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Emotional Competency in Teaching: A Qualitative Study of Practices among Preschool and Elementary School Teachers

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Abstract. This qualitative phenomenological research aims to analyze how teachers incorporate the emotional component, as a soft skill into their teaching practices. The paper presents findings from 40 interviews conducted with preschool and elementary school teachers in Marrakesh. The results reveal that while teachers recognize the importance of emotional competency, few have integrated activities to strengthen its acquisition. The study highlights the need for teacher training programs that focus on promoting emotional competence through activities centered around emotional regulation and communication. The paper concludes by initiating a reflection process to establish the fundamentals of a pedagogical design based on emotions, which can contribute to more positive and nurturing learning environments and positively impact students' academic and social outcomes.

Keywords: emotional competence; teacher practices; children; learning

1. Introduction

The scientific literature emphasizes the significance of emotion regulation in creating favorable conditions for the teaching and learning process, for both the teacher and the learners (Artino & Jones, 2012; Ford & Gross, 2019; Ji et al., 2022). Indeed, any learning activity is an emotionally charged experience (Graesser &

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D'Mello, 2012). Therefore, in the context of the classroom emotion, cognition, and action are integrally connected.

This suggests that to successfully promote learning situations and content, they must be encoded cognitively and effectively (Cuisinier, 2016). However, incorporating the factual dimension of emotions into the educational process may lead to misunderstandings regarding the value of teaching and the purpose of didactic methods. From the teacher's perspective, giving learners free rein over their emotions may seem non-constructive because it deviates from traditional didactic practices.

Indeed, teachers often adopt generic conceptions of their role as facilitators of soft skills (Ouchen et al., 2022), whose job is to ensure the overall harmony of the class group. They may view this as synonymous with channeling the regulation of energies. In other words, leading a class often entails structuring interactions in a manner that is organized and controlled by the teacher. Therefore, students' emotions can trigger interactional dynamics that can be challenging to comprehend and manage, particularly in preschool and primary classrooms.

In such cases, it is natural to question teachers' ability to effectively respond to the intensity of emotions spontaneously expressed by children during difficult times. As well as their predisposition to leave their comfort zone and to deliberately adopt new humanizing conceptions of animation and class management, where compliance with instructions is not the ultimate goal of the didactic action but rather the recognition of des emotional feelings and needs of the child.

This can be achieved through more open and dynamic didactic actions, which aim to enhance the intellectual and human development of learners (Celume et al., 2022). However, the outward expression of emotions in the classroom can be misunderstood by teachers, as it may require them to intervene didactically in two distinct relational spheres: private and public. That can be confusing for teachers quit are generally used to à internalizing their own emotions to focus solely on the transmission of knowledge.

From the child's perspective, expressing emotions related to difficult experiences or delicate family situations can be challenging. The child may be concerned about the looks and judgments of their peers, which can be subjective at this age. This concern may be even more pronounced in the digital age, where children's emotions can be subject to online scrutiny and cyberbullying (Kircaburun et al., 2020).

Some researchers suggest that it is crucial to protect the child's nascent sensitivity in such situations (Aldao et al., 2010), while others argue that allowing the child to express repressed emotions freely, without constraints, can lead to greater emotional well-being and personal growth. Finding a balance between protecting the child's emotional well-being and fostering emotional expression and growth is essential for effective emotional development.

These dilemmas explain why, as a learning object, emotions are often confronted with ethical and social issues. As a result, they are neglected, sidelined, and often not accepted in the classroom context. This stems from a lack of thorough and contextualized understanding Positive effects of their use.

These findings highlight the apprehensions related to the consideration of emotions in the classroom. This theme constitutes the backdrop of the present study on the teaching practice of emotion management in the Moroccan context. The objective is to find out how teachers' and learners' emotions are taken into account in the classroom and according to what modalities. This study stands out in its novelty and significance by exploring the concrete practices of emotional management among teachers, filling an important void in the existing literature. By providing valuable insights into how to address emotions in education in Morocco, this research offers practical implications for educators and contributes to the advancement of the field.

