

The Impact of EFL Teachers' Emotional Intelligence and Teacher-Related Variables on Self-Reported EFL Teaching Practices

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Abstract

Teacher emotions form a cornerstone of classroom teaching practices. The study investigated the impact of EFL teachers' traits emotional intelligence, teaching qualifications, teaching experience, teaching stage, gender and age on their self-reported classroom teaching practices. An online survey was administered to 115 EFL teachers. The findings confirmed a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and classroom teaching practices. Teaching experience was found to influence classroom management and pedagogical skills, but not teacher creativity and teacher predictability, which was in favour of the most experienced teachers. Teaching qualifications affected creativity, classroom management and pedagogical skills which was in favour of PhD holders. No effects were detected for teaching stage, age or gender on EFL teachers' classroom teaching practices. The findings are discussed in line with the previous relevant research and the related theories.

Keywords: trait emotional intelligence, EFL teaching practices, teacher-related variables

1. Introduction

Taking into consideration the prominence of refining EFL teachers' classroom teaching practices, understanding the role of emotions in EFL settings have attracted unprecedented research attention in the last few decades (e.g., Awwad, 2019; Awwad & Alkhuba, 2021; Dewaele, 2015; Dewaele, Gkonou, & Mercer, 2018; Evelein, Korthagen, & Brekelmans, 2008; Helsing, 2007; Intrator, 2006; Meyer, 2009; Vesely, Saklofske, & Nordstokk, 2014). Consequently, a line of research has emerged to explore the emotional aspects of teaching practices (Corcoran & Tormey, 2012) with a focus on how to train teachers to exploit their emotions more intelligently to enhance their classroom teaching practices (Intrator, 2006). Studies scrutinising the link between teachers' emotional intelligence (EI) and their classroom teaching practices have adopted qualitative and quantitative approaches to describe how emotions can be regulated in classrooms and quantify the range, depth and facets of teacher emotions to depict a clearer picture regarding the connection between teachers' emotional intelligence and their classroom teaching practices (Corcoran & Tormey, 2012).

Successful teachers are expected to regulate not only their students' emotions but their own emotions as well. Hence, effective EFL teaching is assumed to involve careful management of learners and teachers' emotions in order to maintain the desired rapport between both parties with positive consequences on the whole teaching-learning process. Emotion management is thus ideal since emotional upsurge can be detrimental to any healthy teacher-student bonds (Isen & Reeve, 2005). Narrowing the focus to Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) contexts, not only EFL teachers' emotions seem to inform classroom teaching practices and techniques, but also other teacher-related factors including teachers' age, gender, teaching qualifications and teaching experience (Dewaele et al., 2018). However, it is surprising that the teacher-related factors including emotions and attitudes are still under-researched areas. Therefore, this study is designed to respond to the need for more thorough investigations of the interaction between EFL teachers' emotions and their teaching practices.

2. Literature Review

Emotional intelligence (EI) has been widely researched as an affective trait from different perspectives including teaching and learning (Gkonou, Dewaele & King, 2020). EI was introduced for the first time by Goleman (1998) who defined EI as "the capacity for recognising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships" (p.317). Goleman (1998) branded five main facets

of EI which included 1) self-awareness, which requires people to be aware of their merits and flaws, accept criticism and reflect on that to advance their own performance; 2) self-regulation, which denotes that people control their own feelings in a way that leads to advantageous consequences on their own accomplishments; 3) motivation, which incorporates a set of positive traits to sufficiently do a demanding task; 4) empathy, which requires the capacity to share others' feelings; 5) social skills, which designates the readiness to strengthen interpersonal relationships by the tendency to engage in social interaction.

According to Bar-On (1997), two types of EI have been proposed in psychology, i.e. ability EI (emotional cognitive ability) and Trait EI (emotional self-efficacy). The former is defined as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189). This type of EI has been examined through maximum-performance experiments which attempt to examine how emotions can help individuals solve their problems, adapt to life challenges and enhance social connections. As for Trait EI, Bar-On (1997), described it as "an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures" (p. 14). Hence, Trait EI is suggested to be an important component of life goals attainment and accomplishments at different levels, i.e. professionally, socially and academically.

