFL Teachers' Emotional Intelligence and Their Students' Language Achievement

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Abstract: This study aimed to investigate the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' emotional intelligence and their students' language achievement as well as the students' attitudes towards teaching/learning process and EFL classroom environment considering their teachers' emotional intelligence. To this end, twenty seven EFL teachers teaching in Iran's educational department were selected as the participants. To elicit data, the study used EQ-I scale (Bar-on, 1997), a questionnaire developed by the researcher to elicit the participants' attitudes regarding language learning experience and a researcher-made questionnaire to elicit EFL teachers' prevalent method to teach in their classes in order to ascertain teachers' homogeneity in their methodology. The data analysis through correlation coefficient and t-test indicated that there is a significant relationship between EFL teachers' emotional intelligence and their students' language achievement. That is, the higher teachers' emotional intelligence, the more students' language achievement. Also, research findings confirm a significant difference between the attitude of the learners with highly-rated EI teachers and those with low-rated EI teachers. The findings can be helpful both for EFL teachers and official to develop teacher training courses.

Key words: Emotional Intelligence, Language Achievement.

INTRODUCTION

Language plays an essential role in the educational setting. It is not only an instrument for communication and expression, but also the means through which we think and is a central tool for learning. English is the widespread international language in many fields. This language is also increasingly used in international communication. Higher English proficiency not only benefits a majority of people in their studies, but also can be helpful with promotion and career development. All of these factors represent English teaching as a crucially important language to be taught. In Iran some students have already been learning English from the language centers, but some students have never learnt language outside of the school system. Students who have different proficiencies will respond differently in class. The critical issues are how teachers can take good care of every student and construct a well-integrated, facilitating and effective environment for the students. The English teachers have to develop approaches or methods suitable for the students who come from different backgrounds and have different proficiencies in English.

These make second half of the twentieth century the age of individualism, when individual values and differences were recognized and respected. After a prolonged preoccupation with the physical aspects of man, the tide turned and attention was focused on the human being as a totality of physical, cognitive and affective variables. Man became man in the real sense of the word (AkbariandHosseini, 2008). This shift of attention has left its mark on the way education is viewed and practiced.

One aspect of every individual deals with affective variables. Brown (2007, p.109) believes that the management of core emotions controls efficient mental and cognitive processing. He mentions the fact that, according to Goleman (1995), the emotional mind is far quicker than the rational mind, springing into action without even pausing to consider what it is doing. However, it seems that emotions have been traditionally neglected in the context of teaching, learning and teacher training courses while the recent research on emotional intelligence (EI) made drastic changes. We as Human beings are extremely emotional. Emotions dominate all our thought, actions and reflections. In fact, we are influenced by our emotion (Brown, 2007). It is highly likely that emotionally intelligent individuals could provide help in how to manage emotions to less emotionally intelligent individuals (RastegarandMemarpour, 2009). Research has generated evidence that skills, knowledge and genetic traits may be less important for effective performance than the employee's emotional intelligence (Abraham, 2000; Ashforth and Humphrey, 1995; Ashkanasy and Daus, 2002).

Education professionals believed that feelings are crucial in the overall development of their pupils and in their own daily tasks. Thus, they are voicing the need to encourage not only the academic development of children and young people, but also the development of their social and emotional competencies (Elias, Zins, Weissberg, Frey, Greenberg, Haynes, Kessler, Schwab Stone and Shriver, 1997; Greenberg, Weissberg, O'Brien, Zins, Fredericks, Resnikand Elias, 2003). On the other hand, emotional competence of teachers is necessary both in general and in particular. In general, it is essential for their own well-being and for

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effectiveness and quality in carrying out teaching-learning processes in the classroom, and in particular for the socio-emotional development of students (Sutton and Wheatly, 2003).

As it is noted, the literature review regarding teachers' EI and its role in shaping their viewpoints and belief system reveals that EI has not received sufficient attention in the realm of EFL teaching. Therefore, It seems to be imperative that some research be carried out in the EFL context to determine if and how EQ and language achievement are related. However, most of the research is on the relationship between learners' emotional intelligence and their language achievement (Aremu, Tella and Tella, 2001) and there has not been any research on language teachers' emotional intelligence and their learners' language achievement. To answer this call, the present study made an attempt to investigate the relationship between EFL teachers' EI and their students' language achievement.

