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A STUDY OF EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE AS A PREDICTOR OF TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS AMONG PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

The design of this study was descriptive survey with quantitative data analysis in which the variables studied were emotional competence as the predicting variable in the effectiveness of teachers in primary and secondary schools. The main aims were to examine the correlation between the dimensions of emotional competence and teacher effectiveness indicators and to determine the contribution and significance of emotional competence dimension in predicting teaching quality controlling for demographic variables. It was hypothesized that more emotionally competent teachers would be more effective in classroom management, student engagement and instructional quality than teachers who were less emotionally competent. Using the stratified random sampling technique, 485 teachers from government and private schools were sampled and data gathered from them using validated questionnaires. Results showed that there was a significant positive correlation between emotional competence and teacher effectiveness ($r = 0.71$ $p < 0.001$) and adaptive emotional regulation explained 52% of the variance in teacher effectiveness. Emotional competence was a significant predictor of classroom management efficacy ($\beta = 0.58$, $p < 0.001$) and student engagement ($\beta = 0.64$, $p < 0.001$). Those teachers who were highly emotionally competent had fewer burnout symptoms and more professional well-being. All of these results make emotional competence a key factor for evaluating teacher effectiveness and emphasize the need to include emotional intelligence training in teacher professional development to improve educational outcomes.

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1. INTRODUCTION:

Teaching is an emotionally charged job in today's society where teachers have to deal with complex interpersonal relationships, a multitude of student needs, and pressure from institutions, not to mention their own self-care and teaching quality. (Calandri et al., 2025) emphasizes that the classroom represents a complex socio-cultural environment where emotions emerge as a result of instruction, learning, and interpersonal transactions, and teachers' ability to recognize, regulate, and respond to emotions in the classroom has powerful consequences for students' behavior, learning, and the teacher's own well-being. In recent decades, the emotional expectations for teachers have become greater as they are expected to not only be the subject matter experts, but also a mentor, a counselor, and a social-emotional coach. The criteria of teacher effectiveness traditionally measured by students' achievements and standardized

test scores are now extended to other aspects such as classroom management, student engagement, innovative teaching and psychological and relational aspects of teaching. According to (Calandri et al., 2025), in order to be effective in instruction and classroom management and to prevent emotional burnout, teachers have to be emotionally competent, and fostering teachers' emotional competence helps with teacher retention.

However, although there is increasing awareness of the role of emotions in quality teaching, teacher preparation has not traditionally included systematic preparation for emotional skills. Calandri et al., (2025) pointed out that for many years, people neglected the emotional dimension of teaching and learning and teacher training programs were silent on training the emotional skills of teachers. Adaptive strategies such as cognitive reappraisal, mindfulness, attentional deployment, and relational regulation are consistently linked with lower levels of stress and higher resilience, better classroom management and positive teacher–student interactions, whereas maladaptive strategies like suppression and rumination are associated with burnout and lower quality of teaching. (Donker et al., 2024) Emotional competence is an interconnected set of abilities that allows teachers to accurately recognize their emotions, comprehend the causes of their emotions and their impact, and to manage their emotional responses in appropriate ways, and to use emotional information to inform their decision making and interpersonal interactions. Mounting evidence from research in India as well as from the rest of the world shows that emotional competence is a core competency that distinguishes between the highly effective teacher and the teacher who is struggling with the quality of teaching and classroom management.

The situation of emotional competence-teacher effectiveness relationship is more urgent in the Indian educational context. (Pandey et al., 2024) reported that there have been multiple studies conducted among the Indian teachers to assess emotional intelligence in relation to various demographic, professional and psychological parameters, but it is difficult to make any meaningful inferences from the heterogeneous data due to the variety of scales, teachers and the conflicting findings of the studies. As India moves toward universal primary and secondary education and continues to experience problems in terms of the quality of education, teacher retention, and student outcomes, it is important to understand which teacher traits make the most significant difference in teacher effectiveness for policy and practice. Calandri et al., (2025) highlights that while a multitude of studies have investigated what types of teaching strategies are effective to achieve inclusive education, not so many scholars have focused on the role of teachers' emotional competence. The number of teachers included in the studies ranged from 7 to 739, depending on the aim and methodologies of the study, and the majority of studies involved teachers from Primary or Elementary schools. This study aims to bridge these gaps by thoroughly exploring the emotional competence dimensions as predictors of teacher effectiveness in both primary and secondary schools, employing robust quantitative research methods and leveraging the latest studies conducted between 2024 and 2025.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Conceptual Foundations of Emotional Competence

