



## The Effects of Emotional Intelligence on Teachers' Classroom Performance: A Case of Primary Schools in Southeast Region of Botswana

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine the effects of emotional intelligence (EI) on teachers' performance in Southeast Region primary schools in Botswana. The research methodology applied was mixed methods. The target group consisted of 300 teachers from 16 primary schools in Botswana's Southeast Region. The participants were chosen using a simple random sampling procedure. Seventy (70) out of 300 teachers comprising both males and females with years of work experience ranging from less than 2 to more than 10 were used as the sample in the study. The 9-layered model of the EI pyramid was used as the theoretical framework for the study. The pragmatism paradigm was used to blend qualitative and quantitative research approaches to arrive at trustworthy conclusions about the effects of EI on teacher performance in primary schools in Botswana's Southeast Region. The findings of the study revealed that primary school teachers in the Southeast Region of Botswana require EI skills to enhance their performance, improve their attitudes towards their instructional practices, and apply appropriate ways of assisting and encouraging struggling learners and colleagues. The findings also indicated a link between teachers' EI and academic performance.

### KEYWORDS

Emotional intelligence; academic performance; emotional stimuli; self-awareness.

## INTRODUCTION

According to Siddique et al. (2020), teaching is a challenging process, and it is a vast concept in the teaching field. Since teaching deals with the interaction between humans, one needs to be emotionally strong to effectively manage the emotions involved in teaching and learning activities. Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to recognise one's own and other people's emotions, to distinguish between different feelings and categorise them accordingly, and to use emotional information to influence others' thinking and behaviour (Abraham & Scaria, 2017). So far, only one EI-related study was conducted in Botswana (Machera & Machera, 2017) using Botho university learners to investigate the need to design and develop an EI curriculum for learners in universities. A study by Machera and Machera (2017), found that the "Generation Y" group was emotionally challenged with drug abuse, family abuse, sexual abuse, relationship problems, and other challenges which could be contributing factors leading to failure and dropout. As a result, teachers must have a high degree of EI to deal with emotionally challenged learners, hence the undertaking of the study.

A study by Malejane and Diraditsile (2019), indicated that Botswana's educational policy was predominantly poorly implemented at the primary school level, which forms the groundwork for secondary schooling, and regardless of whether the children excelled in preparation, ground, and secondary school or not, they are automatically enrolled into higher learning institutions, even though most of them are not emotionally stable. The factors which contribute to the emotional instability of these children range from socioeconomic backgrounds, poverty, and social ills, among others (Malejane & Diraditsile, 2019). This places a huge demand on teachers who find themselves dealing with these children on a day-to-day basis at school. The problems that these children bring to the classroom create a burden for the teacher and consequently affect academic performance. This occurs when teachers fail to recognize the importance of EI in a working environment for the academic programme to prosper. According to Botha and Hugo (2021), teachers leaving the profession before age of retirement is an ongoing problem in schools worldwide. This is because teachers fail to concentrate on their work because of such factors which in the end affect their EI. The goal of the study was to examine the effects of emotional intelligence on teachers' classroom performance in the Southeast Region of Botswana's primary schools. The study is significant because it will assist various stakeholders in the education sector in incorporating EI into teaching and learning processes for the smooth running of the teaching and learning activities. In developing countries like Botswana, limited research has been conducted on EI and teacher performance in primary schools, which could influence academic accomplishment.

### Research Questions

The study was guided by the following main research question:

- What are the effects of EI on teachers' classroom performance in the Southeast Region Primary schools in Botswana?

The above main research question was supported by the following secondary research questions:

- How does EI contribute to teachers' attitudes towards their classroom performance in the Southeast Region Primary Schools in Botswana?
- What is the relationship between teachers' EI and academic performance?
- What strategies need to be put in place to contribute to teachers' EI in primary schools?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

According to Saeidi and Nikou (2012), Salovey and Mayer (1990) were among the earliest to propose the concept of "emotional intelligence" to represent the ability of people to deal with their emotions. The teacher must be aware of EI competencies and skills, promote and encourage interaction in a positive learning environment, and comprehend the learners to support learning and develop the classroom setting (Alhashemi, 2018). Kanwal et al. (2018) carried out a research study on emotional labour and EI of Secondary School Teachers in South Asia. The findings revealed that emotional support offered by the teachers allows the learners to participate in classroom activities, focus on the lessons attentively, and manage their emotions more effectively. This shows that besides the concept of EI being important to the teacher, the teacher's recognition of the learner's emotions in the classroom is of paramount importance.

