

BRINGING THE BACKGROUND TO THE FOREGROUND: HOW DOES EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE LOOK LIKE VIS-A-VIS CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PROCESS?

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ABSTRACT: *Classrooms are not only intellectual spaces but also avenues in which social and emotional interactions occur. Filled at different times with enjoyment, fun, and excitement, these can also be filled with anger, fear, and boredom. This paper explores the relationship between emotional competence and classroom management process as perceived by 50 third year BSEd student participants in the Education program, Bulacan State University during the first semester of the school year 2014-2015. A descriptive-survey method was utilized; Pearson r was used to determine the relationship between emotional competence and classroom management process. Data were treated using the SPSS; findings were summarized; then conclusions and recommendations were offered.*

KEYWORDS: Classroom Management, Emotional Competence

INTRODUCTION

Classrooms are undeniably places in which social and emotional interactions occur; these are the places where both students and teachers display their emotional characteristics. In the classroom, connections and interconnections develop. On certain occasions, teachers and students may find themselves involved in highly emotional discussions. There are situations in which students engage in some controversial topics. Students get to the top of their emotions in expressing their arguments. In some other instances, teachers, too, become emotional when they share stories or react to some student misbehaviors. Classrooms that subtly or indirectly exclude certain groups of students tend to be common from the students' perspectives; students have a particularly negative reaction to instructors who fail to acknowledge consequential local or national events. When they reiterate some school rules and policies, they tend to develop a heightened feeling. When misbehaviors persist while discussions are going on, they become agitated then eventually express their emotions. While it is true that emotions are important part of classroom climate, they must be handled properly. Positive emotions may be used in classroom discussions in ways that facilitate learning and improve the classroom environment. On the contrary, negative emotions if not handled properly can hamper learning.

Considering the various demands placed on teachers' shoulders, emotional competence (EC) may be the bedrock of success in teaching. Without a second thought, teaching may be considered as one of the most demanding occupations. Teaching is more emotionally demanding than it has ever been in the past. When students come to schools prepared or unprepared with their assignments, teachers are expected to provide emotionally responsive support to all students. Additionally, they have to cultivate a warm and nurturing classroom atmosphere in order to handle classroom environment. Teacher behaviors, therefore, are important aspect of classroom management process. When teachers fail to manage classroom pressures, the classroom climate deteriorates and students demonstrate lower levels of performance and on-task behaviors (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003). Moreover, as the

classroom climate deteriorates, it can trigger a “burnout cascade” (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009) where teachers may become emotionally exhausted as they try to manage increasingly difficult student behaviors.

Teacher behaviors are associated with positive social and emotional classroom climate and desired student outcomes. A positive classroom climate is one with low levels of conflict and disruptive behavior (Jennings & Greenberg, 2008). In the same way, they disclosed that teachers who are emotionally disturbed are prone to becoming cynical and callous and may also feel they have little to offer or gain from continuing in the service, and so leave the teaching workforce. On the other hand, teachers who are happy with what they do—those with passion stay—and try to maintain classroom climate.

Emotions are conceived as irrational heightened feelings that are sometimes beyond control. Likewise, emotions are complex states of body and mind comprising of physiological, behavioral and cognitive reactions to situations that can be managed or directed (Darling-Hammond, et.al. 2009). Cognitively, people may interpret events as happy or sad, safe or dangerous, exciting or excruciating. Physiologically, a happy feeling elicits satisfaction and pleasure; a bad feeling yields tears and disappointments. In the same way, a safe situation generates protection and comfort and an excruciating event leads to pain while a dangerous situation accounts for an elevated heart beat. Behaviorally, people seek comfort when they are sad; they find solace when confronted with pain; and they look for help when in danger. With the obvious connection among emotions, thoughts and actions, it is important to develop emotional competence of people. People have to realize that emotions can be managed, regulated and controlled. When they know how to be skillful in handling emotions, they may also have the ability to manage their relationships—which is considered very important ability in creating an effective living.

The classroom is no exception. The classroom is replete with emotional experiences where both students and teachers exercise their emotions while lessons are being discussed. However, when emotions are not properly handled, such may lead to academic failure. Emotions can interfere with students’ learning in several ways; including 1) limiting the capacity to balance emotional issues with schoolwork, 2) creating anxiety specifically about schoolwork, and 3) triggering emotional responses to classroom events. Since behavior is contextual and interactive, the choices adults make in responding to students’ behavior are crucial in influencing the choices children make about how they will behave. The more adults can be aware of and manage their own emotional responses to inappropriate behavior, the more likely they are to be able to maintain a calm classroom.

