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A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AND META-ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHING COMPETENCE AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Abstract

Teaching competence and emotional intelligence have become an important topic of study in the field of educational psychology and teacher development. This meta-analysis aims to examine the relationship between Teaching Competence and Emotional Intelligence. Employing systematic literature review 31 empirical studies were included. The relationship between teaching competence and emotional intelligence was investigated with the help of a random-effects model which revealed the pooled correlation coefficient (r =0.52) indicating a moderate positive association between these variables. There was a high degree of heterogeneity, which led an exploration of the moderating variables. Subgroup analysis indicated that secondary school teachers had the highest relationship while teacher educators and primary teachers had moderate relationships. The 95% prediction interval indicated a significant range in the effect sizes in further studies. The results of this study highlight the significance of emotional intelligence in teacher education programme.

Keywords: *Teaching Competence, Emotional Intelligence, Meta-analysis, Teacher Education*

Introduction

Background and Context: Teaching is essentially a human interaction process that is not limited to mastery of subject matter and pedagogical knowledge. Teaching involves the skill to comprehend, manage, and apply emotions in the proper way, and all these skills are included in the construct of emotional intelligence (Mayer and Salovey, 2016). Emotional intelligence is a competency that has been identified by researchers as a key competency of teachers in the last 20 years, affecting the classroom management and engagement of students as well as the overall teaching performance (Poulou, 2017).

Competence, which is the combined knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to advance learning and growth in cognitive, affective and behavioral areas in students, has received a lot of research in the field of education (Cheng, 2015). The emotional intelligence (EI) which is generally understood as the skill of identifying, comprehending and controlling emotions in oneself and others (Mayer and Salovey, 1997) has also become a potentially significant predictor of teaching competency.

The theoretical concepts of connection between teaching competence and emotional intelligence are based on several frameworks. The pioneering study on emotional intelligence, by Goleman (2006), has pinpointed four fundamental dimensions, which include the self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. All these dimensions relate directly to the effectiveness of the teaching practice: self-conscious teachers are more likely to comprehend their instructional influence, self-contained teachers are more likely to remain calm in difficult classroom scenarios, socially mindful teachers are more likely to establish rapport with students, and teacher competent in relation management create positive classroom environments (Brackett et al., 2012).

Rationale for the Meta-Analysis: Despite the existence of many individual studies that have examined the relationship between teaching competence and emotional intelligence, there has been inconsistencies in the findings of the studies that have been done in different educational settings. Some studies show a high positive correlation (Geetha and Manorama, 2020; r = 0.995), whereas some record insignificant correlations (Shyla, 2014; r = 0.016). Such differences can be due to differences in: (a) operationalization and measurement of teaching competence and emotional intelligence; (b) characteristics of participants (prospective vs. in-service teachers); (c) educational levels taught to; (d) cultural and geographic setting; and (e) methodologies. A quantitative meta-analysis has a number of strengths compared to individual research or narrative reviews. Meta-analysis combines evidence in heterogeneous samples and methods, gives combined effect sizes, measures heterogeneity, and discovers possible moderating variables (Borenstein et al., 2009). The systematic synthesis of correlational evidence of 31 studies presented

in this analysis is a complete evaluation of the relationship between teaching competence and emotional intelligence and a discussion of contextual factors that may clarify the differences in the effects obtained.

Research Objectives: The objectives of this meta-analysis are to:

1. Find out the overall pooled correlation between teaching competence and emotional intelligence across published empirical studies.
2. Examine the magnitude of the correlation between teaching competence and emotional intelligence across teacher subgroups.
3. Analyze the nature and magnitude of heterogeneity in reported correlations.
4. Derive implications of the findings for teacher education, professional development, and educational policy.

Methods

Data Collection: Studies investigating the relationship between teaching competence and emotional intelligence were identified through a literature search of major academic databases and websites (ScienceDirect, Semantic Scholar, ERIC, DOAJ, ResearchGate, Shodhganga, Google Scholar etc.). The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) statement protocol (Moher et al., 2009) has been followed to search and selection of studies. Following search terms were used to search databases: ("teaching competence" OR "teaching competency" OR "teaching competences" OR "teaching competencies" OR "teacher competence") AND ("emotional intelligence"). These terms were systematically combined by using Boolean operators AND/ OR.