Review of Literature:

Goleman (1995 as cited in Motallebzadeh, 2009) defines emotional intelligence in terms of the ability to love and to be loved by friends, partner and family members. Simply stated, emotional intelligence is a learned ability to identify, understand, experience, and express human emotions in healthy and productive ways. They suggest that emotional experience and expression are unique to each teacher and student. No one else thinks, expresses feelings, chooses behaviors and acts in the same way (Nelson and Low, 2005).

Emotional intelligence is about the intelligent use of emotions and utilizing the information contained in emotion to make effective decision; it operates on emotional information in the same manner that other types of intelligence might operate (Grewal and Salovey, 2005).

Salovey and Mayer (1990, as cited in Saeidi and Yusefi, 2008) defined emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive, generate and understand emotions so that it can help thinking and also to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth.

According to Saeidi and Yusefi (2008), in 1997, Six Second's team defined emotional intelligence as the capacities for bringing forth the optimal results in the relationships between the individual and others. They also provided another useful definition from Orioli, Jones, and Trocki (1999) who believe that emotional intelligence is the ability to understand and apply the power and judging skill of emotions as a source of human energy, information, trust, creativity and influence. They also introduce the recently developed definition of emotional intelligence by Mayer and Cobb (2000) who divide the emotional intelligence into four areas:

- a) Emotional perception which involves abilities for identifying emotions;
- b) Emotional facilitation of thought which is dealt with abilities for relating emotions to other sensations and using the emotions in reasoning;
- c) Emotional understanding that concerns solving emotional problems and understanding the similarities and differences between emotions; and
- d) Emotional management which concerns the understanding of the implications of social activities on emotions and regulating emotions in the individual.

Nelson (2005) define emotional intelligence as a confluence of developed abilities: (1) know and value self; (2) build and maintain a variety of strong, productive, and healthy relationships; (3) *get along* and work well with others in achieving positive results; and (4) effectively deal with the pressures and demands of daily life and work.

As is the case with all constructs (i.e. intelligence or personality), several schools of thought exist which aim to describe and measure the notion of emotional intelligence. Three main models of emotional intelligence are as follows:

- Ability EI model
- Mixed models of EI (usually subsumed under trait EI) (Kluemper, 2008; Martins, Ramalho and Morin, 2010)
- Trait EI model

An Ability Model of Emotional Intelligence: Salovey and Mayer:

Salovey and Mayer (1990) were among the earliest to propose the concept of "emotional intelligence" to represent the ability of people to deal with their emotions. They defined it as "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action" (p. 186).

They first coined the term "emotional intelligence" in 1990 (Salovey and Mayer, 1990) and have continued to conduct research on the significance of the construct. Their pure theory of emotional intelligence integrates key ideas from both fields of intelligence and emotion. From intelligence they take the idea that intelligence involves the capacity to carry out abstract reasoning. From emotion research comes the notion that emotions are signals that convey regular and discernable meanings about relationships and that a number of basic emotions are universal (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2002). They further propose that emotional intelligence is comprised of two areas: experiential (ability to perceive, respond, and manipulate emotional information without

necessarily understanding it) and strategic (ability to understand and manage emotions without necessarily perceiving feelings well or fully experiencing them). Mayer and Salovey (1997) proposed a four-branch model of emotional:

1. Emotional perception
2. Emotional assimilation
3. Emotional understanding
4. Emotional management

The first branch, *emotional perception*, is the ability to be self-aware of emotions and to express emotions and emotional needs accurately to others. Emotional perception also includes the ability to distinguish between honest and dishonest expressions of emotion.

The second branch, *emotional assimilation*, is the ability to distinguish among the different emotions one is feeling and to identify those that are influencing their thought processes.

The third branch, *emotional understanding*, is the ability to understand complex emotions (such as feeling two emotions at once) and the ability to recognize transitions from one to the other. Lastly, the fourth branch, *emotion management*, is the ability to connect or disconnect from an emotion depending on its usefulness in a given situation (Mayer and Salovey, 1997).