### **Effects of Emotional Intelligence on Teachers' Performance**

Emotional Intelligence has numerous effects on teachers' performance. Farhah and Ali (2016), add that EI is a significant part of teachers' training programs because it is related to classroom administration performance and other maintenance factors for teachers. Farhah and Ali (2016) also found that EI predicted self-efficacy and life satisfaction, and had a positive influence on university teachers. Gunu and Oladepo (2014) conducted a study to investigate the influence of EI on the commitment of the organisation and employees' performance. Their findings proved that employees' EI, organisational dedication, and capabilities had a strong link. This shows that employees' EI could have dire effects on any organization regarding production or output. Arifin (2019) asserts that education, provided by teachers with great character, often results in a generation with good character because learners learn from their teachers. In the process of shaping learners' characters, teachers need to display commitment and hard work, hence this study aimed to investigate the effects of EI on teachers' classroom performance in Botswana primary schools in the Southeast Region.

### **The contribution of EI to teachers' attitudes towards their classroom performance**

Attitudes are how people think and behave. Jones et al. (2013) explain that today's teachers are more stressed out and discontented than ever before and most of them are leaving the profession because of the attitudes they develop while in the school system. Therefore,

teachers who have not acquired EI skills are not able to manage stress effectively. To address teachers' attitudes toward teaching, a thorough examination of the notion of EI and its relation to teacher performance in Botswana's Primary Schools was required, hence this study.

Emotionally intelligent teachers tend to make better team players and they are more effective at motivating themselves and others (Adeyemo & Agoke, 2014). Emotional Intelligence helps teachers improve their social skills, allowing them to collaborate with others more effectively. One of the reasons why teachers with high EI do better than others is that they have the skills and talents to avoid and manage stress throughout the teaching and learning process (Sharma, 2015). Hence, EI is advantageous for teachers to handle any circumstance in the working environment. When teachers are emotionally stable, they can maximize their potential since there is a link between their EI and their degree of job satisfaction (Khan, 2010).

### **The Relationship between Teachers' Emotional Intelligence and Academic Performance**

A research study was conducted on EI in both primary and secondary schools by Kannaiah and Shanthi (2015), to investigate the workplace drivers of EI and to determine the extent to which employees are aware of EI. According to the study, EI has a critical role in boosting workers' organisational commitment, increasing productivity and efficiency, keeping top talent, and encouraging people to give their all. As a result, the study is relevant in determining the link between EI and the academic achievement of teachers in Botswana's Southeast Region Primary Schools. Competencies are key factors in the professional development of teachers, and as such, teachers need to be in a good state of mind all the time for their EI to assist them in pulling off their educational obligation (García-Martínez, et al. 2019).

Emotional Intelligence is a vital skill that is crucial in teachers' careers. Majoka and Khan (2017) conducted a study among 210 female teachers who taught Grade 10 learners for 2-10 years. These female teachers were randomly selected from 35 government high schools. The study's goal was to find out whether EI was a predictor of work success among high school female teachers. The study found that EI has a beneficial influence on the teaching and learning process, because teachers with high EI have higher work satisfaction than those with low EI, and their learners do better as shown by higher marks. As a result, there was a need to investigate the link between EI and the academic achievement of teachers in Botswana's Southeast Region Primary Schools.

### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

A conceptual framework explains the path of a research study and grounds it firmly in theoretical constructs (Adom et al., 2018). Therefore, the theory of EI should represent how a particular conclusion regarding emotions was reached. Everyone, regardless of gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or culture, expresses their sentiments through their face and body (Darwin & Prodger, 1998). Emotion can be defined as a mind-boggling feeling, which brings about physical and mental changes influencing thought and behaviour (Darwin &

Prodger, 1998). Therefore, this study made use of the Pyramid of Emotional Intelligence which has a Nine-Layer model as its framework.

### **Pyramid of Emotional Intelligence: The Nine-Layer Model**

Drigas and Papoutsi (2018) developed an emotional intelligence pyramid, which is also known as "a nine-layer model". In a hierarchical framework, the model combines characteristics from the Ability EI and Trait EI models. The ability level includes aspects of self-awareness (both personal and social) and management. The trait level relates to the mood connected with emotions, as well as the inclination to behave in a specific manner in emotional states when other relevant aspects are considered. Gardner's concepts of intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence are also incorporated into the EI pyramid.



**Figure 1.** *The emotional intelligence pyramid (9-layered model)* (Drigas and Papoutsi, 2018)

The framework in Figure 1 assisted the study in establishing the effects of EI on teachers' classroom performance in Primary schools in the Southeast Region of Botswana. In making sense of the model, we decided to break it down as discussed below to show its relevance to the study.

***Emotional Stimuli***

This layer is the immediate stimulus of emotions as a product of the modification of the neural processes of sensory input (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2018). An agent receives sensory effects when an event occurs. Cognitive processes then interpret these stimuli and generate emotional stimulation for increasing emotions. Emotional stimuli are then mediated through a neural system that decides what feelings to experience and, as a result, generates an emotional reaction that may affect the outcome of actions. The outcome of actions could then affect the reaction of the teacher who in this case is the subject of the study and the quality of classroom performance depends on such outcomes and actions.

