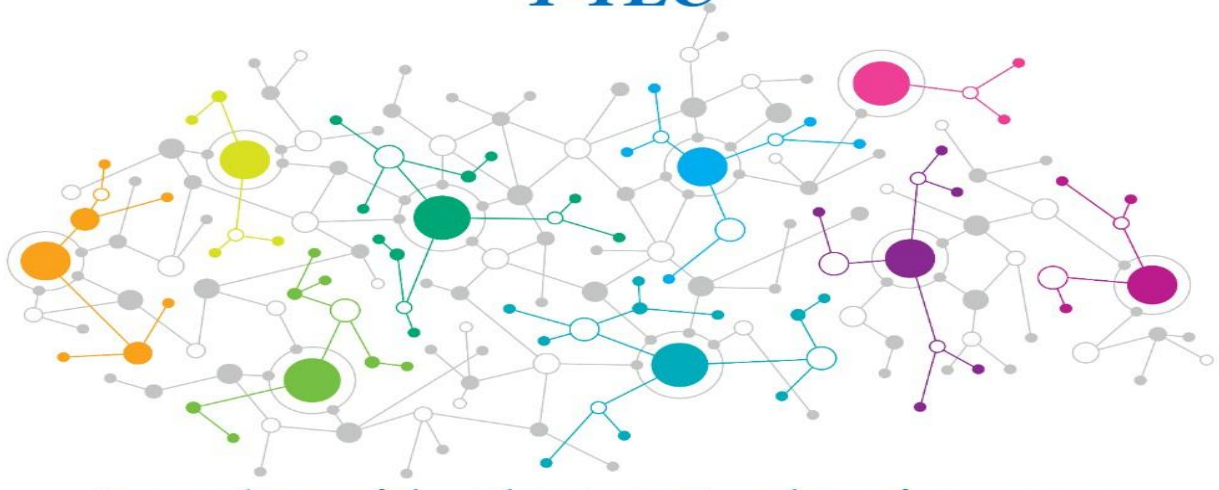




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***Empowering Learners & Unlocking Their Potential***

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**Assessing Emotional Intelligence Competencies Among English Teacher Trainees in the Oriental Region:  
A Goleman-Based Evaluation**

***Mohamed Dihi***

*Regional Center for the Professions of Education and Training, Oujda, Morocco*

*Email: at.dihi@gmail.com*

*ORCID: 0000-0002-7222-2353*

***Yassine Zerrouki <sup>b</sup>***

*Regional Center for the Professions of Education and Training, Oujda, Morocco*

*Email: yassinezerrouki8@gmail.com*

*ORCID: 0009-0004-0648-2976*

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**Abstract**

This study explores the significance of assessing emotional intelligence among English department trainee teachers at the Regional Center for The Professions of Education and Training in the Oriental region. Drawing on Daniel Goleman's model, this study seeks to offer deep insights into the vital role of emotional intelligence and its inherent connection to individual well-being and performance. The Goleman model offers a structured framework, encompassing five distinct components, each vital to understanding and enhancing emotional intelligence, namely self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Prior to evaluating the emotional intelligence of teacher trainees, they participated in a comprehensive workshop designed to elucidate the core principles of emotional intelligence. Following this, a questionnaire was distributed to the trainees, enabling them to self-assess their emotional intelligence, identify areas requiring improvement, and propose actionable recommendations for enhancing their emotional intelligence. The findings revealed that

although most trainees possess an awareness of their emotions, they encounter challenges in managing their emotions, motivation, and social skills. This study offers valuable strategies to enhance these critical areas, particularly through mindfulness-based training and structured social skills workshops, ensuring the practical application of emotional intelligence in educational contexts.

