

Assessing Emotional Intelligence as An Innovative Dimension in The Attainment of Quality Education: A Mauritian Insight

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims primarily to report the findings of the research project which attempted to explore the extent to which Emotional Intelligence (EI) influences the attainment of Quality Education (QE) within the public secondary educational setting in Mauritius. This paper is motivated by the fact that reason and emotions need to be aligned with a view of cultivating the integrated development of the powers of both the mind and the heart to ensure a sustainable education pathway. This study espoused an iterative approach to research design, subscribing to a mixed method while targeting a large population sample for generalisation of results. The perception of QE and EI were assessed through quantitative and qualitative data which were collected through survey questionnaires for educators and school leaders and discourses from regional directors following semi-structured interviews conducted. Analysis of results gathered from educators, school leaders and zone directors related to state-owned secondary schools indicated a positive impact of EI on QE in contemporary times.

Keywords:

Emotional Intelligence; Quality Education; Sustainability.

ABSTRAK

Makalah ini bertujuan terutama untuk melaporkan temuan proyek penelitian yang mencoba mengeksplorasi sejauh mana Kecerdasan Emosional (EI) mempengaruhi pencapaian Pendidikan Berkualitas (QE) dalam lingkungan pendidikan menengah negeri di Mauritius. Makalah ini dilatarbelakangi oleh fakta bahwa akal dan emosi perlu diselaraskan dengan pandangan untuk mengembangkan pengembangan terpadu kekuatan pikiran dan hati untuk

memastikan jalur pendidikan berkelanjutan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan berulang terhadap desain penelitian, menggunakan metode campuran sambil menargetkan sampel populasi yang besar untuk generalisasi hasil. Persepsi QE dan EI dinilai melalui data kuantitatif dan kualitatif yang dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner survei terhadap pendidik dan pimpinan sekolah serta wacana dari direktur daerah setelah wawancara semi terstruktur yang dilakukan. Analisis hasil yang dikumpulkan dari para pendidik, pimpinan sekolah, dan direktur zona terkait sekolah menengah milik negara menunjukkan dampak positif EI terhadap QE di zaman sekarang.

Keywords:

Kecerdasan emosional; Kualitas pendidikan; Keberlanjutan.

1. Introduction

Quality Education (QE), in contemporary times, is no longer restricted to having command of a curriculum and knowledge of theories and facts on an array of disciplines (Garcia 2014) but encompasses the proper understanding of the emotions of learners to encourage and empower them for greater social interaction and integration (Bello *et al.* 2017) and ultimately leading to social change and transformation (Unterhalter 2003). The transitional continuum from Education for All (EFA) to Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and reaching Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), corroborates with the universal changing demands of the education sector aiming towards educational resilience (Morrison and Allen 2007) and calls for a transformation in the conceptual framework of global educational development (Yamada 2016).

Such tectonic global shift (Spence 2011) in terms of ‘*value-neutral*’ education to ‘*value-based*’ education (Ah-Teck and Starr 2013) resides in the fact that it has been empirically noted that the growing demand of companies for ‘*green skills*’ and ‘*green jobs*’ is in disharmony with the human capital provided by the actual education system (Vladimirova and LeBlanc 2015). There resides a gap dealing with integrating hand and mind within educational parameters (Podger *et al.* 2010), along with the promotion of ‘*emotional maturity*’ within an integrated education system focusing on merging reason and emotion. Emotional Intelligence (EI) is an under-researched component within educational settings, more so at secondary level (Daus *et al.* 2012) which fail to fully develop the psycho-social competences of learners, even though EI should be considered as an essential component and be used more consciously than instinctively in the teaching and learning process (Tok *et al.* 2013).

The definition of the concept of quality has known a chronological evolution as browsed literature suggests. While conceptualizing the definition of QE, Schindler *et al.* (2015) added transformation as one of the four broad concepts based on which they attempted to clarify QE: ‘*purposeful*’, ‘*exceptional*’, ‘*transformative*’ and ‘*accountable*’, supported by UNESCO’s (2014) same philosophy. Quality as transformation (Farooq *et al.* 2007) is closely related to the notion of

‘*Transformative Learning*’ (TL). TL is seen as a holistic, emotional and spiritual development which is impactful on educational programmes (Enkhtur and Yamamoto (2017).

