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Teachers' Perception of Department Heads' Emotional Intelligence and Its Relationship to Teacher Efficacy at Aldersgate College High School: Towards A Development Program

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ABSTRACT

This mixed-methods sequential explanatory study investigated teachers' perceptions of Department Heads' emotional intelligence (EI) and its relationship with teachers' self-efficacy at Aldersgate College High School, Solano, Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines. Guided by Goleman's five-component EI framework (self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills) and Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory on teacher efficacy across three domains (instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement), the study involved 24 full-time high school teachers as quantitative respondents and 23 key informants for semi-structured interviews. The study used two validated instruments: the Department Heads Emotional Intelligence Scale (DHEIS) and the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES). Findings revealed that Department Heads were perceived as demonstrating a high level of overall emotional intelligence (M = 4.13, "Often"), with Motivation emerging as the highest-rated dimension (M = 4.27, "Always") and Self-Awareness as the lowest (M = 3.99). Teachers reported uniformly high self-efficacy (M = 8.24, "A Great Deal") across all three dimensions. While Pearson r correlation analyses found no statistically significant relationship between EI and teacher efficacy, likely due to near-ceiling TSES scores and a limited sample size, all 24 correlation pairs were positive. Qualitative themes strongly confirmed that empathetic leadership, emotional composure, and open communication were perceived as foundational drivers of professional confidence. No significant differences in efficacy or EI perception emerged across most demographic variables, except for a subscale-level difference in Social Skills perception by educational attainment. Based on these findings, the LEAD with Heart Training Intervention Program targeting Department Heads' EI competencies was proposed to sustain and strengthen teacher efficacy in private secondary school settings.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Middle-Level Leadership, Teacher Efficacy, Instructional Supervision, Mixed-Methods Research*

INTRODUCTION

The 21st-century educational landscape demands leaders who possess not only technical expertise but also the capacity to understand, manage, and effectively respond to the emotional dimensions of their roles. Emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as a critical competency for educational leaders, significantly influencing their effectiveness and the overall school environment. In the Philippines, where educational institutions face increasing pressure to improve student outcomes while navigating complex social and economic challenges, emotionally intelligent leadership becomes even more pronounced.

Department Heads occupy a unique and critically important position within educational institutions. Unlike principals whose responsibilities span the entire institution, Department Heads work directly and daily with teachers on instructional matters, curriculum implementation, classroom challenges, and immediate professional support. This proximity positions Department Heads as potentially the most immediate and influential leaders in shaping teachers' professional experiences and efficacy beliefs, which Bandura (1997) defined as teachers' beliefs in their capability to organize and execute courses of action required to produce given educational attainments. Research consistently demonstrates that teachers with higher self-efficacy exhibit greater teaching motivation, innovation, and perseverance, contributing significantly to improved teaching quality and student achievement (Kasalak & Dagyar, 2020; Röhl et al., 2024).

Despite the logical importance of this bridging role, Department Heads have received surprisingly limited attention in educational leadership research, particularly in studies examining emotional intelligence. Ocampo et al. (2022) explicitly noted the scarcity of research on Department Heads and mid-level educational leaders, despite their direct, daily influence on teachers' experiences. This gap is especially evident in Philippine educational contexts, where most leadership studies focus on principals or school administrators broadly and fail to account for the unique positioning and influence of Department Heads in shaping teachers' professional confidence and instructional effectiveness.

Department Heads' emotional intelligence influences teacher efficacy through concrete, observable behaviors in the routine interactions of school life. A Department Head with high self-awareness recognizes how their mood affects feedback delivery and adjusts accordingly; one with strong self-regulation maintains composure during crises; and an empathetic Department Head understands the emotional demands of managing difficult classrooms. These competencies operate not in grand, infrequent gestures but in daily micro-interactions that, over time, shape teachers' beliefs about their

professional capabilities across the three key domains of efficacy: instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement.

Recognizing both the theoretical importance of Department Heads' emotional intelligence and the significant gap in empirical research on this leadership level, this study focused specifically on Department Heads at Aldersgate College High School, examining how their emotional intelligence, as perceived and experienced by teachers, relates to teachers' self-efficacy. The findings are intended to provide an empirical basis for developing a targeted training intervention to enhance Department Heads' emotional intelligence competencies and, consequently, improve teacher efficacy outcomes.

