A Research on the Level and Influencing Factors of Elementary and Secondary School Teachers' Social-Emotional Competence

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Abstract: *Teachers' social emotional competence refers to a set of core competencies related to adapting and developing socially in complex situations involving children and adults. It includes teachers' abilities to understand and regulate emotions, solve problems successfully, and behave appropriately in family, school, and social contexts. This competence plays an important role in promoting both teachers' personal growth and students' social emotional development. In this study, we surveyed 1,129 primary and secondary school teachers in Ganzhou City and found that while teachers' overall competence levels were high, development across various dimensions was uneven. Teaching experience had a stronger explanatory effect on teachers' social-emotional competence than academic qualifications or professional titles. Fostering a supportive school climate and providing specialized social-emotional competence training are important ways of facilitating the development of teachers' social-emotional competence. This can stimulate teachers' intrinsic motivations, arouse their desires for professional advancement, and ignite enthusiasm for teaching and educating.*

Keywords: *Primary and Secondary School Teachers; Social Emotional Competence; Influencing Factor*

1. Introduction

At the Education Forum of the ninth Annual Conference of the China Education Thirty Forum held at the end of 2022, improving teachers' social and emotional competence emerged as an important topic, reflecting a shift in pedagogy from cognition to emotion. The forum aimed to enhance societal understanding of social-emotional competence, create an atmosphere supportive of holistic education, promote attention to social-emotional competence in educational circles, and improve the educational well-being and mental health of teachers and students. During the Teacher Literacy Forum, social and emotional competence was noted as a hot topic in international education today. The global education community recognizes social-emotional abilities as key 21st century skills critical for happiness and success. At the forum, participating scholars from various fields shared and engaged in in-depth discussions on the theme of "Improving Teachers' Social and Emotional Competence." Topics included the interplay between teacher and student competence by Teacher Sun Yunxiao, rural teachers' competence enabling students' personalized growth by Principal Zuo Jun. Clearly, experts across domains are paying positive attention to teachers' social-emotional competence currently. Research shows teachers with higher competence tend to have better mental health and teaching effectiveness, benefiting student development more [1][2]. As society increasingly emphasizes developing students' competence, improving teachers' skills targets a core issue in education moral education as the foundation. Hence, this research on teachers' social-emotional competence focuses on the healthy development of the teaching profession, carrying major significance for human flourishing, social progress and happiness.

The concept of Teachers' Social-emotional Competence emerged based on the notion of students' "social-emotional competence." The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) in the United States pioneered research and practice in this field. In 1994, CASEL initiated the Social and Emotional Learning project and defined social-emotional competence as the capacity of individuals to manage their own emotions, build positive relationships with others and make responsible decisions when interacting with society to solve problems in social life [3]. It encompasses competencies across five domains: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.In 2020, CASEL updated the concept of SEC to refer to the processes by which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show

empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions [3].

Regarding research on teachers' social-emotional competence, current studies mainly examine the status quo and influencing factors of competence among various teacher groups based on research objectives. Researchers then analyze the resulting problems and causes to propose corresponding strategies for improvement. Due to differences in the time, region, sample size, examined dimensions and research methods of survey studies, analyses have been conducted from diverse perspectives. Most domestic research indicates relatively high social-emotional competence among primary and secondary school teachers [4]. However, some studies differ, like research on ethnic minority teachers showing medium-high levels for primary school head teachers [5], and generally good competence found among special education teachers [6]. But judging from research in recent years, teachers' social-emotional competence is high overall [4]. Regarding research subjects, domestic scholars have focused more on preservice teachers or specific groups like special education and ethnic minority teachers. Large-sample surveys representing the entire primary and secondary teacher population are lacking. Therefore, representation requires further consideration. Based on the above, this research aims to address: What are the levels and key influencing factors of social-emotional competence among primary and secondary school teachers in the context of China?

2. Method

2.1 Participants

Using the method of group sampling, the online questionnaire of the "questionnaire star" platform was tested in the teachers of primary and secondary schools in GZ city through we-chat, QQ and other communication tools. A total of 1129 teacher questionnaires were distributed, including 1006 valid questionnaires, and the effective rate was 89.1%.

2.2 Instrument

2.2.1 Social and emotional Competence scale

The social emotional Competence scale in this study was revised on the basis of the self-evaluation scale of teachers' social emotional Competence compiled by the Ministry of Education "Social Emotional Learning and School Management Improvement" and the revised social emotional Competence scale by Dr. Li Mingwei[8]. There are 6 factors and 22 items. Likert is scored at 5 points. The higher the score, the higher the higher the level of social and emotional Competence of teachers. The confirmatory factor analysis found that $\chi 2 / df = 4.99$, RMSEA = 0.06, SRMR = 0.04, CFI = 0.96, TLI = 0.96 reached acceptable levels. A reliability analysis of the instrument was performed, obtaining a Cronbach's alpha of 0.98. Therefore, it was considered that the instrument had adequate reliability.

