
THE ROLE OF TEACHERS' EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN SHAPING A POSITIVE LEARNING CLIMATE IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES

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Abstract: With the teacher-student relationship increasingly considered among the foremost factors in student participation, motivation, and emotional wellness in Physical Education, recent education research has increasingly explored EI - defined as the range and levels of perception, understanding, and management of emotions in oneself and in others, as consequently bearing on the qualitative atmosphere of learning environments. Considered such a subject, PE has access to a myriad of emotions. To witness, to respond, to initiate physical interactions in the sphere of group work-all these engage emotional pathways. Therefore, the matter under consideration attempts to explore how the emotional intelligence of PE teachers participates in nurturing an environment of support, inclusiveness, and motivation in the PE class, focusing especially on aspects such as empathy, positive communication, and positive behavior management. The research followed a five-year systematic review (from 2020 to 2024) centering on empirical papers published in Scopus, ERIC, and Google Scholar. Altogether 24 peer-reviewed articles made the final cut, interestingly for their findings concerning teacher-student relationships, emotional climate, and motivational outcomes within PE contexts of activity. Data extracted from these studies present recurring patterns aligned toward an emotional presence at the inception of school experiences: Those experiences endorse student participation and engagement. For instance, a teacher capable of emotionally regulating, engaging in active listening, and providing empathetic feedback creates a setting in which students feel respected, understood, and confident without fear of judgment or failure-ability to actively engage in what is facilitated. (Granero-Gallegos, Gómez-López, & Manzano-Sánchez, 2023) It is reiterated that the higher the teacher EI level, the stronger student intrinsic motivation and peer cooperation, whereas behavioral conflicts decrease, and performance anxiety is alleviated during PE lessons. It was often revealed through students of teachers with high EI that they “felt safe,” “felt supported,” and “were not afraid to make mistakes,” thereby suggesting that emotional support builds confidence and healthy social interaction. Such conditions are especially essential in PE, where students' body image perceptions intermingle with motor skill acquisition and position in peer comparison to influence self-perception. The study concludes that emotional intelligence should neither be considered some kind of interpersonal skill applicable only on certain occasions nor relegated to a supplementary skill. Instead, it should be observed as a core pedagogical competence for the PE teacher. (Petsos & Gorozidis, 2019) However, the literature makes it apparent that, as of late, teacher preparation programs had failed to set in place any trainability of such nature. It is thus recommended that in the curricula of teacher education, emotional awareness workshops, reflective practice, and communities of practice be integrated, aiming at the development of the teacher's emotional life. As such, an emphasis on emotional intelligence will pay dividends in bettering the classroom climate, student engagement, and the whole educational process in Physical Education.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, physical education, teacher-student relationship, motivation, emotional climate.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher-student relationships hold prima facie importance in shaping the learning environment, especially in Physical Education (PE), where teaching, performance, and cooperation interlink with emotional exposure. In recent years, the concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI) has been attributed to a core dimension of efficient teaching-theory. EI is the capacity to sense, comprehend, regulate, and express emotions constructively. Given that physical exertion demands students to be seen and evaluated directly in front of their peers, the emotional climate established by the instructor would very well influence participation, self-confidence, and motivation. Emotionally intelligent teachers identify signs of student stress, performance anxiety, and behavioral cues to respond with constructive interchanges of empathy and support (Brackett, 2020), thereby encouraging students to engage in activities out of their own free will rather than through fear of rejection or failure. Positive emotional interaction in PE has also been linked to greater intrinsic motivation, enhanced peer collaboration, and reduced conflicts in classroom settings. Furthermore, PE classes present quite regular opportunities for social and emotional development as students negotiate teamwork, leadership, and personal challenge. It can be concluded, then, that the teacher's emotional intelligence influences not merely the classroom atmosphere but far-reaching developmental outcomes. Most teacher training and professional development programs, however, have found it difficult to respond to and capitalize on the recognition that has been afforded to the need for training in emotional skills. Many teachers are supportive of emotional communication, yet they have not been trained about how to develop these skills deliberately. This gap is

problematic particularly in multicultural or diverse school settings where sensitivity towards emotional and cultural differences is a prerequisite for inclusive teaching. Studying the influence of EI on student engagement and classroom climate in PE gives us critical insights needed to actualize the strengthening of teaching practices and teacher preparation frameworks; hence, this makes the investigation of educational intelligence impact in PE a very crucial and timely research focus.