***Emotion Recognition***

This layer means that to detect emotions, a person requires the ability to interpret the signals of his or her emotions and that of others, typically relayed by non-verbal means (for example, face, body, and voice). Detecting the learners' emotions is truly important for promoting effective learning, because of the inextricable link between cognition and emotions (Bouhlal et al., 2020).

***Self-Awareness***

It entails having a clear understanding of one's personality, including strengths, shortcomings, thoughts, beliefs, motives, and emotions. Arifin (2019) defines teachers' self-awareness as teachers' ability to recognize their boundaries and tasks. As one's self-awareness grows, there is a shift in one's thinking, which leads to changes in emotions and, finally, actions. Self-awareness is a psychological state in which a person is aware of his or her characteristics, feelings, and behaviours (Crisp & Turner, 2014). This would then enact emotional consciousness, proper self-esteem, and self-confidence (Goleman, 2001), which every teacher requires for better classroom performance.

***Self-Management***

It is the capacity to regulate one's reactions so as not to be driven by impulsive thoughts and feelings (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2018). Self-management makes one more adaptable, receptive, less judgmental of situations, and less reactive to other people's attitudes. Primary school teachers need to possess such traits to accommodate learners of various personalities. Self-management skills include the ability to manage emotions, express emotions properly, and listen to the heart to organize actions daily (Arifin, 2019). This layer is also important because should a teacher fail to manage his or her emotions and express them properly, teaching could be affected and compromised.

**Social Awareness**

This is the level of identifying and understanding the emotions of others. It is an increase in emotional awareness. The way people handle connections and their understanding of others' feelings, needs, and worries is referred to as social awareness (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2018). This skill is relevant to primary school teachers who receive children from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and who need psychosocial support, which makes this layer one of the most important to teachers.

**Social Skills**

Following social awareness, the next stage in the emotional intelligence pyramid that aids in boosting our Emotional Quotient (EQ) is social skills. The phrase "social skills" is used in emotional intelligence to describe the abilities required to effectively handle and affect other people's emotions to successfully manage interactions (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2018). These qualities include the ability to attune to others' feelings and comprehend how they feel and think about things, the ability to collaborate and work well with others, and expertise in other people's emotions and negotiations. Teachers in primary schools are team players and collaborators who require social skills to create a positive learning environment for learners, hence the need for social skills.

**Self-Actualization**

It is crucial to remember that self-actualization is a lifelong journey, not a destination like "happily ever after". Bar-On (2006) shows how emotional intelligence and self-actualization are linked, concluding that "you may actualize your potential capacity for personal growth only when you are socially and emotionally efficient in meeting your needs and dealing with life in general." Primary school teachers' level of self-actualisation is paramount in the teaching and learning process as part of EI.

**Transcendence**

Maslow (1962) also suggested that those who have achieved self-actualization may occasionally encounter a state he called "transcendence." Transcendence refers to far higher and more comprehensive or holistic levels of human consciousness achieved through behaving and associating with ourselves, important others, humanity in general, other species, nature, and the planet as ends rather than means (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2018). At this level, one assists others in self-actualization, fulfilment, and identification of their potential. The emotional quotient is high, and those who have acquired it try to help others understand and regulate their own and others' emotions as well.

**Emotional Unity**

It is the top tier of the EI pyramid. It is a purposefully positive and dynamic level in the sense that it strives to achieve and maintain emotional dominance, which informs the subject that he or she is in control of the circumstance or setting in an acceptable form (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2018). Emotional rules prescribe what teachers should do to comply with certain expectations about the teacher role – for example, displaying too much affection or too much anger may be

inappropriate (Zembylas, 2003). Therefore, teachers in primary schools need to have a reasonable and efficient level of emotional unity for better classroom performance.

The above layers are interconnected and as such, teachers need to be fully engaged in them for their classroom performance to be effective.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Design

The study employed a case study research design. A case study is an in-depth investigation of a person, a group of people, or a unit, to generalize across multiple units (Heale & Twycross, 2017). This design was suitable for the study because a sample of teachers was derived from various primary schools to represent one population. A case study can either be qualitative or quantitative or contain a combination of both approaches and cover investigation within individual cases (Rebolj, 2013).

### Participants

The researchers were able to pick a sample from all description levels within the primary school setting using a case study. These types of studies are research methods aimed at holistically analysing a phenomenon in its context and involve detailed consideration of contextual factors leading to higher construct validity (Yamashita & Moonen (2014). Therefore, the Botswana Primary schools in the Southeast Region of the country, which took part in the study, e, shared the same classroom performance challenges. In this case, mixed methods research was used in the study. The target population was 300 teachers from 16 Primary Schools in the Southeast Region of Botswana. The participants were chosen using a simple random sampling procedure. The procedure entailed giving everyone in the population a chance to be selected as a participant (Majid, 2018). The research study's sample was selected from four primary schools in Botswana's Southeast Region and 70 out of 300 teachers were used as the study sample. The sample comprised both male and female primary school class teachers across all levels with a range of fewer than 2 years to above 10 years of work experience.