This study investigated the relationship between Department Heads' emotional intelligence and teachers' perception of its effect on their self-efficacy at Aldersgate College High School. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the high school teachers at Aldersgate College High School in terms of age, gender, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, years of experience at Aldersgate College, subject area/department, and grade level taught?
2. What is the level of emotional intelligence of Department Heads at Aldersgate College High School as perceived by teachers in terms of self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills?
3. What is the level of teachers' sense of efficacy in terms of instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement?
4. Is there a significant relationship between teachers' perception of Department Heads' emotional intelligence and their own self-efficacy?
5. Is there a significant difference in teachers' sense of efficacy when grouped according to selected demographic variables?
6. Is there a significant difference in teachers' perception of Department Heads' emotional intelligence when grouped according to selected demographic variables?
7. What themes emerge from teachers' qualitative responses regarding how Department Heads' emotional intelligence influences their sense of efficacy?
8. Based on the findings of the study, what Training Intervention Program may be proposed to enhance Department Heads' emotional intelligence competencies and improve teachers' sense of efficacy at Aldersgate College High School?

This research contributes to the growing body of literature on educational leadership and teacher development by providing empirical evidence of the relationship between Department Heads' emotional intelligence and teachers' self-efficacy within the Philippine educational context, extending the international findings of Kasalak and Dagyar (2020) and Röhl et al. (2024) to a specific cultural and institutional setting. The findings offer school administrators and Department Heads evidence-based insights for strengthening leadership practices; provide teachers a deeper understanding of how leadership behaviors influence professional efficacy; guide educational institutions in designing leadership development programs; inform teacher education and professional development curricula; and offer policymakers empirical grounding for leadership standards and certification requirements.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between Department Heads' emotional intelligence and teachers' self-efficacy. The quantitative component utilized a descriptive-correlational design to examine the levels of emotional intelligence demonstrated by Department Heads as perceived by teachers, the levels of teachers' self-efficacy, and the relationship between these two variables, following Creswell and Plano Clark's (2018) recommendation for research seeking both breadth of measurement and depth of understanding. The qualitative strand, comprising semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, was informed by and expanded upon the quantitative findings to illuminate the mechanisms through which emotionally intelligent Department Heads' leadership shapes teacher confidence and effectiveness.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in three interconnected theoretical frameworks. Emotional intelligence (EI) is broadly defined as the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and use emotions effectively in oneself and in interactions with others. Mayer and Salovey (1997) conceptualized EI through a four-branch model, while Goleman (1995, 2020) expanded EI to include self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, the framework adopted in this study. Complementing this, leadership theories, including transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985), instructional leadership (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985), and distributed leadership (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001), support the view that emotionally intelligent leaders are more effective in implementing practices that sustain teacher performance and well-being. Finally, Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive Theory defines teacher efficacy as a teacher's belief in their capacity to influence student learning and classroom outcomes, shaped by four principal sources: mastery experiences, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and emotional states. Integrating these frameworks suggests that emotionally intelligent school leaders, through awareness and management of emotions, create supportive organizational climates that activate the sources of teacher efficacy identified by Bandura.

Research Paradigm of the Study

The conceptual framework of this study illustrates the proposed relationship between Department Heads' emotional intelligence and teachers' self-efficacy at Aldersgate College High School, grounded in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1997) and Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Theory (1995, 2020). Demographic variables (age, gender, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, years of experience at Aldersgate College, subject area/department, and grade level taught) served as grouping variables. The independent variable, Department Heads' emotional intelligence as perceived by teachers, is defined through Goleman's five dimensions, while the dependent variable, teachers' self-efficacy, is operationalized through Bandura's three efficacy domains. A unidirectional arrow from the independent to the dependent variable reflects the proposed directional influence. The expected outputs of the study were: (1) improved teaching performance and professional confidence, and (2) a Training Intervention Program designed to enhance Department Heads' emotional intelligence competencies and, consequently, foster greater teacher efficacy.