*Keywords:* emotional intelligence, education, Goleman model, teacher trainees

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## **1. Introduction**

### *1.1. Background of the Study*

Emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as a critical competency in educational settings, particularly in teacher preparation, given its demonstrated influence on classroom climate, pedagogical effectiveness, and teacher resilience (Goleman, 1995). Grounded in Goleman's five-component framework, encompassing self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, EI provides a robust foundation for developing emotionally competent teachers. While existing research confirms EI's theoretical importance in teaching (Brackett et al., 2011), a persistent theory-practice gap remains, particularly in translating EI principles into actionable classroom strategies. This study examines this disconnect through an investigation of 110 English department trainee teachers at Morocco's Regional Center for The Professions of Education and Training in the Oriental region, using Goleman's model to assess their EI competencies, to reflect on their results, and to propose actionable steps for EI improvement.

### *1.2. Problem Statement*

Emotional intelligence (EI) is widely recognized as a critical skill set for effective teaching, yet many teachers struggle to develop and apply these competencies in real-world classroom settings. Teachers face numerous challenges that test their emotional resilience and skills. They manage disruptive student behaviors, navigate conflicts with colleagues and parents, and cope with administrative pressures and demanding workloads. Despite these hurdles, and in order to foster an inclusive and supportive educational experience, teachers are required to remain motivated and enthusiastic and build genuine connections with diverse students. The core

problem lies in the gap between theoretical understanding of EI and its practical implementation in high-pressure educational environments.

### *1.3. The Purpose, Significance, and Scope of the Study*

This study aims to explore the emotional management challenges encountered by English department trainee teachers at the Regional Center for The Professions of Education and Training in the Oriental region and examine the strategies they perceive as effective for enhancing their emotional intelligence. Drawing on Daniel Goleman's model, this study seeks to offer deep insights into the vital role of emotional intelligence and its inherent connection to individual well-being and performance. To cultivate a balanced emotional teacher, this study highlights the imperativeness of developing a set of EI competencies that enable teachers to comprehend their own emotions, assist their learners in gaining insight into their emotional selves, and promote a learning environment that is both empathetic and intellectually stimulating.

### *1.4. The Research Questions and Hypotheses*

#### *1.4.1. Research Questions*

- What gaps exist in trainee teachers' emotional intelligence?
- What actionable strategies can address these gaps?

#### *1.4.2. Research Hypotheses*

This study assumes that although trainee teachers possess a good awareness of their emotions, they encounter challenges in managing their emotions, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### *2.1 Defining Emotional Intelligence*

When exploring the concept of emotional intelligence, it is essential to elucidate its two fundamental components: emotion and intelligence. Emotion is a complex psychological state that involves three distinct components: a subjective experience, a physiological response, and a behavioral or expressive response (Myers, 2010). Emotions are integral to human experience and influence how individuals perceive and interact with the world around them. They play a critical role in motivation, decision-making, and social interactions. In the realm of psychology, emotions are often studied in terms of their impact on behavior and mental processes. According to the James-Lange theory, emotions arise from physiological arousal, while the

Cannon-Bard theory suggests that emotional experiences and physiological reactions occur simultaneously (James, 1884; Cannon, 1927). Another prominent theory, the Schachter-Singer two-factor theory, posits that emotion is based on physiological arousal and cognitive labeling (Schachter & Singer, 1962). These theories underscore the complexity of emotions and their significant influence on human behaviors and cognition.

Intelligence can be defined as the ability to learn from experience, adapt to new situations, understand and handle abstract concepts, and use knowledge to manipulate one's environment (American Psychological Association, 1996). It involves various cognitive processes, including perception, memory, reasoning, and problem-solving. Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences expands on this definition by suggesting that intelligence is not a single general ability but a combination of various distinct types, such as linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, and interpersonal intelligences (Gardner, 1983). This perspective highlights the diverse ways in which individuals can demonstrate intellectual capability. Furthermore, Robert Sternberg's triarchic theory of intelligence divides intelligence into three components: analytical (problem-solving abilities), creative (capacity to deal with novel situations), and practical (ability to adapt to changing environments) (Sternberg, 1985). These theories illustrate the multifaceted nature of intelligence, emphasizing that it is a complex and dynamic construct that extends beyond traditional measures like IQ tests.

Psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer introduced the concept of “emotional intelligence” in the early 1990s, marking a significant advancement in the understanding of human emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1989-1990; Mayer & Salovey, 1993). The term gained widespread recognition and popularity through Daniel Goleman's influential work, “Emotional Intelligence,” published in 1995, which brought the idea into mainstream discourse (Goleman, 1995). Emotional intelligence is defined as “a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions” (Salovey & Mayer, 1989-1990, p. 189). Over the last decades, EI has emerged as a pivotal component in various aspects of life, including emotional adjustment, personal well-being, life success, and interpersonal relationships. Its significance is evident across diverse contexts of everyday life, where individuals with high EI are often better equipped to navigate social complexities, manage stress, and foster positive interactions. As research continues to explore the depths of EI, its applications, benefits, and

enduring impact on human development and interaction are becoming increasingly integrated into educational, organizational, and therapeutic settings.

## 2.2. Emotions vs. Feelings

There is a significant difference between emotions and feelings, though they are often used interchangeably in everyday language. Emotions are complex psychological states that arise from the brain's response to stimuli, involving physiological changes and behavioral expressions (Ekman, 1992). They are universal and can be observed across different cultures, manifesting in various ways such as happiness, sadness, anger, and fear. Feelings, on the other hand, are the subjective interpretations and internal experiences of these emotions. Unlike emotions, feelings are shaped by individual perceptions, thoughts, and beliefs, making them unique to each person (Damasio, 1999). While emotions can trigger immediate reactions, feelings are often more enduring and can influence one's mood and overall mental state. Table 1 outlines the key distinctions between emotions and feelings, accompanied by illustrative examples.

**Table 1**

*Distinctions Between Emotions and Feelings with Examples*

| Category        | Definition  | Examples   |
|-----------------|---|--|
| <b>Emotions</b> | Brief, intense, and biologically driven reactions to stimuli; universal across cultures.  | - Happiness (e.g., smiling when praised)                       |
|                 |   | - Anger (e.g., clenching fists when frustrated)                |
|                 |   | - Sadness (e.g., crying at a loss)                             |
|                 |   | - Surprise (e.g., gasping at sudden news)                      |
|                 |   | - Fear (e.g., freezing in danger)                              |
|                 |   | - Disgust (e.g., recoiling from a foul smell)                  |
| <b>Feelings</b> | Subjective, long-lasting interpretations of emotions; influenced by personal experiences. | - Love (e.g., deep attachment to a partner)                    |
|                 |   | - Guilt (e.g., regret over a mistake)                          |
|                 |   | - Loneliness (e.g., feeling isolated despite being in a crowd) |
|                 |   | - Jealousy (e.g., resentment toward a rival)                   |
|                 |   | - Contentment (e.g., sustained satisfaction with life)         |
|                 |   | - Anxiety (e.g., persistent worry about the future)            |

### *2.3 Five Domains for Emotional Intelligence*

According to Goleman (1995), emotional intelligence can be broken down into five domains: (a) knowing one's emotions, (b) managing emotions, (c) motivating oneself, (d) recognizing emotions in others, and (e) handling relationships.

#### *a) Knowing one's emotions (Self-awareness)*

Goleman (1995) underscores the pivotal role of self-awareness within the framework of emotional intelligence. According to Goleman, self-awareness refers to the ability to accurately perceive and understand one's own emotions as they occur. This skill is not merely about recognizing what one feels, but also about comprehending the subtle nuances and origins of those feelings. He argues that self-awareness is essential because it allows individuals to exercise greater control over their reactions and behaviors (Goleman, 1995). Furthermore, Goleman suggests that self-awareness serves as the bedrock for other aspects of emotional intelligence, such as self-regulation, empathy, and social skills. By understanding their own emotional states, individuals can communicate more effectively, build stronger relationships, and navigate social complexities with greater ease (Goleman, 1995).

