

Highlighting the Consequences of Ignoring Children's Emotions in Schools: Case of 30 Pupils in Three Algerian Primary Schools

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Abstract

This research paper probes the potential effects that disregarding academic emotions in the educational milieu might have on primary school pupils in Algeria. It mainly focuses on revealing various emotions children have in and toward their schools. To investigate this issue, we have used relevant theories and approaches to underpin the present study, notably Reinhard Pekrun's works (2006, 2000, 2010, 201, and 2017) and Goleman's emotional intelligence theory (1995). Correspondingly, we opted for observation and focus group discussions as the main research instruments to examine the selected pupils' emotions toward school and teachers. More specifically, we selected three different primary schools in Oran and Mostaganem cities (Algeria) to observe and interrogate 30 pupils. Our participants' age varied from six to eleven years old. The findings showed that most children have negative feelings inside the educational milieu. Also, the participants revealed that they hate school, for they consider themselves imprisoned in this milieu, and most of them do not like their teachers for various reasons. As a matter of fact, the present research accentuates that positivizing the educational milieu at the primary level must be a priority for teachers, parents and the ministry of education in Algeria. Our study also emphasizes the significance of fostering children's emotional intelligence

Keywords: Academic Emotions, Children, Algerian Primary Schools, Emotional Intelligence

Introduction

Understanding human emotions have long been the target of psychologists, anthropologists, and other scientists. A myriad of studies, in various fields, argue that the ability to understand feelings and motives is an essential skill. In western Academia, issues and topics related to emotions are given much importance in different disciplines. As one of the most revolutionary researchers in this field, Daniel Goleman (1995) defines Emotional Intelligence (EI) as the ability to understand emotions and help realize how one's emotions affect the people around, including self perception and the perception of others. According to Goleman (1995), EI allows the self to manage individuals' relationships more effectively when understanding others' feelings. In this respect, emotional intelligence or emotional literacy has been defined as recognizing, appraising, expressing, understanding, and regulating emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 2003).

A growing interest in investigating the relationship between learning and emotions has also been marked in various fields, notably educational psychology and child psychology. Nevertheless, in developing and underdeveloped countries, where the educational systems are still weak, little attention is given to understanding the relationship between learning and emotions and how the latter affects the former. In fact, schools are an essential context for children's social and emotional development, and one should relate this fact to what Goleman (1995) has theorized in

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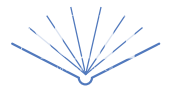
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emotional intelligence. Daniel Goleman emphasizes that emotional intelligence begins to develop in the earliest years of a young child's life. Moreover, in classrooms and other school settings, children and adolescents require skills such as managing negative emotions: being calm and focused, following directions, and navigating relationships with peers and adults (Jones and Boffard, 2012), and this is referred to as 'emotional literacy'; for instance, when a child knows how to manage his/her feelings well, she/he is said to be emotionally literate. Children with good emotional literacy recognize and respond well to other people's feelings. However, and despite its imperativeness, this type of literacy is completely ignored in the educational system in Algeria, where all emphasis is put on other types of literacy skills, chiefly reading, writing, and digital literacy. Although issues related to emotions and their roles in learning are tackled by postgraduates and researchers in teaching foreign languages or psychology departments, it is rare, almost impossible, to find researches that investigate this subject matter edited and published in Arabic, the language of most readers in Algeria.

Indeed, it is of paramount importance to understand that those emotions, during learning, shape young people's feelings toward education. It is often likely to find that children who have positive experiences are the ones who would enjoy their schooling and develop a love of learning. In contrast, children who have negative feelings toward the school, the teacher, or peers often hate education and the learning experience. The negative emotions that learners may have inside the school or the classroom are destructive for the learners themselves and the whole environment. Education studies have revealed that emotions such as boredom, fear, anxiety, and anger negatively impact learning gains and engagement.