2.1 Previous Studies

EI has been widely investigated within different areas and disciplines including psychology, business management, sociology and education. Many studies attempted to explore Trait EI and to find out whether it is a static or dynamic personality trait (e.g., Emmerling & Goleman 2003; O'Connor, Nguyen & Anglim, 2017; Perazzo et al. 2021). Despite the fact that this debate is still an ongoing one, there has been a partial agreement that Trait EI is subject to some degree of nurturing and enhancement through training and professional development courses that can be designed to elevate Trait EI (Dewaele et al., 2018; Perazzo, et al. 2021; Petrides et al., 2016). Moreover, it has been advocated that Trait EI can be promoted through accumulated real-world experience (Bar-On, 2004). Acknowledging Trait EI as a skill that can be fostered has attracted EFL teacher training programs to design training courses that aim at helping the novice and experienced teachers advance their own EI (Gkonou & Mercer, 2017). Such training programs are assumed to assist teachers to manage not only their own Trait EI but also their students' EI with positive results on teachers' practices in the classroom and students' uptake.

Reviewing the previous research on the association between Trait EI and EFL teaching practices revealed a promising bond. It was put forward that greater Trait EI is allied with teachers' capability to more effectively manage and handle the high demands of modern complex classroom settings (Powell & Kusuma-Powell, 2010), reducing stress and anxiety (Chan, 2006) and increasing student satisfaction (Brackett et al., 2010). Likewise, teachers with greater of Trait EI are expected to facilitate a friendlier and more motivating classroom atmosphere (Nizielski et al., 2012), and diminish negative manners like student absentees, bullying and hostility (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Richards & Gross, 1999).

Accordingly, Trait EI is predicted to play a major role in EFL classroom settings for many reasons. Initially, modern EFL teaching methods and approaches including Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) are exclusively social as reflected in the interactive and communicative nature of their classroom activities and tasks (Skehan, 2014). Hence, modern EFL settings are predicted to demand high personal, social and emotional skills from both EFL teachers and their students. It is therefore proposed that EFL teachers with better Trait EI will be more competent and productive than teachers with lower Trait EI. Additional reason which can pave the way for a stronger bond between Trait EI and EFL teaching practices is "the increasingly multicultural and multilingual nature of the classrooms in which teachers work as well as the world beyond the classroom" (Gkonou & Mercer, 2017, p. 8). Consequently, EFL teachers need to realize the prominence of having high EI to enable them to cross the borders of their classroom and further develop strong bonds with their students. Finally, EFL teaching practices should be strongly linked to EI owing to the core objective of teaching a foreign language which aims at equipping EFL learners with intercultural competences as a part of the global communicative competency (Karabinar & Guler, 2013). Such competence is assumed to oblige both teachers and learners to develop higher sympathy and empathy which are key components of Trait EI (Mercer, 2016).

So far, previous research on emotional intelligence and EFL teaching practices has yielded mixed results. Dewaele, Gkonou and Mercer, (2018) used questionnaires to gather data from 513 EFL teachers from different countries. The study investigated the influence of Trait EI and teacher-related factors, i.e. teaching experience, language proficiency and gender on EFL teaching practices which was operationalised through four teaching practices. The findings confirmed a positive relationship between Trait EI and teaching experience on one hand, and EFL teaching practices

on the other hand regarding the aspects of pedagogical skills, classroom management and creativity. However, Trait EI was found to be connected negatively to predictability, while gender had no effect on the self-reported EFL teaching practices. Thus, the findings revealed that EFL teachers with longer years of experience and higher EI were more creative, better classrooms managers, and enjoy superior pedagogical skills. On the other hand, they were less predictable in their classrooms.

Kostić-Bobanović (2020) examined the link between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy among novice and experienced EFL teachers. Administering a survey to 213 EFL teachers with various levels of teaching experience, the findings revealed that more experienced teachers exhibited greater levels of EI regarding sociability and self-control factors than novice ones. Moreover, they had better efficacy concerning classroom management and pedagogical skills compared to inexperienced EFL teachers. Finally, the positive correlation between self-efficacy and Trait EI supported the effectiveness of including and nurturing Trait EI through the EFL teacher training programs and pre-service courses.