Inclusion Criteria

- Empirical studies (quantitative) reporting correlational analysis between teaching competence and emotional intelligence.
- Studies published in English language.
- Studies published in 2015-2024.
- Studies which have adequate statistical data (correlation coefficient value and sample size) to determine effect sizes.
- Studies involving teachers or prospective teachers as participants.

Exclusion Criteria

- Qualitative or Conceptual or theoretical papers.
- Duplicate publications of the same study.
- Studies not accessible through academic databases.

Data Extraction and Coding: A standardized data extraction structure developed to capture:

(a) Study Identification (author, year); (b) Sample Characteristics (sample size (N), participant type); (c) Effect size (Reported correlation coefficient 'r' or sufficient statistics to calculate 'r'); Study characteristics were coded as follows:
Participant Type (Subgroup): Prospective Teachers, Secondary School Teachers, Teacher Educators, Primary Teachers.

Effect Size Calculation: The effect size measure used in this meta-analysis was Pearson correlation coefficients (r). Correlations were transformed to Fisher *z*-scores to normalize the sampling distribution and stabilize variance, a standard procedure in meta-analytical correlational studies (Fisher, 1921). The formula of transformation used was:

$$z = 0.5 \times \ln\left(\frac{1+r}{1-r}\right)$$

where r = the observed correlation coefficient. The transformed standard error of correlation was calculated as:

$$SE(z) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{N-3}}$$

where N represents sample size. After the meta-analytical pooling, the general effect size was back-transformed to the correlation measure (r) to make it interpretable.

Statistical Analysis: Statistical analysis was done using Meta-Essentials, a set of Excel workbooks for meta-analysis developed at Erasmus University Rotterdam. The main analytical tool was a random-effects meta-analytic model, which was selected due to the following reasons: (a) a high level of heterogeneity was expected due to the variation in samples, measurements, and context; (b) random-effects models offer more conservative confidence intervals and explain between-study variation (DerSimonian and Laird, 1986); (c) the findings can be generalized to the overall population of teaching-competence-emotional-intelligence relationships because of the variation that existed in the sampled studies.

Inverse-variance method was used to obtain the pooled effect size (r) and 95% confidence intervals. Heterogeneity was measured by the following: (a) Q-statistic (chi-square test of heterogeneity); (b) I^2 index (proportion of variance attributed to between-study heterogeneity and not sampling error); (c) Tau² (τ^2) and Tau (τ), which are estimated between-study variability of the true effect.

Subgroup analyses were used to test the difference in correlation among teacher types (prospective teacher, secondary school teacher, teacher educator and primary teacher). Mixed-effects models were used that included a participant type as a moderator and tested that the between-subgroup variance was significantly different than zero.

To indicate the range of effect sizes that would occur in similar studies in the future, a prediction interval (PI) was estimated. The prediction interval is also useful in meta-analyses that have a high degree of heterogeneity as they can be used to indicate a range in which about 95 percent of future studies will fall (Higgins and Thompson, 2002).

The analysis of publication bias involved visual analysis of funnel plots and Egger regression test. Even though funnel plot asymmetry may indicate the possible bias, formal statistical test is more rigorous.

Results

Study Identification and Sample Description: The systematic literature review had found 31 studies across diverse geographical context that fit the inclusion criteria. These research works involved 9,791 overall sample. The samples of participants were distinguished in three main categorical groupings, which are prospective teachers (k = 19 studies, n = 5,612), secondary school teachers (k = 8 studies, n = 2,819), teacher educators (k = 2 studies, n = 940), and primary teachers (k = 2 studies, n = 420). Study screening and identification process is presented below-