### Research Approach and Paradigm

Mixed methods research is an approach involving the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data, and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks. The core assumption of this form of inquiry is that the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either approach alone (Creswell, 2014).

In terms of quantitative research methodology, the positivism paradigm was used to guide the research study. This methodology derives its strength from positivism which contends that reality is objective, and that the researcher is an independent observer of such reality (Addae, 2015). The paradigm was relevant to account for the closed-ended questionnaire, which was quantitative. The interpretivist paradigm is polarized in the dimension of the sociology of

regulation by using the subjective approach as an analytical tool (Gunbayi & Sorm, 2018). Because of its qualitative nature, interpretivism also explains and expands on the realm of individual consciousness and subjectivity. Therefore, the researchers used open-ended questions to interview participants. The most effective paradigm to adopt in mixed methods is the one that solves problems. Mixed approaches, in which reality is constantly renegotiated, contested, and interpreted, are best suited to pragmatism (Perera, 2018). The paradigm is concerned with action and change and the interplay between knowledge and action (Goldkuhl, 2012). Primary school teachers are the driving force of the learning and teaching process, therefore, their reactions to EI concerns as a performance indicator are critical. To a pragmatist, the mandate of science is not to find truth or reality, the existence of which is perpetually in dispute, but to facilitate human problem-solving (Parvaiz et al., 2016). Therefore, the positivism research paradigm was suitable for the research study, which focused on determining the effects of EI on teachers' academic performance.

### **Instruments**

Items adapted and derived from a test designed by Schutte, Malouff, and Bhullar (2009) referred to as the "Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)" were employed in both the written interview and the questionnaire. The test was designed in 1998 and covered EI dimensions which are: Emotion Perception, Self-emotion Management, Emotion Management of Others, and Emotion Utilisation and has 33 items of which only ten were answered on a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire had the following scale: 1= Strongly disagree (SD); 2 = Disagree (D); 3 = Neither Disagree nor Agree (NDNA); 4 = Strongly Agree (SA); and 5 = Agree (A). The results were evaluated using a variety of statistical methods. Quantitative data were analysed using quantitative univariate descriptive analysis expressed in contingency (frequency) tables, bar charts, and graphs to show nominal scores and statistical interpretations. A univariate descriptive analysis uses bar charts, graphs, and tables as inferential statistics to draw conclusions and identify relationships from data collected using absolute frequency (number of cases) and relative frequency (percentage) (Cardenas, 2019). The qualitative data were analysed with the help of "verbatim quotes" derived from teachers' responses. Pattorn (2002) argues that verbatim quotations are a basic source of raw data in qualitative research that serve to reveal the informants' emotions and experiences. Luckily, with the decline in COVID-19 numbers, we were able to access the respondents and address them in the study. Permission for interviewing the Primary school teachers in the Southeast Region was also granted. To validate the instruments, a pilot study was conducted with one Primary school from a different region in Botswana. Piloting is important to establish the content validity of an instrument and to improve questions, format, and scales (Creswell, 2009). The teachers from the said Primary Schools were employed to assess the study instruments' reliability and validity (interview questions and questionnaires).

## RESULTS

The questionnaire was used to assess respondents on features of emotional intelligence, which include emotion recognition, social awareness, self-management, and self-awareness. Further, quantitative data univariate descriptive analysis was expressed using contingency tables, bar charts, and graphs to show nominal scores and statistical interpretations. Inferential statistics were used to draw conclusions and identify relationships from data collected using absolute frequency (number of cases) and relative frequency (percentage). The items that were used in the questionnaire were adapted from the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT): Schutte et al., (1998). Below are the results:

**Table 1.** *Presentation and Analysis of Data from the questionnaire: Contingency Table, Emotion Recognition, Self-Awareness, Social Skills, and Social Awareness*

#	Question	1 (SD)	2 (D)	3 (NDNA)	4 (SA)	5 (A)
1	I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people	11 (16%)	14 (20%)	21 (30%)	9 (13%)	15 (21%)
2	I am aware of my emotions as I experienced them	6 (8%)	9 (13%)	15 (21%)	18 (25%)	24 (33%)
3	I am aware of non-verbal messages I send to others	9 (13%)	10 (14%)	18 (26%)	18 (26%)	15 (21%)
4	By looking at their facial expressions, I recognise the emotions people are experiencing	11 (16%)	12 (17%)	15 (22%)	15 (21%)	17 (24%)
5	I know why my emotions change	9 (13%)	8 (11%)	9 (13%)	16 (23%)	28 (40%)
6	I easily recognise my emotions as I experience them	6 (9%)	8 (11%)	6 (9%)	19 (27%)	31 (44%)
7	I am aware of non-verbal messages other people send	5 (7%)	13(19%)	19 (27%)	14 (20%)	19 (27%)
8	I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them	10 (14%)	18(26%)	16 (23%)	9 (13%)	17(24%)
9	I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice	8 (11%)	20 (29%)	16 (23%)	10 (14%)	16 (23%)
10	It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do	8 (12%)	12 (17%)	15 (21%)	15 (21%)	20 (29%)

Note: All the items were adopted from the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) (Schutte et al., 1998).

