

# Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy of Special Education Teacher

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## Abstract

Being a sustainable teacher in a special education classroom requires good interpersonal skills. Emotional intelligence is seen as capable of becoming an internal guidance system that can help teachers face classroom challenges as well as self-confidence in quality teaching. While self-efficacy is seen to form a positive perspective to teachers' self-confidence to deliver effective teaching. A survey study was conducted to find out the relationship between emotional intelligence and teacher self-efficacy. This study involved a total of 84 special education teachers serving in the rural areas of Sabah. The questionnaire is the main instrument that has been adapted from Goleman's model of emotional intelligence as well as Tschannen-Moran, Hoy and Hoy. The research data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential analysis. The results of the Spearman Rho correlation analysis show that there is a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy,  $r=.833$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $N=84$ . The analysis also shows that the strength of the relationship is in a very strong range which is between 0.80-0.99. The findings of the study suggest the professional development of special education teachers with more specific emphasis on knowledge and skills regarding the MBPK classroom. In addition, stakeholders also need to take into account the development of teacher quality in the current era of the need for a balance between interpersonal skills and intellectual knowledge.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Self-Efficacy, Interior, Special Education Teacher, Classroom Challenges

## Introduction

The world of the era of globalization affects education with knowledge, skills, and applications. Teachers need to be individuals who are always ready to face change. Tawan et al (2020) stated that along with the current changes, teachers will certainly face changes that touch career aspects as well as students' development. This is the case just like typical students in the mainstream, students with special educational needs (MBPK) are also no exception to the effects of globalization. This matter is important for teachers to increase the value of self-quality so that it is always relevant in the world of education as well as in the teaching of MBPK classrooms. Emotional intelligence is seen to be able to help teachers effectively through personal development and also performance development. This point is in line with the

opinion Lee & Tahar (2023) where emotional intelligence is an important element that influences the success of a teacher in the classroom. This point is further strengthened by the opinion of Suresh (2020) where emotional intelligence becomes standard to the quality of a teacher. In other words, a quality teacher will succeed in making emotional intelligence an internal guidance system to help control, balance, supervise and adjust emotions.

Improving emotional intelligence skills can help special education teachers improve their professionalism but also their teaching performance to MBPK (Khan, 2020). This means that through this mastery, a teacher will be able to create a produc

tive learning environment, where teachers and students will always try to give their best (Sureen, 2021). Good mastery of these skills also makes teachers more focused in achieving goals by trying to ensure effective teaching for MBPK (Ahsaan et al., 2020). This skill also indirectly forms a teacher's attitude that is more attentive to individual needs such as showing affection and being fair to MBPK students who are made up of various categories and backgrounds. The mastery of these skills then becomes the teacher's personality who always easily gains trust and cooperation during the teaching and learning process (Khassawneh et al., 2022; Sabina, 2022).

Teachers who have emotional intelligence skills are also able to distinguish between feelings or emotions when making an important decision. This ability is very useful especially when teachers are faced with the problems and challenges of the MBPK classroom, especially in the current situation. The right decision will be the key that can free the teacher from the classroom conflict. In this case, when teachers are faced with conflict the correct ethics is using emotional intelligence to solve the problems. So it is clear that when a teacher efficiently deals with the challenges of the classroom, it will certainly produce teachers who will achieve well in terms of work commitment, work performance, teaching effectiveness and self-improvement (Nwosu et al., 2023; Kgosiemang & Khoza, 2022; Khan, 2020; Li & Xu, 2019; Su et al., 2022).

Meanwhile, the aspect of teacher self-efficacy also brings importance to teachers as it becomes a measure in determining the ability of a teacher. In other words, self-efficacy increases the confidence of special education teachers in carrying out teaching tasks according to the goals and objectives to be achieved. Katsora et al (2022) further stated that the combination of self-efficacy and emotional intelligence can be sustainable for teachers in ensuring that teaching goals are always achieved. This encouragement also makes teachers tend to diversify teaching strategies according to the ability level of MBPK students. This indirectly forms a teacher's self-efficacy in ensuring that MBPK receives effective teaching according to their abilities. While the opposite happens when teachers have low self-efficacy. The teacher's perception of self-efficacy is very important because this helps the teacher's readiness to face the dynamic challenges of the MBPK classroom. Therefore, confidence and ability regarding self-ability is a personal belief that is meaningful to the formation of self-efficacy of a good special education teacher (Henson et al., 2001).