Emotional competence as a broad context is composed of five major competencies namely: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, and relationship management. Emotional competence refers to one’s ability to express his or her feelings or emotions. In the same way, emotional competence is the process of handling the ups and downs of a relationship. This is composed of the following elements: emotional self-awareness, accurate self-awareness and self-confidence. When it comes to the second component, social awareness has empathy, organizational awareness and service orientation elements. The third component, self-management, has these elements: emotional self-control, transparency, adaptability, achievement, initiative and optimism. The fourth and last component of emotional competence which is relationship management has the following elements: developing others, inspirational leadership, change catalyst, influence, conflict management and teamwork and collaboration. According to Becker and colleagues (2014), teachers’ emotions are an important predictor of

students' emotions in class. Additionally, students' mood shapes how teachers' emotions and instructions are perceived. In fact, Jennings and Greenberg (2009) disclosed that supportive teacher–student relationships make a significant contribution to a healthy school and classroom climate, students' connectedness to school, and academic and social-emotional outcomes. When a teacher recognizes and understands students' emotions and the roles they play in the students' behavior, teachers can more effectively respond to students' needs and instill trust and respect.

Emotional competence of teachers is related to classroom management. The concept of classroom management is often used to refer to behavior modification or discipline only — and for good reason. However, classroom management is also viewed as establishing guidelines for behavior and making sure that those guidelines are followed. Classroom teachers are not only concerned about good behavior; classroom management is for creating an environment where student learning will take place. Therefore, effective classroom management process is essential for effective learning.

Learning takes place within a network of social relationships as teachers and students emotionally interact with each other. Classrooms are institutional spaces for communities of learners, including both students and teachers and how they arrange classroom space. According to Charles (2008), it is construed that classroom management process is composed of the following: specifying desirable classroom conditions; analyzing existing classroom conditions; selecting and utilizing managerial strategies; and assessing managerial effectiveness.

Generally speaking, when teachers use a variety of skills and techniques to keep students organized, orderly, focused, attentive, on task, and academically productive during a class, there must be some sort of effective classroom management process. When classroom-management strategies are used effectively, teachers minimize the behaviors that impede learning for students.

With these classroom management processes, the researcher wanted to explore the role of emotions in classroom management process. A considerable research literature supports the significant influence of effective teachers on desirable classroom and student outcomes (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

The paradigm below was utilized for the present study. The first box deals with teachers' emotional competence as perceived by student participants and their relationships to the teachers' classroom management process as viewed by the same participants. Once the relationship was established, educational implications are said to be explained.

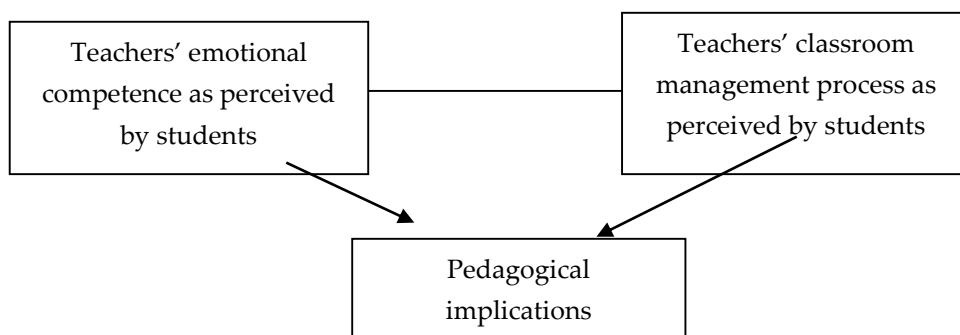


Figure 1 Conceptual Model of the Study

H0= There is no significant relationship between the teachers' emotional competence and their classroom management process.

Specifically, the following ancillary problems were answered:

1. How may the teachers' emotional competence as perceived by students be described in terms of:
 - 1.1 Self-awareness;
 - 1.2 Self-management;
 - 1.3 Social-awareness; and
 - 1.4 Social/Relationship management?
2. How may the teachers' classroom management process as perceived by students be described in relation to:
 - 2.1 Specifying desirable classroom conditions;
 - 2.2 Analyzing existing classroom conditions;
 - 2.3 Selecting and utilizing managerial strategies; and
 - 2.4 Assessing managerial effectiveness?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the teachers' emotional competence and their classroom management process?
4. What implications may be drawn from the teachers' emotional competence and their classroom management process?