Research Setting

The study was conducted at Aldersgate College High School, a private educational institution located on Burgos Street, Barangay Quirino, Solano, Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines. The high school department consists of Junior High School (Grades 7-10) and Senior High School (Grades 11-12) programs, with academic departments including English, Mathematics, Science, Filipino, Social Studies, MAPEH, and TLE/TVL, each led by a Department Head/Department Coordinator who maintains teaching responsibilities while providing instructional leadership, curriculum coordination, and professional support. This organizational structure, characterized by frequent, direct interaction between Department Heads and teachers, made the institution an ideal setting for examining the study's variables, particularly during the institution's ongoing implementation of the MATATAG curriculum.

The respondents were the full-time high school teachers of Aldersgate College High School for the academic year 2025-2026. Of the thirty-four (34) eligible teachers identified through total population sampling, twenty-four (24) completed and returned valid questionnaires, yielding a response rate of 70.6 percent. Department Heads and the Principal were excluded from participation to avoid self-assessment and collegial bias. For the qualitative component, 23 teachers were purposively selected for semi-structured interviews using the maximum variation principle to ensure representation across departments, grade levels, and years of experience.

Data Gathering Tools

Two validated quantitative instruments were used. The Department Heads Emotional Intelligence Scale (DHEIS), adapted from Goleman's (1995) Emotional Intelligence Framework and Bar-On's (2006) EQ-i 2.0 model, consists of 30 items across five dimensions (Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Motivation, Empathy, and Social Skills; six items each), rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always), and yielded excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .977$). The Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES), the long-form instrument developed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), consists of 24 items measuring Instructional Strategies, Classroom Management, and Student Engagement (eight items each) on a 9-point Likert scale, with the present sample yielding a Cronbach's α of .975. The qualitative component used a researcher-designed, semi-structured interview guide validated through expert review, structured around opening questions, EI perception questions, teacher efficacy impact questions, and closing questions.

Data were gathered in four sequential phases following institutional ethics clearance from the Aldersgate College Research Ethics Board (ACREB): pre-data collection preparation, quantitative data collection, quantitative data analysis, and qualitative data collection through 23 individual interviews and two focus group discussions. The researchers obtained informed consent from all participants and observed strict confidentiality and anonymity protocols throughout.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and standard deviation) were used to summarize the demographic profile, Department Heads' emotional intelligence level, and teachers' sense of efficacy. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson r) was used to determine the relationship between Department Heads' emotional intelligence and teacher efficacy, tested at the 0.05 level of significance. Given the small sample size ($N = 24$) and non-normal distribution of scores, non-parametric tests, specifically the Mann-Whitney U test for two-group comparisons and the Kruskal-Wallis H test for comparisons involving three or more groups, were used to examine differences by demographic variable. Qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis framework, combining inductive coding with deductive coding anchored in Goleman's EI dimensions and Bandura's sources of self-efficacy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents, analyzes, and interprets the data gathered from the 24 teacher-respondents and 23 key informants, organized according to the study's eight research questions.

The respondents ranged in age from 24 to 34 years ($M = 26.83$, $SD = 2.37$), reflecting a predominantly young, early-career workforce. Female teachers constituted the majority (62.5%, $n = 15$), followed by male teachers (33.3%, $n = 8$), with one respondent (4.2%) preferring not to disclose gender. Most respondents (79.2%, $n = 19$) were pursuing a master's degree with earned units, while 91.7% ($n = 22$) reported 1 to 5 years of teaching experience. Institutional tenure at Aldersgate College averaged 2.67 years ($SD = 1.61$). Most respondents (87.5%, $n = 21$) were assigned to the English

department, and Grade 9 accounted for the largest share of grade-level assignments (33.3%). This profile situates the workforce in the most formative stage of professional identity development, a stage in which individuals are especially receptive to supervisory influence, consistent with Bandura's (1997) proposition that vicarious learning and social persuasion carry disproportionate weight for early-career professionals.