2.3 Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

Edit the unified guidance language, take the school as the unit, through the school principal and teachers allow, the guiding language and questionnaire to all the school teachers. Statistical analysis of the data was performed using data analysis software such as SPSS 24.0. SPSS 24.0 is mainly used for descriptive statistics and demographic variables.

3. Results

3.1 The overall level of teachers' social and emotional Competence

The total score of teachers' self-rated social and emotional Competence and the average and standard deviation of the six dimensions are shown in Table 1. The overall average score of teachers' self-rated social emotional Competence was 4.05 (SD=0.80), and the six scores were from high to low: collective management 4.40 (SD=0.81), collective cognition 4.12 (SD=0.79), other cognition (4.03,0.75), self-cognition 4.06 (SD=0.80), self-management 4.04 (SD=0.81), 4.03 (SD=0.75) other management 4.3.69 (SD=0.83). The statistical results show that the total score of teachers' social emotional Competence and the average of the six sub-dimensions are at a high level.

Table 1 Total scores of teachers' social emotional Competence and the six-dimension mean and standard deviation

Dimensionality	Mean	Standard deviation
Self-cognition	4.07	0.80
self-management	4.04	0.81
other cognition	4.03	0.75
other management	3.69	0.83
collective cognition	4.12	0.79
collective management	4.40	0.76
social emotional Competence	4.05	0.80

3.2 The influence of background factors on teachers' social and emotional Competence

Literature review part has mentioned teacher's individual demographic information, but the influence factors of social emotional Competence is more complex, we will test the average and the standard deviation, the background of the research factors mainly include: gender, teaching class type, whether the teacher in charge and title, etc., and examine whether there are differences in these factors.

3.2.1 Gender difference in the social emotional level of primary and secondary school teachers

To study the influence of gender factors on teachers' social emotional Competence, the article of male and female teachers social emotional Competence of independent sample t test, it can be seen from table 3, different gender factors, teachers social emotional Competence level overall no significant difference (P> 0.05), but in self-management, other management, collective cognition, collective management has significant differences. Table 2 shows the test results.

Table 2 Comparison of gender differences in teachers (M ± SD)

	Self-cognition	self-management	other cognition	other management	collective cognition	collective management	social emotional Competence
Male N=314	3.99±0.91	3.97±0.93	4.03±0.83	3.70±0.91	4.07±0.92	4.35±0.88	4.12±0.77
Female N=692	4.10±0.75	4.07±0.75	4.02±0.70	3.68±0.78	4.15±0.73	4.42± 0.74	4.10± 0.62
F	2.53	5.09*	3.68	8.25**	7.37**	5.67*	2.98

Note: All those reported in the table are non-standardized coefficients, * $p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, and***$p < 0.001$. The following table is the same.

3.2.2 The social emotional level of primary and secondary school teachers in whether normal students

To study whether living factors on the teachers 'social emotional Competence level, the article of normal and non-normal students social emotional Competence dimensions of independent sample t test, as can be seen from table 3, whether normal factors, teachers' social emotional Competence level overall there is no significant difference (P> 0.05). Table 3 shows the test results.

Table 3 Comparison of the Differences between Teachers' Social Emotional Competence Level (M ± SD)

	Self-cognition	self-management	other cognition	other management	collective cognition	collective management	social emotional Competence
Normal university students (N=845)	4.13±0.81	4.15±0.81	4.17±0.75	4.19±0.83	4.21±0.80	4.23±0.76	4.11±0.65
Non-normal school students (N=161)	4.14±0.78	4.16±0.82	4.18±0.76	4.20±0.84	4.22±0.77	4.24±0.79	4.12±0.72
F	0.32	0.00	0.33	0.15	3.11	0.90	0.01

3.2.3 The difference in the social emotional level of primary and secondary school teachers in their educational background

To study is whether factors on the influence of teachers 'social emotional Competence level, the article respectively for teachers in teachers' social emotional Competence, each dimension of one-way variance analysis, as can be seen from table 4, under the degree factors, teachers' social emotional Competence overall no significant difference (P> 0.05), only in the self-cognitive dimension. Table 4 shows the test results.