METHOD

Participants

The participants used in this study included 50 students from five different major areas in the College of Education of Bulacan State University during the 1st semester of school year 2014-2015). Ten students from five areas of specialization namely: English, Math, Science, Filipino, and Social Studies were taken as participants. There were a total of 30 students for pilot testing: 10 each were taken from three remaining areas of specialization: Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE), Music, Arts, Physical Education and Health (MAPEH), and Computer.

Instruments

The instruments for data collection were the researcher-made questionnaire and interview protocols. The questionnaire is composed of two parts: one for, the other one is for classroom management process. For the first part, a total of 72 items were created emotional competence: 4 questions were slated for each item. There are all in all 18 items for 4 different emotional competencies: self-awareness, 3 items; self-management, 6 items; social awareness, 3 items; and relationship management, 6 items. The second part is for classroom management process

that registers a total of 20 items. Five questions were created for each component: 1) specifying desirable classroom conditions; 2) analyzing existing classroom conditions; 3) selecting and utilizing managerial strategies; and 4) assessing managerial effectiveness. In addition, an interview protocol was made to verify the responses expressed in the questionnaire.

Data Collection and Analysis

Items in the questionnaire were modified based on the experts' suggestions after the dry-run had been conducted. Then, the final draft was reproduced for the actual conduct of the study. Questionnaires were distributed to the target participants. The data were gathered, sorted, tallied, tabulated, and analyzed using frequency counts and means to describe the relationship between teachers' emotional competence and their classroom management process.

The researcher used Pearson r (through SPSS) in order to determine the relationship between emotional competence and classroom management process of teachers as perceived by students. Also, z -test was used to test the significance.

To measure the level of relationship, a five-point Likert scale was used.

Mean Numerical rating	Verbal interpretation	Descriptive Equivalent
4.50-5.00	Very Great Extent	High
3.50-4.49	Great Extent	Sufficient
2.50-3.49	Moderate Extent	Fair
1.50-2.49	Less Moderate Extent	Minimal
1.0-1.49	No Extent	Low

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section displays the results and discussions of findings.

Teachers' emotional competence as perceived by students

With regard to self-awareness, a grand mean score of 4.01 was obtained and was interpreted as *Great Extent*. Although all the items got the same verbal interpretation of *Great Extent*, *Accurate self-assessment* got the highest mean score of 4.05. It means that participants perceive that their teachers are aware of their strengths and limitations. Their self-awareness and self-knowledge are important components of emotional competence. Teachers are believed to have sufficient recognition of their emotions. During the interview protocols, they perceived their teachers are very vocal about their strengths; they know exactly who they are in relation to others. Although teachers need to learn how to recognize signs of emotional problems in their students, it is equally important to acknowledge that their own personalities and individual psychological histories have helped shape their attitudes and responses to certain behaviors (Henson, 2002). However, helping students cope with their own behaviors emanate from teachers' personal awareness of themselves, particularly their own emotional processes that occur in the midst of conflict (Richardson & Shupe, 2003). Teachers are sensitive to the different

ways they respond to various behaviors and display them when necessary. Accordingly, increased self-awareness involves a more accurate understanding of how students affect teachers' own emotional processes and behaviors and how such affect students, as well. *Accurate self-assessment* is an important element of self-awareness. It means that students perceived their teachers to reflect on their practice, identifying their own professional strengths and areas of development. Since they reflect on their professional strengths and weaknesses, they become aware of their professional goals for their harmonious relationship with students.

Table 1 likewise shows the teachers' emotional competence as perceived by their students. When it comes to self-management, although all the components received the same verbal interpretation of *Great Extent*, it could be said that of all the items, *Optimism* obtained the highest mean score of 4.20. This only shows that participants perceive that their teachers have sufficient positive frame of mind that when they have problems; they think positively. This is followed by *Adaptability* with a mean score of 4.09. It shows that participants perceive their teachers to be flexible and adaptable to changes. During the cursory interview, participants disclosed that they see their teachers how to manage their emotions. When they are confronted with some kinks, they can easily solve and cope with changes. When they are at the verge of anger, they can sufficiently manage their emotions. They can easily adapt to the existing situations because they show their professionalism. This is supported by Beard, Hoy and Hoy (2010) when they disclosed that teacher sense of academic optimism is individual teachers' beliefs that they can teach effectively, their students can learn, and stakeholders including their parents will support them so the teacher can impose learning. At the school level, this may be interpreted that as collective academic optimism increases, the level of student academic performance may also rise on a higher ground.

