

Association Between Emotional Intelligence and Relationship Building in Secondary-Level School Classrooms

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of emotional intelligence (EI) on students' participation in relationship-building in secondary-level classrooms. A random sample of 486 students studying in grades 11 and 12 in Jhapa, Myagdi and Lamjung were selected through a random selection process. The Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) and a five-point Likert scale were used to measure the association of students' emotional intelligence with relationship building. The results show that individuals with higher emotional intelligence have stronger academic relationships and fostered positivity, effort, and positive attitude, which led to academic growth, improved communication, and respectful conduct. It was concluded that emotional intelligence had positive and supportive relationships with academic performance. The study suggests that teachers need to raise their students' emotional intelligence and foster more profound and meaningful relationships by introducing mindful activities, patience and self-awareness in their everyday lives.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, relationship building, problem-solving, academic activity, sharing experiences

Introduction

In developing a profession, emotional intelligence (EI) significantly and positively affects academic success. EI is the capacity to recognize, comprehend, and regulate one's emotions and those of others (Goleman, 2021; Mayer & Salovey, 1993). Higher levels of self-awareness, critical self-reflection, empathy, and social competence in students have been linked to excellent academic performance, better relationships with teachers, and class involvement (Li & Zhang, 2024; Shrestha, 2022). EI has a supportive and positive role in enhancing academic achievement.

Higher academic achievement is typically associated with students who have higher EI scores. According to Grigoraskos (2018) and Sánchez-Álvarez et al. (2020), pupils with higher EI scores and higher grade point averages (GPA) also perform better academically. It is one of the effective predictors that support the aid of human intellect, bodily sensation, and behavior (Hasson et al., 2014). The ability to comprehend and effectively manage these aspects is essential for personal and social well-being.

Similarly, students with high EI are better able to establish friendly relationships with teachers and peers, which can result in a more encouraging learning environment because they are self-aware and accountable for their actions. Additionally, specific EI traits (subscales of EI) help predict how successful an individual will be. Pope et al. (2012) found that aside from social consciousness, academic success had no appreciable association with students' self-awareness, self-management, or relationship management. Social awareness is a good indicator of how engaged students are in class. Self-control/management, a dimension of EI in the TEIQue (self-esteem, happiness, and optimism as a subscale of dimension), successfully gained a higher average score than other dimensions of well-being, a dimension of EI in the TEIQue. However, AL-Qadri and Zhao (2021) investigated the significant effects of each EI characteristic, including stress management, flexibility, good mood, interpersonal relationships, and intrapersonal relationships, on academic performance and classroom participation. Recent studies have reported varying effect sizes with EI subscales globally. Most research focused on academic achievement, but limited studies focused on the relationship-building process and its relation with emotional well-being. However, it is insufficient to represent Nepalese students' EI and their relation with academic performance or relationships fulfilled by this study.

Furthermore, students with high EI have more effective relationship-building and problem-solving skills because of improved teamwork and communication, which helps produce fresh ideas and solutions and fosters a supportive environment. Similarly,

it helps people regulate their emotions better, establish a positive outlook, and react to difficulties more effectively (Al-Qadri & Zhao, 2021). As Acar et al. (2022) also investigated, students' relationships with their teachers positively and significantly impact how they learn. The development of strong academic performance (Chamizo-Nieto et al., 2021; Maamari & Salloum, 2023) and active class participation is made possible by the trust-based relationships between teachers and students (Li & Zhang, 2024). Students with higher EI are also better able to manage their time, deal with other students, and handle problems with their learning.

Students with higher EI levels can also better handle challenging situations and deal with their coworkers. They appear to be more active and engaged in class, and they also appear happier, action-oriented, energetic, successful time managers, and pleased to help others (Pope, 2012; Shrestha & Mandal, 2021). Time management abilities, contemporary technologies, and collaboration indicate better problem-solving abilities. Similarly, Sánchez-Alvarez et al. (2020) showed that interpersonal skills, a feature of EI, help to promote teamwork by supporting one another in the classroom. Emotional intelligence is a key component in developing interpersonal and communication abilities (Petrovici & Dobrescu, 2014). It also correlates with self-monitoring, social skills, cooperative reactions, assuming an empathic perspective, and happiness in intimate relationships (Schutte et al., 2001).

