

Do Emotions Matter: A study on Social and Emotional Competencies of Teachers

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At the heart of all human actions, lies emotion as all humans are social beings. Current literature on education emphasize that, purely cognitive theories of learning will be rejected unless a role is assigned to affectivity, the emotional domain of learning. Based on this premise, the current study attempted to identify the impact of social and emotional competencies of teachers on the achievement of students, with reference to university undergraduates in Sri Lanka. Definitions of education, when extended beyond the confinements of traditional boundaries, are not mere learning of facts. If education is what remains after all the learning is completed in the classrooms and is defined in a way that it embraces and resorts to the goal of making a better human being, then, developing social and emotional competencies (SEC) is essential for both teachers and students. The objective of this study was to find out how social and emotional competencies of teachers affect learning. The sample of the study consisted of 150 undergraduates and lecturers from one of the national universities in Sri Lanka, selected on stratified random sampling. Data was collected through a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Descriptive qualitative analysis of data indicated that students value emotional and social competencies of their teachers more (76 per cent) than their knowledge on the subject matter (53 per cent). Social and emotional competencies such as empathy, understanding, listening and self-efficacy are found to be the most important ones by the students. The impact that teachers have had on the achievement of students are positively related to their SECs. Findings related to the perspectives of teachers suggest that when teachers are aware of their SECs it has a significant positive impact on the entire teaching-learning process and help teachers deal with teacher burnout better.

Key words: *Social and Emotional Competencies, learner achievement, teacher burnout.*