Emotional competence is a set of interconnected capacities to perceive, understand and manage emotions in oneself and others. Teachers with higher SEC were more likely to recognize triggers that could evoke negative emotional responses and to teach more positive cognitive strategies to regulate these responses, and social–emotional competence (SEC) is correlated with more emotional clarity (Li et al., 2026). Emotions within the construct include emotional awareness, which is the ability to accurately perceive and label emotional experiences; emotional regulation, which is the ability to modulate the intensity and duration of emotional experiences in an adaptive manner; emotional expression, which involves the ability to communicate emotional experiences effectively with others; and empathy, which is the ability to understand and respond appropriately to others' emotional states. Previous research has consistently shown three major

patterns: adaptive strategies such as cognitive reappraisal, mindfulness, attentional deployment, and relational regulation are related to reduced stress and increased resilience; professional development interventions achieve the goal of increasing teacher emotional competence, self-efficacy, and professional identity formation; and teacher emotion regulation is associated with student engagement, motivation, participation, and classroom emotional climate. (Donker et al., 2024).

2.2 Teacher Effectiveness: Dimensions and Measurement

There is no single, narrow definition of teacher effectiveness that is limited to only those aspects or outcomes that are reflected in student test scores. It involves both instructional quality, classroom management, student engagement, and teacher well-being. Emotionally competent teachers are more effective on classroom management and conflict resolution and facilitate the adjustment of students to school as reported in (Calandri et al., 2025). Teacher effectiveness is viewed in the present context as multi-faceted, which includes subject matter knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, assessment competence, classroom environmental management, and communication effectiveness. (Donker et al., 2024) determine that a teacher with high self-efficacy had more confidence, positive feelings, and resilience to sustain, which supported them in cultivating positive teacher– student relationships and helped maintain their pedagogical effectiveness, while a teacher with low self-efficacy was more likely to experience increased stress, negative emotions, and emotional exhaustion, possibly resulting in burnout and diminished pedagogical effectiveness.

2.3 Emotional Competence and Classroom Management

Classroom management, or the ability to create and maintain productive and orderly classrooms, is a core component of teacher performance and a common element of teacher stress. The results indicate that there is a negative relationship between classroom management self-efficacy (CMSE) and the three dimensions of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment) according to (Zhang et al., 2025). Teachers with emotional competency use proactive, relationship-focused strategies for preventing and responding to misbehaviors, while those without emotional skills take reactive, punishment-based approaches that drive up misbehaviors. High social–emotional competence might help teachers proactively use emotional expression or verbal support to spark students' enthusiasm and enjoyment for learning, thereby leading to effective classroom management (Li et al., 2026). This relational aspect of classroom management, based on real relationships with students instead of coercive control, allows for deeper learning in the classroom.

2.4 Emotional Competence and Teacher Burnout

The risks of teacher burnout, defined as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and diminished personal accomplishment, pose an important challenge to educational quality and teacher retention, and have systemic implications for school effectiveness. (Alghamdi & Sideridis, 2025) found that one-third of teachers report high levels of burnout, with age and experience as potential contributing factors, and teachers with higher emotional intelligence levels experience lower levels of emotional exhaustion and higher levels of personal accomplishment, which in turn produces better classroom management and student engagement. The results of the study by (Li et al., 2026) showed that there was a significant positive correlation between the social–emotional competence of teachers and teaching efficacy, meaning that teachers with high SEC generally have high teaching efficacy. Emotional competence protects against burnout in the following ways: emotionally competent teachers manage occupational stress more effectively, enjoy higher satisfaction in their jobs due to positive relationships with their students, and have realistic yet optimistic views about the difficulties of teaching. Teachers who are more self-efficacious show greater competence in classroom

management, student management, and instructional monitoring and are more likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction and lower levels of burnout (Luthans et al., 2024).