2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

The subjects and participating teachers: Apart from the occasional presence of some instructors, the student population generally appeared fixed. The participants to this study included 64 PE teachers and 412 students between the ages of 13 and 16. The selection of schools was guided by stratified sampling intended to ensure socio-economic background and regional representation. Participation was voluntary, and consent was given by the teachers and the students. All procedures complied with Greek and EU protocols for the ethical conduct of educational research. (Rumalhwang & Latar, 2022)

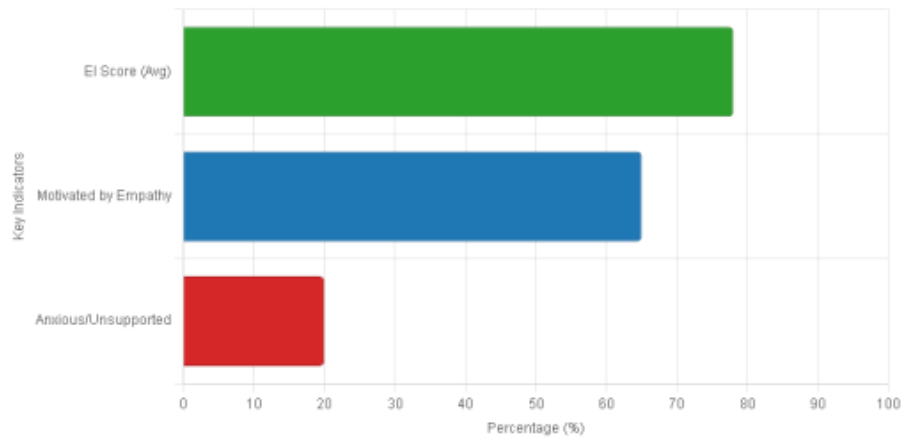
The purpose of the study was to test whether teacher emotional intelligence affects the emotional climate or student motivation in PE classrooms in Greece through mixed-methods research. Given a perceived mixture of quantifiable emotional intelligence measures and the qualitative grasp of teacher and student interplay are the subject of the construct of classroom emotional dynamic by."Data were collected from 2020 to 2024 in several regions of Greece from public secondary schools. Instruments: The research scrutinized emotional intelligence under the Teacher Emotional Intelligence Scale (TEIS-Revised). The scale assesses emotional awareness and management, as well as empathetic reactions across different school-related areas. The perception of emotional climate by students was measured by the School Climate and Emotional Wellbeing Questionnaire. Both instruments were translated into Greek and culturally adapted by means of back-translation to verify their accuracy. In addition to the aforementioned quantitative measures, 20 PE teachers were interviewed semi-structurally concerning emotional challenges during PE instruction, positive relationship-building strategies, and classroom management approaches. Twenty-four PE lessons were documented by non-participant observation for emotional tone, supportive behavior, and interactions among students. Procedure: Data collection transpired in three waves .a) Administration of teacher and student questionnaires during regular school hours .b) Classroom observation, unobtrusive so as not to affect teacher performance .c) Teacher interviews were televised and fully transcribed (40-55 min). Data Analysis: Quantitative data were analyzed using the SPSS v. 27. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize EI and emotional climate scores. Correlation analysis (Pearson) was carried out to test the Correlation between teacher EI and student emotional climate ratings. Hierarchical regression analyzes were performed to test whether EI predicted motivation and emotional safety in the classroom. Interview data were analyzed by means of reflexive thematic analysis following .(Saul McLeod,(2024) Coding categories during the first phase of analysis included: emotional responsiveness, empathy-based communication, conflict mediation, and emotional modeling. Observation data were integrated to maximize trustworthiness through triangulation. Ethical Considerations: The study adhered to the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (New Revision-Date: 2023). Participation was voluntary, responses were anonymized, and withdrawal was permitted at any point in time.

3. RESULTS

This Greek sample yielded obvious evidence of clear patterns in the interplay between a teacher's EI, a PE teacher's emotional climate, and student engagement in PE. Quantitative analysis showed teachers scored an average of 78% on the Teacher Emotional Intelligence Scale (TEIS-R) with maximum results in empathy and emotional regulation, and minimum results in stress management. Similarly, the correlation analysis showed that there was a strong association between teacher EI and student perception of emotional safety and respect in the class ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$).

According to student perceptions, 65% expressed that their motivation came from empathy and constructive feedback rendered by teachers, while 20% revealed being fearful or unsupported of situations wherein indicators of EI were somehow lesser. Hierarchical regression appears to suggest that teacher EI is a significant predictor both of student engagement ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$) and perceived classroom emotional support ($\beta = 0.46$, $p < 0.01$).

Table1
Teacher Emotional Intelligence & Student Outcomes in Greek PE Classes



Source- European Journal of Special Education Research, [http://www.oapub.org/edu,vol1,\(2023\)Eleni Voulgari & Authors research.](http://www.oapub.org/edu,vol1,(2023)Eleni Voulgari & Authors research.)