The Theory of Intelligence is rich in definitions but the overarching theories which have gained significant attention in academics and have replaced the traditional theories by causing a shift in the traditional paradigm are the Multiple Intelligence Theory of Gardner (1983) and the Emotional Intelligence Theory introduced by Salovey and Mayer in 1990 and carried forward by Goleman in 1995 (Marwaha 2015). It is universally accepted that the harmonisation of the mind and the heart is highly meaningful to human achievement and for leading a successful life as the ability of dealing properly and successfully with people and the environment paves the way to set and achieve personal as well as professional goals (Marwaha 2015). This ability, identifies as EI, is the most important element of intelligence and has a stronger influence than IQ (Yahaya *et al.* 2012). Browsed literature of Marwaha (2015) supported Sallowi and Meer as the ones who introduced EQ for the first time.

In the quest of explaining EI, Bar-On identified five major areas along with their fifteen respective competencies which attend to the emotional and social behaviour-related abilities underlying EI (MacCann *et al.* 2020). These five domains are mainly intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, adaptability, stress management and general mood (MacCann *et al.* 2020). As such, the primary field of EI is intrapersonal. The second on the list is interpersonal. Adaptability is listed as the third field and reality-testing, flexibility and problem-solving are the required capabilities. Stress tolerance and impulse control form part of stress management and the last field of general mood considers happiness and optimism as the major competencies to be emotionally intelligent (Brackett and Geher 2006).

Reaching the state of scientific maturity, the EI paradigm has developed and is based on Ability EI Model of Mayer and Salovey, Trait EI developed by Bar-On and Competency EI conceptualised by Goleman. However, Drigas and Papoutsis (2018), have brought forward a more recent and comprehensive model of EI to follow in the ascension towards the apex of emotional maturity, coined as emotional unity, by the protagonist of the EI pyramid model, as shown in Figure 1.

Actually, social and emotional learning, “*the missing piece*”, is the required moral compass and empowerment strategy that learners need for effective quality education in a foreseeable future where job sustainability is uncertain (Elias 2003). Similarly, while assessing the significance of EI with regard to QE and the extent of the value-added in individuals with high EI, it was affirmed that EI supports building resilient and capable human to face fast-evolving parameters within globalisation and global uncertainties, thus, leading to EI being sanctioned as a necessary component of any quality teaching and learning process (Yahaya *et al.* 2012). Research has proven that EI provides learners with abilities to critically analyse situations and make common-sense decisions, evaluate risks and take calculated ones, sort out strategies to navigate through hardships for goal attainment and manage and control pressures in a constructive way (Chapin 2015).

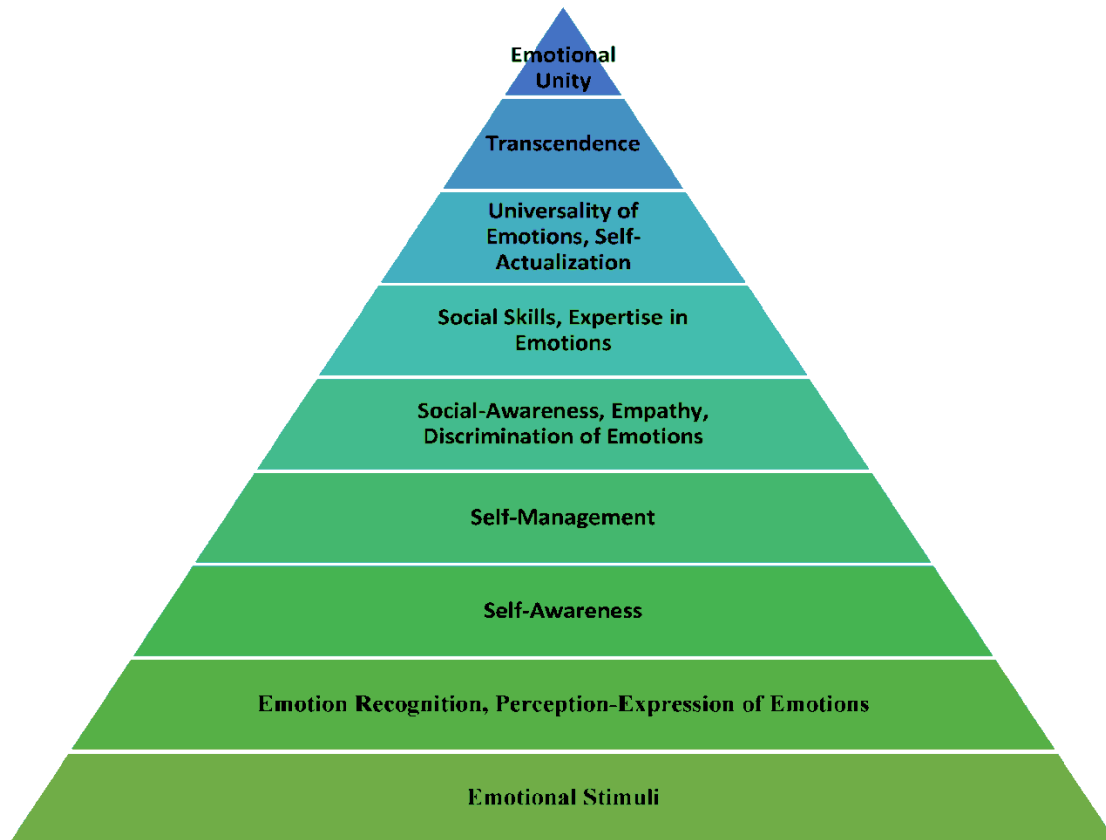


Figure 1. The Emotional Intelligence Pyramid: A 9-Layer Model

Source: Drigas and Papoutsis (2018)

