

**The Impact of Emotional Intelligence on  
Enhancing English Language Teachers'  
Professional Development**

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**Abstract**

The present study aimed at developing English language teachers' professional performance in the pedagogical aspect through applying training sessions based on emotional intelligence skills. The participants were Egyptian English language teachers (N=17) from five Egyptian governorates. An observation sheet designed by the researcher was used to evaluate the professional performance of the teachers. Assessment was done through a pre-post administration of the study instrument on the one-group participants of the study. Teachers' scores on the pre and post-tests were statistically analyzed. The findings revealed that there was a strong positive correlation between enhancing English language teachers' emotional intelligence and the development of their professional performance with respect to the pedagogical domain. It could be concluded that emotional intelligence skills are effective for enhancing the pedagogical performance of English language teachers.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, English language teachers, Professional Performance, pedagogical performance.

مستخلص البحث باللغة العربية:

هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى تطوير مستوى الأداء المهني لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في الجانب التدريسي من خلال تطبيق دورة تدريبية مكثفة قائمة على مهارات الذكاء

الوجداني. كان المشاركون معلمين للغة الإنجليزية في عدة مدارس مصرية (عدد = 17) من خمس محافظات في مصر. تم استخدام بطاقة ملاحظة صممها الباحث لتقييم الأداء المهني للمعلمين. تم تحليل درجات نفس المعلمين في الاختبار القبلي / البعدي إحصائياً ومقارنتها. كشفت النتائج الكمية أن هناك علاقة إيجابية قوية بين تعزيز الذكاء الوجداني لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية وتطوير أدائهم المهني فيما يتعلق بالمجال التدريسي. يمكن الاستنتاج أن تطوير مهارات الذكاء الوجداني لها آثاراً إيجابية فعالة في تحسين الأداء التدريسي لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الذكاء الوجداني، معلمو اللغة الإنجليزية، الأداء المهني، الأداء التدريسي.

## 1. Introduction:

English language teachers' professional development has been the foundation for enhancing EFL education in Egypt. Furthermore, with the rapid changes occurring in language education worldwide, the current EFL educational approaches have witnessed a vast development in the theories of language education and learning pedagogy, where education has become more complex than ever. Therefore, advocates of educational reforming have called for practical and influential teachers' training that conformed to the latest best practices. One of these latest advancements in EFL education is the interest in the emotional aspect as an essential element of effective language teaching.

## 2. Theoretical Background

The notion of Emotional Intelligence (EI) “is not new rather it is now growing, developing and consciously being applied in human life in general” (Farooq et al., 2017, p.2) and in education, in particular. Adult learning theories emphasized the importance of a considerate, nonthreatening and emotionally safe learning environment that provides adult learners the opportunities to link their experiences with what they are learning by reinforcing positive emotions and maintaining optimistic attitude. In the same line, Oxford (2015) attested that emotions operate as “an amplifier, which provides energetic intensity to all human behavior, including language learning” (p.371). Ozkaral and Utsu (2019) stressed the need of enhancing teachers’ emotional intelligence as they affect their students’ emotional development.

Research in the role of emotions in second/foreign language learning and teaching is not a novel phenomenon. Several approaches have addressed psychological and emotional notions, inspired in some cases by Krashen’s claim of a language monitor and the affective filter hypothesis (Shao et al. 2013). In addition, one of the famous theories dealing with the relationship between language and emotion is Greenspan’s (1992) theory that has been given little attention in foreign language education studies. However, Pishghadam et al. (2013) introduced

“Emotion–Based Language Instruction” (EBLI) as a novel approach to second language (L2) acquisition. Pishghadam et al. (2013) emphasized that “targeting bilingual learners’ emotions is likely to have a significant positive outcome on their language learning” (p.13). Pishghadam et al. (2013) illustrated the importance of emotionalizing language to lead to better second language learning. This language teaching approach hinges on the hypothesis that different lexical items are associated with different degrees of emotions. The stronger these emotions are, the deeper and faster the language learning process becomes (Pishghadam et al., 2013). Since the emotion–related dimension has been recognized as a paramount component of language education, the tendency to address language learners’ emotions in SLA research has gained ample attention.

EFL teachers can lead English language learners towards effective language learning if both of them are conversant with EI and its implementation in the classroom (Tok et al, 2013; Galler, 2015). Dewaele et al. (2018) identified the significance of studying the emotions in EFL classroom environment to understand the learning patterns and motivations of the students. EFL teachers, as facilitators, need to be aware of their students’ emotions to be able to guide them. According to Tok et al. (2013), the introduction of emotional intelligence in EFL classroom was

capable of making students intra-personally and interpersonally involved during the entire time of the class. In addition, it developed an environment that produced a more humane partnership between the teacher and the students. Besides, it improved the socio-affective factor in EFL classrooms where learners are encouraged to ask questions.