The success of a teacher is an indication of his level of efficiency. Even so, the challenge of the MBPK classroom is different according to the MBPK category. This explains the importance of self-efficacy to form individual teachers who have effective teaching performance and are stress-free due to MBPK classroom conflicts (Alsalamah, 2023; Brunsting et al., 2022). There are several studies that state the relationship between emotional intelligence and teacher self-efficacy (Abdul Rashid Abdul Aziz et al., 2020; Alasmee et al., 2022; Costa, 2022; Lu & Mustafa, 2021; Tatal & Efe, 2020). However, studies in the context of special education, especially teachers in rural areas, are still not highlighted (Khan et al., 2023). Inconsistent

research findings (Gumah et al., 2019; Pressley & Ha, 2021; Sharma, 2021; Yi et al., 2021) among rural teachers also show that there are still gaps that require this study to be conducted.

### **Concept of Self-Efficacy**

Giangrande in Rosli et al (2021) stated that self efficacy is an effort to realize the desire to create quality education. The quality refers to the ability to apply knowledge and skills acquired in real situations. Bandura (1986) describes self-efficacy as an individual assessment of one's ability to organize and then implement appropriate efforts in order to achieve a desired performance. According to Bandura, self-efficacy is not about the skills that a person has but more precisely about a person's perception and confidence about his abilities. In addition, self-efficacy also means an individual's confidence in his own abilities. This confidence is a factor for individuals to adjust any task or challenge according to their available skills (Hamid et al., 2019).

As a special education teacher, teacher efficiency is essential in effective MBPK classroom teaching. This process will have an impact through the results shown such as becoming a holistic student (Khalil et al., 2019). The teachers will also be more clear about their own strengths and weaknesses and further act to find proactive initiatives in order to successfully achieve the goals of the assignment (Dasan & Nawi, 2020) this explains the importance of self-efficacy can be seen as a yardstick for the achievement of teaching performance because the level must always be at a high level.

According to the view of Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) commenting on teacher self-efficacy as a teacher's self-restraint regarding his ability to teach and motivate students without being prejudiced or stereotyped towards his abilities and the student's family situation. In other words, teachers who have self-efficacy have a fair and impartial attitude towards their students. Justice in MBPK classrooms is strongly emphasized considering that MBPK consists of various categories, different ability levels, different support needs and different backgrounds (Garbenis, 2021). The gist refers to the dynamic challenges of MBPK classrooms that indeed require a teacher who is constantly efficient. In other words, the existence of MBPK is highly dependent on the determination and dedication of teachers in shaping them. In this study, the teacher's self-efficacy will be seen in three main constructs, namely the construct of student involvement, the construct of instructional strategies and also the construct of classroom management.

### **Concept of Emotional Intelligence**

Today's community groups are beginning to realize the importance of emotional intelligence in modern education through the theory initiated by the psychological figure Thorndike (1920), which is the theory of social intelligence. Thorndike describes emotional intelligence as a person's ability to understand and regulate emotions when interacting with others. Moreover, the theory of emotional intelligence was further developed by Mayer and Salovey (1990) and this theory was extended by Gardner (1993) with his intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence models in the framework of multiple intelligences (multiple intelligences). Then the concept of emotional intelligence was successfully popularized by the psychological figure Goleman (1996) through his book emotional intelligence. Goleman succeeded in convincing the public about the importance of emotional intelligence skills which are equally important as cognitive intelligence. He also thinks that emotional intelligence skills can influence the level of success of an individual either in career or life. According to Goleman

in Yahaya (2010), this skill helps an individual's internal judgment so that he can control and manage his own emotions as well as other people's emotional reflexes, which refers to aspects of feelings, emotions and behavior. This is also, able to ensure that by having these skills, individuals will be better at making decisions and choosing appropriate actions according to the time and situation.

Emotional intelligence skills are seen as important to be mastered so that an individual can better manage their own emotions (Goleman, 1995). The great influence of the mastery of these skills can be seen in the aspect of delivering work performance as well as positive relationships with other individuals (Welmilla, 2020). In other words, teachers who have emotional intelligence will show an attitude such as always being motivated and showing good work performance even in stressful situations. Teaching in a special education classroom will certainly involve a high level of emotion. Emotional intelligence is an important skill that can prevent teachers from taking actions and decisions that can affect themselves and others. Amanda (2019) stated that teachers with emotional intelligence will show an ethical attitude when faced with problems such as being more proactive in problem-solving. The skills of teachers regarding emotional management give an overview of their cognitive, feelings and behavior while working or in other words while carrying out tasks (Redin & Erro-Garces, 2020; Wang & Wang, 2022). Therefore, an educator needs high emotional intelligence because through this skill, educators will be able to build management skills and be a good role model for MBPK (Rivana, 2019). The aspect of emotional intelligence in this study refers to Goleman's model of emotional intelligence which is divided into five main domains. The domains are the domain of self-awareness, the domain of self-management, the domain of motivation, the domain of empathy and the last domain is the domain of relationship management.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study is a quantitative study that uses survey research as the main design. Survey research was chosen because it is very suitable to use referring to its advantages in collecting data quickly. In addition, the selection of this design is also due to its standardized that allows data to be easily prepared, administered and analyzed so that can be generalized to the respondent (Shaari, 2022; Ismail et al., 2023). In the meantime, the use of a survey research design meets and fits the time horizon, location and geographical shape of the state of Sabah which is very wide. The rationale of this approach supports the distance factor aspect because the schools involved are far from each other. Because of that, it will certainly involve high costs. Therefore, when conducting a field study, the selection of this method is able to minimize ethical constraints while providing ease and smoothness during the implementation of the study.