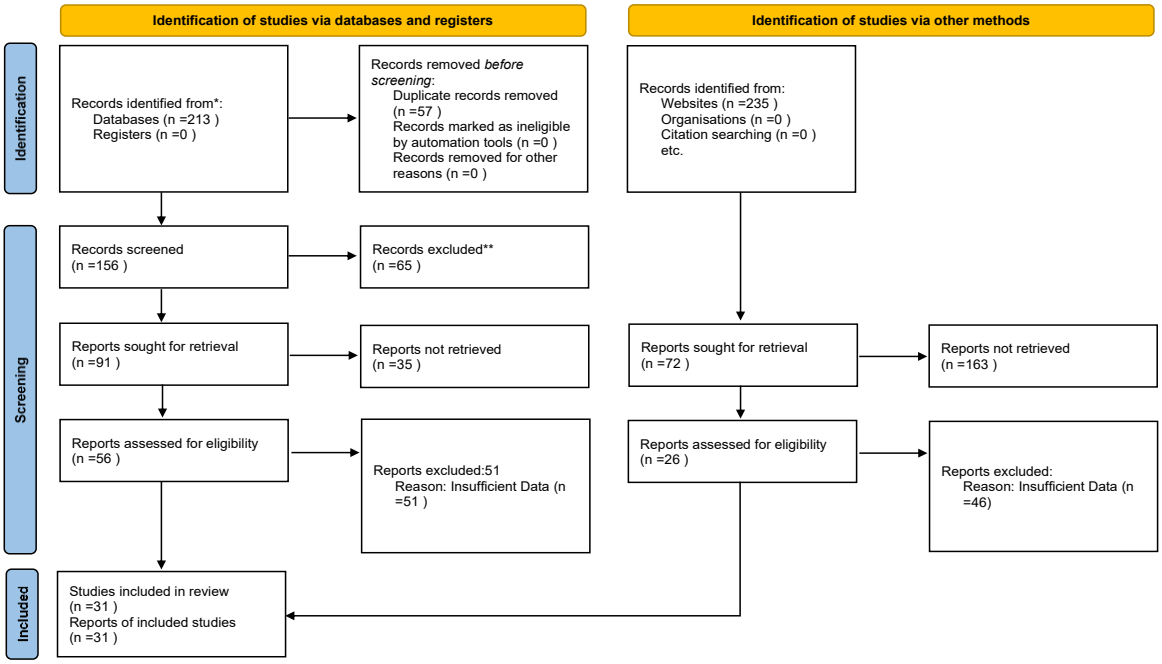

Figure 1: PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for systematic reviews (Page et al., 2021)

Effect Size Analysis: The analysis of effect size of the pooled correlation of teaching competence and emotional intelligence among all the 31 studies are presented below-

Table 1: Meta-analysis with combined effect and heterogeneity

Meta-analysis model	
Model	Random effects model
Confidence level	95%
Presentation	
Sort By	Entry number
Order	Ascending
Combined Effect Size	
Correlation	0.52
Confidence interval LL	0.34
Confidence interval UL	0.65
Prediction interval LL	-0.32
Prediction interval UL	0.90

Z-value	**5.50**
One-tailed p-value	0.000
Two-tailed p-value	0.000
Number of incl. subjects	9791
Number of incl. studies	31
Heterogeneity	
Q	1739.49
p_Q	0.000
I^2	98.28%
T^2 (z)	0.19
T (z)	0.43