By employing a phenomenological approach, we seek to capture the subjective experiences and perspectives of teachers and learners regarding emotions. Additionally, through exploratory research methods, we aim to uncover new insights and develop a comprehensive understanding of emotions in this specific educational context.

This study holds significant importance as it addresses a relatively understudied subject—the management of emotions in Moroccan classrooms. By delving into this topic, we contribute to a deeper understanding of the reality and practices of teachers in managing learners' emotions. Moreover, our research opens the door for critical reflections on emotional education and the necessary conditions for its effective implementation within the Moroccan school system.

The present research is therefore an attempt to understand teachers' perceptions of emotions in the city of Marrakech. Its objective is to draw up an inventory of the integration of this component in the didactic practices of primary and preschool teachers in the prefecture of Marrakech. It is a question of seeing how emotional competence is taught to the children and which are didactic resources mobilized for this purpose. The objective of this study is to respond to the following questions:

Question 1: What are teachers' perceptions of the emotions experienced by children in the classroom?

Question 2: How do teachers perceive and understand their own emotions in the context of their teaching profession?

Question 3: What pedagogical practices do teachers use in their classrooms to strengthen emotion management?

2. Literature Review

the particular context of the Post COVID-19 and recent global crises have undeniably influenced priorities at school (Delacourt et al., 2020). Indeed, the health crisis has raised awareness of the importance of managing the emotions that overwhelm individuals during difficult times. Especially for children who represent a population at risk due to their fragility (Chanchlani et al., 2021).

Recalling that (UNICEF, 2022) stresses following the Covid pandemic, many children feel neglected, scared, anxious, and even worried about their future. In Morocco, data from the latest surveys of the High Commission for Planning in 2020 revealed that children have been heavily affected by this unprecedented crisis. They were subject to negative feelings such as hypersensitivity or

nervousness (7.1%), general fatigue (5.3%), depression (5.0%), and lack of interest or pleasure in usual activities (8%). Children's emotions may be impaired in this case (Williams & Riskind, 2004), which may result in a lack of skill or behavioral flexibility to respond intelligently to emotions during learning.

Indeed, emotion is considered an "adaptive multicomponent phenomenon with important social functions that are acquired throughout life" (Christophe, 2019b). Studies explain that in children, emotion constitutes "a brief and intense behavioral and physiological response reflecting the subjective experience affected by an internal or external event" (Christophe, 2019a).

It is therefore a sensation and an internal mental construction and corresponds to a personal and personalized processing of information from an external situational element. This processing can be done consciously or unconsciously and can subsequently produce negative or positive emotional results (Goleman, 2005).

In other words, negative emotion can lead the child to react instantaneously either by fleeing, defensive attack, or inert immobilization. Knowing full well that a child is not yet capable of understanding and interpreting the situational and pragmatic elements of his social context. These elements explain why the emotion experienced by the child is quickly interpreted by an observable emotional movement. Indeed, the externalization of emotion in the child is brief and lasts only a few seconds.

Emotions are translated by impulsive or compulsive actions that are imposed on him instantly without him being able to control them. Children experience a range of emotions while adapting to the social environment of the school, including anger, pride, and envy, which can be intensified by educational materials (Denham et al., 2022).

Studies show that expressing emotions in a way that is socially accepted is linked to the child's ability to effectively manage emotions. This management takes the form of a process that intensifies, mitigates, or maintains the effects of the emotions experienced (Gross & Thompson, 2007).

Cuisinier (2016) specify that the process helps the child to decrease negative emotions and to intensify, maintain or contain positive emotions. In other words, to be more successful, one should learn how to maintain, monitor, control, and evaluate their emotions to better act in complex situations. To do this, they should learn to develop emotion management skills, namely understanding their own emotions, understanding the emotions of others, and expressing efficiently their emotions (Gross & Thompson, 2007; Koole, 2009).

It should be noted, however, that the management of emotions is external learning (by adults) before being gradually internalized by the child. It is therefore a gradual development that is possible not only thanks to lived experiences but also thanks to the intervention of the child's close environment.