### **Respondents**

Population refers to the target group of the researcher. In this study, the population involved are teachers of the integration special education program (PPKI) of primary schools in the state of Sabah, which is a total of 600 people. However, the sample involved is PPKI teachers who serve in the upper borderland. The upper borderland will involve samples from the four main districts in the state of Sabah. The sample that represents the population is PPKI teachers who serve in four districts namely Keningau district, Tenom district, Nabawan district and Tambunan district.

Table 1

*Number of schools and respondents involved*

No	Districts	Number of schools	Number of respondents (people)
1	Keningau	6	35
2	Tambunan	2	18
3	Tenom	3	19
4	Nabawan	2	12
<b>Total</b>		13	84

### Instruments

Questionnaire was used as the main approach to collect primary data from the respondents. The use of questionnaire instruments in this study is because of its effectiveness in measuring responses regarding views and evaluations regarding aspects of emotional intelligence and also teachers' self-efficacy (Eguji, 2018; Nigel et al., 2009). Meanwhile, this instrument also has methodical standardization which is very helpful in ensuring that each respondent receives the same set of questionnaires (Aithal et al., 2020; Taherdoost, 2021). Therefore, in this study there are two sets of questionnaires that have been adapted from the study of (Guan & Omar, 2022; Surin & Surat, 2021). Referring to this study, there are two sets of questionnaires that need to be filled out by the respondents. Teacher self-efficacy questionnaire containing 25 question items and the teacher emotional intelligence questionnaire containing 50 question items. A five-point likert scale was used in both sets of research instruments.

According to Manisha (2021), five-point likert is a psychometric respond that helps respondents' views better, insure accuracy of the data, easier to analyze data statistically and can avoid bias from the respondent's answer. Instrument analysis and content validity states that the three experts agree (100%) that all the items used in the emotional intelligence and self-efficacy instrument are suitable to use. This means that the minimum condition of items getting at least 80% approval has been complied (Hamzah & Idris, 2021). A pilot study of construct validity was carried out to respondents who have characteristics almost identical to actual respondents. Based on link distribution Google Forms found that a total of 35 out of 50 respondents had given feedback. The response of the pilot study has met the population requirements of at least five to 50 respondents or ten percent of the actual number of respondents (Aithal et al., 2020; Nigel et al., 2009). The findings of the pilot study show a revision of the coefficient value Cronbach Alpha for the emotional intelligence instrument is very high which is 0.949. While the coefficient value Cronbach Alpha For the self-efficacy instrument also managed to show a high value of 0.973. Aithal et al (2020) states the value Cronbach Alpha that above 0.70 has good internal error. The consistency shown by these two instruments shows that these instruments have internal stability and consistency in measuring the research topic (Hamzah & Idris, 2021).

### Data Analysis Methods

The analysis of the study data is carried out statistically descriptively and also inferentially. This study uses software Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) while doing Spearman Rho correlation analysis. The Spearman Rho correlation analysis method is easy to use because it is able to test the effect of the relationship between emotional intelligence and teacher self-efficacy (Shaari, 2022). Pearson Correlation analysis refers to the relationship or association between events or variables. However in statistics, correlation refers to the

measure used to calculate the relationship between two variables using the correlation coefficient. According to Shaari (2022) correlation is not the cause of another variable but shows the existence of a relationship. Correlation coefficient in this study was used to measure the relationship between two sets of data, namely the emotional intelligence data and the respondent's self-efficacy data (Ibrahim et al., 2019).