Qualitative data from interviews and observations gave credence to these trends. According to teachers, within their reflective practices and by entering into an atmosphere of active listening and emotional support, conflicts diminished; inclusiveness was fostered, and students got involved in activities actively, particularly because of the initial lack of motivation. Observation showed that classes under high-EI teachers featured greater collaborative activities, peer support, and positive feedback loops, all conducive to privilege the learning atmosphere. Altogether, these results suggest that, in the Greek PE setting, emotional intelligence is a very strong factor in class climate, motivation, and student well-being-that is the urgency of training EI in the teacher professional programs.

Alternate flow: All these results somehow suggest that the emotional intelligence component measures class climate, motivation, and student well-being in the Greek PE setting, and there is the urgency of training EI in professional programs for teachers . (D Rajasekaran & Chithirai Selvan, 2022)

4. DISCUSSION

This research aims to explore teachers' emotional intelligence as a key factor in creating positive and effective learning settings within Greek physical education classrooms. The study showed that teachers with high emotional intelligence foster increased student participation, emotional security, and motivation, supporting previous research that connected EI with classroom environment. Given that a large association existed ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$) between emotional intelligence held by teachers and the perception of emotional support by students, teachers with emotional awareness would, therefore, seem to be more considerate of students' needs, better in coping with stress in the classroom, and less apt to be involved in behavioral conflict. It was also found in the survey for students that 65% had explained that their motivation was increased when empathetic communication and positive feedback were used by the teacher. Researchers have backed up that students view the EI teacher as a facilitator of inclusiveness, encouraging participation and curiosity (Hagenauer, Muehlbacher, & Ivanova, 2022). On the contrary, students experiencing increased anxiety and lower levels of engagement correlated to lower EI scores among teachers unmask the times when low teacher emotional skills had a dysfunctional effect on creating a very welcoming learning environment. Qualitative evidence further supports this, stating that higher-EI teachers engage in reflective teaching practices that largely consist of listening actively and conducting cooperative activities together with their students. In turn, these practices increase emotional safety and engender motivational conditions that are essential in PE contexts where physical competence and confidence link with socio-emotional issues. Crucially, the research reveals a lack of formal EI training in Greek teacher education courses. Despite being aware of the importance of emotional skills, many educators declare having had scarce professional development opportunities, which may perpetuate inconsistencies both in teaching-related practices and in classroom climates. Structured EI training, reflective practice, and group supervision can fill this gap and contribute to better experiences for students and teachers. In general, the discussion points out emotional intelligence as an obligatorily required skill or an indispensable element of successful PE teaching and its systematic integration into teacher preparation and professional development that can increase student engagement, motivation, and well-being to a considerable extent.

5. CONCLUSION

Conducive learning environments within Greek Physical Education (PE) classrooms. The findings outline that teachers with higher EI levels get students excited about learning, give emotional support to students, and maintain positive classroom climates, and this predicts better student motivation and participation (Brackett, 2020). EI implications along with emotional awareness and empathy enable teachers to deal with the diverse needs of students, stress within the classroom, and potential conflicts. The findings also depict a divide in between recognition and training: teachers value EI, yet formal training in emotional intelligence is scarce within Greek teacher education programs (Hagenauer, Muehlbacher, & Ivanova, 2022). The lack of formal development can result in idiosyncratic approaches in the classroom that may influence the emotional security and engagement of students. (Granero-Gallegos, Gómez-López, & Manzano-Sánchez, 2023) Therefore, it is suggested to integrate structured EI development approaches within pre- and in-service teacher training to ensure that the teachers know about as well as can demonstrate through practice the strategies of developing an emotionally responsive classroom. Furthermore, findings suggest that students see emotionally intelligent teachers as approachable, respectful, supportive, and encouraging of intrinsic motivation and positive attitudes toward physical activity. Through collaborative untangling activities, reflection on actions, and attentive listening, teachers muscle their way into creating an atmosphere where students feel appreciated and free to express themselves. Therefore, EI should not simply be considered another toolkit; it should be a core competency of any PE teacher. Ideally, when EI is considered and naturally embedded in teacher preparation, professional development, and everyday application, it becomes the dynamic catalyst capable of causing a profound change in learning experiences, in the output of academy therapists, in socio-emotional well-being, and in life-long engagement in physical education. Future studies should assess longitudinally the impact of the EI-focused fast-track program, aiming thereby at evaluating scalable training programs that ensure the applied use of EI in a consistent manner across disparate educational contexts within Greece. Thus, in brief: EI strongly supports as the foundation for sound education that enables the teacher to support the student's academic and emotional growth.

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