In line with previous research findings, (OECD, 2018) emphasizes the crucial role of pedagogical actors in fostering specific skills related to emotion management. These skills include but are not limited to emotional regulation, empathy, and effective communication. The OECD report highlights the importance of teachers

utilizing diverse interpersonal approaches and responses to nurture these skills in children.

Teacher practice significantly influences learners' acquisition of emotional management skills (Baudoin & Galand, 2021). Durlak et al., (2011) explain that it is nevertheless essential to include the development of emotional competencies in curricula to guarantee the well-being of learners and their personal development. At stake is the consideration of emotions in the didactic process.

Celume et al., (2022) nevertheless state that to teach and introduce emotions into school activities, teachers must have previously developed them. Indeed, the perception of one's emotions as a teacher has a significant influence on the overall classroom climate. Studies on teachers' emotions show that teachers who have this skill are more focused on the learner and their learning needs. Chen et al. (2021) bring up that due to the teacher's positive emotions, she is better able to create close relationships with the learners. On the contrary Audrin, (2020) explains that negative emotions can affect learners' academic success.

It is important to highlight that negative emotional reactions among teachers can be attributed to the inherent pressures of the profession. Stephanou & Oikonomou (2018) further emphasize that the teaching profession often entails strong and potentially negative emotions due to the requirement of aligning emotional reactions with professional expectations.

Moreover, Genoud et al. (2009) researched the challenges faced by teachers, highlighting how these difficulties can give rise to psychological distress, acute stress, and professional burnout, particularly in the primary education sector. Additionally, Hascoët & Audrin (2021) have observed a general sense of malaise among teachers.

3. Research Methodology

The design of this study is presented below :

Research approach and design	Sampling technique and research site	Instrument for data	collection and data analysis procedure	Ethical procedure
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Figure 1: Research design

3.1. Research approach and design

Exploratory research is used to develop this study, this methodical choice is motivated by the lack of data regarding. In this perspective, a qualitative approach of a phenomenological type was used to examine the practices of the participating teachers and to analyze their discourses to note their perceptions of emotions (Fortin & Gagnon, 2016).

This phenomenological approach, provides significant information about the participant's experience, without being a simple linear, and purely explanatory reading of the collected remarks.

3.2. Research site

The region of Marrakech-Safi holds the second-highest population among the seventy-five Moroccan provinces and prefectures. It also has a significant share in the field of education, with 14.5% and 13.9% of national preschool and school education respectively. In our study, we define preschool as educational institutions that provide early childhood education to children typically between the ages of 3 and 5, before their enrollment in formal schooling.

Elementary school, on the other hand, encompasses the foundational years of formal education, catering to children aged 6 to 12. Within the context of our research, preschool, and elementary school teachers refer to educators working within these specific educational settings.

3.3. Instrument for data

Semi-structured interviews were conducted. a grid composed of six guiding questions serving as a theme was developed for this study. It allows for the collection of information and its order in a methodical manner. The questions also help to guide the interview so that the exchanges do not stray from the research objectives. Table 1 summarizes the different themes discussed.

Table 1: Grid of interview themes

Objective1	Teachers' perception of learners' emotions	(a) The different forms of emotional expression in children (b) The source of emotion in the children.
Objective2	Teachers' self-perception of their own emotions	(a) The sources of emotions for teachers. (b) teachers managing emotions
Objective3	Pedagogical practice of teachers around emotions	The impact of emotions on children's learning (b) Teachers' feedback on learners' emotional expression (c) Pedagogical activities used in the classroom

3.4. Study population

Our research includes a sample of 40 volunteer teachers selected according to a reasoned choice respecting internal diversification (Kalerante et al., 2020). It should be noted that in the collection and presentation of data, the term teacher refers to both teachers and educators. The study's participants are teachers working in public and private preschools and primary schools affiliated with the Ministry of Education in the urban and rural communes of the city of Marrakech during the 2021-2022 school year.

We purposefully chose these teachers after taking into account a variety of variables (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This sampling makes it possible to obtain a maximum of profiles that vary according to the following elements: the nature of the initial training received, the number of years of seniority, the classes taught, and the teaching zone. Table 2 shows the selected sample of participants in the study.