It is central to highlight that emotional intelligence has remained intricate to the concept of education and teacher-student relationship. Even though some studies have argued that a correlation exists between some emotional intelligence traits and effective teacher-student relationship (Tok et al., 2013), emotional intelligence has remained an integral aspect of successful teaching and learning process. Regardless of how the concept is described in the context of education, Goleman et al. (2000) argued that emotional intelligence is a power booster for any educational leadership style.

Moreover, interaction generates any learning process. Thus, it is “not possible to implement EI in the classroom without teacher-student and student-student interaction.” (Farooq, 2017, p.4). According to Goleman (2015), “our feelings mostly predominate our thoughts when shaping our decisions and acts.” Alimehmeti and Danglli (2013) addressed Knowles’s (2011) idea that learners come to the classroom with a variety of experiences

and backgrounds that need to be cherished through the learning experience. Thus, for an effective EFL classroom to occur, EFL teachers need to create a safe learning environment in which students share their thoughts, emotions and knowledge in a healthy learning environment.

In spite of the different views in the area of EFL teachers' professional development, it is essential to highlight that the need for emotional intelligence has not only gained relevance in the academic literature but also in the associated school of practice. EFL teachers' professional development has remained a part and parcel of in-service training programs and workshops directed towards upgrading teachers human resource capacity (Ravandpour, 2019). According to Aghabarari and Rahimi (2020), these in-service programs and training cannot alone address all the professional development of educators due to the complexity of the educational setting and the uniqueness of classroom issues and challenges faced by teachers. It is based on these assertions that the need for EFL teachers' professional development has been argued as vital to the success of EFL teachers' mission (Duta & Rafaila, 2014; Dewaele et al.2018).

Strong positive relationship exists between effective professional development experiences for teachers and improved student outcomes. Spelman and Rohlwing (2013) emphasized,

“highly qualified, effective teachers are the most powerful factor in increasing student achievement” (p. 155). Thus, it is vital for schools and universities to provide EFL teachers with quality professional growth opportunities. Rather, EFL educators should be able to identify their professional performance learning needs so as to be able to make progress in improving their performance and teaching practice. Similarly, Bouwma–Gearhart (2012) highlighted that in teachers’ professional development, there is no such a thing as “one size fits all.” However, EFL teachers need to be able to assess their own professional performance needs in order to pursue quality and meaningful professional development opportunities and activities. Additionally, Patti et al. (2012) pointed out that a professional development opportunity “anchored in compassion versus compliance has a greater probability of promoting desired, sustainable change in attitudes and behaviors” (p. 265).

In the same line, El–Bilawi and Nasser (2017) stated that PD programs accomplishing the goals of the educational institutions in Egypt is vital for improving education. However, PD programs and trainings should attain the educational organizational goals, as well as address the needs of EFL teachers and in order to enable them to effectually communicate with their students and improve students’ outcomes, and

therefore, improve Egyptian education. Knight and his research team at University of Kansas disclosed that for PD programs to be effective and productive, they should be grounded in seven key principles, which are as follows: “equality, choice, voice, dialogue, reflection, praxis, and reciprocity” (Knight, 2013, p.21). Thus, EFL effective PD programs should tap into all educational aspects, including the emotional one. In other words, through the development of EFL teachers’ emotional intelligence, EFL teachers are capable of becoming more attuned to their learning and teaching needs; hence, they become more competent self-directed teachers and life-long learners, as well. In order for Egypt to attain sustainable development in education, comprehensive changes should take place to teachers’ pedagogical practices, approaches and knowledge to enhance learners’ outcomes.

### **3. Statement of the problem**

The problem of the current research can be outlined in the lack of knowledge and awareness of the key aspects of emotional intelligence in relation to EFL pedagogical performance. Emotional competence in EFL education is often misunderstood and seldom taught or discussed. Therefore, the present study attempted to enrich Egyptian EFL teachers’ pedagogical performance by enhancing their emotional intelligence skills.

#### **4. Research Question**

To address this problem, the present study attempted to answer the following research question:

What is the effect of emotional intelligence on developing the pedagogical performance of English language teachers?

#### **5. Hypothesis**

The study examined the following hypothesis:

There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the one-group study participants on the pre- and post-test scores on the pre-post administration of the EFL teachers' professional performance observation sheet with regard to the development of the pedagogical domain in favor of the post-test scores.

#### **6. Aim of the Study**

The present study aimed at identifying the impact of developing EI on improving the pedagogical performance of English language teachers in Egypt in regards to the pedagogical aspect.