The effect of EI on students' participation in relationship-building with teachers has not yet been sufficiently determined. Nepalese students with higher EI have better work sensitivity, academic relations, and performance (Shrestha & Mandal, 2021; Shrestha et al., 2021). Similarly, the school system in Nepal has not focused on addressing students' EI to enhance academic progress, which might have caused weaker academic performance of students. Regular practices of self-awareness and critical self-reflection are successful tools for enhancing Nepalese students' EI (Shrestha, 2022). Finding the relationship between EI on interpersonal interactions and teachers' participation in class engagement is essential to this study. This paper elaborates on the relationship between EI and relationship-building between teachers and students.

Methods

This survey study was conducted within a positivist philosophical background. The researchers investigated the effectiveness of EI and school students' relationship building. The Department of Education figures published in 2022 show that 58,949 students enrolled in higher education. These students were the target population of this study. They displayed emotional maturity and were under pressure to succeed in interviews and resolve problems.

The sample size was then calculated using Slovin's formula, which numerous scholars have used to establish sample sizes (Limiyanty & Robin, 2022). According to Tejada and Punzalan (2012), a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error are appropriate. The sample size was altered as a result of this calculation.

Using the population size, margin of error (0.05), and confidence level (95%) (Dhimal et al., 2020), 400 samples may be calculated using the Slovin formula. Then, 6 and 80 samples were added due to design influence and non-response (1.5 design effect and 20% non-response). In the end, 486 students from classes 11 and 12 were selected through a random selection process. The three randomly selected districts were Myagdi, Lamjung, and Jhapa. These districts represent the Mountain, Hill, and Terai regions. In each district, 162 students studying in grades 11 and 12 were selected on a random basis from three schools and retained as samples.

To evaluate class engagement and emotional intelligence (EI), survey questionnaires were developed using a "large sample" of 486 students. The survey data proved helpful for quantifying associations. The initial step was developing research guidelines, and the prototype questionnaires were made after consulting with colleagues. After being revised, these inquiries were sent to five Tribhuvan University professors for feedback. It was revised in response to input before being finalized with the help of experts' recommendations. These surveys were a pretest when evaluating the students' emotional intelligence (EI) and classroom experiences. Tools that proved helpful in achieving goals were preserved in their final form. If tools successfully gauge goals after testing, they are preserved in their final form. The questions were logically organized and given in plain Nepali. Similarly, the benchmark was a five-point Likert scale emotional intelligence test (SSEIT), which represents four emotional intelligence subscales, including the capacity to understand, utilize, and manage one's own and other people's emotions. Thirty-three items measured emotional intelligence, rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (see the literature review section for more information).

This study was built on a field inquiry, with a non-standardized questionnaire serving as the primary technique based on self-report. Using standardized questionnaires, the emotional intelligence levels of children were evaluated. Consent was obtained from the instructors by asking them to complete the forms. Students who voluntarily participated in the survey completed it by offering intelligent comments across the collection.

Internal consistency in the reliability of questionnaires was established using Cronbach's alpha, which is typically used in the tool's certification process (Bryman,

2012). According to Bryman (2012), a test result of 0.6 or higher shows high dependability. Instruments comprising less than 0.6 of the totals were excluded from the study. Perception, utilization, managing oneself, and managing others had alpha values of 0.6717, 0.7274, 0.7439, and 0.6491, respectively, while the total EI had an alpha value of 0.8958 and 0.714 concerning holder variables.

The relationship between emotional intelligence and the relationship between teachers and students was linked using a descriptive t-test and logistic regression in a multivariate analysis. Before conducting the regression, the tool validity (confirmatory factor analysis), internal consistency (reliability), and statistical features of multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, or normality were investigated. Following the identification of homogeneity, normality, and multicollinearity of academic involvement, the effect size was examined using the SPSS 26 program. Stata 14 was used for data analysis, while SPSS 26 was used for data entry, cleaning, and tool reliability.

Results

EI and teacher connections were analyzed about one another using descriptive analysis through t-test and multivariate analysis by binary logistic regression. Fewer than 100 EI scores stay as not good (Less), while scores of 100 or more are included as good or higher EI (more/better). It is the cut-off point of a good indicator of EI. Similarly, indications that strongly disagree, disagree, and cannot say anything remain on the “Not Good” list, while indicators that strongly agree and agree remain on the “Excellent” list.

Relationships Between EI and Teachers’ Relations With Students

Based on EI, there was a significant difference between students who had fewer chances and students who had more chances to share experiences (T-value = -5.59, $p < .001$). Table 1 illustrates that students with higher EI had taken advantage of more opportunities (mean = 126.26) to share their experiences. Similarly, students with less experience as stakeholders have lower EI (mean = 119). Results suggested that pupils with higher EI levels had shared more experiences with their friends and teachers.