Table 4 Comparison of Educational Differences (M ± SD)

	Self-cognition	self-management	other cognition	other management	collective cognition	collective management	social emotional Competence
Secondary vocational school (N=8)	3.09±1.38	3.63±1.51	3.59±1.48	3.71±1.2	4.21±1.37	4.13±1.34	3.97±0.72
Junior College (N=181)	4.01±0.82	3.96±0.89	4.08±0.78	3.71±0.89	4.14±0.84	4.38±0.84	4.04±0.77
Undergraduate program (N=796)	4.09±0.80	4.07±0.79	4.03±0.73	3.69±0.81	4.13±0.78	4.42±0.74	4.12±0.63
Master's degree (N=21)	4.13±0.68	3.98±0.94	3.92±0.86	3.62±0.91	3.98±0.9	4.27±0.89	3.98±0.71
F	4.5*	1.38	0.09	0.27	0.71	1.51	0.65

3.2.4 The difference in the social emotional level of primary and secondary school teachers in their teaching age

To study whether the teaching age factors on the influence of social emotional Competence level, the article of normal and no normal teachers social emotional Competence, each dimension of one-way variance analysis, as can be seen from table 5, under the normal factors, teachers social emotional Competence level overall significant difference ($P < 0.05$), and there are significant differences in the six dimensions. Table 5 shows the test results.

Table 5 Comparison of teaching differences of teachers (M ± SD)

	Self-cognition	self-management	other cognition	other management	collective cognition	collective management	social emotional Competence
3 years at (N=138)	3.93±0.86	3.85±0.91	3.93±0.78	3.55±0.88	3.92±0.81	4.18±0.76	3.92±0.62
4-10 years at (N=265)	4.05±0.75	3.99±0.74	3.96±0.67	3.59±0.78	4.04±0.77	4.36±0.75	4.05±0.57
11-20years at (N=338)	4.07±0.83	4.05±0.84	4.01±0.82	3.69±0.89	4.14±0.84	4.41±0.8	4.12±0.71
21 years at (N=265)	4.17±0.79	4.18±0.78	4.18±0.7	3.88±0.75	4.32±0.71	4.56±0.7	4.26±0.67
F	4.57**	5.29**	7.08***	9.51***	8.12***	5.56**	2.71*

3.2.5 The difference in the social emotional level of primary and secondary school teachers in the professional title

Table 6 Comparison of professional titles (M ± SD)

	Self-cognition	self-management	other cognition	other management	collective cognition	collective management	social emotional Competence
Positive High (N=5)	3.90±1.66	3.8±1.60	3.85±1.64	3.85±1.64	3.8±1.61	4±1.73	4.71±0.26
High (N=151)	4.21±0.73	4.17±0.78	4.14±0.71	4.14±0.71	4.24±0.72	4.52±0.7	4.32±0.69
Level I (N=384)	4.06±0.87	4.07±0.86	4.06±0.8	4.06±0.8	4.17±0.9	4.45±0.83	4.15±0.74
Level 2 (N=367)	4.06±0.74	4.00±0.76	3.98±0.71	3.98±0.71	4.06±0.72	4.35±0.73	4.07±0.57
Level II I (N=11)	3.80±0.97	3.41±1.01	3.89±0.52	3.89±0.52	4.27±0.51	4.41±0.62	3.88±0.35
Undetermined grade (N=88)	3.95±0.83	3.94±0.81	3.97±0.73	3.62±0.82	4.02±0.71	4.28±0.66	3.95±0.6
F	1.62	2.71*	1.27*	2.82*	1.91	2.13	2.57*

In order to study whether the professional title factors influence on teachers 'social emotional Competence level, this paper conducted one-way variance analysis of professional title level and teachers' social emotional Competence. It can be seen from Table 6 that there is a significant difference in teachers' social emotional Competence level under different professional title factors ($P < 0.05$). Table 6 shows the test results.

3.2.6 The difference in the social emotional level of primary and secondary school teachers in the monthly income

For study, whether the monthly income factors on the influence of teachers social emotional Competence level, respectively, the monthly income and teachers social emotional Competence, each dimension of one-way variance analysis, can be seen from table 7, under different income factors,

teachers social emotional Competence level overall significant difference (P <0.01). Table 7 shows the test results.