#### **7. Methodology**

##### **7.1 Design**

This researcher adopted the one-group pre-posttest quasi-experimental design. Quasi-experimental design is favorable for educational research where "randomness is sometimes – either impossible or impractical" (Leedy & Ormond, 2013, p.226 – 227).

## **7.2 Participants**

The participants were 17 volunteers Egyptian teachers, who are currently teaching English in the Ministry of Education at private and public governmental schools. The participants' age was between 26 and 46 years old. They came from five governorates in Egypt. They all have been teaching English as a foreign language for preparatory and secondary school students. Their students' age ranged between 12 to 17 years old. In addition, the number of students in their classes ranged between 25 to 55 students per class. Furthermore, the participants teaching experience ranged between 5 to 23 years.

## **7.3 Setting of the Study**

The experiment was conducted entirely online. "Zoom Cloud Meetings" was used by the researcher to conduct the 11 training-sessions. In addition, teacher trainees used the same online platform to deliver their teaching demonstrations in the pre and post treatment. This context provided a number of features that made it an effective alternate to the traditional classroom.

## **7.4 Procedures**

The experimental part of the study included a pre-post lesson demonstration and online training sessions as illustrated in Table 1 below along with the time frame, at which they were carried

out. Voluntary and informed consent of all teacher–trainees was obtained.

**Table (1) Phases of the Experimental Part of the Research**

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
<b>Name of the Phase</b>	Pre–Treatment	Treatment	Post–Treatment
<b>Instrument Used</b>	Lesson Demonstration 1	Professional Performance Development Training Sessions	Lesson Demonstration2
	Pre–Observation Sheet		Post–Observation Sheet
<b>Time Frame</b>	May 2022	June and July, 2022	August 2022

### 7.5 Instruments

The observation sheet was designed by the researcher in order to record the overall professional teaching performance observed in an English language teacher’s demo in relation to emotional intelligence skills. The overall score was used as an indicator of the teacher’s understanding and application of the necessary knowledge and needed skills related to emotional intelligence in regard to EFL teaching.

The observation sheet consisted of 10 items measuring the pedagogical domain of professional performance in relation to EI

skills. Each item had 5 levels of performance. 1: Unsatisfactory, 2: Developing, 3: Satisfactory, 4: Competent, 5: Outstanding.

### **7.5.1 Piloting the Observation sheet**

The observation sheet was piloted on a group of 15 EFL teachers in primary and preparatory schools in Egypt to calculate the validity and reliability of this instrument. To calculate the internal consistency, the correlation coefficient was calculated, where  $R \geq 0.63$ . Moreover, to calculate the reliability coefficient of the observation sheet, Cronbach's Alpha Formula was used. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient value = 0.93, which is an acceptable and high value. In addition, inter-rater reliability was used to validate the reliability of the instrument. The researcher and another observer rated the teachers' demos using the observation sheet. The second observer is an EFL instructor and teacher trainer with more than twelve years' experience as an educational manager, teacher trainer and EFL teacher in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. He is a CELTA holder. In addition, he holds a doctorate in Linguistics and Translation, an MA in TEFL, and a train the trainer certificate from Cambridge English. Thus, the reliability of the observation sheet was calculated by calculating the agreement coefficient between the two raters. The percentage of agreement between them was calculated using Cooper's Equation

(Al-Wakeel & Al-Mofty, 2016). The correlation coefficient between the two raters was found = 98%, which is an acceptable percentage reflecting the reliability of the observation sheet. This indicated the accuracy and reliability of the observation sheet as a means of assessing EFL teachers' performance and therefore it is reliable.

## **8. Findings and Discussion**

### **8.1 Verifying the Validity of the Hypothesis**

The null hypothesis of the present study states that there would be no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the the one-group study participants on the pre- and post-test scores on the pre-post administration of the EFL teachers' professional performance observation sheet with respect to the development of the pedagogical domain for professional performance.

To validate this hypothesis, the researcher compared the mean rank scores of the current study participants before the implementation of the training sessions with the mean rank scores of the one-group study participants in the pedagogical domain of professional performance domains after the administration of the EFL professional performance observation sheet. Wilcoxon Test is used to show the significance of differences between the pre-

post administrations of the EFL professional performance observation sheet. Table (3) shows the findings in this respect:

**Table (3): Pre–Post Administration of Observation Sheet of Pedagogical**

Domain	Ranks	Number (N)	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mean		Std. Deviation		Z	Sig.	Effect size
					Pre	Post	Pre	Post			
Pedagogical Domain	Positive Ranks	17	9.00	153.00	8.71	19.53	3.22	1.91	3.638	0.00	1.00
	Negative Ranks	0	0.00	0.00							
	Ties	0	0.00	0.00							
	Total	17									

Table (3) shows that the results of the mean rank scores of the study group participants in the pedagogical domain in the EFL professional performance observation sheet had the following: the positive ranks are 17, the ties are zero, and the negative ranks are zero, which indicates that the mean rank scores of all EFL teachers of the present study (N=17) increased in the post treatment than the pre–treatment in the pedagogical domain of professional performance. No teacher had his/her mean rank scores decreased in comparison to the pre–treatment or equal to it on the EFL Professional Performance observation sheet.