All in all, QE remains a major area of interest among proponents of the educational paradigm shift (Sunder 2016) and dimensions of QE need to be revisited to bridge the existing gaps which are highly justifiable in the contextualized global educational setting. Altogether, the present study finds ‘*raison-d’être*’ in researched literature of Enkhtur and Yamamoto (2017) who fervently advocated that there is an urgent need to move from formative learning to Transformative Learning (TL) in the 21st century.

The aim of the study was to assess how far EI can be considered as a new dimension of QE in the rapidly evolving and unstable globalized world structure and the research questions identified to gauge this aim are:

- RQ1** What is the perception of educators and school leaders of public secondary schools with regard to QE?
- RQ2** What is the perception of educators and school leaders of public secondary schools with regard to EI?

RQ3 How far EI influences the attainment of QE according to the perception of educators and school leaders at secondary level?

RQ4 To what extent can EI be considered as an innovative dimension of QE according to the perception of educators, school leaders and zone directors at secondary level?

2. Methods

2.1. Research Design

The present research was conducted within the Island of Mauritius, a multiracial and multilingual island which is located off the southern coast of Africa. The present study attempted to ascertain primarily, the legitimacy of EI as a new dimension of QE through validated and proven scientific measures within both a positivist and interpretivist research paradigm espousing the mixed method approach. More specifically, this study is geared towards understanding the impact EI has on QE. The epistemological perspective of the study encompassed the context, the kind of evidence that was being searched for and how it was interpreted which, in the present situation, were clearly diverse. As far as the ontological assumptions of the present investigation are concerned, the study adopted a realistic ontology (Moon and Blackman 2014) and adhered to relativist ontology. The whole study was driven by the exploratory scientific research method with mainly an inductive reasoning with emphasis laid on collecting data then generalisations. RQ 4 looked for confirmation of data collected through the explanatory point of view.

2.2 Data Collection

Secondary data was primarily gathered through academic journals, books, articles, newspapers and websites. Data from existing official manuals, procedures, reports, policy-papers and statistical sources were also given consideration in the review. Primary data was collected through survey questionnaire which attempted to assess the perception of EI from the perspectives of both educators and school leaders. The target population was divided into three groups: educators, school leaders and zone directors and were scattered across the island, encompassing both rural and urban regions. Following a purposive sampling strategy, a total of 437 educators and 63 school leaders of public secondary schools participated in the survey. They were provided with self-administered questionnaires to assess perception of EI through online and/or through paper-based survey. To assess the understanding of EI, the 9-layer model of Drigas and Papoutsis (2018), was taken as the basis from where statements were adapted. The impact Emotionally Intelligent Learners (EIL) have on their personal, academic and social life within an educational setting was also assessed.

The respondents were even asked to justify, giving at least five reasons, why they considered EI as an important factor in reaching QE or why EI was not, according to them, a significant contributor to QE. In sum, the survey attempted to look at both QE and EI, specifying the various

determinants of QE and EI and their inter-connectivity, if any. The interview guide was drafted with the aim of '*seeing the issue and its meanings from as many angles as possible*' and '*to ensure information-richness*' (Busetto *et al.* 2020). Questions in the interview guide were grouped thematically, with key questions related to QE and EI and their inter-connectivity. The preferred languages were English and French. SSIs were conducted both through face-to-face and through Zoom online platform as per the preferred medium of the interviewees, given that Covid-19 pandemic was still a matter of great concern with the Omicron variant causing untimely deaths in the island. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim at the earliest, within 24 hours, (Sileyew 2020), without annotations for behavior or observation of facial expressions in the case of the face-to-face interviews. Raw data was sorted as per coding procedures and connected with theoretical terms (Busetto *et al.* 2020). After the SSIs, the transcripts were coded to sort out raw data and to be categorized. The dominant responses, then, emerged for concluding analysis