In question 1, a total of 36% of those polled disagreed with the statement, while 34% agreed. The respondents who strongly agreed were (13%) and those who agreed were (21%). This indicates that most respondents have difficulty understanding nonverbal messages from others due to a lack of emotional awareness and require assistance. As a result, teachers do not possess qualities that enable them to decipher nonverbal information from others. The positive response by teachers to understand the emotions of other people has been supported by Jennings and Greenberg (2009) in a study that identified one of the features of socially and emotionally competent teachers as the "ability to recognize and understand the feelings of others". As a result, teachers must possess qualities that enable them to decipher nonverbal information from others.

Question 2 shows that 21% of respondents disagreed with the statement, while 58% were aware of their emotions as they experience them. This indicates that most of the respondents were aware of their emotions as they experienced them. However, a large percentage (42%) indicated that the respondents' level of emotional awareness was low and that it must be developed for them to be aware of their emotions as they occur. Therefore, teachers need high self-awareness to utilize EI traits during teaching and learning. The positive response of teachers being aware of their emotions as they experience them (58%) has been supported by Jennings and Greenberg (2009), who identified "high self-awareness" as one of the characteristics of socially and emotionally competent teachers. Therefore, teachers must have high self-awareness to utilize EI traits during teaching and learning.

Question 3 indicates that a total of 27% of those polled disagreed with the statement, while 47% agreed. This demonstrates that most of the respondents lacked emotion recognition abilities, as they were unaware of the non-verbal signals they transmitted to others. Therefore, teachers need more emotional skills to be aware of the non-verbal messages they send to others. The above response by teachers, about the need to understand non-verbal messages sent to others, has been supported by Drigas and Papoutsis (2018) in their Pyramid of Emotional Intelligence referred to as "The Nine-Layer Model". The second layer of the pyramid is "emotion recognition". It is a stage in which accuracy becomes stronger as emotions are both relayed and remembered. At this level, a person must be able to detect emotions followed by the ability to interpret the signals of his or her emotions and that of others, typically relayed by non-verbal means such as the face and body. Therefore, teachers need emotional skills to be aware of the non-verbal messages they send to others.

Question 4 shows that 33% of respondents disagreed with the statement, while 45% agreed. This demonstrates that most of the respondents lacked emotion detection skills, as they were unable to recognise the emotions that others were experiencing based on their facial expressions. Therefore, with the acquisition of emotion recognition and social awareness skills, Primary school teachers in the Southeast Region of Botswana will be able to recognise the emotions learners experience by looking at their facial expressions. Teachers' responses reveal that they require social awareness, as Drigas and Papoutsis (2018) argue that "Social awareness

is essential for one to identify and understand the emotions of those around him, including the facial expression". Therefore, with the acquisition of emotion recognition and social awareness skills, primary school teachers will be able to recognise the emotions students experience by looking at their facial expressions.

The above question 5, shows that 24% of respondents disagreed with the statement, while 63% do. This demonstrates that a substantial portion of the respondents lacked self-awareness, as they had no idea why their feelings changed. Therefore, due to a lack of self-awareness skills, teachers could not know why their emotions changed. The response of most respondents concurs with Crisp and Turner (2014), who describes self-awareness as a psychological state in which an individual knows his or her traits, feelings, and behaviours. Therefore, through self-awareness skills, all teachers can learn why their emotions change. Question 6 illustrates that 20% of respondents disagreed with the statement, while 71% agreed. This demonstrates that most responders had emotion detection skills, as they could recognise their own emotions as they occurred. Therefore, Primary school teachers in the Southeast Region of Botswana must not only recognize their emotions as they experience them but also choose among the various negative and positive emotions and apply positive ones in the classroom situation. Most of the teachers' comments corroborate Gardner's (1989) multiple intelligence theory, which is discussed in this study. He identified 7 aspects of intelligence found in both teachers and learners. Among them is "intrapersonal intelligence". It is found in a teacher who has detailed and accurate self-knowledge. Such a teacher must be able to access and differentiate among his or her sentiments, as well as leverage his or her abilities and desires. Therefore, primary school teachers must not only recognize their emotions as they experience them but also choose among the various negative and positive emotions and apply positive ones in a classroom situation.