In the Algerian educational context, learners' emotions are not given any consideration. In fact, the educational system in Algeria is often described as weak and failing, although a succession of reforms has been brought to textbooks and teaching approaches since the independence (1962). One can notice that a number of controversial issues were at the center of these reforms: national identity, meeting globalization demands, and covering the needs of an ever-growing population. Nonetheless, no special attention was/is given to emotionalizing the educational process and positivizing the educational milieu. Algerian education experts focus more on the logistics of the educational process, its approaches, and textbooks' content. It is uncommon to find debates on and about learners' emotions, teachers' emotional health, how to improve the emotional intelligence of pupils, or related issues. On another hand, few types of research investigate the role of emotions in Algerian schools or learners' emotional intelligence.

Tracing the history of reforms brought to the Algerian education system since 1962, we discern that policymakers and educational specialists were often concerned with equipping Algerian schools with suitable materials, new technologies, and more teachers. However, no attention was given to the issue of emotions and feelings in the educational setting, although the latter represents nowadays, in developed countries, a key aspect of successful teaching and learning experiences. Academic emotions, indeed, have an indispensable role in the life of students outside the school because the school is an environment where children spend long hours interacting with their mates, being praised or criticized by their teachers, being bullied, challenging teachers, etc. Therefore, the school is a milieu charged with positive or negative emotions. (Saunders, 2012)

In fact, while reading through the five years syllabi of Algerian primary education and deconstructing the programs' objectives, the researchers have detected that no consideration was given to understanding and positivizing children's emotions at school to improve learners' emotional intelligence and foster the emotional relationship between the learner and the school environment. Therefore, the present research highlights the importance of considering the children's emotions in Algerian schools. Its ultimate objective is to explore the significant impact that ignoring the learner's emotions in the classroom has on the educational process at the primary level, where learners are too young to recognize and manage their own emotions, and they are in the throes of developing their emotional intelligence.

This investigation is, indeed, of paramount importance as it puts forward that one major reason for the deterioration in Algerian schools is their emotionlessness. By presenting a few instances of young primary school learners who represent the majority of pupils in this country since what will be presented is phenomenal in most Algerian schools, we could assert that pupils' emotions in the school are completely ignored unrecognized by the kids and their teachers. Thus, the significance of this research lies in its novelty in the Algerian context, its cruciality in making education in Algeria successful, and turning the Algerian school into a milieu where young learners love to spend long hours.

Literature Review

Emotions in Education and Academic Emotions

The school and the classroom are full of emotions, and there must be a pertinent understanding of these emotions as they differ from those found outside the educational milieu. It has become necessary to comprehend that emotions expressed and felt inside the classroom or the school affect the learners' learning and the teachers' teaching. Trezise (2017) argued that classrooms are emotional settings and that students' emotional experiences can impact their ability to learn, engagement in school, and career choices. However, education research often ignores or neutralizes emotions.

It has become essential that researchers tackle different issues related to emotions in the educational milieu from different perspectives. As a result, an increasing number of research seeking to understand the significance of other emotional states in academic settings has marked the last two decades. Researchers (Pekrun, 2006; Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Linnenbrink et al., 2010; Ulmanen et al., 2014) are now theorizing on the relationship between emotions, cognition, and learning and the relationship between neural activity and emotional states while learning. Linnenbrink-Garcia and Pekrun (2011, p. 3) noted, "research on emotions is still in its early infancy." Nevertheless, more recently, there has been increasing recognition of the crucial role of emotions in educational settings in international academia. A considerable number of new researches have been published in the last two decades to draw attention to the pivotal role emotions play in educational settings. Pekrun's works on achievement and emotions were pioneering research in this field. A brief overview of this theory will be presented in the following section.