#### *b) Managing emotions (Self-regulation)*

Goleman (1995) emphasises the critical importance of appropriately managing one's emotions to bolster self-awareness and navigate life's challenges and maintain a balance between positive and negative experiences. In alignment with this perspective, Howard (2000) posits that emotions are regulated by the brain's appraisal of events, which subsequently affects their intensity and duration. Individuals can effectively manage their emotions by modulating their responses to various stimuli. For example, a manager who receives harsh criticism in front of his team may manage his emotions by staying calm, acknowledging the feedback, and reflecting on it later to identify constructive takeaways. By controlling his initial frustration, he maintains professionalism and sets a positive example for his team. This self-regulation helps him address the issue productively rather than escalating tensions.

#### *c) Motivating oneself (Motivation)*

Motivation serves as the driving force behind the pursuit of ideas, thoughts, or goals, emphasizing desired outcomes rather than the behavior itself (Zirkel, 2000). The successful execution of these ideas is contingent upon individual motivation, which is shaped by elements

such as desire, gratification, and perceived benefits (Bandhu et al., 2024). Goleman (1995) links motivation with the concept of "flow," a state of optimal performance characterized by positive emotions that pave the way for success. During this state of flow, individuals experience a sense of harmony and joy. A good example of this is a professional musician who becomes so absorbed in playing the piano that time seems to vanish. The musician enters a state where every note flows effortlessly, and the music becomes an extension of his emotions. This immersive experience not only brings immense satisfaction and joy but also elevates his performance to new heights.

*d) Recognizing emotions in others (Empathy)*

To cultivate a deeper sense of self-awareness, it is essential to consider the emotions and needs of others (Goleman, 1995). Gardner (1983) defines interpersonal intelligence as the ability to perceive and comprehend the moods and motivations of others. This form of intelligence is crucial in building meaningful relationships and fostering an inclusive environment (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). A prime illustration of this concept can be observed in the scenario of a student who persistently encounters difficulties with reading comprehension, resulting in feelings of frustration. Rather than resorting to conventional disciplinary actions, the teacher engages in a private dialogue with the student, attentively listening to the student's expressed struggles and acknowledging the inherent challenges of the task (Rogers, 1957). The teacher can offer customized strategies, such as deconstructing complex passages and celebrating incremental achievements (Dweck, 2006). This approach cultivates a secure learning atmosphere and empowers students to tackle their difficulties with renewed confidence and determination.

*e) Handling Relationships (Social skill)*

Social skill encompasses the ability to manage relationships effectively and build rapport with others (Goleman, 1995). It involves a range of competencies, including communication, influence, collaboration, and conflict management (Goleman, 1998). Individuals with strong social skills understand social cues, build networks, and foster positive interactions. They can navigate complex social situations while inspiring and motivating others toward shared goals. Essentially, social skill, within Goleman's model, is the capacity to use emotional awareness to manage interactions successfully and create harmonious and productive relationships (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002).



### **3. Method**

#### *3.1. Participants*

The research study involved a sample of 110 English language teacher trainees (N = 110) affiliated with the Regional Center for The Professions of Education and Training in the Oriental region. These trainees were divided into three distinct groups, each consisting of approximately 34 participants. A total of 100 responses to the questionnaire were collected. Among the participants, 44% were male, while 56% were female. Participants' ages ranged from 21 to 30 years. The participants did not need any prior knowledge of the topic. A session was designed to instruct them about emotional intelligence before they were asked to complete the EI questionnaire.

#### *3.2. Instrument(s)*

The primary instrument used for data collection was a two-page questionnaire. This questionnaire was designed to assess five core dimensions of emotional intelligence (EI): self-awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, empathy, and social skill. Participants were required to rate 50 statements on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Does not apply to 5 = Always applies), indicating the frequency of EI-related behaviors. Responses were categorized into the five competencies, and total scores were interpreted as follows:

- 35–50: Considered a strength.
- 18–34: Identified as needing attention.
- 10–17: Classified as a development priority.