Table 2: Matrix of characteristics of the study population

Variable		Preschool	Primary
Urban	Private	5	5
	Public	5	5
Rural	Private	5	5
	Public	5	5
Gender	Feminine	16	9
	Masculin	4	11
Academic background	Licence	19	15
	Master	1	5
Experiment	1 - 5 years	12	4
	6- 15 years	7	10
	More than 15	1	6

3.5. Collection Data

The data for this study was gathered through semi-structured interviews with preschool and elementary school teachers. These interviews were conducted either in person face-to-face, based on the preferences of each participant allowing, for direct interaction and in-depth exploration of the research topic. To ensure data validity, the authors took several actions. They scheduled appointments in advance, considering the availability of each participant, and conducted the interviews in a comfortable and confidential setting. The interviewees also actively participated in the validation process by reviewing and verifying the accuracy of the interview transcriptions.

3.6. Data analysis procedure

The qualitative data analysis was conducted thematically, following the method presented by Van der Maren, (2014). The analyst utilized a combination of paper-based notes and non-specialized software (Word) to identify, record, and analyze the emerging themes.

Simultaneously, a coding grid was developed for each theme. The interviews were transcribed manually, ensuring that the participants' words were faithfully recorded and translated without using any abbreviation system. The interviewees' statements were not modified, interpreted, or altered in any way. This preservation of participants' original words and expressions ensures the utmost rigor and veracity of the collected comments.

The transcribed data from the interviews underwent a thorough reading to cross-reference and organize the information collected. Repetitive data and redundant comments were eliminated to identify only the most relevant information. To accomplish this, the verbatim transcripts were broken down into units of meaning, representing distinct actions related to each dimension of the interview grid. Each interview was transcribed and analyzed before proceeding to the next one. This iterative process allowed for the identification of data saturation.

At the end of this study, the encoded excerpts were subjected to a discursive review, which consists of themes that fit with the scientific literature (Fortin &

Gagnon, 2016). The classification was also validated by expert individuals to promote the greatest objectivity and credibility during this step. The type of coding used was mixed, meaning that some themes were predefined by the conceptual framework, nevertheless, the themes analyzed were also open to modifications and additions (Van der Maren, 2014). The coding key was calculated according to the reliability formula of Miles and Huberman (2015) and the reliability coefficient was 92%.

3.7. Ethical procedure

Informed consent was provided before the interviews commenced and research participants were informed that they may withdraw at any stage of the study. Confidentiality and anonymity are ensured by removing all identifying information from the interviews and replacing it with distinctive codes.

4. Results and discussion

The results of the interview are presented according to the axes transcribed on the interview grid.

4.1. Teachers' perception of learners' emotions

The data presented in Table 3 reveal that the majority of the interviewed teachers affirmed that children's emotions are a tangible reality that punctuates learning sequences. The teachers are therefore adept at recognizing these observable manifestations. The analysis of the content of the interviews shows that these observations concern both the verbal and non-verbal expression of emotions. Verbal expressions are more often cited by primary school teachers, while preschool teachers report that young children verbalize their internal emotions less.

Only one teacher among those interviewed mentioned this modality of expression at the preschool level. In general, the teachers emphasized the expressive diversity of emotion as well as its momentary nature.

Table 3: Matrix of items for the different forms of emotional expression in children

Verbal communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Often students tell me: "I don't feel well teacher"(E10). - "I have a close relationship with my students and they often confide in me about how they feel. » (E15). - "If they are tired, they tell me: I want to sleep"(E24).
Non-verbal communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "I have a deep understanding of my students and can quickly discern their emotional states through simple observation." (E37) - "It's so obvious that we don't even question it anymore" (E19) - "Sometimes when students become very tired and can no longer attend class, they jump for joy when I tell them it's time for recess." (E4). - "Even if they feel very sad, students often hide their emotions once they enter the classroom. "(E9).

On the other hand, the responses show that the teachers commonly observe or perceive negative emotions in the classroom.