Adaptability is next to Optimism. It deals with how teachers assume their roles in the classroom. Additionally, adaptability is the power of teachers to be flexible with the variables in the classroom including academic learning time, space, pace, materials to name a few. Of teachers are show adaptability, they can easily arrange for learning spaces that make it easier to engage students by allowing for the quick and easy configuration of classrooms to facilitate different kinds of activities. This is supported by Mascarenhas, Parsons, and Burrowbridge (2010) when they disclosed that adaptability is a significant component of emotional competence. Adaptability is one of the most important qualities that teachers need to possess. When they receive feedback from their peers or administrators regarding the ways they teach and deal with students, changing their plans and goals in order to accommodate feedback and criticisms may be a daunting task. However, they have to be aware that will always need to be changing their styles. Classroom routines, for example, may be modified if behavior problems arise that interfere with learning. Effective teachers are described as reflective and thoughtfully adaptive; they are characterized as flexible and adaptive to different students and classrooms. In the same line of thought, it is construed that teachers are adaptive in the sense that they adjust teaching to meet students' academic needs (Mascarenhas, Parsons, & Burrowbridge, 2010).

Table 1: Teachers' Emotional Competence

	Mean Scores	Verbal Interpretation
Self-awareness	4.01	Great Extent
1. Emotional self-awareness	3.98	Great Extent
2. Accurate self-assessment	4.05	Great Extent
3. Self-confidence	3.99	Great Extent
Self-management	3.99	Great Extent
1. Emotional self-control	3.81	Great Extent
2. Transparency	3.85	Great Extent
3. Adaptability	4.09	Great Extent
4. Achievement	4.01	Great Extent
5. Initiative	3.97	Great Extent
6. Optimism	4.20	Great Extent
Social awareness	4.11	Great Extent
1. Empathy	4.19	Great Extent
2. Organizational awareness	3.91	Great Extent
3. Service orientation	4.23	Great Extent
Relational management	3.95	Great Extent
1. Developing others	4.01	Great Extent
2. Inspirational leadership	3.90	Great Extent
3. Change catalyst	3.88	Great Extent
4. Influence	4.07	Great Extent
5. Conflict management	3.82	Great Extent
6. Teamwork/Collaboration	4.01	Great Extent
GRAND MEAN	4.02	Great Extent

With regard to social awareness that received an overall mean score of 4.11, the same table reveals that of the three components, *Service orientation* got the highest mean score of 4.23 which is interpreted as *Great Extent*; and that is followed by *Empathy* with a mean score of 4.19 and is also interpreted as *Great Extent*. It means that students perceive their teacher to be sufficient models of service to humanity. They are seen as people willing to serve people. Last in the list is *Organizational awareness* which received the lowest mean score of 3.91 and is also interpreted as *Great Extent*.

There is much to be said about teaching. When students decide to be a part of the academe, they have to embrace the fact that teaching is not a lucrative profession. They have to accept the fact that teachers receive a meager salary compared to other professions such as engineering, medicine and so on. Teaching is a vocation and as such teachers have to serve humanity by way of using service-oriented endeavor. It means that when they are in the classroom, their task is centered on giving service to students. Even if they have to go home but some students still need them, teachers give their time and accommodate their needs. This idea is construed that teaching is a strategy which integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to facilitate learning experiences.

In terms of relational management, which received an overall mean of 3.95, *Influence* obtained the highest mean score of 4.07 and is interpreted as *Great Extent*. This is followed by

Developing others and *Teamwork/collaboration* which obtained the same mean score of 4.01 and is interpreted as *Great Extent*.

There is an old adage by Henry Adams who stated that: “A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.” Indeed, most people understand that teachers are very important in students’ lives. Many teachers do not realize how much they can truly impact their students’ future lives. This impact goes much deeper than the lessons that are being taught in the classrooms. Teachers’ words can either make or unmake students. By encouraging struggling students and showing them how they can achieve more than what they think they can, teachers are believed to have the power to change a student’s career from one of failure to success. This idea receives support from Merrow (2011) when he said that teachers have to provide students with safe places where they can create stimulating and exciting environments for learning. In the same way, it is necessary to motivate students and help them recognize their strengths and weaknesses. Teachers are important role models for students and have a sufficient impact on helping shape, create, support and establish students’ strengths, goals and knowledge.