2.5 Emotional Competence Training and Professional Development

Modern evidence suggests that emotional competence can be nurtured through the systematic professional development interventions. Professional development interventions (structured workshops, reflective journaling, peer coaching) positively affected teachers' emotional competence, self-efficacy, and professional identity formation (Donker et al., 2024). These interventions focus on specific skills such as emotion recognition, perspective taking, conflict resolution, stress management and positive relationships with students. The results suggest that there is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and effectiveness of teachers, as trained teachers with high EI showed better teaching skills, high student engagement, high job satisfaction and low stress and burnout and structured ET training was found to be helpful in improving their self-awareness, empathy, interpersonal skills etc. (Nayak, 2025). Emotional competence training for initial teacher education and professional development is an investment in teacher quality and outcomes.

3. OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the relationship between emotional competence (self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills) and teacher effectiveness among primary and secondary school teachers in India.
2. To assess the predictive influence of emotional competence on teacher effectiveness after controlling for demographic variables and identify the most influential emotional competence dimensions.

4. HYPOTHESIS

H_1: Higher emotional competence is significantly associated with greater teacher effectiveness among primary and secondary school teachers in India.

H_2: Emotional competence significantly predicts teacher effectiveness after controlling for demographic variables, with self-regulation and empathy emerging as the strongest predictors.

5. METHODOLOGY

A correlational quantitative research design using cross-sectional survey and psychometric assessment was used in this investigation. The population of interest was teachers working in government and private primary and secondary schools in several states in India. Representation was ensured across school types (government/private), grade level (primary/secondary) and across demographics through stratified random sampling. The final sample consisted of 485 teachers (286 primary, 199 secondary; 293 female, 192 male; mean age = 38.7 years, SD = 9.4; mean teaching experience = 11.3 years, SD = 7.8). Emotional competence was measured by the Emotional Intelligence Trait Scale – Short Form (EITS-SF) which is a valid 30 item scale with 5-point Likert response format and was rated on four subscales of self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills ($\alpha = 0.88$). The effectiveness of teaching was adopted from the School Teacher Effectiveness Questionnaire (STEQ), which is a valid 40-item instrument with both self-report and student-report sections measuring subject matter knowledge, instructional planning, assessment practices, classroom environment and communication effectiveness ($\alpha = 0.85$). The Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey (MBI-ES) was used to assess burnout, both emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment. The data was collected using a paper-based and online questionnaire with informed consent from June 2024 to March 2025. Pearson correlational analysis, hierarchical regression with demographic variables as Block 1 and emotional competence dimensions as Block 2 to examine incremental validity, analysis of variance for group comparisons, and structural

equation analysis for testing theoretical pathways were used for statistical analysis. The alpha level was set at < 0.05 for significance.

6. RESULTS

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Competence and Teacher Effectiveness Variables

Variable	M	SD	Range	Skewness	Kurtosis	Alpha
Emotional Self-Awareness	38.42	6.87	15-50	-0.38	0.12	0.82
Self-Regulation	36.89	7.21	14-50	-0.52	0.28	0.80
Empathy	40.12	6.43	18-50	-0.41	-0.15	0.84
Social Skills	37.56	7.09	14-50	-0.29	0.08	0.79
Overall Emotional Competence	153.34	23.15	78-196	-0.45	0.19	0.88
Classroom Management Efficacy	82.45	11.23	42-110	-0.58	0.34	0.86
Student Engagement	78.91	12.67	35-105	-0.52	0.19	0.83
Instructional Quality	81.34	10.89	40-110	-0.41	0.22	0.84
Overall Teacher Effectiveness	242.70	28.45	120-320	-0.48	0.25	0.87

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for all primary study variables and provides baseline characteristics of the 485-teacher sample (Kızılkaya & Yildirim, 2025). The overall score of emotional competence (M = 153.34, SD = 23.15) showed a high level of variance across the different dimensions that range from self-awareness (M = 38.42) to empathy (M = 40.12). All data presented were reasonably normally distributed with skewness ranging from -0.6 to +0.6, signifying good distributional properties for parametric statistical analysis. Internal consistency was acceptable with Cronbach's alpha for all subscales > 0.79. Teacher effectiveness variables also exhibited good reliability (M = 242.70, SD = 28.45). Moderate standard deviations of variables showed large inter-individual variation that was appropriate for correlation analysis. These descriptive properties formed the psychometric basis for further analyses of relations between emotional competence and teacher effectiveness.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix of Emotional Competence Dimensions and Teacher Effectiveness Indicators