Ability EI involves actual abilities and should be measured with "maximum-performance" tests, and is directly applicable to cognitive ability (Petrides and Furnham, 2001, p. 426).

A Mixed Model of Emotional Intelligence: Bar-On Model of Emotional-Social Intelligence (ESI):

Bar-On (1997), defined EI as "an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures" (p. 14). His model of emotional intelligence relates to the *potential* for performance and success, rather than performance or success itself, and is considered process-oriented rather than outcome-oriented (Bar-On, 2002). It focuses on an array of emotional and social abilities, including the ability to be aware of, understand, and express oneself, the ability to be aware of, understand, and relate to others, the ability to deal with strong emotions, and the ability to adapt to change and solve problems of a social or personal nature (Bar-On, 1997, as cited in Stys and Brown, 2004). Bar On (2006) defines emotional intelligence in terms of such emotional and social skills that influence our understanding and expression of ourselves, our understanding for others and interaction with them, and the ability to deal with everyday demands. His inventory consists of five major components and 15 subscales of these components which are outlined below:

1. Intrapersonal Component:

The intrapersonal component of emotional intelligence emphasizes self-awareness and self-expression. It includes following five subscales:

Emotional Self-Awareness: involves the awareness and understanding of one's own emotions.

Self-Regard: involves the understanding, acceptance and respect of the self.

Self-Actualization: refers to the ability to strive for personal goals and actualize one's potentials.

Assertiveness: is the ability to effectively express and defend one's beliefs and thoughts.

Independence: is the ability of being self-directed and self-controlled.

2. Interpersonal Component:

The interpersonal component of emotional intelligence model is concerned with social-awareness and interpersonal interactions. It includes following subscales:

Empathy: is the ability to be aware of and understand how others feel.

Social Responsibility: is the ability of being a cooperative, constructive and responsible member of the society.

Interpersonal Relationships: refer to the ability to establish pleasant relationships and healthy interaction with others.

3. Stress Management:

This component of EI involves managing and regulating emotions and includes two sub-scales of:

Stress Tolerance: is the ability to withstand the difficult conditions and unpleasant events by constructively managing emotions.

Impulse Control: is the ability to resist or delay a desire, a drive or a temptation by controlling one's emotions.

4. Adaptability:

This component of EI model is concerned with the ability to adjust with the change and cope with the problems that come with the change. It includes following sub-scales:

Reality Testing: means the ability to objectively judge the external reality and the internal feelings.

Flexibility: is the ability to adapt one's thoughts and emotions according to the changing situations and adjust in new situations.

Problem Solving: refers to the ability to identify the problem and to put forward an effective solution.

5. General Mood:

This component of emotional intelligence includes the competencies related to self-motivation. It includes two sub-scales:

Happiness: refers to the satisfaction with one's life, and the ability to express positive feelings and enjoy life.

Optimism: is the ability to think positively, to keep in view the bright side of the life and remain hopeful in the face of difficulties and negative feelings.

A Mixed Model of Emotional Intelligence: Goleman Model:

The model proposed by Daniel Goleman (1998) focuses on EI as a wide array of competencies and skills that drive leadership performance. Goleman's model outlines four main emotional intelligence constructs and 20 competencies (Goleman, 2000, as cited in Nasir and Masrur, 2010).

1. *Self-Awareness* that includes three competences: Emotional Self-Awareness, Accurate Self-Assessment, and Self-Confidence.
2. *Self-Management* that involves six competences: Self-Control, Trustworthiness, Conscientiousness, Adaptability, Achievement Drive and Initiative.
3. *Social Awareness* that includes three competencies: Empathy, Service Orientation and Organizational Awareness.
4. *Relationship Management* that includes eight competences: Developing Others, Influence, Communication, Conflict Management, Leadership, Change Catalyst, Building Bonds and Teamwork and Collaboration.

According to Goleman (1998) the first, self-awareness, is the ability to read one's emotions and recognize their impact while using gut feelings to guide decisions. Self-management is the second construct which involves controlling one's emotions and impulses and adapting to changing circumstances. The third construct, social awareness, includes the ability to sense, understand, and react to other's emotions while comprehending social networks. Finally, relationship management, the fourth construct, entails the ability to inspire, influence, and develop others while managing conflict.