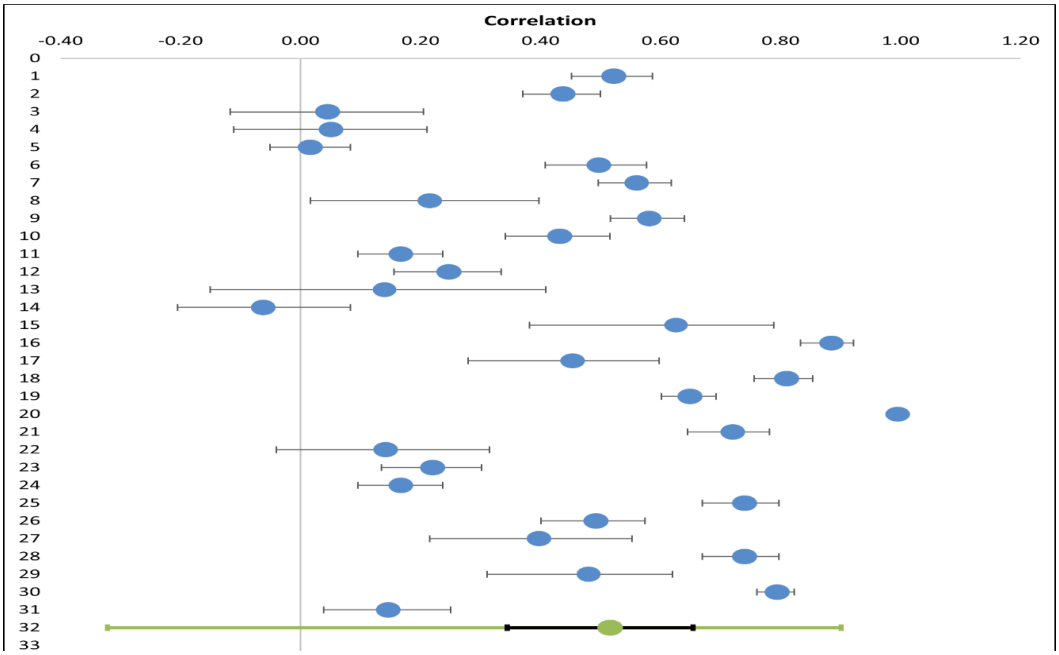

Figure 2: Forest plot for meta-analysis of correlation of Teaching Competence and Emotional Intelligence

Table 1 depicts that the effect is statistically significant (two tailed p value < 0.001) and convey a positive correlation between teaching competence and emotional intelligence with a large effect size (r = 0.52) based on the Cohen conventions (Cohen, 1988). This correlation is significantly more than zero and it is also significant even after considering sampling variability. The model explain 27% of the teaching competence variance ($R^2 = 0.27$), which is a large effect based on Cohen (1988). This implies that emotional intelligence can be a substantive predictor, but the rest of the variation is explained by other variables.

Heterogeneity Analysis: There was a high level of heterogeneity in the effect sizes distributions. The Q-statistic was very large ($p< 0.001$) and this means that the difference between heterogeneity and that which would be due to sampling error is very large (Higgins and Thompson, 2002). $I^2 = 98.28\%$ implies that 98.28% of observed variation in effect sizes is due to true between-study differences and not sampling error, which is very high (Huedo-Medina et al., 2006; Borenstein et al., 2023). Tau (τ=0.43) is the standard deviation of the actual effect distribution, which implies that there is a significant difference in how the true correlations vary between studies (Borenstein et al., 2023). An I^2 of 98.28% is used to denote that the real correlations differ significantly among studies (Higgins and Thompson, 2002). The heterogeneity is not surprising since research was diverse in EI measures, teaching tests, population, contexts, and quality/size (Higgins et al., 2025).

Prediction Interval: Since the heterogeneity was significant, a 95% prediction interval was obtained to describe the distribution of the expected future effect sizes (IntHout et al., 2016).

Prediction Interval: $r = -0.32$ to 0.90

This large range shows that future research on the relationship between teaching competence and emotional intelligence can have correlations between weak negative to strong positive. A broad range of prediction indicates that contextual, methodological, and individual factors can have a significant moderating effect on this relationship (IntHout et al., 2016).

Subgroup Analysis: Meta-regression with participant type as between-groups moderator was carried out in order to explore possible sources of heterogeneity.

Subgroup name	Correlation	CI Lower limit	CI Upper limit	Weight	Q	p_Q	I^2	T^2	T	PI LL	PI UL
Primary Teacher	0.38	-0.16	0.74	0.06%	27.02	0.00	0.93	0.06	0.24	-0.65	0.92
Prospective Teacher	0.48	0.32	0.61	0.12%	833.89	0.00	0.98	0.15	0.39	-0.31	0.88
Secondary School Teacher	0.68	-0.16	0.95	0.01%	860.06	0.00	0.99	0.51	0.72	-0.83	0.99
Teacher Educator	0.44	0.40	0.47	99.81%	0.01	0.92	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.40	0.47

Table 2: Subgroup Analysis of Pooled Correlations by Type of Participant

The strongest pooled correlation was found with Secondary School Teachers (r = 0.68), and 8 studies indicated the strongest correlation between teaching competence and emotional intelligence in this cohort. The 19 studies (Prospective Teachers) showed a moderate correlation (r= 0.48) and significant within-subgroup heterogeneity (I^2 = 98%), meaning that the relationship varies across pre-service teacher education environments. The moderate correlation (r = 0.44) with low heterogeneity (I^2 = 0%) between Teacher Educators was observed but only two studies fell under this subgroup and therefore, the generalizability is limited. Primary Teachers had the lowest correlation (r =0.38), once again with a small sample size (k =2 studies).