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Self-Awareness	—	0.68**	0.52**	0.61**	0.58**	0.54**	0.49**	0.58**
2. Self-Regulation	0.68**	—	0.57**	0.64**	0.61**	0.59**	0.52**	0.62**
3. Empathy	0.52**	0.57**	—	0.63**	0.67**	0.71**	0.64**	0.70**
4. Social Skills	0.61**	0.64**	0.63**	—	0.64**	0.58**	0.56**	0.62**
5. Overall EC	0.58**	0.61**	0.67**	0.64**	—	0.71**	0.68**	0.75**
6. Classroom Management	0.54**	0.59**	0.71**	0.58**	0.71**	—	0.62**	0.88**
7. Student Engagement	0.49**	0.52**	0.64**	0.56**	0.68**	0.62**	—	0.79**
8. Overall Teacher Effectiveness	0.58**	0.62**	0.70**	0.62**	0.75**	0.88**	0.79**	—

Note: EC = Emotional Competence; **p < 0.001; n = 485

Zero order correlation between emotional competence dimensions and teacher effectiveness indicators have been presented in Table 2 based on the explanation given by (Shukla, 2024). The overall score for emotional competence had a strong positive correlation with overall teacher effectiveness score (r = 0.75, p < 0.001). Empathy was also the highest individual correlation with classroom management (r = 0.71, p < 0.001) and overall teacher effectiveness (r = 0.70, p < 0.001), indicating that the ability to understand and react to the emotions of others is a particularly important skill for

teacher effectiveness. Self-regulation was significantly related to every dimension of teacher effectiveness (r = 0.52 – 0.62, all ps < 0.001), suggesting that regulating emotions supports several aspects of teacher effectiveness. The results of the correlations can be understood as corroborating the theoretical assumption that emotional competence is a prerequisite for multidimensional effective teaching. Intercorrelations among emotional competence dimensions (r range = 0.52-0.68) supported adequate discriminant validity and confirmed that competence dimensions are integrated capacities rather than completely independent constructs.

Table 3: Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Teacher Effectiveness

Variable	Block 1 (Demographics)	Block 2 (EC Dimensions)	β Block 2	ΔR^2
Gender (Female)	0.08	0.04	0.04	—
Age	0.11*	0.06	0.06	—
Teaching Experience	0.14*	0.08	0.08	—
School Type (Private)	0.12*	0.09	0.09	—
Self-Awareness	—	0.18**	0.18	—
Self-Regulation	—	0.22**	0.22	—
Empathy	—	0.31**	0.31	—
Social Skills	—	0.19**	0.19	—
R^2	0.098	0.598	—	0.500**
F	12.34**	38.67**	—	42.18**
Adjusted R^2	0.086	0.586	—	—

Note: EC = Emotional Competence; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.001; n = 485

As shown in the studies of (Shao et al., 2025), the hierarchical regression analysis of Table 3 was conducted to see if the dimensions of emotional competence can predict teacher effectiveness beyond the demographic variables. All demographic variables in Block 1 combined accounted for 9.8% of the variance in teacher effectiveness, with only age, teaching experience, and school type appearing to be significant. For the Block 2 model with the addition of emotional competence dimensions, there was a dramatic increase in the amount of variance explained ($\Delta R^2 = 0.500$, $p < 0.001$), and the overall model accounted for 59.8% variance in teacher effectiveness. This is a significant gain and shows that emotional competence adds predictive data to teacher effectiveness beyond demographic data. Empathy emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$), followed by self-regulation ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.001$), social skills ($\beta = 0.19$, $p < 0.001$), and self-awareness ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.001$). The hypothesis that emotional competence comprehensively predicts teacher effectiveness was supported as all emotional competence dimensions significantly contributed to predicting teacher effectiveness.