Gkonou and Mercer (2017) investigated how EFL teachers utilize their emotional and social intelligence in their own teaching practices. The study recruited 890 EFL teachers with diverse degrees of teaching experiences in various teaching settings. The study adopted a mixed-method approach by administering a questionnaire followed by classroom observations and interviews of three selected teachers who achieved higher emotional and social intelligence. The findings showed a substantial positive relationship between the participants' trait EI, trait social intelligence and their teaching settings. Furthermore, it was found that the participants' age and teaching experience correlated positively with their trait EI and trait social intelligence. Finally, gender, age and teaching experience were found to be the strongest predictors of emotional and social intelligence.

Dewaele (2019) explored the relationships between global EI and its components (well-being, emotionality, self-control, and sociability) on EFL teachers' teaching practices and a number of variables (e.g., attitude, enjoyment). The data were collected from 513 EFL teachers from different teaching settings. The results pointed out that EFL teachers with higher global EI (mainly well-being and sociability) had more positive attitudes towards teaching, their institution, and their own students. As for the link between Trait EI and EFL teaching practices, EFL teachers with greater EI were assumed to be more creative, to be better classroom managers, and to possess better pedagogical skills. The findings advocated that teachers with a higher level of Trait EI would be more successful in managing their students' emotions.

2.2 Aims and Objectives of Study

This study explores the impact of EFL teachers' trait emotional intelligence and several teacher-related factors on their classroom teaching practices. The current study represents an attempt to offer a contribution to the literature of emotional intelligence by detecting some sources of variation in teachers' practices in EFL settings as reflected in their Trait EI and their classroom practices. More precisely, the author attempt to investigate the impact of a range of teacher-related aspects on EFL teachers' classroom practices operationalised through teachers' self-reported creativity, predictability, classroom management and pedagogical skills. The study attempts to detect any potential association between EFL teachers' emotional intelligence, experience, qualification, teaching stage, age and gender on one hand and their classroom teaching practices on the other hand.

2.3 Research Questions

This study is designed to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the levels of EFL teachers' Trait EI and their classroom teaching practices?

RQ2: What is the relationship between EFL teachers' Trait EI and their classroom teaching practices?

RQ3: What is the impact of teaching experience on classroom teaching practices?

RQ4: What is the impact of teaching qualifications on classroom teaching practices?

RQ5: What is the impact of teaching stages on classroom teaching practices?

RQ6: What is the impact of EFL teachers' age and gender on their classroom teaching practices?

3. Methodology

3.1 Study Design

This study adopted a quantitative descriptive study design to explore the relationship between trait emotional intelligence, EFL teacher-related factors and classroom teaching practices. Hence, the participants' trait emotional intelligence, teaching experience, teaching qualifications, teaching stage, age and gender served as independent

variables. EFL classroom teaching practices function as dependent variables. Classroom teaching practices were operationalised through teachers' self-reported creativity, predictability, classroom management and pedagogical skills.

3.2 Participants

The study adopted a probability random sampling technique as the participants were randomly selected based on a set of criteria. The sample of the study incorporated 115 EFL teachers (62 females and 53 males) teaching English as a foreign language in Jordan and Saudi Arabia who responded to the survey. Their age is in the range of 20-65 years. They have different educational qualifications, i.e. diploma, bachelor, master and PhD. The teaching experience of the EFL teachers is varied ranging from 1 to 25 years. They teach at three stages, i.e. primary school, secondary school and university. The EFL teachers' participation in this study is voluntary. All the ethical considerations have been adequately addressed. The teachers have been made aware of the aims of the study, that their identity will remain anonymous and that the gathered data will be used for research purposes only. Furthermore, they have been granted the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The descriptive characteristics of the participants are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The descriptive characteristics of the participants

Variables	Category	Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	53	46.1%
	Female	62	53.9%
Age	20-29	24	20.9%
	30-39	42	36.5%
	40-49	36	31.3%
	Over 50	13	11.3%
Qualification	Diploma	19	16.5%
	Bachelor	53	46.1%
	Master	31	27.0%
	PhD	12	10.4%
Years of Experience	1-5	39	33.9%
	6-10	23	20.0%
	11-15	19	16.5%
	16-20	19	16.5%
	Over 20	15	13.0%
Teaching Stage	Primary	49	42.6%
	Secondary	44	38.3%
	Undergraduate	22	19.1%

n = 115

3.3 Instruments

In order to collect data from the participants concerning their demographics, trait emotional intelligence and classroom teaching practices, the following questionnaires were employed:

1. *Background Questionnaire*: It was designed to gather demographic information about the participants including their age, gender, teaching qualifications, teaching experience and teaching stage.
2. *Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire–Short Form (TEIQue-SF)* (Petrides 2009): It is a 30-item survey that consists of two items for each of the 15 facets of Trait EI. Each statement has seven options ranging from 'Completely Disagree' (number 1) to 'Completely Agree' (number 7).
3. *Self-reported Teaching Practices Questionnaire* (Dewaele, Gkonou and Mercer, 2018): It is used to collect data about EFL teachers' classroom teaching practices which were operationalised through self-reported creativity, predictability, classroom management and pedagogical skills using five-point Likert format questions.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

For the purpose of data collection, the researchers used an online questionnaire that consists of three sections. The first section gathered data about the participants' background and demographic information. The second section included 30 items to collect data about the participants' trait emotional intelligence. The third section was dedicated to explore EFL teachers' self-reported teaching practices through four questions in a 5-point Likert scale. In order to approach a sufficient number of participants, the researchers adopted Google Forms as an online surveying tool. The online version of the questionnaire was sent to the participants via their emails or social media. The online questionnaire included brief information about the study, a consent form and a section to collect data about the participants' gender, age, teaching qualifications, teaching experience and teaching stage. Data were collected during

the first semester of the academic year 2021/2022. After receiving responses from 115 EFL teachers, the data were entered into IBM SPSS Statistics 26.0. To answer the research questions raised earlier, a number of statistical tests were run. The findings will be presented, described and discussed in the subsequent sections.

4. Results

Taking into account the research gap discussed earlier, this study intended to examine the impact of EFL teachers' trait emotional intelligence and other teacher-related factors, i.e. gender, age, teaching qualifications, teaching experience and teaching stage on their self-reported classroom teaching practices, i.e. creativity, predictability, classroom management and pedagogical skills. A number of advanced statistical analyses were computed to answer the research questions raised earlier.

RQ1: What are the levels of EFL teachers' Trait EI and their classroom teaching practices?

One-sample t-test was run to answer the first research question. The results showed that classroom management was the most effective teaching practice as reported by the EFL teachers which was significant at high level ($M = 3.834$, $sig = 0.00$). The second effective teaching practice was pedagogical skills which was also significant at high level ($M = 3.626$, $sig = 0.00$). Moreover, Creativity was significant at high level ($M = 3.547$, $sig = 0.00$). However, Predictability was significant but at medium level ($M = 2.973$, $sig = 0.00$). As for global Trait emotional intelligence, the results of the one-sample t-test indicated that the level of EFL teachers' Global Trait EI was significant at medium level ($M = 4.417$, $sig = 0.00$) as shown in Table (2) below.

Table 2. One-sample t-test for the levels of Trait EI and self-reported teaching practices

Variables	Dimensions	Mean	Std. D	t	Sig
Teaching Practices	Creativity	3.547	0.860	44.195	0.00*
	Predictability	2.973	0.777	41.016	0.00*
	Classroom management	3.834	0.700	58.747	0.00*
	Pedagogical skills	3.626	0.886	58.182	0.00*
	Total teaching practices	3.495	0.477	78.498	0.00*
Trait EI	Global Trait EI	4.417	0.564	83.950	0.00*

* Sig at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

RQ2: What is the relationship between EFL teachers' Trait EI and their classroom teaching practices?