Table 1. Summary of Department Heads' Emotional Intelligence Level by Dimension

As shown in Table 1, teachers perceived Department Heads at Aldersgate College High School as demonstrating a high overall level of emotional intelligence (M = 4.1333, "Often"). Motivation emerged as the highest-rated and only dimension reaching the "Always" interpretation (M = 4.2708), with the item "Demonstrate passion for educational excellence" the single highest-rated indicator (M = 4.4583) across all 30 items. Self-Awareness, while still within the "Often" band, was the comparatively least developed dimension (M = 3.9861), with the item "Aware of emotional triggers during stressful situations" registering the lowest mean overall (M = 3.8333). This finding indicates that while Department Heads consistently and visibly inspire and motivate their teachers, they have room to deepen their inward-facing self-knowledge, the foundation on which the other EI competencies rest.

Table 2. Summary of Teacher Efficacy Level by Dimension

Teachers reported a remarkably high and uniform sense of self-efficacy, with an overall mean of 8.2380 interpreted as "A Great Deal." Classroom Management and Student Engagement shared identical subscale means (M = 8.2812), while Instructional Strategies was marginally lower (M = 8.1510). The highest-rated individual item was "Foster student creativity" (M = 8.4348), while "Craft good questions for your students" (M = 7.8333) and "Control disruptive behavior in the classroom" (M = 7.8750) were the only two items falling within the "Quite a Bit" band. This pattern suggests that relational and motivational teaching skills are perceived as more fully consolidated than the technically demanding, context-sensitive skills of instructional design, a pattern developmentally coherent given the sample's early-career profile.

Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was conducted between the five DHEIS dimensions and three TSES dimensions, producing 24 correlation pairs tested at the 0.05 level of significance (two-tailed). None of the 24 correlation coefficients reached statistical significance (all $p > .05$), and the obtained r values ranged from $r = .027$ (Social Skills vs. Instructional Strategies) to $r = .265$ (Motivation vs. Student Engagement, $p = .211$); the overall EI-overall efficacy correlation was $r = .176$ ($p = .410$). Notably, all 24 correlation pairs were positive. This consistent positive directionality, though not statistically significant, is theoretically expected and most plausibly attributable to insufficient statistical power at N = 24 and a restriction-of-range effect produced by the near-ceiling teacher efficacy distribution (M = 8.24, SD = 0.60), rather than a genuinely absent relationship. The null hypothesis (H_{01}) was therefore not rejected, though the finding should be interpreted as a probable Type II error rather than confirmed evidence of no relationship.

Non-parametric tests (Kruskal-Wallis H for variables with three or more groups; Mann-Whitney U for two-group comparisons) revealed no statistically significant differences in teacher efficacy across gender ($H = 3.531$, $p = .171$), educational attainment ($H = 0.435$, $p = .805$), years of teaching experience ($U = 34.000$, $p = .229$), subject area ($H = 1.904$, $p = .386$), or grade level taught ($H = 2.938$, $p = .568$); H_{02} was not rejected for any variable. Similarly, no significant differences were found in overall EI perception across gender ($H = 3.157$, $p = .206$), years of teaching experience ($U = 21.000$, $p = .958$), subject area ($H = 0.903$, $p = .637$), or grade level ($H = 1.108$, $p = .893$). One statistically significant exception emerged at the subscale level: teachers' perception of Department Heads' Social Skills differed significantly by educational attainment ($H = 6.362$, $p = .042$), with bachelor's degree holders (M = 4.71) and the doctoral respondent (M = 5.00) rating Social Skills more favorably than master's-with-units holders (M = 4.04). The narrow range of efficacy means across demographic subgroups (approximately 7.09 to 8.92 on a nine-point scale) suggests that teacher efficacy at Aldersgate College High School functions as an institution-wide condition shaped more by shared organizational climate than by individual background characteristics.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage of Informant Responses per Qualitative Theme

Thematic analysis of the semi-structured interview data yielded six overarching themes. Empathetic leadership (82.6%), emotional composure (73.9%), and transparent communication (73.9%) were the most pervasively cited themes, identifying the relational conditions teachers most universally regard as essential to their professional confidence. As one key informant explained, “When my Department Head listened without judging, it made me feel that things were manageable” (KI-12), illustrating how emotional composure functions as a stability anchor during high-pressure periods. Leader self-awareness, cited by 56.5 percent of informants, revealed a “mirror effect” in which Department Heads who modeled reflective practice cultivated a parallel culture of professional reflection among teachers. Motivational leadership and professional development, cited by 43.5 percent, centered on academic role modeling and investment in teacher training. Most critically, Theme 6, volunteered organically by 39.1 percent of informants without direct prompting, captured the erosion of confidence associated with perceived EI deficits: “There were times when I avoided sharing my classroom problems because I wasn't sure how [Department Heads] would react. That uncertainty made me feel less supported and less confident” (KI-19). Taken together, the qualitative themes provide the narrative mechanism explaining the positive, though statistically unconfirmed, EI-efficacy relationship identified in the quantitative analysis.