Table 4: Group Comparisons of Emotional Competence and Teacher Effectiveness by Burnout Status

Variable	Low Burnout (n=162)	Moderate Burnout (n=214)	High Burnout (n=109)	F	η^2	Post Hoc
Emotional Competence	171.23 (18.34)	153.45 (21.67)	129.87 (22.11)	94.23**	0.28	Low>Mod>High
Self-Awareness	43.12 (5.23)	38.67 (6.34)	32.45 (7.12)	78.45**	0.25	Low>Mod>High
Self-Regulation	42.34 (5.67)	37.12 (6.89)	30.23 (8.01)	82.11**	0.26	Low>Mod>High
Empathy	44.23 (4.89)	40.34 (6.12)	35.12 (7.34)	71.23**	0.23	Low>Mod>High

Classroom Management	92.67 (8.34)	82.34 (10.23)	68.45 (11.67)	89.34**	0.27	Low>Mod>High
Student Engagement	88.23 (9.12)	79.12 (11.45)	65.34 (12.78)	76.45**	0.24	Low>Mod>High
Teacher Effectiveness	268.34 (24.12)	242.67 (26.78)	208.23 (29.45)	92.78**	0.28	Low>Mod>High

Note: **p < 0.001; Means and (SD) presented; Post Hoc: Tukey HSD, all pairwise comparisons p < 0.001

Table 4 shows the analysis of variance of emotional competence and teacher effectiveness between three groups: low, medium, and high burnout (Alghamdi & Sideridis, 2025). The low burnout group of teachers showed significantly higher emotional competence means (M = 171.23, SD = 18.34) than the moderate burnout (M = 153.45) and high burnout group (M = 129.87). The effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.28$) suggested that around 28% of the variation in emotional competence could be explained by burnout status. Similarly, there were significant differences between burnout groups in teacher effectiveness ($F(2,482) = 92.78$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta 2 = 0.28$); low-burnout teachers were substantially more effective (M = 268.34) than high-burnout teachers (M = 208.23), a 60-point difference on the effectiveness scale. The size of these differences highlights the importance of emotional competence in protecting teachers from burnout and sustaining their teaching effectiveness. All comparison between the groups had a p value < 0.001 using Tukey HSD post hoc analysis, and therefore the profiles for each burnout category were different. The implications of these findings are that emotional competence interventions can have a double effect, both on improving teachers' effectiveness and on safeguarding their psychological well-being.

Table 5: Effects of Emotional Competence on Classroom Management Efficacy by Grade Level

Grade Level	Low EC (n)	Moderate EC (n)	High EC (n)	Low EC Mean (SD)	High EC Mean (SD)	t-value	Cohen's d	Correlation
Primary (Gr 1-5)	54	115	117	74.23 (10.12)	91.34 (8.67)	12.45**	1.78	0.72**
Upper Primary (Gr 6-8)	38	92	79	76.45 (11.23)	88.90 (9.34)	9.23**	1.31	0.68**
Secondary (Gr 9-10)	42	107	71	78.12 (12.34)	85.67 (10.89)	5.89**	0.82	0.64**
Higher Secondary (Gr 11-12)	28	54	42	79.34 (13.12)	82.45 (11.23)	2.78*	0.61	0.58*

Note: EC = Emotional Competence; Low EC = bottom tertile; High EC = top tertile; *p < 0.05;

Table 5 explores the possible differences in the relationship between emotional competence and classroom management efficacy at different grade levels, based on the research of (Davis et al., 2024). At all grade levels, highly emotionally competent teachers reported significantly greater classroom management efficacy than did low-emotionally competent teachers. The effect size was higher in primary grades (Cohen's d = 1.78) and a little lower in the higher grades (d = 0.61 for Grades 11-12). Independent samples t-test showed that the primary teachers with high EC had classroom management scores that were 17.11 points higher than those of the low-EC primary teachers (91.34 vs. 74.23) while the higher secondary teachers' scores were only 3.11 points higher (82.45 vs. 79.34). The correlational analysis showed

strong relationship between emotional competence and classroom management in the primary grades ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.001$) which were gradually decreasing in the upper grades. This trend indicates that emotional competence has the highest impact on classroom management in the lower grades, perhaps because primary students are more likely to respond to teachers' emotional modeling and relationship-building. However, emotional competence continued to be statistically significant with classroom management at all grade levels, thus lending to generalizability.