Finally, participants were instructed to reflect on their results and propose actionable steps to improve their emotional intelligence. The questionnaire combined quantitative self-assessment with structured qualitative reflection to facilitate personal development.

#### *3.3. Data Collection Procedures*

In a structured three-hour session, each of the three groups engaged in activities that focused on emotional intelligence (EQ). The session was divided into two parts. The first part consisted of a presentation that provided a general introduction to emotional intelligence, explained Goleman's EQ model, and discussed the significance of EQ in educational development. In the second part, participants completed the questionnaire that aimed to assess the five core dimensions of emotional intelligence. This involved filling out a 50-statement questionnaire on

the first page and calculating and interpreting their scores using the guidelines provided on the second page.

### *3.4. Data Analysis*

The research study used a comprehensive methodology by incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to thoroughly analyze the collected data. The quantitative aspect involved obtaining numerical scores for each emotional intelligence competency. The qualitative data were derived from participants' thoughtful responses to an open-ended question, which prompted them to reflect on and articulate potential actions they could undertake to enhance their emotional intelligence competencies. This approach not only provided a robust framework for analysis but also offered a rich, nuanced understanding of the participants' perspectives and insights.

Excel software was used to export and process the data for comprehensive analysis and in-depth discussions. We used pivot tables and correlations to organize the information efficiently, ensuring accuracy and clarity in our findings; thus, we were able to visualize trends and patterns, ultimately enhancing the quality of our analysis.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### *4.1. Quantitative Data: Participants' Scores*

The table below presents the results of a self-assessment of emotional intelligence (EI) competencies based on feedback from 100 respondents. The evaluation covers five key EI competencies: self-awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, empathy, and social skill. Each competency is rated across three categories: “strength” (high proficiency or effectiveness in the competency), “needs attention” (areas requiring improvement), and “development priority” (critical areas needing immediate focus).

**Table 1***Trainees' proficiency in emotional intelligence competencies (N=100)*

| Competencies       | Strength | Needs attention | Development priority |
|--------------------|----------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Self-awareness     | 93       | 7               | 0                    |
| Managing emotions  | 41       | 58              | 1                    |
| Motivating oneself | 46       | 52              | 2                    |
| Empathy            | 83       | 17              | 0                    |
| Social Skill       | 47       | 51              | 2                    |

As illustrated the table above, self-awareness and empathy stand out as clear strengths, with 93% and 83% of respondents rating them as strengths, respectively. Very few respondents flagged these as needing attention or priority development. Almost all respondents believe they understand their emotions, strengths, and weaknesses well. Most respondents feel skilled at recognizing others' emotions and perspectives. These strengths are foundational for EI but do not compensate for gaps in other areas because "managing emotions," "motivating oneself," and "social skill" show significant room for improvement, with over 50% of respondents indicating that these competencies need attention. A small percentage (1-2%) identified them as "development priorities."

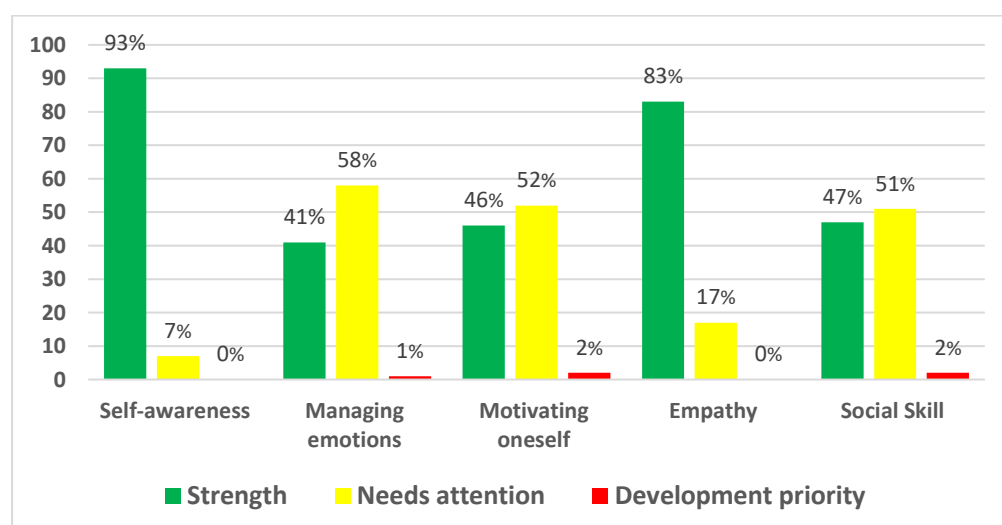
**Figure 1***A bar chart showing percentages by competency*