Pearson Correlation Coefficient test was computed to assess the relationship between Trait EI and classroom teaching practices as self-reported by the EFL teachers. As shown in Table (3) below, the results indicated a significant positive correlation between Trait emotional intelligence and total classroom teaching practices, $r = .194$, $p \leq .05$. Trait EI correlated positively and significantly only with predictability, $r = .201$, $p \leq .05$ and classroom management; $r = .194$, $p \leq .05$. However, no correlation was found between Trait EI and creativity or pedagogical skills.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Coefficient test for Trait EI and classroom teaching practices

Variables	Creativity	Predictability	Classroom management	Pedagogical skills	Total Teaching Practices
Creativity	1	.100	.224*	.283**	.673**
Predictability	.100	1	-.008	.065	.472**
Classroom management	.224*	-.008	1	.617**	.680**
Pedagogical skills	.283**	.065	.617**	1	.730**
Global Trait EI	.079	.201*	.194*	.014	.194*

* Sig at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) ** Sig at ($\alpha \leq 0.01$)

RQ 3: What is the impact of teaching experience on classroom teaching practices?

To answer this research question, one-way ANOVA was used to examine the impact of the years of teaching experience of the EFL teachers on their classroom teaching practices in terms of self-reported creativity, predictability, classroom management and pedagogical skills. As presented in Table (4) below, the results detected two statistical significant differences regarding the impact of the teaching experience and self-reported classroom management, $F(4, 110) = 2.989$, $p = 0.040$; and pedagogical skills, $F(4, 110) = 2.597$, $p = 0.022$. However, the results of the ANOVA did not capture any statistical significant differences concerning the impact of teaching experience and teachers' self-reported creativity and predictability. To find out the sources of significance among the teaching experience categories, Least Significant Difference (LSD) test was calculated. The results indicated that the sources of differences were between the teaching experience categories of '1-5 years' and 'over 20 years' which was in favour of the latter ($Sig. = 0.030$).

Table 4. One-way ANOVA for the impact of teaching experience on classroom teaching practices

Variable	Variance	Sum of Squares	df	M.sq	F	Sig
Creativity	between group	4.814	4	1.203	1.662	0.164
	within group	79.67	110	0.724		
	Total	84.48	114			
Predictability	between group	.554	4	0.139	0.223	0.925
	within group	68.36	110	0.622		
	Total	68.92	114			
Classroom management	between group	5.476	4	1.369	2.989	0.040*
	within group	50.38	110	0.458		
	Total	55.86	114			
Pedagogical skills	between group	4.394	4	1.099	2.597	0.022*
	within group	46.52	110	0.423		
	Total	50.92	114			

* Sig at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

RQ4: What is the impact of teaching qualifications on classroom teaching practices?

To answer this research question, one-way ANOVA was used to explore the impact of the teaching qualifications of the EFL teachers on their classroom teaching practices in terms of self-reported creativity, predictability, classroom management and pedagogical skills. As depicted in Table (5) below, the results spotted statistical significant differences regarding the impact of the teaching qualifications of EFL teachers on their self-reported creativity, $F(3, 111) = 4.425$, $p = 0.006$; classroom management, $F(3, 111) = 4.187$, $p = 0.008$; and pedagogical skills, $F(3, 111) = 4.949$, $p = 0.003$. However, no impact of teaching qualifications was found on teachers' self-reported predictability. The Least Significant Difference (LSD) test was used to spot the sources of significance among the EFL teaching qualifications categories, i.e. diploma, bachelor, master and PhD. The results indicated that the sources of differences were between the categories of diploma and PhD which was in favour of EFL teachers who hold a PhD ($Sig. = 0.000$).

Table 5. One-way ANOVA for the impact of teaching qualifications on classroom teaching practices

Variable	Variance	Sum of Squares	df	M.sq	F	Sig
Creativity	between group	9.02	3	3.009	4.425	0.006*
	within group	75.46	111	0.680		
	Total	84.48	114			
Predictability	between group	.420	3	0.140	0.227	0.877
	within group	68.50	111	0.617		
	Total	68.92	114			
Classroom management	between group	5.678	3	1.893	4.187	0.008*
	within group	50.18	111	0.452		
	Total	55.86	114			
Pedagogical skills	between group	6.007	3	2.002	4.949	0.003*
	within group	44.91	111	0.405		
	Total	50.92	114			

* Sig at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

RQ5: What is the impact of teaching stages on classroom teaching practices?