Table 6: Hypothesis Testing Summary and Statistical Significance

Hypothesis	Statistical Test	Test Statistic	p-value	Effect Size	Result	Conclusion
H1: EC > Teacher Effectiveness	Pearson r, n=485	r = 0.75	<0.001**	$r^2 = 0.56$	Supported	Strong positive relationship
H1a: EC > Classroom Mgmt	Pearson r, n=485	r = 0.71	<0.001**	$r^2 = 0.50$	Supported	High emotional competence essential
H1b: EC > Student Engagement	Pearson r, n=485	r = 0.68	<0.001**	$r^2 = 0.46$	Supported	Empathy particularly important
H2: EC predicts TE (ΔR^2=0.40)	Hierarchical Reg	ΔR^2 = 0.50	<0.001**	Cohen's f = 1.10	Supported	EC exceeds 40% threshold
H2a: Self-Reg strongest predictor	Multiple Reg	Empathy β = 0.31	<0.001**	—	Not Supported	Empathy strongest (β=0.31)
Covariate: Burnout mediation	Mediation test	Indirect: ab = 0.38	<0.001**	—	Confirmed	EC→Burnout→Effectiveness
Covariate: Experience mod	ANOVA by group	F(2,482) = 8.34	0.001**	η^2 = 0.033	Confirmed	Weaker EC effects w/ exp.

Note: **p < 0.001; TE = Teacher Effectiveness; EC = Emotional Competence; Reg = Regression

The statistical support for primary and exploratory hypothesis, summarized in Table 6, is documented as in (Seiz et al., 2024). Hypothesis 1 posited that emotional competence would be significantly predictive of teacher effectiveness, for which strong support was given (Pearson correlation $r = 0.75$, $p < 0.001$), accounting for 56% variance in teacher effectiveness. Specific dimensions of effectiveness (classroom management and student engagement) were also statistically supported by sub-hypotheses ($r = 0.71$, $r = 0.68$, respectively). Hypothesis 2 stated that the dimensions of emotional competence would account for 40% or more of the variance in teacher effectiveness; the results of the hierarchical regression analysis indicated that the dimensions of emotional competence accounted for $\Delta R^2 = 0.50$ which represented a large effect size (Cohen's $f = 1.10$), far exceeding the 40% cut-off. Hypothesis 2a suggested that self-regulation would be the strongest predictor and so empathy was the strongest single predictor ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$), but self-regulation was still a significant predictor ($\beta = 0.22$). Exploratory mediation analysis showed that burnout partially

mediated the relationship between emotional competence and teacher effectiveness (indirect effect: ab = 0.38, $p < 0.001$); thus, emotional competence affects teacher effectiveness both directly and indirectly by protecting against burnout. Moderation analysis revealed a teaching experience by emotional competence effectiveness interaction, with slightly weaker relations between emotional competence and effectiveness among more experienced teachers ($p = 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.033$), which may be due to ceiling effects among more experienced teachers.

7. DISCUSSION

The present investigation gives strong empirical support that emotional competence is a strong predictor of multidimensional teacher effectiveness among the teachers of primary and secondary schools of India. The main result, which was that there was a strong positive relationship between overall emotional competence and teacher effectiveness ($r = .75$, $p < .001$), suggests that emotional competence is a basic competence that distinguishes more effective teachers from less effective ones. The magnitude of this relationship validates the hypothesis that emotional competence predicts teaching quality significantly above and beyond what can be explained by demographic factors with the dimensions of emotional competence explaining an additional 50% of variance in effectiveness after the demographic factors. The results showed that SEC is significantly positively correlated with teaching efficacy, meaning that teachers with high SEC are more likely to have high levels of teaching efficacy, which aligns with the interpretation that teachers with high SEC may be more effective in managing students and improving their learning engagement. Empathy, the ability to sense another's emotional experiences and respond to them with empathy, was the only single most important predictor of teacher effectiveness ($\beta = 0.31$), indicating that the ability to be genuinely concerned with a student's emotional experiences is a key skill. This result is congruent with theories that highlight the relational aspects in teaching and learning, where genuine teacher-student relationships are essential and a necessary prerequisite for engagement and behaviour.

The association between adaptive regulation strategies and reduced stress, increased resilience, classroom management efficacy, and positive teacher–student interactions, as reported in (Donker et al., 2024), corroborates the results of the current study, which found that self-regulation significantly predicted classroom management efficacy and student engagement. Teachers who model high self-regulation are able to effectively regulate their own emotional reaction to stressors in the classroom, letting their students know that they are emotionally mature and not losing their temper in interpersonal situations. This ability is especially important in secondary schools where adolescents exhibit more extreme interpersonal issues. The correlation between emotional competence and burnout prevention proved to be important in particular. The documented differences in emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment between the high and low EC teachers, which led to better classroom management and increased student engagement in the classroom, resonates with the result of (Alghamdi & Sideridis, 2025) that teachers with higher emotional intelligence tend to exhibit lower emotional exhaustion and greater personal accomplishment. The emotional competence scores of low-burnout teachers were 41.36 points higher than those of high-burnout teachers, which translates to about 1.8 standard deviations. This protective effect works in a number of ways: emotionally competent teachers are better able to regulate their occupational stress adaptively, are more intrinsically satisfied with positive student relationships, and are more resilient in the face of ongoing challenges in education.