Figure 1 presents the results in percentages. The data suggests a polar distribution with two opposing extremes: high confidence in self-awareness and empathy and moderate to low confidence in emotional management, self-motivation, and social skills, signaling areas for growth. A good metaphor that best works for these results is a basketball player who is great at shooting (self-awareness/empathy) but poor at defense (managing emotions) and passing (social skills). In short, the data shows a tale of two halves: strong in introspection and empathy but needing work in practical emotional and social skills.

Using pivot tables, we found the following sums:

**Table 2**

*Sums of the three categories: strength, needs attention, and development priority*

| Competencies       | Strength         | Needs attention  | Development priority |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Empathy            | 83               | 17               | 0                    |
| Managing emotions  | 41               | 58               | 1                    |
| Motivating oneself | 46               | 52               | 2                    |
| Self-awareness     | 93               | 7                | 0                    |
| Social Skill       | 47               | 51               | 2                    |
| <b>Grand Total</b> | <b>310 (62%)</b> | <b>185 (37%)</b> | <b>5 (1%)</b>        |

Table 2 reveals an overall distribution where most respondents perceive themselves as competent, with strength response totaling 310 (averaging 62% per competency), while a significant minority—185 responses (37% average)—indicate areas needing attention. Development Priority responses are notably scarce, totaling just 5 (1% average), highlighting that while many recognize room for improvement, very few view these gaps as urgent. This suggests a general confidence in emotional intelligence competencies, tempered by awareness of certain weaknesses, though not to a degree that demands immediate action.

The data reveals clear patterns and correlations in emotional intelligence competencies. There is an inverse relationship between “strength” and “needs attention”—competencies with the highest strength scores (self-awareness at 93% and empathy at 83%) have the lowest “needs attention” (7% and 17%, respectively), while those with the lowest “strength” (managing emotions at 41% and social skill at 47%) show the highest “needs attention” (58% and 51%). Additionally, a disconnect exists between awareness and action: strong self-awareness does not

translate to effective “managing emotions” (only 41% strength), and high empathy does not guarantee strong social skills (47% strength). Despite these gaps, urgency for development is consistently low, with development priority never exceeding 2% across all competencies, even in weaker areas. This suggests that while respondents recognize their shortcomings, they do not perceive them as critical priorities.

These findings reveal notable strengths in self-awareness (93% strength) and empathy (83% strength), aligning with research suggesting that these introspective competencies are often more developed in individuals due to their foundational role in emotional and social functioning (Goleman, 1995; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). However, the lower scores in managing emotions (41% strength), motivating oneself (46% strength), and social skills (47% strength) suggest a gap between recognizing emotions and regulating or applying them effectively—a phenomenon documented in studies on “emotional labor” and the challenges of translating self-awareness into behavioral change (Grandey, 2000 ; Brackett et al., 2006).

The inverse relationship between high self-awareness/empathy and weaker practical EI skills (e.g., emotion regulation) echoes Mayer and Salovey’s (1997) model, which posits that EI is hierarchical: perceiving emotions (self-awareness) does not guarantee managing them. This disconnect is further supported by research showing that individuals often overestimate their ability to regulate emotions, leading to gaps in real-world application (Sheldon et al., 2014).