## Findings

### Demographic Analysis

Table 2 shows the number and percentage for gender demographics, academic qualifications, age and length of service. The total number of respondents is a total of 84 people, males represent 28 percent of the total respondents and females represent 70 percent of the total respondents. As for the academic qualifications of the respondents, the highest percentage is a Bachelor's Degree which is 86 percent, followed by a Master's Degree 10 percent and a Doctor of Philosophy by 4 percent. The total percentage based on age group shows that respondents aged 30-40 years show the highest percentage which is 54 percent. Next, 41-51 years old is 24 percent and 29 years old and below shows 14 percent and finally is 52 years old and above which is only 6 percent.

In addition, the respondents' service period showed the highest percentage to be 11-21 years which is 45 percent. Next is 6-10 years as much as 27 percent. While the service period is less than 5 years showing a percentage of 18 percent. The lowest percentage is the service period of more than 22 years which is only 8 percent. Based on demographic data, on average, PPKI teachers have the minimum qualification of a bachelor's degree. In addition, the data shows that there are more experienced teachers than novice teachers. This explains that the longer a teacher serves, the more experience that can improve the teacher's perception and competence. This matter will indirectly affect the teaching performance in the classroom (Mufidah et al., 2021). In addition, the variety of experience indicates that the person has depth experience in the field. This is required in an organization so that teachers can better know their own strengths and weaknesses (Saidi, 2020; Julaihi & Hamdan, 2020)

Table 2

#### *Demographic distribution of respondents*

Category	Details	N	Percent (%)
Gender	Men	24	29
	Woman	60	71
Academic qualifications	Degree	73	86
	Masters	8	10
	Doctor of Philosophy	3	4
Age	29 years and under	14	17
	30-40 years	45	54
	41-51 years old	20	24
	52 years and over	5	6
Length of service	Less than 5 years	15	18
	6-10 years	23	27
	11-21 years old	38	45
	Over 22 years old	8	10



### Analysis of The Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence And Self-Efficacy Special Education Teachers

Table 3 shows the analysis of the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. Spearman Rho correlation coefficient analysis shows that there is a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy,  $r=.833$ ,  $p<.001$ ,  $N=84$ . The analysis also shows that the strength of the relationship is in a very strong range which is between 0.80-0.99 (Hussin et al., 2014).

Table 3

*Analysis of the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy*  
Correlation Coefficient

			Correlation Coefficient		
			Emotional intelligence	Self-efficacy	Strength of the relationship
Spearman Rho correlation coefficient	Emotional intelligence	Correlation coefficient	1.000	.833**	Strong
		Sig. (2 tails)	.	.000	
		N	84	84	
	Self-efficacy	Correlation coefficient	.833**	1.000	
		Sig. (2 tails)	.000	.	
		N	84	84	

\*\*. The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 shows the correlation coefficient table that explains the relationship between emotional intelligence and teacher self-efficacy. The correlation coefficient indexes are used to explain the degree and strength of the linear relationship between two variables. The results of table 3 show that the two variables have a solid and positive correlation.

Coefficient value	Strength
1.0	Perfect
0.80 - 0.99	Very strong
0.60 - 0.79	Strong
0.40 - 0.59	Easy
0.20 - 0.39	Weak
0.01 - 0.19	Very weak
0.0	No relationship

In short, the results of the research show that there is a significant positive relationship and brawny range between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy of the respondents. Due to the significant value of the correlation coefficient, it can be concluded that the hypothesis is rejected. Therefore from the result of the Spearman Rho correlation coefficient analysis indicated that strong, positive correlation between emotional intelligence and the self-efficacy of primary school special education teachers.

Table 5

*Analysis of the relationship between emotional intelligence domains and self-efficacy*

Spearman Rho Correlation Coefficient	Self- efficacy	Self- awareness	Self management	Motivation	Empathy	Relationship Management
Self-efficacy	1.000	.605	.673	.739	.797	.634
Self- awareness	.605	1.000	.488	.561	.579	.386
Self management	.673	.488	1.000	.678	.590	.501
Motivation	.739	.561	.678	1.000	.777	.696
empathy	.797	.579	.590	.777	1.000	.596
Relationship management	.634	.386	.501	.696	.596	1.000

Table 5 shows the analysis of the relationship between the domains of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. Spearman Rho correlation coefficient analysis shows that there is a positive and significant relationship that refers to the five domains involved. This can be explained through the value of the correlation coefficient which is in the range of 0.60-0.79 which is at the level of a strong relationship (Hussin et al., 2014). In addition, the table also shows that the domain of emotional intelligence, empathy and motivation has the highest value of the correlation coefficient  $r$  compared to the other domain is  $r = .797$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $N = 84$  and  $r = .739$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $N = 84$ . This concludes that among the domains of emotional intelligence in Goleman's theory, the domains of empathy and motivation are more prominent with the degree of positive significant relationship at a strong level compared to the other three domains.