In terms of *Developing others*, it is evident that teachers intend to develop students in various aspects including cognitive, affective, social, and so on. Teachers are found to develop others in the schools and outside the schools. In the classroom, for example, teachers play the role of facilitators of learning. They do so because they want to develop students’ knowledge and skills. Not only that, they likewise mold their character by way of providing positive attitudes and values (Hansen, 2010). With regard to their co-teachers, they develop mentoring activities that may harness other teachers’ skills and repertoire of pedagogical approaches. They share their knowledge and develop wholesome dialogues with others in relation to improving their craft. Dialogic thinking is a central activity within many professional learning programs (Penlington, 2007). Understanding how and why dialogue works as an effective tool for teacher change becomes an important aspect of teaching.

Teamwork and collaboration go hand in hand with developing others. Team teaching is a form of collaboration and teamwork. Beaten and Simons (2014) stated that five models of team teaching were distinguished: observation, coaching, assistant teaching, equal status and teaming model. Several benefits of teamwork for student teachers are also forwarded (e.g., increased support, professional growth), their mentors (e.g., decreased workload, learning gains), and the learners in their classroom (e.g., increased support, rich lessons). Sorensen (2014) disclosed that teamwork promotes higher-order thinking skills because collaboration requires dialogues that foster deep understanding of the material to be learned.

Teachers’ classroom management process as perceived by students

With regard to teachers’ classroom management process, Analyzing existing conditions got the highest mean score of 4.23 which is interpreted as *Great Extent*. This is followed by Selecting and utilizing managerial strategies that received a mean score of 4.17 and is also interpreted as *Great Extent*. From these data, it can be said that teachers are sufficiently aware of the existing conditions in the classroom. During the cursory interview with students, they said that teachers display a sense of awareness. They also disclosed that during the learning process, when they do collaborative learning, they find their teachers are happy because they are successful in cognitive processing of the material to be learned.

They likewise said that they feel a sense of belongingness and social responsibility when they work in groups. This idea is supported by O'Donnell (2015) when she stated that if there is cooperative or collaborative learning, the learners feel they process both the cognitive and social learning.

Table 2: Teachers' classroom management process as perceived by students

Classroom management process	Mean Score	Verbal Interpretation
Specifying desirable classroom conditions	4.12	Great Extent
Analyzing existing classroom conditions	4.23	Great Extent
Selecting and utilizing managerial strategies	4.17	Great Extent
Assessing managerial effectiveness	4.16	Great Extent
GRAND MEAN	4.17	Great Extent

The same thing happens when teachers feel that some methods do not work, they become flexible by selecting and utilizing managerial strategies. Since they are aware of what methods to utilize when things do not work for students' advantage, teachers do something about it. Sometimes, they provide positive expectations of students. This is similar with Pas, Cash, Debnam and Bradshaw (2015) when they said that teachers provide more learning opportunities so that they that can respond to less disapproval and reactive behavioral management. It is important that teachers use a variety of teaching strategies. In fact, Sun (2015) disclosed that effective strategies control student behavior while nurturing responsibility. In classroom interactions, teachers have to scaffold students as they try to utilize classroom strategies. Engagement is sustained when students structure physical and social contexts to support learning and promote prosocial behavior (Wallace, Sung & Williams, 2014).

Relationship between the teachers' emotional competence and their classroom management process

Data show that all measures of emotional competence are significantly correlated with classroom management process as supported by the obtained coefficients with associated probability values which are less than the level of significance at 0.01. For the first component of emotional competence, the computed coefficients suggest a low positive relationship between self-awareness and the following classroom management processes: selecting and utilizing managerial strategies ($r = 0.486$), assessing managerial effectiveness ($r = 0.442$), analyzing classroom conditions ($r = 0.375$) and specifying classroom conditions ($r = 0.372$). It means that as teachers' self-awareness increases, their level of classroom management processes also increase.

With regard to the second component of emotional competence, self-management, data show that classroom management processes: selecting and utilizing managerial strategies ($r = 0.595$); analyzing existing classroom conditions ($r = 0.579$); and specifying desirable classroom conditions ($r = 0.523$) reflect a moderate positive correlation while assessing managerial effectiveness ($r = 0.481$) registers a low positive correlation. With these, it can be said that teachers' self-management influences the selection and utilization of managerial strategies,

analysis of existing classroom conditions and specification of classroom conditions. Teachers can handle properly the selection and utilization of strategies, specification and analysis of the classroom present condition when some emotional problems arise.