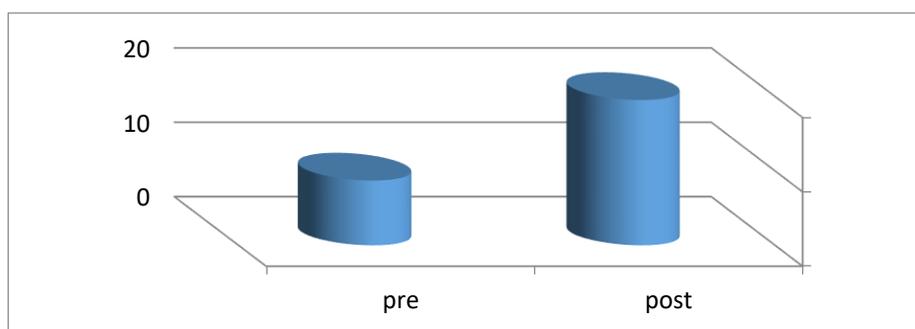
In addition, the mean rank score of the study participants on the post–administration of the EFL Professional Performance

observation sheet in the pedagogical domain is higher than their mean rank score on the pre-administration of the observation sheet in the pedagogical domain. This illustrates that the professional performance of EFL teachers in the pedagogical domain has developed after the implementation of the emotional intelligence training sessions.

Moreover, the level of significance of EFL teachers' professional performance in the pedagogical domain of professional performance is equal to 0.00 (below 0.01). This indicates that there are differences in the mean rank scores of the one-group study participants on the pre-post administration of the EFL Professional Performance observation sheet in the pedagogical domain of professional performance at the level of significance 0.01. Therefore, the above null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Thus, the hypothesis which states, "there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the one-group study participants on the pre-and post-test scores on the pre-post administration of the EFL teachers' professional performance Observation Sheet with regard to the development of the pedagogical domain for professional performance in favour of the post-test scores" has been proven statistically valid.

The following bar graph illustrates the difference between the mean rank scores of pre–post administration of the EFL Professional Performance sheet in the pedagogical domain of professional performance in favour of the post treatment scores.

Fig. (1) The difference between the mean rank scores of the pre and post administration of the EFL Professional Performance observation sheet in the pedagogical domain



The result of the effect size on developing the professional performance of EFL teachers in the pedagogical domain is equal to 1. This indicates that the proposed training based on emotional intelligence has a very strong effect on developing all the pedagogical domain of professional performance of EFL teacher–trainees of the current study.

In conclusion, English language teacher’s trainees have remarkably improved in their pedagogical performance after attending the training sessions. Teacher–trainees showed better understanding of the techniques for designing and using online

teaching aids. Moreover, they demonstrated excellent application of various comprehensive assessment techniques to monitor students' performance throughout the lesson. Finally, after the training sessions, teacher–trainees were able to provide positive and constructive feedback with opportunities for students to correct themselves.

## **9. Conclusions**

To conclude, the results of the current study consolidate the main finding of this research, which demonstrates a strong positive correlation between enhancing Egyptian EFL teachers' emotional intelligence and the development of their professional performance in the pedagogical domain. Comparing the findings of the current study with previous research results, the findings concurs with Valente's et al. (2020) assertion that teachers who tended to have higher levels of emotional intelligence reported higher levels of instructional and teaching effectiveness.

### **9.1 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the current study, a number of recommendations have been suggested:

- There is a need to revise and restructure EFL professional development programs and trainings, in order to promote emotional learning in their agendas.

- Teachers should pay more attention to students' non-verbal communication in order to understand their own emotions and help them accurately express them.
- Curriculum designers and policy makers should collaborate with EFL teachers in designing and selecting the taught curricula based on Egyptian EFL students' needs.

### 9.2 Suggestions for future research

In the light of the results of the current study, researchers may consider the following suggestions for further research:

- Determining the gender differences between Egyptian EFL teachers with regard to their emotional competence level and its effect on their pedagogical performance.
- Replicating the study on Egyptian EFL university teachers.
- Exploring the effect of developing Egyptian school principals' emotional intelligence on teacher-principal relationship.

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