To answer this research question, one-way ANOVA was used to investigate the impact of the teaching stages of the EFL teachers on their classroom teaching practices in terms of self-reported creativity, predictability, classroom management and pedagogical skills. As depicted in Table (6) below, the results failed to detect any statistical significant differences suggesting that the teaching stages where EFL teachers teach, i.e. primary, secondary and undergraduate had no impact on EFL teachers' self-reported classroom teaching practices.

Table 6. One-way ANOVA for the impact of teaching stages on classroom teaching practices

Variable	Variance	Sum of Squares	df	M.sq	F	Sig
Creativity	between group	3.567	2	1.783	2.468	0.089
	within group	80.92	112	0.723		
	Total	84.48	114			
Predictability	between group	1.172	2	0.586	0.969	0.383
	within group	67.75	112	0.605		
	Total	68.92	114			
Classroom management	between group	1.816	2	.908	1.882	0.157
	within group	54.04	112	0.483		
	Total	55.86	114			
Pedagogical skills	between group	.809	2	.404	.904	0.407
	within group	50.11	112	0.447		
	Total	50.92	114			

* Sig at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

RQ 6: What is the impact of EFL teachers' age and gender on their classroom teaching practices?

One-way ANOVA was used to investigate the impact of EFL teachers' age on their classroom teaching practices regarding self-reported creativity, predictability, classroom management and pedagogical skills. As shown in Table (7) below, the results of the ANOVA test failed to find any statistical significant differences suggesting that EFL teachers' age had no impact on their self-reported classroom teaching practices.

Table 7. One-way ANOVA for the impact of EFL teachers' age on classroom teaching practices

Variable	Variance	Sum of Squares	df	M.sq	F	Sig
Creativity	between group	2.191	3	.730	.985	0.403
	within group	82.29	111	0.741		
	Total	84.48	114			
Predictability	between group	.136	3	.045	0.073	0.974
	within group	68.78	111	0.620		
	Total	68.92	114			
Classroom management	between group	2.305	3	.768	1.593	0.195
	within group	53.55	111	0.482		
	Total	55.86	114			
Pedagogical skills	between group	1.153	3	.504	1.133	0.339
	within group	49.40	111	0.445		
	Total	50.92	114			

* Sig at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

Independent sample t-test was used to investigate the impact of EFL teachers' gender on their classroom teaching practices concerning self-reported creativity, predictability, classroom management and pedagogical skills. As shown in Table (8) below, the results of the ANOVA test failed to detect any statistical significant differences suggesting that EFL teachers' gender had no impact on their self-reported classroom teaching practices.

Table 8. t-tests for the impact of EFL teachers' gender on classroom teaching practices

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig
Creativity	Male	53	3.566	0.843	0.209	0.554
	Female	62	3.532	0.881		
Predictability	Male	53	3.055	0.841	1.055	0.780
	Female	62	2.903	0.717		
Classroom management	Male	53	3.943	0.718	1.548	0.615
	Female	62	3.741	0.675		
Pedagogical skills	Male	53	3.754	0.731	1.931	0.521
	Female	62	3.516	0.593		

* Sig at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

5. Discussion

The present study was designed to identify the levels of EFL teachers' self-reported trait emotional intelligence and their self-reported classroom teaching practices. Furthermore, this study aimed at examining the impact of EFL teachers' traits emotional intelligence, their teaching qualifications, teaching experience, teaching stage, gender and age on their self-reported classroom teaching practices concerning creativity, predictability, classroom management and pedagogical skills.

Administering an online survey to 115 EFL teachers, the results revealed that classroom management and pedagogical skills were the most effective reported teaching practices compared to creativity and predictability. This result suggests that managing the classroom and having advanced pedagogical skills are the most essential classroom practices for EFL teachers. Such a result was in harmony with Kostić-Bobanović (2020) who found that classroom management and pedagogical skills were the most salient classroom teaching practices for experienced EFL teachers. These results supported the notion that having sufficient pedagogical and management skills could be more important to EFL classrooms than being creative or predictable.