Trait EI Model:

Trait EI is "a constellation of emotional self-perceptions located at the lower levels of personality" (Petrides, et.al, 2007). In fact, they further state that trait EI refers to an individual's self-perceptions of their emotional abilities. The definition of EI encompasses both behavioral dispositions and self-perceived abilities and is measured by self-report measures. Trait EI is comprised of "behavioral dispositions and self-perceived abilities" and should be measured through self-report questionnaires, and is related to the study of personality (Petrides and Furnham, 2001, p. 426).

According to Bar-On (1997) emotionally healthy behavior is reflected in characteristic ways of (1) thinking (2) identifying, managing, and expressing feelings, and (3) choosing effective behaviors. He also adds that becoming an emotionally intelligent teacher is a journey and process, not an arrival state or end result. Emotionally intelligent teachers are active in their orientation to students, work and life. They are resilient in response to negative stress and less likely to overwhelm themselves with pessimism and strong, negative emotions. In his idea an emotionally intelligent teacher learns and applies emotional intelligence skills to improve:

- Physical and mental health by gaining knowledge/ techniques to break the habit of emotional reactivity (Stress Management);
- Productivity and personal satisfaction by helping to harmonize their thinking and feeling minds (Self-esteem and Confidence);
- Self-esteem and confidence by learning specific emotional intelligence skills (Positive Personal Change);
- Communication in personal and work relationships (Assertion);
- Ability to manage anxiety and improve performance under pressure (Anxiety Management);
- Ability to quickly establish and maintain effective interpersonal relationships (Comfort);
- Ability to understand and accept differences in others and diversity issues (Empathy);

- Ability to plan, formulate, implement effective problem solving procedures in stressful situations (Decision Making);
- Ability to positively impact, persuade, and influence others (Leadership);
- Ability to direct energy and motivation to accomplish personally meaningful goals (Drive Strength);
- Ability to manage time to meet goals and assignments (Time Management);
- Ability to complete tasks and responsibilities in a timely and dependable manner (Commitment Ethic); and
- Ability to control and manage anger and improve performance under stressful conditions and situations (Anger Management).

According to Nelson and Low (2005), teachers who model emotional intelligence are characterized by: intentional reflective behavior (not reactive), more flexible (not resistant to change), assertive communication (not aggressive or passive), more optimistic and hopeful (not pessimistic and negative), and relies on skills and positive habits (not reactive habits).

Abdullahi(2001) believes that teachers equipped with adequate emotional intelligence skills would be able to generate a pleasurable classroom by having a dynamic group discussion with the students. Teachers will be able to reduce the negative effect of students' anxiety in each learning process by constructing an acceptable and pleasurable condition that gives psychological support to the students.

Accordingly, the researchers have presented the following research questions:

1. Is there any relationship between EFL teachers' EI and their students' language achievement?
2. Is there any difference between the attitude of the learners with highly-rated EI teachers and those with low-rated EI teachers?

Method:

Participants:

The first group of participants in the present study comprised all the male and female educational department's high school students in Urmia aged between 15-17. In order to avoid the effect of learners' socio-economic status on the results of the study, the researcher selected the schools in the first educational district because the students studying at these schools seem to belong to upper-intermediate or higher social rank in the city while the other educational district (second educational district) belongs to intermediate or low level families. The researcher used multi-step stratified sampling through which about 56 high schools from among 65 high schools in Urmia were randomly selected (based on Morgan's table) and from among these schools the researcher selected 70 different EFL classes for the study. The second group of participants in the present research was non-native EFL teachers teaching in the same classes and the same students we had selected for the research. Teachers were both male and female since in Iranian educational system female students should be taught by female teachers and male students must have male teachers.

Instruments:

The following instruments were used in this study:

- a. Emotional Intelligence test (Bar On, 1997).
- b. A questionnaire developed by the researcher to elicit the participants' attitudes regarding language learning experience
- c. a researcher-made questionnaire to elicit EFL teachers' prevalent method to teach in their classes.