2.3 Data Analysis

Data gathered was presented under the main branches of statistical analysis: descriptive and inferential statistics for quantitative data. The stability and consistency of the constructs were evaluated by Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, with Bartlett's Test of Sphericity performed for validity whereas Exploratory Factor Analysis, Multiple Correlation Analysis and Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin assessed the inter-relationships between the variables. Qualitative data, on the other hand, was analysed using an iterative process. Enumeration enabled the researcher to determine how frequently respondents responded to the coded categories. After coding, the suggestive themes pop out and through thematic analysis, the themes were identified and analysed in the research findings. As there were only four interviewees, the transcripts of the SSIs were firstly transcript from audio-recorded versions into typed texts and analysed through a narrative inquiry for each question. To increase confidence in findings, '*between-methods*' triangulation (Heale and Forbes 2013) was used together with data triangulation (Johnson *et al.* 2007).

3. Results and Discussion

Among the 500 respondents, 87.4% represented educators and 12.6% were school leaders. The percentage of females were 71% relative to 29% of males. The highest % of respondents were from the age group of 41-50 years with 53.2% having more than 15 years of experience in the education sector. 46.6 % had a pedagogical certificate after having followed a degree course (94.8%). The demographic profile evidenced that participants were deemed to be reliable and trustworthy. Cronbach's Alpha values .9 indicated sufficient reliability in the data collection process. KMO value (.962) indicated a highly appropriate sample size to generate insights (Shrestha 2021). Eventually, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity value (0.000) reflected appropriate validity of the research and responses, in line with set objectives (Park 2021).

To examine the main dimensions contributing towards QE in Mauritius, an Exploratory Factor Analysis was performed. The first step was performed by computing the Total Variance Explained to

figure out the total value of variance estimated by the factors used to measure the construction of QE. As can be observed from Table 1, there were four factors that contributed towards QE in the Mauritian context. This was identified by analysing the Initial Eigenvalues which stand at one or above when a factor contributes significantly towards an outcome (Shrestha 2021). To probe deeper into the analysis, the variables and items used for this analysis were regrouped under the Rotated Component Matrix that allowed assigning the different variables to their parent factors, which then enabled naming of the salient factors.

Table 1. Total Variance Explained (QE)

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	8.769	39.858	39.858	8.769	39.858	39.858	5.349	24.315	24.315
2	1.640	7.457	47.315	1.640	7.457	47.315	3.055	13.888	38.203
3	1.461	6.640	53.955	1.461	6.640	53.955	2.642	12.007	50.210
4	1.124	5.111	59.066	1.124	5.111	59.066	1.948	8.856	59.066
5	.855	3.889	62.954						
6	.811	3.686	66.641						
7	.759	3.449	70.090						
8	.702	3.190	73.279						
9	.651	2.959	76.238						
10	.568	2.580	78.818						
11	.533	2.422	81.240						
12	.517	2.349	83.589						
13	.507	2.304	85.892						
14	.462	2.099	87.992						
15	.434	1.972	89.964						
16	.418	1.902	91.866						
17	.345	1.569	93.435						
18	.329	1.494	94.929						
19	.320	1.456	96.385						
20	.285	1.295	97.679						
21	.277	1.258	98.937						
22	.234	1.063	100.000						

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	8.769	39.858	39.858	8.769	39.858	39.858	5.349	24.315	24.315
2	1.640	7.457	47.315	1.640	7.457	47.315	3.055	13.888	38.203
3	1.461	6.640	53.955	1.461	6.640	53.955	2.642	12.007	50.210
4	1.124	5.111	59.066	1.124	5.111	59.066	1.948	8.856	59.066
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Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: SPSS (Version 22)

Scree Test

A **Scree** plot with Eigenvalue magnitudes on the vertical access and Eigenvalue numbers constituting the horizontal axis was generated to confirm if four factors influenced QE in Mauritius. For the actual analysis, the Scree plot levelled significantly after factor four where the curve

straightened, confirming that as from variable 5, variables do not have a significant influence on QE in Mauritius (Shrestha, 2021).