The minimal prioritization of development areas ( $\leq 2\%$  for all competencies) is concerning, as literature underscores that unaddressed EI gaps can impair leadership effectiveness (Goleman, 1998) and teamwork (Druskat & Wolff, 2001). The data suggests a potential ‘blind spot’<sup>1</sup> in recognizing the urgency of improving these skills, consistent with Dunning-Kruger effects in self-assessment (Kruger & Dunning, 1999).

#### *4.2. Qualitative Data: Participants’ Actions*

Participants identified various actions they can take to strengthen their emotional intelligence, focusing on self-awareness, emotional regulation, social awareness, and relationship management. Many participants aim to enhance self-awareness by reflecting on past

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<sup>1</sup> The term “blind spot” in the context of the emotional intelligence (EI) results refers to a discrepancy between self-perceived competence and actual behavioural gaps—a phenomenon well-documented in EI and psychological literature.

experiences, recognizing their emotions, and understanding themselves better. They plan to achieve this through journaling, self-reflection, or mindfulness practices.

For emotional regulation, several participants suggested that one can manage his or her emotions by talking to someone they trust, engaging in enjoyable activities to ease stress, or rewarding themselves for motivation. While some prefer to regulate their emotions openly, others expressed a tendency to suppress negative feelings, highlighting different approaches to emotional control.

In terms of social awareness, participants emphasized developing empathy by putting themselves in others' shoes and making a conscious effort to understand different perspectives. Some participants plan to achieve this by interacting more with people, studying psychology and human behavior, or building new relationships.

Regarding relationship management, responses indicate a desire to improve social skills by engaging more with others, socializing, overcoming fear of judgment, and participating in structured social skills workshops. Some participants focus on motivation and discipline, believing that forming habits and maintaining consistency will help them stay emotionally balanced. Others see enjoyment in work and self-motivation as key factors in their emotional growth. Their chosen actions reflect different perspectives on emotional intelligence, with some prioritizing internal self-improvement and others emphasizing external social interactions.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study assessed the emotional intelligence (EI) competencies of English department trainee teachers at Morocco's Regional Center for The Professions of Education and Training, using Goleman's five-component framework as a theoretical lens. The findings revealed a distinct dichotomy: while participants demonstrated strong self-awareness (93%) and empathy (83%), they exhibited significant gaps in managing emotions (41%), motivating themselves (46%), and applying social skills (47%). This disparity underscores a critical theory-practice gap, where theoretical understanding of EI does not seamlessly translate into actionable competencies in high-pressure educational environments.

The qualitative data further highlighted participants' intentions to address these gaps through strategies like self-reflection, mindfulness, and improved social engagement (Gross, 2002; Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Lopes et al., 2003). However, the low prioritization of these areas for development ( $\leq 2\%$ ) suggests a potential blind spot in recognizing the urgency of EI skill enhancement. These insights align with existing literature on emotional labor and the

hierarchical nature of EI, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions that bridge self-awareness with practical emotional regulation and interpersonal skills (Kruger & Dunning, 1999; Sheldon et al., 2014).

To cultivate emotionally intelligent teachers, teacher training programs should integrate experiential learning, reflective practices, and scenario-based training to strengthen emotion management and social skills. Future research could expand this study by incorporating longitudinal assessments or observational data to validate self-reported competencies. Ultimately, fostering emotional intelligence in trainee teachers is not just an academic exercise but a vital step toward creating empathetic, resilient, and effective educators capable of nurturing inclusive and supportive learning environments.

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## **AUTHORS BIODATA**

Mohamed Dihi serves as an associate professor and teacher trainer at the Regional Center for The Professions of Education and Training —Oriental. His research interests encompass a variety of topics, including creativity, English language teaching, educational sciences, critical thinking, blended learning, flipped classrooms, autonomous learning, and educational technology.

Yassine Zerrouki is an English language teacher at Kadi Ayad High School. He is a researcher and serves as the vice chair of the International Council for Progressive Education (ICAPE). Additionally, he is a member of ZeMV. His research interests include topics such as clip thinking and visualizing cognitive load dynamics.