Table 4: Matrix of emotion-related behavior items

"Impulsive" (E25)	"They argue" (E35)	"They're noisy. " (E12)
"Too agitated" (E9)	"crying" (E11)	"Jump for joy" (E17)
"They don't stand in place" (E14)	"They refuse to listen to instructions. " (E8)	"Talk a lot to each other" (E2)
"They're distracted" (E1)	"They are silent " (E14)	" Run in all directions" (E19)
"They are joyful " (E10)	" Very sensitive" (E30)	" They argue among themselves." (E5)

All of these emotions listed in Table 4 are described by the teachers as belonging to the child's private sphere. According to them, these emotions are often associated with family problems "Some children don't feel good at home" (E35). "Generally they are in a happy mood, but sometimes when they are not, I realize very quickly that it is because of their family problems" (E28).

On the other hand, in primary school, in addition to emotions related to family problems, children are also subject to emotions related to learning in class and those related to evaluation "They are upset when they don't understand" (E16) and "yes, especially on exam day" (E9). Other teachers also talk about conflicts between students: "Sometimes just a little word wrong can cause huge anger" (E36) and "they often argue" (E18).

4.2. Teachers' self-perception of their own emotions

In the interviews, the teachers interviewed mentioned their private lives as the main source of emotions, although the majority said they drew boundaries between their professional and private lives. Participants also cited the school context as a source of additional anxiety and apprehension, as it can be "restrictive" according to what they say.

This feeling is reinforced by the difficulties of practicing related to the public, such as the problem of large groups, which requires more effort on the part of the teachers to carry out their mission, although they are aware that the accumulation of these negative feelings could be triggered at times of peak stress or fatigue. Preschool teachers, especially the new recruits, mainly mentioned a feeling of "fatigue" caused by the agitated and uncontrollable behavior of some children.

However, as shown in Table 5, in addition to the negative emotions, teachers also mentioned positive emotions that marked their daily professional life. Several participants said they were "proud" (E23) and even "honored" (E30) to be teachers. One participant even stated that "it's the passion for teaching" (E22) that allows him to overcome the day-to-day challenges of his job.

Table 5: Matrix of items related to the teaching profession

	Primary	Preschool
Rural	"No matter what mood I'm in today, I try to do my job properly..." (E27) "Because of how much I work, I never have time to worry" (E38)	"I'm at a loss on what to do" (E23) "I feel good in the company of children" (E35)
Urban	"When I have problems, the students don't see it" (E8) E "I see my students as my children and I am happy to work with them" (E20)	E "I do my best." (E5) E "It depends on the students...they can be difficult to manage at times" (E14)

The information presented in Table 6 sheds light on the fact that most of the teachers we met described 'pressures' that can lead to "stress", "fatigue", and even "exhaustion". However, it should be noted that the teachers did not mention any techniques for managing their own emotions.

Table 6: Matrix of items from teachers' comments

	Rural		Urban	
	Private	Public	Private	Public
Primary	"The administration stresses us out" (E27)	"We're on our own." (E38)	"I always try not to get too excited" (E6)	"This generation of kids is tough." (E18)
Preschool	"I can't stand the pressure from the parents" (E23)	"I feel completely drained at the end of my working day" (E32)	"Children are little kings and we have no strength left" (E1)	"I don't think I'll stay in my current job for very long...I need to change jobs." (E12)

In the Post-Covid period, these pressures have worsened. Some teachers show signs of Burnout by stating that they no longer have "the strength to continue teaching" (E15), which illustrates a sign of de-motivation, "I have zero morale every time I go to work" (E20). Other participants mentioned difficulties related to distance learning and working independently: "I didn't know how to work in these conditions" (E12), or "My colleagues also had the impression of being abandoned, we felt a bit lost, we had no one to ask for advice" (E39).