In this study, instructors’ fear of meeting due to punishment or mental suffering suggests a reluctance to meet. Unexpectedly, significantly higher mean EI scores (mean = 125.76) were seen in groups with more fear-holding students than in groups with fewer fear-holding students (mean = 120). Due to their social and emotional intelligence and ability to control their own and others’ emotions, students with higher

EI could manage their fear of the teacher and were highly interested in meeting and interacting with each other.

According to Table 1, students who were highly driven to study tend to have higher levels of EI (mean = 124.73). In contrast, students with low motivation (mean = 114.97) had lower EI due to poor perception, poor relations with teachers, and poor learning material. Students with higher EI were highly motivated in learning, had positive attitudes and views about learning activities and their future, and were actively involved in learning. Students who are less motivated by their teachers have a significantly lower mean EI score than those who are more motivated. This difference is statistically significant (T-value = -5.40, $p < .001$).

A statistically significant relationship existed between preference feeling holders and EI (T-value = -5.08, $p < .001$). Students with lower EIs (mean = 117.85) found it less enjoyable in the class environment to discuss their academic progress. On the other hand, students with higher EI scores (mean = 125.24) reported feeling more positive toward their professors and the class environment. It suggests that higher EI learners are more open-minded and grateful for the relationship-building process.

Table 1. *Relationships Between EI and Teachers' Relation based on t-Test*

Variables		Obs.	Mean	Std.	t-value
Share experience	Less	169	119.04	13.2	-5.59***
	More	247	126.26	12.72	
Fear with teacher	Less	178	120.06	12.97	-4.40***
	More	238	125.7647	13.18	
Motivated by teacher	Less	60	114.97	14.95	-5.40***
	More	356	124.73	12.59	
Pleasure at meeting	Less	108	117.85	14.87	-5.08***
	More	308	125.24	12.28	
Solve the problem	Less	178	120.06	12.97	-4.40***
	More	238	125.76	13.19	
Class environment	Not good	60	114.97	14.95	-5.40***
	Good	356	124.73	12.59	
Raise respect for the teacher	Less	189	121.7	13.25	-2.26*
	More	227	124.67	13.37	
Work consciousness	Less	99	117.99	14.49	-4.65***
	More	317	124.99	12.58	

Note, ***= $p > .001$, **= $p > .01$, and*= $p > 0.5$, obs.= observation, Std. = Standard deviation

The t-test revealed a significant difference between EI and problem-solving attempts. Higher EI bearers (mean = 125.76) were more eager to work with teachers to solve the learning puzzles. Less EI bearers (mean = 119) exhibited low engagement in illuminating challenges due to reduced positive, innovative, and cooperative behavior. EI holders had a higher success rate in securing teacher assistance. Students who find it more challenging to solve problems have a significantly lower mean EI score than those who find it less complicated. This difference was statistically significant (T-value = -4.40, $p < .001$).

The relationship between EI and the classroom environment was quite strong. Compared to low-level EI (mean = 114.97) holder students, higher EI holder (mean = 124.73) pupils thought the classroom was an excellent place to learn. It shows that emotional perception and management abilities had a favorable view of the learning environment in the school. Students in a perceived not-good child-friendly learning environment have a significantly lower mean EI score than those in a good class environment. This difference was statistically significant (T-value = -5.40, $p < .001$).

Notably, students with higher EI have reported feeling more respect for the teacher. T-test results reveal that students with higher EI (mean = 124.67) felt more appreciated when they met their class teacher than students with lower EI (mean = 121.7). Students with greater EI, as opposed to those with lower EI, were more dedicated to the instructor who helped them progress academically because they have an open mentality and strong management skills.

Higher EI holders are more aware of their role as learners in the classroom. A higher EI bearer ($m = 124.99$) was actively interested in understanding and correctly regulating their own and other people's emotions. They had worked more efficiently as a result. Students with less work consciousness have a significantly lower mean EI score compared to those with more work consciousness. There was a statistically significant (T-value = -4.65, $p < .001$) difference.

For instance, Table 1 suggests various aspects of teachers' relations, such as sharing experiences, fear levels, motivation, pleasure at meetings, problem-solving, class environment, and work consciousness, are associated with differences in students' Emotional Intelligence scores. The t-tests indicate that these differences are statistically significant in most cases, providing valuable insights into the relationship between these variables.

Multivariate Analysis

Binary logistic regression is used in multivariate analysis to find functional correlations. The influence of EI was determined by sharing experiences, talking about fears, motivation, pleasure feelings, instructors' contributions, respect, and displeasure with teaching. Table 2 presents the results of a logistic regression analysis exploring the distribution linkage between EI and various aspects of relationships with teachers.