Table 7 Comparison of monthly income difference (M ± SD)

	Self-cognition	self-management	other cognition	other management	collective cognition	collective management	social emotional Competence
3000(N=89)	3.85±1.05	3.97±1.05	3.99±0.9	3.77±0.97	4.13±0.91	4.13±0.80	3.95±0.8
3001-4500(N=488)	4.05±0.78	4.02±0.78	4.01±0.74	3.67±0.81	4.1±0.81	4.27±0.83	4.12±0.65
4501-6000(N=280)	4.07±0.79	4.02±0.8	3.99±0.73	3.64±0.81	4.08±0.78	4.4±0.78	4.07±0.65
6001-9000(N=143)	4.24±0.75	4.17±0.8	4.18±0.71	3.83±0.85	4.29±0.68	4.37±0.78	4.26±0.48
Above 9001 (N=6)	4.5±0.52	4.83±0.2	4.58±0.41	3.78±0.83	4.78±0.27	4.55±0.61	4.57±0.16
F	1.95	2.60*	1.52	3.01*	3.02*	2.56*	3.73**

4. Discussion and Suggestions

4.1 Teachers' social emotional Competence is at a high level, but the development of various dimensions is not balanced

The average score of teachers' self-rated social emotional Competence is 4.05, and the average score of 6 sub-dimensions are from high to low respectively: collective management 4.40, collective cognition 4.12, self-cognition 4.07, self-management 4.04, other cognition 4.03, and other management 3.69. It can be seen that the total score of teachers' social emotional Competence and the average of the six sub-dimensions are at a high level. Among them, collective management and collective cognition scored high, which is consistent with the research results of Li Mingwei [7].Hofstede (2010) pointed out that when studying the cultures of different countries[8], Chinese culture has a high degree of collectivism. Under such social and cultural norms, teachers are easy to develop a high degree of collective consciousness, and can consciously abide by the collective norms, coordinate the relationship between individuals and the collective, and show unity, cooperation, responsibility and other pro-social behaviors. In the process of developing teachers' professional Competence, we should attach importance to the unity and growth of teachers in the school community. For example, teaching and research groups, academic groups and student community can help teachers shape their social emotional Competence, help teachers actively manage the relationship between themselves and the group, and draw nutrients from the group. The low scores of self-management and other people's management may be because teachers, as multi-role professionals, need to face many situational conflicts, and need to communicate and coordinate with students, parents, colleagues and leaders, but the corresponding guidance and support is not enough. Therefore, in order to improve teachers 'social emotional Competence, firstly, it is necessary to strengthen teacher training, open special social and emotional Competence courses, and strengthen teachers' empathy and interpersonal communication Competence through role playing, case analysis and other ways. Second, to create a good campus cultural atmosphere, organize teachers to participate in collective activities, strengthen the communication, interaction and cooperation among teachers, and cultivate teachers' team spirit. Third, school leaders should pay full attention to the emotional needs of teachers, and use more encouragement and guidance to help teachers to build self-confidence and positive mentality.

4.2 Teaching age, professional title and monthly income have a significant impact on teachers' social emotional Competence

The reason why teaching age, professional title and income have a significant impact on teachers' social and emotional Competence is mainly because these factors represent the accumulation, status and demand satisfaction degree of teachers in the education system. To be specific, the longer the teaching age and the higher the professional title, the better teachers have richer teaching experience and higher professional Competence, which not only enhances the authority of teachers, but also makes them more confident and experience in dealing with teacher-student relationship and teaching management. On the other hand, the income level directly affects the degree of teachers' economic demand satisfaction and work emotional state. Higher income can reduce the psychological pressure of teachers, so that they can devote more time and Competence to teaching communication. In general, the teaching age, professional title and income are all positively correlated with the accumulation and status of teachers in the education

system, so these factors will have a significant positive impact on teachers' social and emotional Competence. Therefore, to promote the development of teachers' social and emotional Competence, schools can adopt personalized training strategies. For junior teachers, teaching guidance should be strengthened by organizing teaching experience sharing and establishing a tutorial system, so as to help them accumulate class management and communication skills. For intermediate teachers, they can conduct teamwork projects, provide professional development opportunities, and enhance their organizational and coordination skills. For senior teachers, mentors or project leaders can be assigned to play their authority to drive all teachers. On the other hand, we should increase the economic support and psychological counseling for low-income teachers to enhance their work enthusiasm. For all teachers, we should create a good campus cultural atmosphere, carry out regular training and social activities, and establish a teacher evaluation and incentive mechanism. School leaders should pay more attention to the needs of teachers and provide full support. Through personalized training strategies, teachers at different stages can improve their relationship skills and emotional management Competence in a good environment, so as to promote their own professional development.

5. Research Limitations and Future Directions

In the study, the questionnaire process of the study is the relevant design of the cross-sectional study, which has relatively limitations, and the future design or recruitment of subjects will be more extensive; the use of teacher data collected at the same time point cannot provide sufficient evidence for explaining causality. Future studies can continue to incorporate extrinsic environmental factors for teachers' social emotional Competence development such as family and community for more in-depth investigation. Moreover, the teacher data collected at the same time point cannot provide sufficient evidence for explaining causality, so it is very necessary to increase the tracking data survey and experimental study design, which deserves further discussion in future studies.

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