Between-Subgroup Comparison: Analysis of variance (mixed-effects meta-regression) was used to determine whether the differences between subgroups were statistically significant:

Analysis of variance	Sum of squares (Q*)	df	p
Between / Model	2.17	3	0.537
Within / Residual	31.56	27	0.249
Total	33.73	30	0.292
Pseudo R^2	6.45%		

Table 3: Analysis of Variance

Pseudo R^2 = 0.0645 (6.45 percent of heterogeneity due to subgroup membership)

The between-subgroup comparison did not reach the significant value (p=0.537), which means that the differences in the sizes of the effects among the categories of the teacher are not statistically different, even though the differences in the numbers were not negligible (ranging between r=0.378 and r=0.675). This pseudo-R^2 = 0.0645 indicates that the heterogeneity by subgroup membership can only be attributed to other factors (e.g., measurement methodology, study quality) as it only explains a total of 6.45 per cent of the heterogeneity.

Publication Bias Assessment

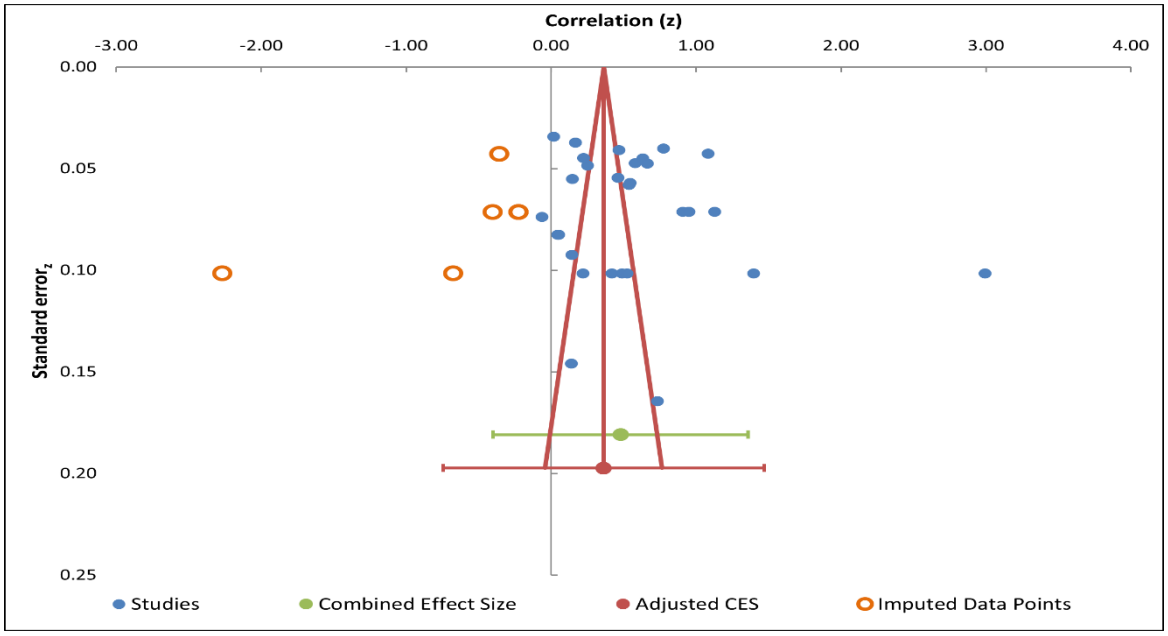

Figure 3: Funnel Plot for Publication Bias Assessment

Egger's Linear Regression Test (Egger et al., 1997)

Egger Regression				
	Estimate	SE	CI LL	CI UL
Intercept	5.78	3.70	-1.78	13.33
Slope	0.17	0.21	-0.25	0.60
t test	1.56			
p-value	0.13			

Table 4: Egger's Linear Regression Test

The Egger regression intercept (p=0.129) was not statistically significant and, therefore, did not provide any data to indicate the existence of publication bias. The insignificant value of the intercept means that smaller studies do not consistently report larger effect sizes than their larger counterparts, which would otherwise have identified selective reporting of positive results.