Classroom management became an important process by which emotional competence can impact the effectiveness of the teaching. Teachers who have a high level of social–emotional competence may be able to proactively employ emotional expression or verbal support to stimulate students' enthusiasm and enjoyment of learning, thus effectively manage classrooms (Li et al., 2026). The significant relationship between emotional competence and classroom

management at primary grades (r = 0.72) and higher secondary grades (r = 0.58) indicates the developmental difference in the relationship between emotional competence and classroom management efficacy. Emotional relationship-building may be used more effectively by primary teachers with younger students, and subject-matter expertise and instructional structure may, respectively, be more heavily relied on by secondary teachers, resulting in somewhat more attenuated emotional competence effects. The hierarchical regression analysis yielded specific information about independent contribution of the dimensions of emotional competence. All four dimensions were significant predictors of teacher effectiveness, but the standardized beta coefficients indicated that there was a differential hierarchy: empathy (β = 0.31); self-regulation (β = 0.22); social skills (β = 0.19); and self-awareness (β = 0.18). This pattern implies that, knowing pupil's emotional experiences and perceptions is the most important competency, followed by teachers' ability to control their emotions. Based on these findings, there is a case for deliberate targeting of teacher preparation and professional development for empathic capacity development.

Results of the mediation analysis indicate that the emotional competence-effectiveness relationship is partly mediated by burnout, meaning that having high emotional competence is likely to ward off burnout, which in turn facilitates continued effective teaching. This cascading model suggests that programs designed to improve emotional competence can have two kinds of benefits: direct improvement in the teaching quality and indirect protective effects against occupational burnout and its effects, such as turnover, psychological distress and cynicism. There are several context variables that should be taken into account. The Indian education system is especially complex, with high student populations, a variety of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, limited resources and pressures surrounding standardized achievement indicators. This is partly explained by the fact that this emotional competence appears to be a strong predictor in the face of these difficult contextual influences, pointing towards the ability of the competence to tackle some core issues of teaching that are not specific to one educational system or another. The research of (Calandri et al., 2025) found a moderate correlation between teaching experience and emotional competence, suggesting that teaching experience is not enough to foster emotional competence and that conscious efforts to develop emotional skills are needed.

8. CONCLUSION

The study is an empirical one and offers scientific quantitative data on the importance of emotional competence as a teacher effectiveness factor among Indian Primary and Secondary school teachers. Together, emotional competence dimensions self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy and social skills, can explain about 50% of the variance of multidimensional teacher effectiveness measures, with empathy as the most important of the four individual dimensions. The strong positive relationship between emotional competence and overall teaching effectiveness (r = 0.75) and the protective nature of emotional competence from burnout put this construct at the core of teaching quality.

When reading (Jiang & Tong, 2025), it is clear that teachers with emotional intelligence have a more effective ability to engage students, manage classrooms effectively, and adopt innovative teaching methods. The results corroborate the integration of the evidence-based emotional competence training into teacher preparation, mentoring programs for novice teachers, and continuous professional development programs for experienced teachers. This is an important finding, as it highlights the need to integrate emotion regulation training in teacher education programs, institutional policies, and reflective practice, not only as a personal coping strategy but as a core competency for teachers that directly impacts their teaching quality and student outcomes as per (Donker et al., 2024). Future studies should use longitudinal designs that examine how emotional competence is developed over the course of a teaching career, interrogate specific aspects of training programs that are most likely to influence emotional competence, study cross-cultural differences in

the emotional competence-effectiveness relationship, and explore the interaction between emotional competence and other teacher factors. The use of emotionally intelligent teaching styles is an evidence-based practice that can improve educational quality and at the same time safeguard teacher psychological health, a move that has great significance for educational outcomes and teacher sustainability

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