Question 7 above shows that 26% of respondents disagreed with the statement. The statement was supported by 47% of the respondents. This indicates that most of the respondents lacked emotional recognition and social skills, as they were not aware of the non-verbal messages other people send. Drigas and Papoutsi (2018) go on to describe social skills as qualities that span from being able to tune into another person's thoughts and comprehend how they feel and think about things, being a great collaborator and team player, and having expertise in other people's emotions and negotiations. Additionally, primary school teachers must always be aware of non-verbal messages students send to accord them the necessary assistance during teaching and learning.

Question 8 above shows that 28 respondents disagreed with the statement, while 37% (26 respondents) agreed. The total number of respondents who strongly disagreed (14%), disagreed (26%), and neither disagreed nor agreed (23%) makes 63%. This demonstrates that most respondents lacked social awareness, as they could not tell how other people were feeling simply by looking at them. One of the characteristics of socially and emotionally competent teachers identified by Jennings and Greenberg (2009) in their study, which agrees with teacher

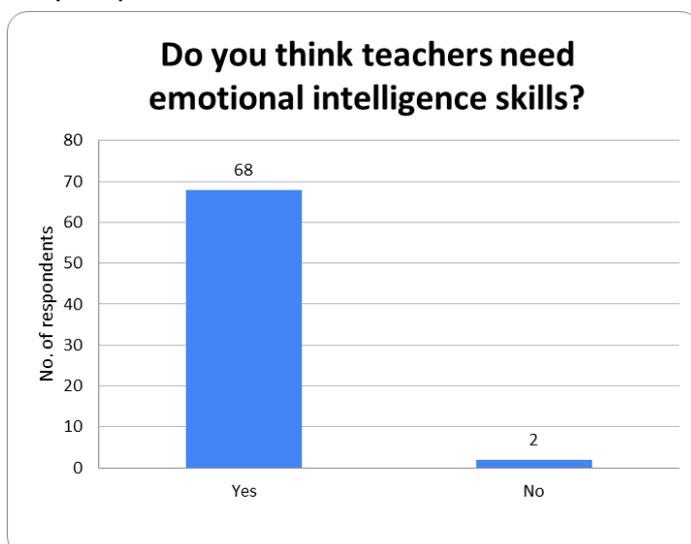
responses in the current study, is that such teachers are socially conscious, fully comprehend that others may have different points of view than they do, and account for this in relationships with learners, parents, and colleagues. This means that teachers would need to improve their EI skills to be able to tell what their learners perceive simply by looking at them.

Question 9 shows that 40% of respondents disagreed with the statement, while 37% agreed. This demonstrates that most of the respondents lacked social awareness abilities, as they were unable to tell how others were feeling simply by listening to their voice tone. Gardner (1989), in his multiple intelligence theory, supports the need for teachers to be able to tell how students are feeling by listening to their voice tone. Linguistic intelligence entails sensitivity to the sounds, rhythms, and meanings of words; sensitivity to the different functions of language, including voice. As a result, teachers must have linguistic intelligence and social awareness abilities to assess the tone of students' voices and provide appropriate assistance.

Question 10 above shows that 29% of the respondents disagreed with the statement, while 50% of the respondents agreed. This demonstrates that most respondents lacked social awareness abilities since they struggled to comprehend why individuals felt the way they did. Most of the teachers' responses indicate a lack of self-management abilities, which supports what Drigas and Papoutsis (2018) stated, that self-management allows one to become more flexible, responsive, less critical of situations, and less reactive to people's attitudes. This means that teachers must understand why learners feel the way they do. Arifin (2019) also concurs with Drigas and Papoutsis (2018) that a socially aware teacher shows empathy for other people and provides good service to the learners at school. Most of the responses (50%) by teachers and the supporting literature indicate that the respondents lack EI skills.

### Presentation and Analysis of Data from Open-ended Interview Questions

This section shows how selected interview questions were used to address the EI research questions. The first question sought to find out if teachers do need EI skills and below is how they responded:



**Figure 2.** *Teacher's Need for EI Skills*

The above question sought to find out from participants if teachers need EI skills. The figure shows that 68 (97%) of respondents agreed that instructors require emotional intelligence skills, whereas 2 (3%) disagreed. This demonstrates the necessity for elementary school teachers to be equipped with emotional intelligence abilities. The following are some of the most common responses provided by participants:

T1: Yes, they do. The ability for one to understand and handle their emotions well helps him or her to interact better with learners and colleagues.

T2: Yes, teachers need emotional intelligence skills because sometimes they just cause conflicts unnecessarily.

T8: Yes, because it helps them deal with complicated situations in the classroom without affecting students.

Teachers' comments suggest that they recognise the importance of having EI abilities. The above comments agree with Alhashemi (2018) who states that to understand learners and promote learning and progress in the classroom environment, teachers must be aware of EI skills and competencies, as well as promote and encourage interaction in a conducive learning environment. This indicates that teachers must have EI abilities to improve both their performance and that of learners.