To evaluate EFL teachers' emotional intelligence (EI), the researcher employed the Emotional Intelligence test, developed by Bar On in 1997. Bar On's EI test, also called emotional quotient inventory (EQ-i) is a self-report measure of emotionally and socially intelligent behavior that assesses EI based on responses to 117 items, tapping the evaluation and expression of emotion in oneself and others, the regulation of emotion in oneself and others, and the use of emotions in solving problems (Bar On, 1997). It is a standardized tool to measure a number of constructs related to emotional intelligence. The original instrument includes 137 items. This test has been translated and piloted for reliability and validity in Iran by Samouei (2003). After removing deficiencies and ambiguities, the number of questions was reduced to 90. The revised format was used by the researcher in the present study. The test is in the form of short sentences which measures five scales of *Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Adaptability, Stress Management* and *General Mood* and fifteen subscales as was mentioned above. The original EI test has demonstrated high internal consistency. The Farsi version of this questionnaire was given to the participants of this study. According to Samouei (2003), this test does have reliability and validity in Iranian culture. Based on her findings the reported Cronbach's alpha was 0.93.

The second instrument was a questionnaire prepared by the researcher in the study to elicit the students' attitudes regarding language learning experience. The questionnaire consisted of 43 questions to examine the students' reactions towards language learning experience they had with high-rated and low-rated teachers in EI. The questions included in the attitude test were developed based on fifteen subscales comprising emotional intelligence. The questionnaire was developed in Farsi in order to avoid misunderstanding which may have

affected the results of the study. It was a five scale likert-type questionnaire comprising (A) as the most agreement to (E) as the least agreement to the statements provided. Having designed the questionnaire, it was piloted on fifty students with the same characteristics of the sample group and the reliability of the test was calculated ($\alpha= 0.97$).

The researcher also developed a questionnaire which was applied to the teachers to ascertain they all followed somehow the same method to teach in their classes. It was a questionnaire to check the homogeneity of teachers regarding the method they use. It consisted of twelve questions tapping some methodology principles taken from Larsen-Freeman (2000) and the teachers were required to read the statements and choose (Yes) if they follow it and (No) if they do not. The principles were selected from the traditional approaches towards teaching languages as well as the recent one, that is, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). The questionnaire was given to the teachers as an attachment to EQ-I and MIDAS.

Finally, the student's achievement was judged based on the scores they achieved at the final exam. Since the participants were selected from educational department and in Iran's educational system all the teachers and high schools have to follow the same curriculum, text books and even syllabus as well as the same evaluation system and final test, their final exam seems to be an appropriate procedure to compare the student's achievement.

Procedure:

The study consisted of a pilot study and a main study. In the pilot study, attitude test was administered to a sample of fifty randomly selected students in sequence to estimate their reliabilities. Since the reliability for the Farsi version of EQ-I had already been estimated; it was not needed to be piloted again. Having made sure that the tests possess appropriate qualities for use in the study, the main study started.

In the main study, tests (EQ-i and method test) were administered to the teachers who were to participate in the study in order to determine their level at EI and to make sure that they all followed somehow the same teaching method. The teachers were supposed to teach their students for a semester and at the end of the term the students were given their normal final exam because their final exam scores were intended to be used as the representative of the students' achievement throughout the course. While the students were taking their final exam, they were given the attitude test to collect the data regarding their attitude towards their corresponding classroom environment which was possibly influenced by the teachers' high score or low score in emotional intelligence test. At last, the scores the students got in their final exam were collected from high school to represent how much they achieved through the course.

Results:

For the first research question Pearson correlational coefficient was used to investigate the relationship between EFL teachers' Emotional Intelligence and their learners' language achievement and independent sample T-test was used to investigate the difference in the attitudes of students attending the classes of teachers with high and low emotional intelligence. The first step in analyzing data was to make sure if the participant teachers in the research all followed the same method to teach their students in order to avoid the effect it may have on the research findings. This can be achieved through Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test.