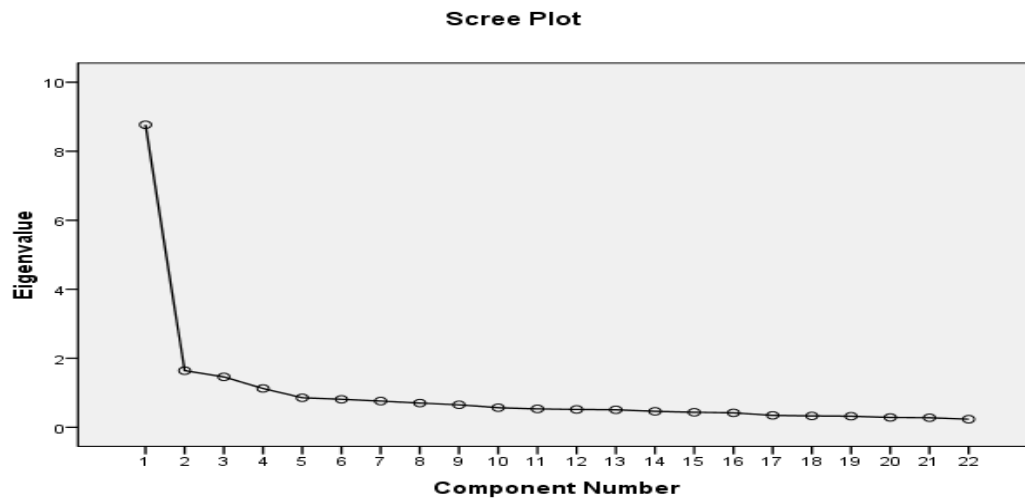


Figure 2. Scree Plot (QE)

Source: SPSS (Version 22)

Following confirmation of four factors contributing significantly towards quality education, a Rotated Component Matrix (Table 2) was computed to group the different variables under the factor they contribute the most (Chetty, 2015).

Table 2. Rotated Component Matrix (QE)

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
QE means to have clear aims, inputs and processes for goal attainments.	.306	.755	.160	.155
QE rests on fulfilment of Shared Vision and Mission.	.225	.785	.146	.121
QE means understanding, development and proper planning of the curriculum.	.266	.777	.153	.088
QE means meeting standards and benchmarks set by educational bodies.	.116	.473	.516	.124
QE requires adaptive learning and teaching styles that meets learners' needs	.399	.484	.318	.070
QE is subject to teacher quality (subject expertise, innovative teaching strategies, ICT literate, resilience, dedication amongst others).	.347	.342	.549	-.008
QE is generally known to be a threshold of literacy and numeracy.	.131	.212	.730	.033
QE aims at developing the skills to conceptualise, apply, analyse, synthesise and evaluate information gathered from various sources prior to adopt any behaviour or action.	.318	.349	.579	.138

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
QE asks for academically focused learners with high participation rate in learning activities.	.164	-.058	.750	.260
QE means transforming and empowering learners with life-long skills, knowledge and attitudes.	.500	.260	.371	.042
QE is achieved when success rate outweighs failure rate in educational institutions.	.077	.094	.081	.695
QE is a reflection of high trust from all stakeholders.	.303	.222	.002	.704
QE is subject to goodwill and reputation of educational institution within the immediate community at large.	.134	.027	.222	.786
QE breeds committed, instructional, skilled, visionary, charismatic, passionate school leaders who act as managers, coaches, team-leaders, motivators, mediators, entrepreneurs with problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills.	.565	.104	.280	.292
QE entails the ability of having adequate and appropriate evaluation, feedback and monitoring tools on/of learning outcomes for on-going improvement plans.	.653	.234	.227	.147
QE is attained when staff is empowered through Continuous Professional Development, develop high- esteem and participate in decision-making.	.725	.238	.131	.141
QE is attained with required and quality human capital (teaching, non-teaching and administrative staff).	.798	.134	.113	.136
QE demands for adequate and quality physical facilities (well-maintained buildings, adequate teaching and learning tools, proper sanitary measures, space for sports and recreational activities).	.719	.155	.130	.060
QE is subject to adherence to Safety and Health Protocol for learners and staff.	.731	.137	.105	.149
QE accounts for both cognitive and affective empowerment of learners.	.739	.219	.119	.108
QE relates to the development of both knowledge-based and skill-based competencies in learners.	.771	.225	.156	.107
QE aims at bridging the gap between educational mismatch and unemployment.	.480	.333	.225	.041

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

Source: SPSS (Version 22)

From the Rotated Component Index, The Transformative dimension of QE reaped the largest number of variables with 10 relevant to the agreed loading value (Harvey, 2006), whereas 4 variables could be grouped under Purposeful dimension (Owlia and Aspinwall 1996), 5 under QE as being Exceptional (Chong 2014) and 3 for QE as being Accountable (Scheerens 2015). Henceforth, it can be concluded that the four dimensions have significant number of factors associated to them, hence,

the four dimensions, with order of priority as per Figure 3 below, have substantial share in enforcing QE within the local context.



Figure 3. Dimensions of Quality Education
Source: Own

To pinpoint the main factors that contribute towards EI within the Mauritian context, the Scree Plot (Figure 4) and Rotated Component Matrix further evidenced that Competency, Personal Traits and Ability contributed towards EI in Mauritius. Handling relationships was regarded as a major contribution in gaining on emotional intelligence (Sharma and Yadav 2014). Proper emotional management facilitates better control on feelings and emotions, flexibility and willingness in dealing with own and others' feelings while adapting to new conditions (Khan 2019). Boosting self-esteem and realization of personal potential encourage individuals towards empathy and kinship towards humanity; emotionally intelligent individuals aim at making people humble, cheerful and satisfied by their lives (Schutte *et al.* 2013).