Table 3: Relationship between the teachers' emotional competence and their classroom management process

Emotional Competence	Classroom Management Process			
	Specifying desirable classroom conditions	Analyzing existing classroom conditions	Selecting and utilizing managerial strategies	Assessing managerial effectiveness
Self-awareness Pearson r p- value	0.372 0.008 Highly Significant	0.375 0.007 Highly Significant	0.486 .000 Highly Significant	0.442 0.001 Highly Significant
Self-management Person r p- value	0.523 0.000 Highly Significant	0.579 0.000 Highly Significant	0.595 0.000 Highly Significant	0.481 0.000 Highly Significant
Social Awareness Pearson r p-value	0.522 0.000 Highly Significant	0.496 0.000 Highly Significant	0.637 0.000 Highly Significant	0.573 0.000 Highly Significant
Social/Relationship Management Pearson r p-value	0.550 0.000 Highly Significant	0.544 0.000 Highly Significant	0.590 0.000 Highly Significant	0.546 0.000 Highly Significant

Between social awareness and classroom management processes, only analyzing existing classroom conditions ($r = 0.496$) obtained a low positive correlation. However, a positive correlation is registered between social awareness and classroom management processes such as selecting and utilizing managerial strategies ($r = 0.637$); assessing managerial effectiveness ($r = 0.573$) and specifying desirable classroom conditions ($r = 0.522$). Based on the data, it can be said that as the teachers' social awareness increases, their level of classroom management processes such as selecting and utilizing managerial strategies, assessing managerial effectiveness and specifying desirable classroom conditions is also on the rise. It only manifests that teachers are socially aware of their job to select and utilize strategies, assess their effectiveness and specify desirable classroom conditions when there are problems with students' emotions.

The last component of emotional competence is social/relationship management. Between this component and all the items of classroom management processes: selecting and utilizing managerial strategies ($r = 0.590$); specifying desirable classroom conditions ($r = 0.550$);

assessing managerial effectiveness ($r = 0.546$); and analyzing existing classroom conditions ($r = 0.544$) register a moderate positive correlation. Data reveal that social/relationship management moderately influences classroom management processes. It means that when the level of teachers' relationship management is high, also classroom management processes are high. Teachers are perceived not only to be role models in the schools and community but also role models by way of developing dialogues to promote higher-order skills. This is supported by Sorensen in 2014 when he said that teamwork promotes higher order thinking skills.

Pedagogical Implications

Students experience the classroom as not just an intellectual space, but also as a social, emotional, and physical environment. Filled at different times with enjoyment, fun, and excitement, these can also be filled with anger, fear, and boredom. When teachers portray negative emotions which may implicitly marginalize classrooms, such may have a negative effect on students' motivation for cognitive development. Emotions are construed important in the classroom. It is therefore important for teachers to create a positive, emotionally safe classroom environment to provide for the optimal learning of students.

The skills of teachers in working with emotional information and in regulating their own and their students' emotion impact upon what and how students learn in the classrooms. Therefore, it may be imperative for the College of Education to formulate programs which may be integrated into its three-year development plans other programs specifically related to managing emotions and harnessing their classroom management strategies.

Conclusions and Future Research Directions

Of the four components of teachers' emotional competence, social awareness rises above. A hallmark of effective teaching is reflected in the ability to sufficiently manage emotions and to implement effective coping strategies during management process. Though professional development programs most often focus on core teaching competencies, a plethora of factors enhancing social awareness have largely been attributed to emotionally laden characteristics. Social awareness appears to provide the foundation for enhancing emotional competence. Therefore, the researcher is compelled to reject the null hypothesis. For this reason programs that focus on social awareness along with the other components of emotional competence may be considered in creating college programs. Classroom management process, especially analyzing existing classroom conditions, is influenced by teachers' emotional competence. In the same way, the increasing demands on teachers' intellectual and emotional resources are linked to increased classroom management processes. Teachers' emotions seem to have the potential power to affect teachers' classroom management procedures. Several teachers have not received sufficient training to recognize how they affect their emotional interactions with students. For future research directions, interested researchers may consider other variables (such as self-efficacy) to explore their roles in classroom management processes.

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