Table 1: One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test.

| | |
|---------|------------------------|
| 37 | N |
| 15.8378 | Mean |
| 1.70804 | Std. Deviation |
| 1.299 | Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z |
| .07 | Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) |

As it is from the above table, there is not any significant difference among the participant EFL teachers regarding the method they use in the classroom and we can be sure that they all followed the same method for the students since $p>0.05$.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Coefficient between Language Achievement and EI.

| variable | N | r | Sig |
|----------------------------|----|------|-------|
| Language Achievementand EI | 37 | 0.59 | 0.001 |

Table 2. Indicates that there is a relationship between EFL teachers' emotional intelligence and their students' language achievement. Since calculated correlation coefficient is 0.59 and level of significance is 0.001 and less than $\alpha=0.05$, null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, we can be 99% certain that there is a relationship between EFL teachers' emotional intelligence and their students' language achievement.

Study of EI in the educational setting is a relatively new endeavor and, as such, few studies have focused on the overall effects of EI on second or foreign language learning. These few studies have been limited to certain

dimensions as management, self-esteem, anxiety, strategy use, or motivation only. In ESL/EFL context, different studies examined the relationship between EQ and second language success (Chao, 2003; Clement, Dornyei and Noels, 1994; Nelson and Low, 1999). The results of the present study substantiate the contention that there is a positive relationship between teachers' EI and students' language achievement. Data analysis using Pearson correlation indicated a significant positive correlation (0.59). This means that EFL students' language achievement increases whenever their teachers have higher emotional intelligence.

The literature represents that with the established relationship of emotional intelligence skills and academic achievement, students would benefit from learning and applying emotional intelligence skills to improve academic performance in school and college settings. With new research evidence linking emotional intelligence to instructional performance and as a factor, teacher retention, pre-service, new, and novice teachers could benefit from learning and using emotional intelligence skills for personal and professional development (Nelson and Low, 2005).

Aghasafari (2006) found a positive relationship between overall EQ and language learning strategies. This study also confirms the findings since the appropriate use of learning strategies will finally lead to better learning and achievement. Furthermore, Riemer (2003) argues that EQ skills contribute to the learning potential of foreign language acquisition, particularly as it relates to acknowledging the legitimacy of other cultures as being equally valid. Meanwhile, Pishgadam (2009) states that a number of methodologies exists which specifically address emotional and psychological issues in second language learning (e.g. Suggestopedia). Moreover, studies have shown that although academic achievement does not correlate much with IQ, it is strongly associated with some dimensions of EQ such as intrapersonal, stress management and general mood competencies (Fahim and Pishgadam, 2007).

As Ciarrochi and Mayer (2007) state, emotional intelligence has offered the potential to integrate the reasoning of learners' cognition and emotion and predicted academic success. The application of EI theory in a classroom can yield beneficial emotional and social changes and contribute to enhancing the school ethos (Kelly, Longbottom, Potts and Williamson, 2001). To move further, its potential to improve the acquisition of language in learners is claimed to be great. As Duraiswamy (1999) states, language remains unconscious until it is dealt with emotionally. This emotional awareness and experience could be the vehicle that evokes consciousness, enabling learners to understand and communicate ideas better.

In a similar study, in L2 context, Moafian and Ghanizadeh demonstrated that emotional intelligence plays a positive role in teaching effectiveness (Ghanizadeh and Moafian, 2010). Surely teaching effectiveness ascertains higher academic achievement. In a similar vein Fahim and Pishgadam (2007) found a significantly positive correlation between university students' academic achievement and several components of EI (intrapersonal, stress management, and general mood competencies).

A growing body of interdisciplinary research clearly has connected the relationship of emotional intelligence to achievement, productivity, leadership, and personal health (Goleman, 1995, 1998; Epstein, 1998; Sternberg, 1996; Gardner, 1993; Weisenger, 1998; Low, 2000; Nelson and Low, 1999, 2005). Recent doctoral research has linked emotional intelligence with academic achievement and college success (Stottlemire, 2002; Vela, 2003; Smith, 2004; Williams, 2004; and Potter, 2005). Gil-Olarte, Palomera and Brackett (2006) also found a significantly positive relationship between students' emotional intelligence and their academic success and social competence.