The relationship that exists between QE and EI was examined through *Correlation analysis*.

Research Hypothesis 1

H₀: Emotional Intelligence does not share a significant and positive relationship with Quality Education

H₁: Emotional Intelligence shares a significant and positive relationship with Quality Education

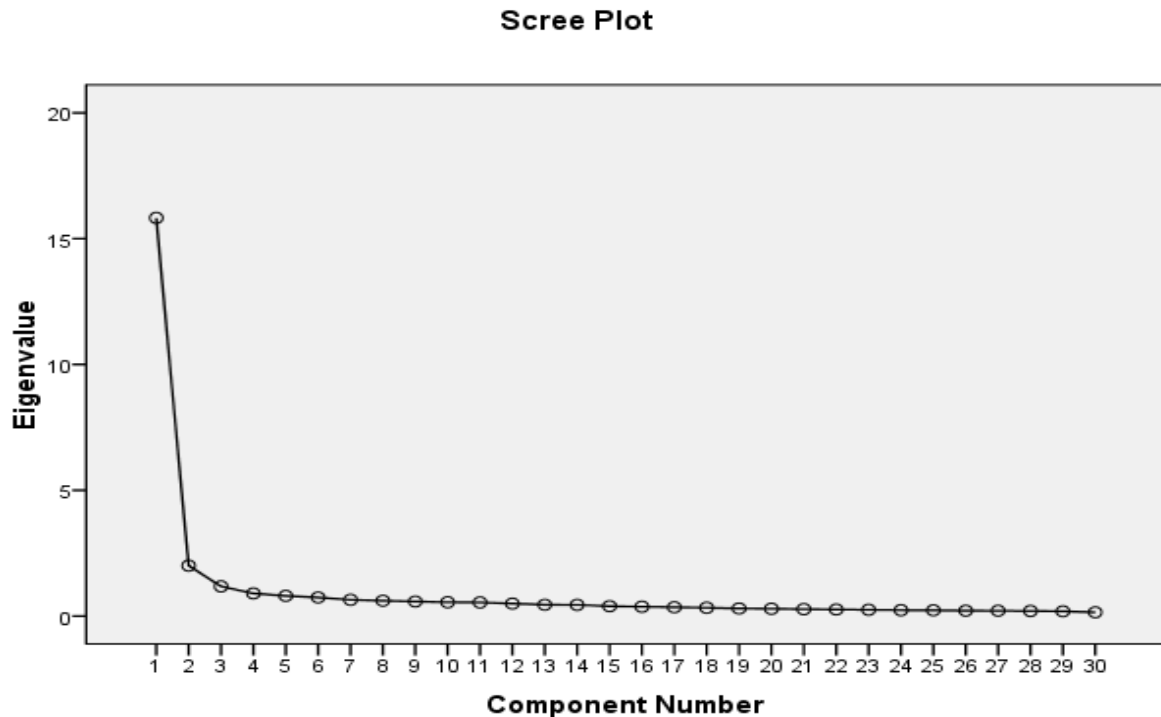


Figure 4. Scree Plot (EI)

Source: SPSS (Version 22)

The analysis showed that there is not sufficient statistical evidence to accept the research null hypothesis and to claim that EI does not share a relationship with QE. The research null hypothesis was rejected and it was concluded, at 99% confidence level, that EI shares a significant and positive relationship with QE. Answers for the two open-ended questions related to QE and EI were scrutinized and categorized through thematic interpretation via segmenting, coding and enumeration (Social Competencies/Skills and Employability, Value-based Education, Resilience and Self-Transformation, Sustainable and Decent Living and Wellness, Inter-relationships between stakeholders and Political Will, Attributes of QE and Miscellaneous). Responses to ‘*Any other remarks on QE*’ were significantly high in number, with 427 attempts and 73 abstentions (with ‘*no other remarks*’ written), implying 85.4% of positive response.