Begg & Mazumdar Rank Correlation Test (Begg & Mazumdar, 1994)

Begg & Mazumdar	
Δ_{x-y}	70
Kendall's Tau a	0.15
z-value	1.19
p_z	0.234

Table 5: Begg & Mazumdar Rank Correlation Test

The Begg Mazumdar test (p 0.234) was also not significant, which further supports the inability to identify any publication bias.

Trim-and-Fill Analysis (Duval & Tweedie, 2000)

Trim and Fill	On
Estimator for missing studies	Leftmost Run/Rightmost Run
Search from mean	Left
Number of imputed studies	6

Table 6: Trim-and-Fill Analysis

The trim-and-fill process approximated that six studies could be missing on the left side of the distribution- the ones with small non-significant effects. By including these hypothetical studies, the adjusted effect size (z= 0.362, r= 0.347) has been statistically significant and has maintained a magnitude comparable to the initial observation. This strong adaptability illustrates that despite the possible publication bias the positive relationship that exists between emotional intelligence (EI) and teaching competency remains.

Rosenthal Failsafe-N (Rosenthal, 1979)

Failsafe-N = 26,555

The implication of this value is that 26,555 unpublished null studies (with z=0 would be needed to lower the overall statistical significance of p<0.001 to the traditional level of p=0.05). This astronomically significant number provides a conclusive data that the observed associations are not weak to publication biasness. All this is even in the event that a large collection of null studies had not been reported to the file drawer (unpublished research).

Publication Bias Conclusion: Multiple independent sources of evidence (Egger et al., 1997; Begg and Mazumdar, 1994; Duval and Tweedie, 2000; Rosenthal, 1979) all point to the insignificance of publication bias in this meta-analysis. It concludes that emotional intelligence is related to the competency of teaching seems sound and it would be hard to attribute it to the selectivity of reporting or publication processes.

Discussion

Findings: following key findings revealed from this Meta-analysis –

1. The outcome is statistically significant (two-tailed $p < 0.001$) and indicates a positive correlation between teaching competence and emotional intelligence with the large effect size ($r = 0.52$) according to Cohen's conventions (Cohen, 1988), which offers robust support that teachers who possess higher emotional intelligence are more likely to show high teaching competence.
2. Emotional intelligence explains 27% of the variation in teaching competence ($R^2 = 0.27$), which is a significant impact based on the standards Cohen (1988) sets in behavioral research. Therefore, emotional intelligence is a substantive predictor of teaching competence, but there are other variables that can account for the rest of the variation.
3. The teachers of secondary schools revealed the strongest emotional intelligence-teaching competence correlation, and the prospective teachers revealed an average correlation with a high heterogeneity. Weaker associations were found in teacher educators and primary teachers because they had limited samples.
4. The heterogeneity statistics suggest that there is a significant difference in the true correlations of the studies, which is probably caused by the differences in measures of EI, teaching competence, population of participants, study conditions etc.
5. The Pseudo R^2 can only explain 6.45 percent of the total heterogeneity through subgroup membership that implies that there are other moderating variables that cause most of the observed variance.
6. Wide Prediction interval suggests that future research can possibly reveal weak negative to very strong positive relationships between emotional intelligence and teaching competence, depending on the moderating variables that were not fully captured by the categorization of subgroups that were used.

7. There was no indication of publication bias. The relationship between emotional intelligence and teaching competence also seems to be strong and not a result of selective reporting.