The second question sought to find out if teachers think emotional intelligence training can help them develop good attitudes towards their profession, and below was the response:



**Figure 3:** *The EI Training Towards the Development of Teachers' Good Attitudes Towards Their Profession*

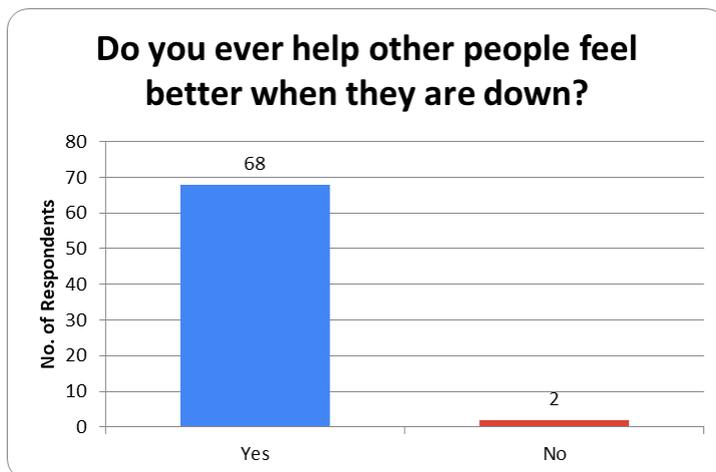
In figure 3 above, 69 (99%) of the respondents thought that EI training can help teachers develop good attitudes towards their profession whilst 1(1%) disagreed. The following are some of the most frequent answers given by the respondents:

T6: Yes, it can help one to know how to control feelings and emotions.

T11: Teacher training can aid in the development of positive attitudes toward their career, as they will be able to make the best decisions based on their capacity to critically evaluate circumstances before engaging in them, "Thinking before the act".

T21: Teachers need emotional intelligence training; it can assist them in constructively managing and controlling their emotions.

Several authors cited in this study agree with 99% of teachers' comments. They include Adeyemo and Agoke (2014) who commented that emotionally intelligent teachers tend to make better team players and are more effective at motivating themselves and others. Sharma (2015) supported teachers' responses, claiming that one of the reasons why teachers with high EI do better than others is that they have the skills and capacities to avoid and cope with stress during the learning and teaching process. The argument has been cemented by Khan (2010) who claimed that when teachers are emotionally stable, they use their potential at an optimum level because there is a relationship between their EI and the level of their job satisfaction. This shows that EI training can positively contribute to teachers' attitudes towards their instructional practices. The next question asked teachers whether they helped others feel better when they were down and below is how they responded:



**Figure 4.** Do you ever help other people feel better when they are down?

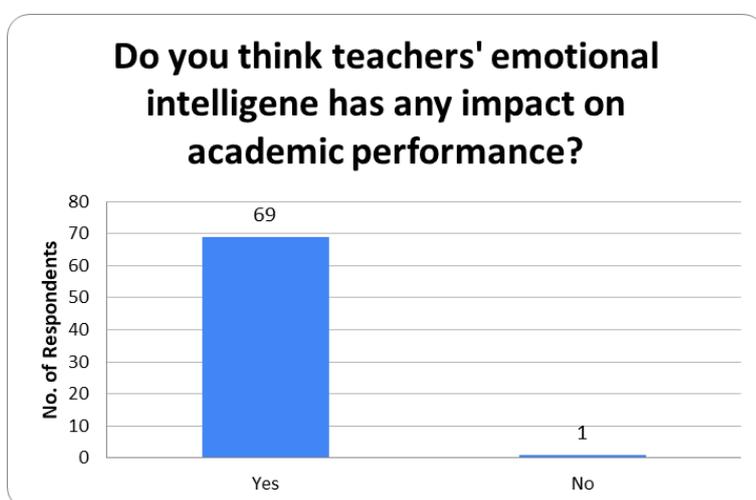
Figure 4 shows that 68 (97%) of respondents indicated that they assisted others to feel better when they were down, while 2 (3%) claimed that they never helped. The findings show that most teachers can assist others when they are down. The following are some of the most frequent answers given by the respondents:

T9: Yes, everybody needs support, so I feel it is human to assist whenever another human is in need.

T 14: Yes, because talking to someone can help him or her to heal or get better.

T 33: Yes, I always motivate people because you cannot work with someone who is not in a good mood. It automatically transfers to you, so you all need to have the right mindset towards the job to produce good results.