As it is clear the results of this study is completely in line with the findings of all the emotional intelligence studies mentioned above. All these studies along with the present study indicate a positive relationship between EI and language achievement regardless of the fact that it is teachers' EI or students'.

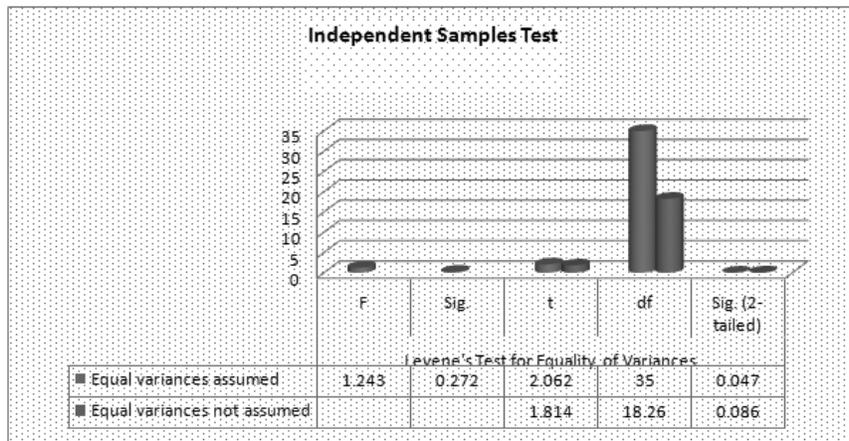
Also, the findings of the present study confirm what Elias, Gara, Schuuyler, Brandon-Muller, and Sayette (1991) discovered about EI. They believe that teaching emotional and social skills is very important at school; it can affect academic achievement positively not only during the year they are taught, but during the years that follow as well. They add the point that teaching these skills has a long-term effect on achievement.

The results of this study suggested that the program structure worked well for most of the teachers. It provided the opportunities for integration of most of the strands of the program, allowing participants to synthesize information and skills derived from the various EQ activities. It helped them to gain useful information and encouraged them to adopt ways of using EQ activities in the classroom. The importance of the necessity of EQ training in learning-teaching activities has been realized. A similar view is expressed with the findings of an earlier study by Tucker, Sojka, Barone, and McCarthy (2000), in which EQ training program with the help of an instructor is seen to be essential for the improvement as well as for assuring the success of any teaching and learning activity.

Results of the present study also suggest that teachers might well gain considerable benefits from in-service programs focusing on EQ and socio-emotional learning. Thus, different approaches to instruction can open opportunities in shaping the nature of the ideas and practices that EQ could develop.

However, in a recent meta-analysis examining the correlation and predictive validity of EI when compared to IQ or general mental ability, Van Rooy and Viswesvaran (2004) found IQ to be a better predictor of work and

academic performance than EI. This study contrasts the previous findings since in all the studies the relationship between EQ and academic performance has been firmly established.



The results of Levene's test indicates that the level of significance for F-test is 0.27 and this figure is larger than $\alpha = 0.05$. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is not any significant difference between the two groups' variances. Because the level of significance estimated for T-test is 0.04 and $0.04 \leq \alpha = 0.05$, null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is confirmed. Hence, it can be stated that there is a significant difference between the attitude of the learners with highly-rated EI teachers and those with low-rated EI teachers.

Education authorities believed that feelings and emotions have a crucial role in the overall development of their learners and in their own daily tasks. Thus, they are voicing the need to encourage not only the academic development of children and young people, but also the development of their social and emotional competencies (Elias, Zins, Weissberg, Frey, Greenberg, Haynes, Kessler, Schwab Stone and Shriver, 1997; Greenberg, Weissberg, O'Brien, Zins, Fredericks, Resnikand Elias, 2003).

Wubbels and Levy (1991), as cited in MoafianandGanizadeh (2009), contended that there is a strong relationship between teachers' affective traits and learners' emotional achievement. Furthermore, Mortiboys (2005) argued that the way the teacher manipulates his/her own emotions and those of learners will increase the chances of learners' engagement, motivation, and collaboration.