Theoretical Implications: The findings are in line with contemporary theories of educational psychology which places emotional intelligence as a core component of the teaching competence. The relationship could be explained by a number of theoretical mechanisms:

1. **Self-Regulation and Classroom Management:** Teachers with high level of emotional intelligence are able to regulate their own emotional reactions to the challenges in the classroom (Gross & John, 2003), and thus be able to control their own emotions during disruptive situations, handle conflict in a positive way, and serve as an example of emotional competence to students. This self-regulatory skill allows bringing about of orderly psychologically safe classroom settings- the requirement of successful teaching (Wang, Haertel, and Walberg, 1990).
2. **Social Awareness and Relationship Quality:** Emotional intelligence deals with empathy and social awareness the capacity to identify and understand the emotional conditions and attitudes of students (Granell-, 2010). Teachers who are proficient in such dimensions develop rapport with the students, create a sense of belongingness, and develop positive student teacher relationships. There is always empirical evidence that indicates that the quality of relationships is a predictor of student engagement, motivation as well as of learning outcomes (Pianta, Hamre, and Allen, 2012).
3. **Motivation and Inspiration:** The emotional expression of teachers has an impact on student motivation and classroom activities. Teachers who have well developed emotional intelligence are able to motivate students because of their sincere enthusiasm, flexibility and sensitivity to the emotional and learning requirements of students (Zahn -Waxler, Cole, Welsh, and Fox, 1995).
4. **Reflection and Metacognition:** Self-awareness is one of the central aspects of emotional intelligence, which allows teachers to review their practice, understand how their emotions and prejudices influence teaching, and constantly improve their pedagogical strategies. Professional development and adaptive teaching are based on this metacognitive ability (Korthagen and Vasalos, 2005).

Practical and Policy Implications: The findings outline some of the practical implications that are relevant to teacher education programmes and the overall professional development environment:

1. **Integration of Emotional Intelligence in Teacher Education Programs:** The development of emotional-intelligence would provide quantifiable gains when explicitly incorporated. The curriculum must incorporate (a) training of self-awareness to enable the trainees to recognize their emotional patterns, triggers, and biases; (b) self-management training to enable the trainees to learn how to manage their emotions and reduce stress; (c) social-awareness training to enable the trainees to develop a perspective-taking and empathy; and (d) relationship-management training to aid the trainees to resolve conflicts and to build skills to work in teams (Thornton, Peltier, and Medina, 2007).
2. **Emotional Intelligence in Teacher Evaluation:** Current assessment systems are biased towards predicting the content knowledge and teaching methods at the cost of the affective skills. Integrating systematic measures of emotional competence, either by direct observation, through 360-degree feedback or by self-report measures, would enhance responsibility in developing this vital aspect of pedagogical practice**.**
3. **Professional Development Focused on the Emotional Aspect of Teaching:** Training programmes that focus on emotional intelligence, in particular, stress management and burnout prevention interventions, compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma, the development of psychologically safe classroom environments, and the establishment of inclusive relationships with diverse learners will be of significant benefit to in-service teachers.
4. **Selection and Recruitment:** Recruitment body can also think of integrating emotional-intelligence test in the teacher recruitment and selection process and thus identify this competence as an indicator of instructional efficacy.
5. **Well-Being and Retention of Teachers:** Since the emotional requirements of teaching are substantial and the pressure of burnout and attrition grows, the involvement in the emotional-intelligence development of teachers is a strategic project that will improve the wellbeing, job satisfaction, and staff retention (Herman, Hickmon-, and Reinke, 2018).

Conclusion

This meta-analysis concludes with comprehensive quantitative evidence that teaching competence and emotional intelligence are positively correlated. The strength of the correlation is not only significant but also statistically sound, thus supporting the theoretical hypotheses developed based on the current educational psychology and organisational behaviour literature. However, the high level of heterogeneity of the effect sizes suggests that this association cannot be applied across all settings. All the moderators, contextual ones, methodological, and individual, have a significant impact on the strength of the correlation. Subgroup analysis showed that teachers of secondary school are the most strongly associated followed by prospective teachers, teacher educators and primary teachers, which have relatively weak connections.

Emotional Intelligence is a critical aspect of teaching competence that should be included specifically in teacher education curricula, teacher development programmes, and teacher assessment systems. Systematic self-awareness training, emotion-regulation skill development, empathy development and relationship-management training are promising avenues of improving teacher performance and teacher wellbeing by enhancing teachers emotional intelligence. Further studies must attempt to clarify how emotional intelligence has its impact on teaching, analyze cultural and situational moderators, use longitudinal designs that

can separate the temporal dynamics. This kind of work will bring more understanding on how emotional intelligence can be developed purposefully to build pedagogical practice and eventually improve the learning outcomes of students.

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