Sharing experiences and EI have essential connections. Students with higher EI scores shared 2.17 times more experiences with teachers than students with lower EI scores. Students with higher EI scores took advantage of more possibilities for sharing experiences since they were more aware of their jobs and how to manage relationships. On the other hand, students who experienced more fear of teachers have an odds ratio of 1.80 ($p < 0.05$) compared to those with less anxiety. This implies that the odds of having higher emotional intelligence were 1.80 times greater for students who reported less fear of teachers. However, they were successful in managing relationships with teachers. This fear might appear due to work responsibility.

Being more motivated by teachers is associated with an odds ratio of 1.67, but this result is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). The relationship between being motivated by teachers and emotional intelligence has not been firmly established based on this analysis. Similarly, experiencing more pleasure at meetings is associated with an odds ratio of 1.61 ($p > 0.05$). While the odds ratio is not statistically significant, it suggests a trend that is not strong enough to reach conventional significance levels.

EI and attempts to overcome challenges in the learning process have a clear relationship. Students with higher EI scores are 3.5 times more likely to consult an expert when seeking a teacher's assistance to solve a problem. Using experts' support, their grasp of power and management abilities helped to forge alliances and solve issues. Higher emotional intelligence significantly increases the students' involvement in the problem-solving process. Their understanding of power and managing skills helped them build relationships and benefited from solving problems by taking the support of experts.

Table 2. *Distribution Linkage Between EI and Relationships With Teachers Based on Logistic Regression*

EI and relationships		Odds Ratio	5%CI	Marginal effect	
Share experience	Less	ref			
	More	2.17***	1.36-3.42	.149***	.059-.24
Fear with teacher	Less	ref			
	More	1.80*	1.14- 2.81	.11*	.024- .19
Motivated by teacher	Less	ref			
	More	1.67	.86-3.211	0.1	-0.268
Pleasure at meeting	Less	ref			
	More	1.61	.94- 2.71	0.092	-0.2
Solve the problems	Less	ref			
	More	3.50***	1.81-6.75	.26***	.12-.41
Class environment	Not good	ref			
	Good	1.67	.70-1.89	0.027	-0.18
Raise respect for the teacher	Less	ref			
	More	0.99*	.618-.57	-0.002	-0.16
Consciousness	Less	ref			
	More	1.88*	1.11-3.18	.125*	.016-.233
	cons	.084***	.034- .20		

Note ***= $p>0.001$, **= $p>0.01$, and *= $p>0.05$, ref. = Reference category

Importantly, individuals with more consciousness stayed more aware of their task two times longer (OR = 1.88) than those with less consciousness. If we support increasing one unit of emotional intelligence, it will increase twelve percent of the chances of a good relationship. Better EI holders are more successful in constructing better relationships, work consciousness, and positive attitudes toward their instructors.

It is anticipated that more mindful people tend to become more sensitive to problem-solving in educational settings. Comparatively high EI holders have more than 1.67 times more possibilities to be in a positive classroom setting, are happy to meet, and are automatically shown more respect throughout the meeting period than those with less EI. For instance, a study reveals that pupils with greater EI have more chances to develop good relationships with instructors. An effective predictor of maintaining connections with instructors is a higher EI level. The constant term (0.084, $p<.001$) represents the estimated baseline probability of having higher emotional intelligence when all other variables are constant. For instance, logistic regression results indicate

that sharing experiences, fear with teachers, raising respect for teachers, and problem-solving built significant relations with emotional intelligence. Similarly, motivation, pleasure at meetings, and class environment do not show statistically significant associations with emotional intelligence. Higher consciousness is associated with increased odds of having higher emotional intelligence.

Discussion

Emotional intelligence has significant relationships with teacher-student relations. Notably, sharing experiences significantly increases emotional intelligence, emphasizing the importance of open communication. Additionally, a supportive and less intimidating learning environment, indicated by reduced fear of teachers, plays a crucial role in fostering emotional intelligence. While higher motivation by teachers shows a positive trend, it does not reach statistical significance, warranting further exploration. Furthermore, problem-solving skills significantly contribute to higher emotional intelligence, highlighting the need for programs to strengthen these skills. The class environment and raising respect for teachers do not show significant associations, suggesting that other factors may play more critical roles. Finally, emphasizing consciousness and mindfulness is recommended for enhancing emotional intelligence in students. These insights offer actionable recommendations for educators and policymakers seeking to optimize teacher-student relationships and promote emotional intelligence development in academic settings.