In this sense, to meet the demands of the job, teachers use personal resources such as relaxing and resting, as indicated by one teacher: "Once I'm home I turn off all the lights to rest" (E132), "I go for a walk" (E36). Regarding the resources that the school provides to teachers, the majority mention "lack of training" and some talk about "lack of communication" "lack of resources" and "lack of consideration of their emotions"

Nevertheless, faced with the frequency of emotional crises, teachers often find themselves unable to manage all the crises simultaneously. In addition, they have to deal with their own emotions as well; one teacher reports that his personal

emotions have an impact on his teaching: "If a student gets on my nerves, I can't finish my lesson" (E15)

In general, however, teachers can manage their emotions in the classroom and "put up" with the children's emotions in their own words, although they find it very difficult to deal with the constant demands of parents. Some teachers interviewed spoke of parents' feelings of anger and frustration towards them. They report that parents are very impatient about their children's learning progress, demanding rigorous traditional school activities and criticizing teachers for using playful games or songs at the preschool level. Teachers even recall conflictual situations in this regard

4.3. Pedagogical practice of teachers around emotions

The purpose of this section is to understand the concrete practices that teachers put in place. The teachers' responses show that they are not indifferent to children's emotional expressions. The majority of teachers try to respond either indirectly by talking to the child in private or directly by stopping the lesson for a few minutes and discussing it in plenary, especially when there is generalized emotion in the class.

Table 7 underscores the fact that most teachers acknowledge the direct impact of emotional competence on learning. They all agree that the quality of learning is imperatively linked to the regulation of emotion in the classroom. Some said that these emotions are "contagious" and influence the general climate of the classroom. One teacher considers that "50% of children's learning is linked to the emotions they feel" (E20). According to the teachers, these emotions materialize into behaviors that illustrate the degree of willingness to learn. This remark emphasizes the cognitive dimension of emotions, as they are influenced by students' success decisions and thus condition their classroom behaviors.

Table 7: Matrix of items on the impact of emotions on learning

	Emotions positives	Emotions negatives
Primary	"They learn faster " (E6) "They are more attentive" (E16) "They work easily in small groups" (E30) " They are motivated " (E37)	"They are isolated" (E10) "They are impulsive" (E20) " They can't concentrate " (E39)
Preschool	"Yes, they are reactive (E4) " They sing, dance " (E23) " Smiling and pleasant " (E33)	" Cry easily " (E27) "Stay in their corners" (E36) " Impossible to get them to express themselves " (E40)

In light of these remarks, the teachers interviewed are aware of the importance of being empathetic and listening to the children's emotions, and at this point, they specify that reassuring communication is necessary.

Based on the feedback provided on learners' emotional expression, teachers do not report engaging in specific pedagogical activities. As one teacher stated, "I have no particular activities." Instead, their approach is to allow children the necessary time to regain their composure. As another teacher mentioned, "I don't rush them when they're upset. I give them time to calm down."

Teachers often feel that they cannot effectively discuss emotions with a large number of children, causing them to suppress emotional expression to stay focused on the lesson. Many of the teachers interviewed, on the other hand, try to find the best way to accompany the children and guide them by offering advice and recommendations.

In preschool, teachers use more distraction techniques such as handing out candy or presenting toys, but only when the behavior is disruptive to the flow of the lesson. They justify their action by the frequency of the children's emotional signs and the impossibility of managing them all. All the teachers said that they do not use activities that focus on emotional learning and that they do not have specific resources for it.

Others are surprised that such a pedagogical approach even exists. However, the teachers interviewed were unanimous about the importance of ongoing training to better equip them to manage their own emotions and those of the children in the classroom .

Table 8: Matrix of teaching practice items for emotional competence

Teachers' instructional practices for developing emotional competence in the Classroom	Feedback	<i>"Sometimes I communicate with them"(E7) "I know, but I have to continue with the class. (E19) "I try to be a good listener, but I can't do it with 35 students in the class. (E20)</i>
	Activities	<i>"I don't use any tools, I just talk to my students(E8). "I usually discuss with the students about their problems"(E12)</i>

5. Discussion

This research focused on exploring teacher practices to develop the emotional management of learners in a school setting. This discussion is structured in three parts: Teachers' perception of learners' emotions, Teachers' self-perception of their own emotions, and teachers' pedagogical practices around emotions.

The results show that the participants interviewed are aware of the issues related to the teaching of this skill. According to them, these issues are related to the quality of acquisition, the regularity of learning, and the improvement of the general conditions of cognitive and effective assimilation of their learner. This is a positive point because the management of children's emotions is first done with the help of an adult (Cuisinier, 2016). Nonetheless, teachers display some confusion in their comments between the concept of emotion and common-sense meanings such as affect or mood. expression of emotions For participants, welcoming emotions is seen as a functional asset to minimize challenging behavior. The majority of teachers interviewed report personal efforts to collect and respond to their learners' emotions.