Based on the convergent quantitative and qualitative evidence, the study proposed the LEAD with Heart Training Intervention Program (TIP), a structured 12-week, six-module, blended-delivery professional development program for

Department Heads and department coordinators. Grounded in Goleman's (1995, 2020) five-component EI framework and Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive Theory, module sequencing begins with the lowest-rated dimension, Self-Awareness (M = 3.99), and progresses through Self-Regulation, Motivation, Empathy, and Social Skills before culminating in an integrative module. Each module pairs a full-day workshop with two weekly 30-minute micro-sessions, delivered through face-to-face workshops, online reflective activities, and peer coaching, with assessment through pre- and post-DHEIS administration, reflective journaling, peer observation, and teacher feedback. Notably, the program embeds the culturally specific practice of pakikiramdam (shared inner perception) within its Empathy module, contextualizing international EI frameworks within Filipino relational tradition to increase the likelihood of authentic rather than performative leadership behavior change.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Structured Onboarding and Mentorship: Given that 91.7 percent of respondents have one to five years of teaching experience, school administrators should develop structured onboarding and mentorship programs for early-career teachers, recognizing supervisory support as an acute institutional need.

Strengthen Department Heads' Self-Awareness: Because Self-Awareness was the lowest-rated EI dimension, Department Heads are encouraged to keep reflective leadership journals, solicit regular informal feedback from teachers, and use the DHEIS for structured self-assessment as a personal development tool.

Sustain Motivational Leadership Behaviors: Department Heads should continue publicly celebrating teacher achievements, modeling academic advancement, and framing curriculum challenges optimistically, as Motivation was the most consistently and energizingly visible EI competency.

Build Intentional Empathetic Routines: Department Heads should establish regular one-on-one check-ins during high-stress periods, given that empathy was the most pervasive qualitative theme despite ranking as the second-lowest quantitative dimension.

Target Instructional Strategy Confidence: Curriculum developers and instructional coaches should design in-service workshops on question-crafting and disruptive-behavior management, the two lowest-rated TSES items, using video modeling, peer observation, and collaborative lesson planning.

Replicate with a Larger, More Heterogeneous Sample: Future researchers should replicate this study with a minimum sample of 85 participants (per Cohen's 1988 power analysis) and more heterogeneous teacher populations to address the restriction-of-range condition that constrained correlational findings.

Adopt a Longitudinal Design: Future studies should track changes in teacher efficacy alongside observed changes in Department Heads' EI behaviors over one to two academic years to allow stronger causal inference.

Codify and Sustain the High-Efficacy Climate: Administrators should document and scale the organizational practices, such as structured departmental meetings and transparent communication protocols, that appear to sustain institution-wide teacher efficacy.

Address the Social Skills Perception Gradient: Department Heads should proactively strengthen communication, conflict resolution, and collaborative facilitation skills in anticipation of rising expectations among increasingly credentialed faculty.

Embed EI Competencies into Formal Evaluation: Policymakers and school leaders are encouraged to embed behaviorally grounded EI competencies into Department Heads' performance evaluation criteria and establish confidential feedback mechanisms for reporting supervisory climate concerns.

Implement and Evaluate the LEAD with Heart Program: The institution is encouraged to implement the proposed program with a formal baseline DHEIS administration, and future researchers are encouraged to conduct a quasi-experimental or pre-post evaluation of its effectiveness, and to test the generalizability of these findings in comparable private secondary schools across the Cagayan Valley region.

AI DECLARATION STATEMENT

AI-supported tools helped with grammar and structure in creating this article. No AI tools were used to collect, analyze, or interpret data; all authors are credited for their academic contributions.

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