Teachers' replies demonstrate that they had EI skills that needed to be combined with other skills like social awareness for them to show empathy for others and deliver excellent service to students at school during instructional activities (Arifin, 2019). The response by teachers also supports the argument advanced by Soanes and Sungoh (2019), as discussed in this study, that teachers who exhibit EI have a deliberate reflective (rather than reactive) personality, are more flexible (rather than resistant to change), communicate affirmatively (rather than aggressively or passively), are more future-oriented and optimistic (rather than pessimistic and negative), and are creative and practice positive behaviours (non-reactive habits). Therefore, teachers need EI skills to apply appropriate ways of assisting learners to make them feel better when they are down. On the question of whether teachers' EI has any impact on academic performance, the responses are indicated below:



**Figure 5.** *Do you think teachers' emotional intelligence has any impact on academic performance?*

Figure 5 shows that 69 (99%) of respondents believed that teachers' EI has a major impact on academic success, while 1 (1%) disagreed. Most respondents believed that EI has an impact on academic performance, according to the findings. The following are some of the answers given by the respondents:

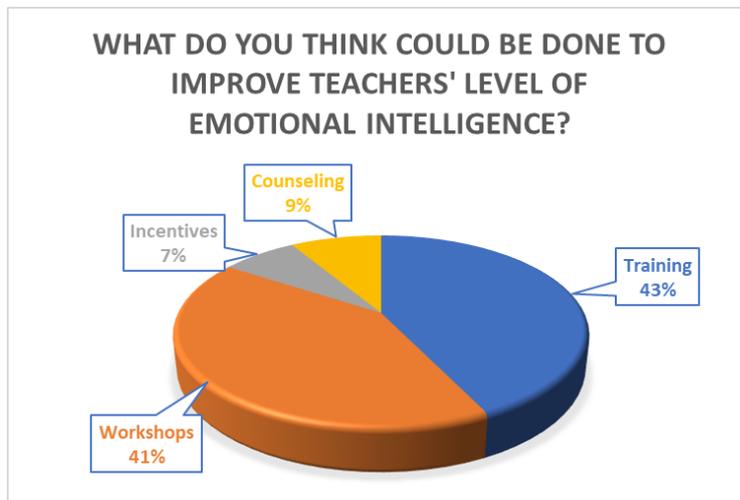
T4: Yes, because teachers work with children and must be emotionally intelligent to achieve the best results.

T9: Yes, because once they are down, they won't deliver as expected and this may affect their learners' performance.

T16: Yes, it does have an impact because emotionally intelligent teachers will grasp people's psychology and behaviour and will approach them in the right manner.

The findings of the study conducted by Majoka and Khan (2017) concur with the responses of teachers as discussed earlier on in this study, where it was revealed that EI had a

positive impact on the teaching and learning process. This indicated that teachers with high EI have more job satisfaction than teachers with low EI, and their students scored higher. Therefore, there is certainly a link between teachers' EI and students' academic success. The question on the strategies needed to improve teachers' EI in the region where the study was undertaken was responded to as follows:



**Figure 6.** *What do you think could be done to improve teachers' level of emotional intelligence?*

The information above reveals that 30 (43%) of the respondents thought that training could improve teachers' level of EI whilst 29 (41%) of them thought that workshops could help. 6 (9%) of respondents believed that counselling was necessary, whereas 5 (7%) believed that incentives could help them enhance their EI. According to the data, most respondents believed that formal training could boost teachers' EI levels. The following are some of the most frequent answers given by the respondents:

T22: Regular training and motivation and appraisal can improve teachers' level of emotional intelligence.

T28: In-service training, followed by encouraging or instilling the spirit of personal development.

T29: Teachers should be exposed to this emotional intelligence training.

The above responses by teachers support what Alhashemi (2018) asserted, that to understand students and promote learning and progress in the classroom environment, lecturers must be aware of Emotional Intelligence (EI) competencies and skills, as well as promote and encourage interaction in a positive learning environment. Teachers considered EI training as a contributory factor that has an impact on the advancement of their EI competencies, according to the findings of a study conducted by Dolev and Leshem (2016) to determine the impact of teacher-centred EI training on teachers' EI in Israel. Another relevant study by Turi, Ghani, Sorooshian and Abbas (2017), which supports the responses by teachers, indicated that socio-emotional intelligence produces better social, socio-emotional, and

psychological skills in teachers directly, and indirectly develops teacher proficiencies and performance. Therefore, EI training can be used as a strategy to improve teachers' levels of EI.

### CONCLUSION

The findings of the study reveal that primary school teachers in the Southeast Region of Botswana need EI skills to enhance their performance. The study found that lack of EI has an effect in the classroom and affects the performance of the teacher which could overflow to the learners. The study's findings show that EI training can improve teachers' views towards their instructional practices in Botswana's Southeast Region Primary Schools. Furthermore, teachers need EI skills to apply appropriate ways of assisting learners to make them feel better when they are down. The study's findings reveal that there is a link between teachers' EI and academic performance and demonstrate that EI training can be utilised to raise teachers' EI levels.

### Recommendations

The main recommendation based on the findings of this study is that Emotional Intelligence training should be offered as a module during pre-service training of teachers. Teachers in the field should attend EI refresher workshops. Similar research studies should be conducted among teachers and learners.

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