Indeed, most respondents (95.5%) had the perception that if EI is enhanced, this will entail better control of self which will lead to better self-management, encouraging better social awareness, leading to the social skills and competencies needed to strengthen social relationships. Quite a large quantum of answers (84.7 %) could be associated to EI as an enabler to more resilience among stakeholders. From the 471 respondents, 315 (66.9%) were of the opinion that EI significantly empowers learners and other stakeholders. The rationale behind learners being empowered through EI resides in the fact that where EI is enhanced, there is a rise in performance and productivity. 36.7 % of participants explained that having a value-based education, bring forward the caring and mature side of people, thus, forging strong relationships through greater trust. People are seen as better

individuals who understand the essence of life in a more profound way and ensure sustainability and wellness by living a decent and happy life. Qualitative analysis, through arguments and evidence, explicitly conveyed the message that educators and school leaders perceive EI as the vehicle that can drive learners and the education system not only towards QE but can achieve the broader aims of education in ensuring sustainable living in a harmonious environment amidst happy people. On a positive note, EI is said to play a significant role in attainment of QE, as a novel promoter within the actual environmental situation and global demands. It was stipulated that EI should be included in the primary and secondary curriculum at an early stage, preferably, in their elementary school period as the learners are still in their emotional formation process.

Given that there were only 4 directors in post, no qualitative software analysis was used. Verbatim transcriptions were analysed through analytical discourse as the questions included in the interview guide followed the thematic analysis made for the open-ended questions. All interviewees unanimously agreed that QE espouses a holistic approach and provided additional validation of similar conclusions reached in previous thematic analysis. From the perspectives of the directors, it seems that achieving QE entails having a common vision and mission with collaboration from all the stakeholders to empower learners with both hard and soft skills and competencies so as to work towards attaining the broader goals of holistic development within a sustainable setup. The preferences of the interviewees in terms of QE being accountable, exceptional, purposeful and transformative were assessed as per Model of Schindler *et al.* (2015). Accountability with quality assurance and optimum use of all resources put at the service of education was highlighted. QE can be exceptional by creating exceptional citizens through exceptional education by developing '*trust among all, be wide and for everybody*'. QE as being purposeful meant developing an appropriate curriculum which will match the future demands of society so as to live decently and in peace. The transformative aspect of QE was termed as holistic transformation, with revised and adapted curriculum along with appropriate assessment and evaluation as focal points.

The prominent themes around which the directors expressed themselves, with regard to outcomes of QE, were skills acquisition, employability, imbibing values, resilience, about living decently as good citizens and about sustainability. It was ascertained that directors did not substantiate the idea that policymakers should be the prime actors for EI initiative and implementation. Directors believed this is a matter for all stakeholders to internalize and initiate, given that policymakers had realized the high significance of emotional development in contemporary times and have included, as non-examinable subjects SEWB programme and LSV in the '*NCF*' for lower secondary learners.

Few constraints were experienced during operationalization of the research study. With Covid-19 Pandemic, the data collection process had to be re-scheduled and was delayed. Secondly, the survey is mostly feminized with 66.9% of respondents among educators and school leaders of female gender, complying to the reported feminization of the education sector worldwide. Thirdly, though being a major stakeholder in the education sector, parents were not considered for this study as this would have entailed huge financial investments as the thesis was based on a global survey across

zones and not limited to one zone. Additionally, the actual pandemic situation still prevailing in 2023 did not encourage such endeavour.

The four dimensions of QE, transformative, purposeful, exceptional and accountable were validated and described as ‘*limbs of the education system*’ which cannot be ranked based on priority but should be looked at horizontally, giving all same significance, nevertheless, the Transformative aspect of QE stand-out as the most significant outcome of QE after quantitative and qualitative analysis of data collected.

Teaching both the heart and the mind of learners, has been so far, well-established through the actual survey and discussions thereon. As advocated by browsed literature, ‘*the missing piece*’ of social and emotional learning (Elias 2003), points out towards the empowerment strategy to provide an effective QE within the uncertain global structure where job-sustainability is growing wary as global needs and demands evolve. As a matter of fact, EI acts as a catalyst for those who want to progress towards the self-actualisation summit as it paves the way to self-fulfillment and happiness (Bai and Niazi 2014).

This study strongly advocates for a QE framework where EI is given prime acknowledgment for warranting a QE that provides opportunities of life success to every child. The presented QE Framework enhanced with EI as a novel dimension (Figure 5), brings in a continuum in a QE which is emotionally inclined to meet the aim of having holistically developed citizens who are enjoying psychological well-being and spreading wellness and happiness around.