Authors point out in this regard that facial expression represents a universal indicator of the momentary manifestation of emotion. Studies show the need to adopt a common frame of reference and a transversal approach in teaching emotions to children (Curby et al., 2021).

Furthermore, teachers' comments demonstrate a facility for recognizing children's emotions. Participants promote discussion of children's experiences and

knowledge by placing a premium on children's personal experiences. Yet, the majority of teachers testify to their difficulty in dealing with the consequential negative emotions for some learners. They claim that these emotions affect their learning. These statements echo those of others who say that in the absence of psychological help or support, the emotionally vulnerable child produces extreme behaviors to externalize his needs and feelings. Nevertheless, emotions are predominant. Furthermore, this research also revealed the lack of information regarding the functioning of emotional management as a condition of individual and group well-being. Many teachers lament that they are not adequately trained to address the emotional and behavioral needs of their students.

In this regard, (Audrin, 2020) notes that teachers are called upon to mobilize their expertise and develop their knowledge and know-how for the well-being of their learners. Some teachers resort to positive reinforcement nevertheless they explain that environmental conditions can affect the quality of their responses. The teachers' comments also point out that the school context presents obstacles to this change in practice, such as lack of time, lack of collaboration, and the entrenchment of a culture focused on academic performance at the expense of holistic development. According to many researchers the difficulties of integrating emotions in a school context are multifactorial (Ferreira et al., 2021; Morcom, 2014; Poirel et al., 2019).

In this regard, we found that the participants were not informed about practices and/or teaching methods that promote learning to manage emotions. What seems to be generalized to all teachers, however, is the absence of courses specifically to empower future school personnel to teach emotions to learners or even to develop them for themselves (Orlova et al., 2015). Therefore, emotions in the classroom remain an entity on the fringe of teachers' concerns and educational programs.

This aligns with the findings of previous research, which indicate that teachers who received training and support in addressing emotions in the classroom demonstrated a greater awareness and integration of emotions in their teaching practices compared to those without such training (Cuisinier, 2016 ; Curby et al., 2021). Providing teachers with the necessary tools and training to effectively manage and support students' emotions is crucial for enhancing the overall classroom experience and promoting positive learning outcomes

This study makes an original contribution by shedding light on teachers' perceptions, pedagogical practices, and their own perception of emotions, providing a comprehensive insight into emotional management in the field of education. The findings underscore the need to further research to deepen our understanding and enhance emotional management practices in the school environment.

Future studies could focus on examining the effectiveness of different pedagogical approaches, investigating the long-term impact of emotional management on learners' well-being, and developing specific training programs to strengthen teachers' emotional competencies. These future endeavors would enrich the field of emotional management in education and provide further support to teachers in their crucial role in fostering learner development.

6. Conclusion

This study provided an opportunity to reflect on an approach to teaching emotional competence at the preschool and primary school levels. The interest is to address teachers' concerns about children's well-being during difficult learning times. The data collected revealed that the concept of emotional intelligence is a vague and poorly understood concept by teachers. Indeed, the analysis of the interviews shows a real need for a referenced appropriation of the practice of teaching/learning emotional intelligence, while ensuring that its application is easy and applicable for all pedagogical actors. Given the results we have arrived at, it would be interesting to recommend that teachers be made aware of the positive impacts of emotional intelligence and that they be given the training to reinforce the teaching of emotional competence in its behavioral and procedural aspects. Certainly, the passion for the teaching profession is palpable through the words of the participants, their sense of duty is also very present, and it is manifested by their desire to provide children with a quality education. However, the results underline that teachers also need more recognition and motivation. It is therefore essential to rethink support strategies for teachers to help them develop skills to reinforce emotional learning. The teacher must not only master the knowledge of emotional competencies but also know how to transmit them judiciously and pragmatically in the school context. This study highlights how far we still have to go to implement changes that promote the integration and development of emotional intelligence in the learning process.

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