## Discussion

This study has measured the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy of special education teachers who serve in the rural areas of Sabah. The importance of the study is to find out the relationship between emotional intelligence and its impact on teacher self-efficacy. This study uses the Daniel Goleman Model to measure the mean of teachers' emotional intelligence, which refers to five domains of emotional intelligence. The domains are self-awareness, self-management, motivation, empathy and relationship management. According to Krishnan and Awang (2020) this model can measure and explain the individual achievements and performance.

Moreover this model does not visualize emotions only but also elucidate the impact on work performance and success in career. In other words, this model has characteristics that are suitable to be applied in the field of education, especially the field of special education which consists of a variety of students with different levels of cognitive ability (Kgosiemang & Khoza, 2022).

Referring to the findings of the study, it was found that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and the self-efficacy of special education teachers. The



findings of the study successfully show the existence of a relationship in a strong range which is  $r$  value ( $n=84, p = 1.000$ ) = .833,  $p < 0.005$  compared to studies (Aziz et al., 2020; Moira, 2020; Tatal & Efe, 2020). In addition, the findings of this study are also in line with studies Aziz et al (2020); Alasmee et al (2022); Lu & Mustafa (2021); Tatal & Efe (2020) where it is explained that if emotional intelligence increases then self-efficacy teachers will also increase. Varol and Mehmet (2020) also found that emotional intelligence brings a significant change to the teacher's self-efficacy. This means that the better the teacher's emotional intelligence, the more enhance the teacher's level of self-efficacy. In other words, emotional intelligence brings positive thinking and subsequently increases the confidence and optimistic view of teachers to always achieve success even in challenging situations. The impact of this change further supports the emergence of MBPK.

This significant relationship explains that emotional intelligence greatly affects the level of self-efficacy of special education teachers. The level of efficiency, whether it increases or decreases, has a strong relationship referring to the mastery of emotional intelligence skills. Sabina (2022) explains that emotional management is essential for the effectiveness of teaching. Failure of emotional intelligence skills not only affects their actions but also changes their values, abilities, capabilities and psychological state. Nwosu et al (2023) also elaborates where emotional intelligence further affects the effectiveness of teachers in the classroom, which refers to teaching and student performance. This study also proves that even though teachers have self-confidence, if teachers fail to manage their emotions well, it definitely contributes to the decline of self-efficacy.

This study also supports the emotional intelligence theory of Goleman's model (1998) who states that the level of emotional intelligence is not inherited but begins to form as early as childhood. Therefore, the relationship between emotional intelligence and teacher self-efficacy will lead to a change in the social behavior of teachers who are able to resolve MBPK classroom conflicts constructively. Goleman in Khan (2020) states that emotional intelligence allows individuals to work well in organizations. This explains the relationship of emotional intelligence that has an impact on the improvement of teachers' self-efficacy. Teachers with high emotional intelligence will use this skill when facing difficulties. This skill allows teachers to continue moving forward with good emotions and will to build motivation and also optimistic attitude towards achieving goals.

Data analysis also concluded that the emotional intelligence skills of special education teachers in rural areas have a strong relationship with self-efficacy. Through the findings of the study of emotional intelligence, it is seen that it is necessary to refer to the teaching challenges of MBPK's own classroom. The variety of MBPK categories and problems make classroom conflicts easy to occur. In this case, when teachers cannot accurately understand their own emotions as well as the emotions expressed by MBPK, then the teaching goals are more difficult to achieve. At this time, the teacher's competence in managing conflict is needed where the teacher needs to determine the right decision without being influenced by feelings. This is not an easy matter especially when conflict happens teachers' emotions and physicality are certainly challenged by the state of MBPK. The success of teachers in managing MBPK conflicts further leads to increased self-efficacy. So this matter indirectly leads to the delivery and improvement of better teaching performance to MBPK at rural schools.

## Conclusion

This study measures the relationship between emotional intelligence and teacher self-efficacy. The implementation of the study was carried out specifically for special education

teachers who serve in the rural areas of Sabah. The findings of the study concluded that emotional intelligence has a positive influence on teacher self-efficacy. This means that emotional intelligence is an interpersonal skill that can indirectly help improve teacher self-efficacy. However, there are still other variables that need to be studied in an effort to ensure that teachers' self-efficacy is always sustainable and relevant. Therefore, stakeholders need to take the initiative and be positive that effective teaching in the MBPK classroom is not enough with knowledge alone. The self-confidence of teachers needs to be constantly nurtured to ensure that teachers can maintain outstanding teaching performance. Therefore, the development of teacher professionalism should be balanced by not only developing intellectual knowledge but also learning interpersonal skills.

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