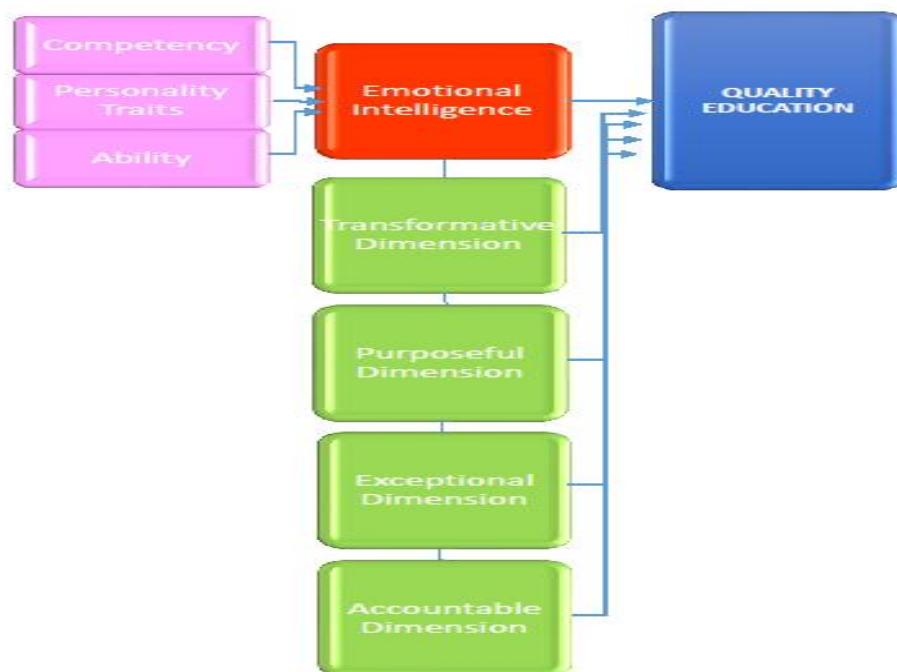


Figure 5. Proposed QE Framework with EI

Source: Own

The focus on education should shift from mere certification to encompass the development of analytical, cognitive, motivational and creative potential of the learner. It is thus recommended that EI be introduced in the curriculum and be infused in learning at all stages so as to develop both head and heart of the learners. The perception that only intellectual intelligence needs to be developed whereas on the emotional front the learner will automatically be empowered is a fallacy (Leasa *et al.* 2017), equal focus needs to be put on both IQ and EQ.

The research study provided a compelling argument that EI of learners need to be thoroughly assessed through currently available and validated EI tests and that the overall EI scores be communicated to parents and authorities at an early stage so that once shortcomings have been diagnosed, appropriate remedial actions, in terms of, educational programmes, be designed and implemented to bridge the gap between a low EI and a high EI learner to mitigate forthcoming personal or social disturbances in the long run. Therefore, it is suggested that the curriculum be revised and more activity-based learning of EI be encouraged through interactive methods along the learner-centered approach (Lagat 2017). Learners need to be exposed to independent thinking through educational and extra-curricular activities. Hence, it is recommended that after reviewing the existing curriculum with better kinesthetic learning styles, regular assessments through field work and activities evaluating level of EI must be made part and parcel of ongoing assessment at school level and considered for deciding on overall performance attained during schooling.

Not only new recruits in the education sector, but educators already in service must be given adequate knowledge of the concept of EI and how it can be used during teaching, learning and class management (Schutte *et al.* 2013). The best technique of EI training need be sorted out and put in practice in workshops and courses for all stakeholders in academia with optimal training time for different groups.

As a matter of fact, such research has never been conducted in any islands of the Indian Ocean or in the African region. Per se, with no former available comparative results in relation to actual findings, it can be said that the scope for further research is indeed vast. The same research could be replicated at a larger scale where results could be triangulated with responses from additional respondents, such as parents, deputy rectors and educational administrators from both private and public educational settings. Indeed, the EI of Mauritian learners need to be assessed whether as an ability, a competency or as a trait, avenues are diverse.

Further research can investigate the situational factors that can activate the emotional competency of learners within the school environment. EI of learners could be compared within cultures, based on gender or/ and age, related to ethnicity, among disadvantaged and vulnerable groups among slow learners, related to school attainment at differing levels, to LSV and/ or SEWB educational programmes, within any subject area or field of study. The EI of educators, school leaders, administrators, parents, non-teaching staff too, do have a significant impact of various factors contributing to QE, implying that evaluating their EI level with respect to factors enabling QE, can lead to better understanding of their emotional state, their positive or negative influences along the

quality process and for drawing inferences for greater targeted social support and quality enhancement initiatives.

4. Conclusion

The present survey enabled the researcher to reach the conclusion that it is crucial to review the educational quality framework within contemporary global challenges and ensure that learners are well empowered to face life setbacks with the appropriate set of competencies, skills and knowledge so that they succeed both academically and in life. This study recommends that EI should be considered as an essential component in the quest for QE and should be used more consciously rather than instinctively, with well spell-out aims and objectives through proper lesson-planning while infusing it across teaching and learning activities. To reach QE, EI should be the overarching theme across all levels of curriculum design.

5. References

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