Students who share more experiences with their teachers have a significantly higher EI. A positive and open exchange of experiences contributes to the development of emotional intelligence. Similarly, higher EQ students are more engaged in sharing their experiences with their peers and teachers and have vigorously participated in communication. They might communicate fluently, pay attention intently, and perceive the feelings expressed via language. Better communication and more solid relationships may result from this. After completing a systematic review, Yadisaputra (2021) discovered, supported by the current study, that EI significantly impacted teenagers' subjective well-being (relationships). Muhtadi et al. (2022) came to the same conclusion. Their meta-analysis demonstrated how EI has improved teacher interactions by fostering positive attitudes and energizing thoughts. EI directly impacts building relationships.

Students with higher EI scores are more motivated, feel more joy while studying, and have a more optimistic outlook. Also, they have a favorable perspective on others' efforts, accept them with gratitude, and acknowledge their assistance. They are more eager to learn about the advancement of their academic careers. In primary school

students in Spain, consistency was found by Arias et al. (2022), which revealed that the outcomes maintain a high level of academic motivation and a mid-to-high degree of emotional intelligence across all of its components, including self-conscience, self-control, emotional use, empathy, and social skills. They, therefore, show a favorable and significant relationship between EI and motivation for academic work. Higher motivation by teachers is associated with higher EI scores in students. Teachers who inspire and motivate students contribute positively to developing their emotional intelligence. Similarly, students with higher EI have taken advantage of more significant opportunities to exchange experiences with teachers. They put more thought into their job and cultivate positive connections to get support. Studies of American and German students in higher education indicated that greater EI formed a good and significant link to engaging in quality interaction, according to a similar finding by Lopes et al. (2004). Similarly, EI subscales (e.g., MSCEIT) also demonstrated a favorable relationship with social contact. They establish trusting relationships and are at ease controlling their emotions and feeling at ease during a meeting or encounter.

Students find it less challenging to solve problems and exhibit higher mean EI scores. This indicates that problem-solving skills, nurtured in a supportive environment, contribute to emotional intelligence. Similarly, EI holders are more involved in problem-solving and more successful at getting the teacher's help. Students with higher EI have sought the teacher's advice to address their academic difficulties by preserving positive connections. Their sharp awareness and effective mood control helped them do their tasks effectively. As Deniz et al. (2013) research showed, EI and problem-solving have a favorable relationship. Holders of higher EI have a greater chance of participating in collaborative problem-solving.

Those with higher EI ratings feel more appreciated when they meet their teacher. Due to their open mentality and strong interpersonal management skills, their teacher encouraged them in their academic progress and received much of their devotion. In the instruction class, pupils with higher EI paid more attention to their tasks. They actively learn how to manage their emotions and those of others adequately, and they do it at work. It is anticipated that more mindful people will become more sensitive to learning issues and seek external assistance when necessary. Their performance has improved as a result. For instance, encouraging open communication and shared experiences between teachers and students can enhance emotional intelligence.

On the other hand, creating a supportive and non-intimidating learning environment can help reduce fear and positively impact emotional intelligence. If we address emotional intelligence in the classroom instruction period, programs that enhance students' problem-solving skills may contribute significantly to their emotional intelligence. On

the other hand, EI may support conducting effective classroom instruction and better learning in career development. Furthermore, while not significant, pleasure with the teacher, motivation, and class environment, the positive trend suggests that exploring ways to boost student motivation might indirectly influence emotional intelligence. However, the study suggests that some factors, like pleasure at meetings and the class environment, may warrant further investigation to understand their specific impact on emotional intelligence better.

Conclusion

This study concludes that EI is significantly associated with sharing experiences, fear of teachers, problem-solving and word consciousness. Similarly, EI had moderate associations with respect for teachers and the classroom environment. However, the pleasure of meeting and the inspiration from teachers have weaker relations with EI. Generally, students with higher EI scores have strong and positive relationships with teachers. They actively participate in exchanging experiences, have favorable perceptions of the classroom environment and understand the role of instructors in advancing academic careers. Students with higher EI scores exhibit greater enjoyment, a more optimistic outlook, and a constant respect for instructors and other respectable individuals. Higher EI students tend to have better relationships with teachers, are more engaged in problem-solving and relationship-building processes and have a positive perception of the classroom environment. They also show more respect for teachers and are more mindful of their tasks. The implication of this study supports the understanding that students' EI levels can help educators tailor their approach to foster better relationships, support problem-solving skills, and create a positive learning environment. Students with higher EI might benefit from targeted interventions to enhance their learning experiences and teacher engagement.

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