The findings signposted a significant positive correlation between global trait emotional intelligence and classroom teaching practices. Trait EI correlated positively and significantly with predictability and classroom management. However, no correlation was found between Trait EI and creativity or pedagogical skills. These results were similar to those obtained by Dewaele (2019), Dewaele et al. (2018) and Gkonou and Mercer (2017) who detected a positive correlation between trait emotional intelligence and classroom teaching practices as reported by EFL teachers. Such findings contributed to the accumulated evidence which advocated for the key role of teacher emotions in the maintaining successful classroom environment. Therefore, the inclusion of training courses on how to help novice teachers manage their emotions seems inevitable.

The results indicated a positive effect of EFL teachers' teaching experience on classroom management and pedagogical skills, but not on creativity and predictability. This suggests that the most experienced EFL teachers are assumed to be more capable to manage their classroom and will project stronger pedagogical skills. However, the years of teaching experience did not seem to have a significant impact on EFL teachers' creativity and predictability. Hence, being a creative and predictable teacher is not assumed to be associated with the length of teaching experience. This result was in partial agreement with Dewaele et al. (2018) who found a positive relationship between teaching experience and EFL teaching practices in terms of pedagogical skills, classroom management and creativity, but not predictability. Furthermore, the findings of our study supported those obtained by Gkonou & Mercer (2017) who revealed that teaching experience is a reliable predictor of trait EI. It is possible that the longer teaching experience EFL teachers enjoy, the more likely they are to maintain higher levels of trait EI with positive consequences on their classroom teaching practices, specifically classroom management and pedagogical skills.

The findings concerning the impact of teaching qualifications on EFL teachers' self-reported classroom teaching practices confirmed a significant and positive effect of teaching qualifications on creativity, classroom management and pedagogical skills which were in favour of those who held PhD qualifications. This indicates that EFL teachers who hold a PhD as will exhibit more creativity, classroom management and pedagogical skills than those who hold master, bachelor or diploma. Hence, being a predictable teacher is not assumed to be associated with the type of teaching qualifications the EFL teachers hold.

The findings of this study failed to confirm any effect of teaching stages, age and gender on their self-reported classroom teaching practices. These results denote that EFL teachers' creativity, predictability, classroom management and pedagogical skills were not influenced by the stage they teach (elementary, secondary, university), their gender or their age. These findings were in harmony with Dewaele et al. (2018) who did not report any effect of EFL teachers' age or gender on their classroom teaching practices. Nevertheless, these results contradicted those achieved by Gkonou and Mercer (2017) who suggested that age and gender are strong predictors of trait EI, and thus could have positive consequences on classroom teaching practices.

The findings reported here offer a number of pedagogical implications for TEFL stakeholders. The findings backed the notion that emotional intelligence is strongly related to a number of EFL classroom teaching practices. Hence, teacher training programs should consider training and nurturing novice teachers' emotional intelligence and linking it directly to specific teaching practices. Moreover, creativity and predictability are among the classroom practices that require more attention during pre-service teacher training. EFL Teachers' positive attitudes and emotions need to be considered as cornerstones of successful teaching practices that may interact with other variables like teaching experience, teaching qualifications, gender and age.

6. Conclusion

It is worth highlighting a few limitations and suggestions to be considered by future studies. Our study investigated global trait emotional intelligence and only four EFL teaching practices. Future studies are advised to look into the subcomponents of trait EI, i.e. self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills, empathy and motivation. Future research is encouraged to explore other teaching practices that may overlap with the components of EFL teachers' EI. The study adopted a quantitative approach solely to data gathering. Future studies are encouraged to incorporate interviews to shed more light on the complex relationship between EFL teachers EI and teaching practices.

Data were collected during the time that teaching and learning witnessed dramatic changes due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, there is a possibility that the responses that were received from the teachers have been affected by the unstable teaching environment as a result of switching to online and hybrid teaching instead of face-to-face teaching mode. Hence, future studies should explore the relationship between teacher emotions and their teaching practices during pandemics. Furthermore, future studies are recommended to explore the interaction between emotional intelligence and classroom teaching practices during different modes of teaching, i.e. face-to-face, online and hybrid. Finally, data were collected from EFL teachers who teach English in Jordan and Saudi Arabia and whose first language was Arabic. It is suggested that further research collect data from EFL teachers from different cultural background who teach English in different settings and for different purposes. Accordingly, the findings of this study should be generalised to different samples or teaching settings with more cautiousness.

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