As Nias (1996) noted, teaching involves human interaction and therefore has an emotional dimension. Nelson and Low (2005) believe that a simple and major problem for schools and colleges is to provide a safe environment that is emotionally healthy and academically challenging. The creation of a healthy learning environment focused on personal, academic, and career excellence requires an understanding and emphasis on affective as well as cognitive skills.

As it was mentioned, studying affective characteristics of teachers is one promising area of research that can help effective teaching. However, these types of studies and studies with the findings mentioned above will all be on sand if the other side of educational process (the learner) is not taken into account. Education is a two-way process between teacher and learner. The studies implemented considered only one side of this process (the teacher) while it is believed that successful instruction is the one which is directed at the learners' needs and desires. Therefore, comprehensive study involves not only the investigation on teachers' emotional capabilities but also the learners' satisfaction since even the most appropriate methods and techniques seem to be totally valueless if the learners are not satisfied with or take no advantage of them. Whatever is done in the classroom environment and whatever innovations are followed are all guided towards learners' benefits. Therefore, the present study intended to evaluate the students' attitude towards their learning experience having studied the teachers' emotional intelligence. Since emotional intelligence targets the students' emotions and feelings, it was expected that they will probably develop better feelings and attitudes towards their learning if their teacher receive higher emotional intelligence. Besides, if the studies brought about were really flawless in representing the relationship between teachers' EI and student's achievement, motivation, collaboration, academic excellence, and etc., these outcomes will surely lead to satisfaction from learning environment which needs to be investigated.

This study tapped the aforementioned issue to shed light on whether EI is considered helpful from the students' themselves point of view. It was evident from independent sample T-test used to analyze the students' attitudes that there was a significant difference between students' attitudes. Those enjoying the teachers with higher EI developed positive attitudes towards their learning experience and teachers. This result, of course, was in line with other studies which also investigated students' attitudes. Studies by Emig (1997), Haley (2004) and Hamurlu (2007) indicated that multiple intelligence-based teaching affected both EFL learners' language

achievement and their positive attitude towards language learning experience. All these confirms that higher EI not only affects teachers' instruction and formulates their attitudes which finally improves their teaching and facilitates learning but it also influences what learners think and feel in the learning process and help them to develop positive attitude which again affects their learning.

Conclusion:

We educate students with one main objective in mind: their success. But how can we measure success? Is success equal with strong scientific mind? Frankly said, strong mind guaranteed success in the past but today the introduction of new theories such as emotional intelligence theory (Bar On, 1988; Salovey and Mayer, 1990; Goleman, 1995) caused immense changes in what we consider success and how we measure it. With this theory, success depends on the control of emotions. IQ was not taken into account as measure of success by itself. IQ, according to Goleman (1995, as cited in AbiSamra, 2000), only counts for 20% and the rest goes for Emotional and social intelligences, and luck.

Today, the time achievement, personal responsibility and individual differences received the most attention, identifying and developing children's strengths is one of the most effective and desirable ways to get children to have positive working styles. Academic achievement is believed to be related to emotional development as well as intellectual development, teachers must learn and apply new skills to reduce the effects of negative stress, to establish and build positive and supportive relationships, and develop emotional intelligence. Healthy classroom environments minimize negative stress and contributes to more effective student learning. Most of the scholars on this topic pinpoint the fact that in order to function to the potential as a member of society, both IQ and EQ are necessary (Gardner, 1983; Goleman, 1995; Mayer and Salovey, 1995; Salovey and Mayer, 1990). EQ is considered to be as important as IQ for people to succeed in school and in life. It is important, then, for us as educators to consider if we need EQ skills to be applied into the classroom environment for the academic achievement as well as social and emotional success of learners. A positive relationship between the teacher and the learner seems to be vital if students are supposed to be successful. When students perceive their teachers' motivation as a sincere interest in helping them to succeed, the motivational and emotional impact of the feedback tends to be more positive (Tucker, Sojka, Barone, and McCarthy, 2000).

As Hein (1996) indicates EQ level of the teachers and students is an important variable in devising a classroom atmosphere in which EQ skills can be taught and developed healthily. An important factor in teacher's EQ is how they can manage their own emotions, especially the negative ones. Effective and successful teachers are those who can deal with negative feelings more efficiently.

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