Emotions in the school: academic, yet socially-embedded
 Besides acquiring knowledge and cognitive skills during formal education, learners develop pleasant and unpleasant emotions related to learning and achievement. However, despite the ubiquity of emotions in the classroom, research on



emotions in educational contexts has been slow to emerge. In fact, research on emotions and their role in achievement and performance is still at its embryonic stage since little was investigated in the field of emotions in education, and yet so far, research has shown that young learners' emotions are linked to their academic achievement. More specifically, positive emotions such as enjoyment of learning show positive links with achievement, and negative emotions such as test anxiety show negative links (Pekrun, 2006). Reinhard Pekrun's work is one of the significant studies investigating how students' emotions impact their learning, how success and failure at learning influence the development of their emotions, and how other variables cause the association.

According to Pekrun's theory of control-value, emotions reflect the temporary affective state when performing a learning-related task in a school, college, or university setting. Learning-related emotions appear in different academic backgrounds, such as attending class, studying, and taking exams. Therefore, emotions can vary across these settings. Using a three-dimensional taxonomy (Pekrun, 2006), learning-related emotions can be differentiated by valence, object focus, and activation. In terms of valence, positive emotions (e.g., enjoyment) are distinguished from negative emotions (e.g., anxiety, boredom). These emotions are academic, and some of them are socially embedded. In fact, academic emotions refer to a set of emotions that are experienced in pedagogical settings while engaging in pedagogical activities, such as teaching, studying, and learning.

Moreover, Pekrun (2009) assumed that emotions influence students' cognitive performance by affecting their cognitive resources, motivational processes, and ways of solving problems. Also, positive emotions may, for example, promote the enjoyment of learning that further increases effort and odds for academic success (Pekrun et al., 2002). On the other hand, increased anxiety caused by competition for good grades may also result from positive peer interactions, where good academic performance is socially expected and valued (Pekrun et al., 2017).

The present research is related to what Pekrun and other researchers have theorized regarding education or academic emotions. However, our investigation is different from the previous research in many ways. First, the context is culturally different; Algeria as an Arab, Muslim, and African country represents a divergent field of research when dealing with the issue of emotionalizing schools. Algeria is a relatively conservative country where traditions and religion partially control people's social and individual behavior. Also, most Algerian families do not give their children's emotions importance, mainly when they start school. What they care about the most is the grades of their children, i.e., their cognitive development rather than their emotions and their emotional development. The other variable that would make the present investigation unique is the specificity of the educational system in this country. To explain further, the following sections will present a concise description of the educational system in Algeria.

A Brief Description of The Algerian Educational System

The Algerian educational system is structured into primary, middle, secondary and university levels. Algerian education is still grounded in the French fact-acquisition orientation, and teaching is almost exclusively in the lecture and memorization mode (See <https://www.aboutalgeria.com/2017/12/the-algerian-education-system.html/> accessed on the 10th of August 2020). Primary schools operate on a three-cycle system. The curriculum in the first

through the third year of primary education (basic cycle) for children 6 to 9 years of age provides manual work with education and training tools to develop motor skills and help children understand and adapt to the environment. The second, or "awakening" cycle, is designed for 9- to 11-year-olds and occurs in the fourth through fifth year of education. The educational focus is on reinforcing skills acquired during the first stage plus continued learning in language, mathematics, environment, and religious and national studies. French as a first foreign language is offered. Pupils start learning this foreign language in the third year. The third, or training, cycle (also called the middle school) comprises the sixth through the ninth year of education for children 11- to 15-years-old. The curriculum is dedicated to studying linguistic, social, cultural, religious, and scientific education, as well as mathematics, physics, and various sciences of applied technology. English as a second foreign language is offered and taught from first-year middle school to university. At the end of the third stage, students sit for a final exam in the fourth year (foundation education certificate, or B.E.M).

In this brief overview of Algerian education, one may notice that it does not give any importance to emotional skills. No subject develops these skills. For instance, in primary school, from their first year in school, young pupils from six years to 10 or 11 years old are exposed to complicated notions in mathematics, Arabic language, religious education, and other subjects. The long hours –three hours in the morning and one and a half to two hours and a half in the afternoon – often enervate the young kids and make them hate being in school. They have a break of only ten minutes in the morning and ten minutes in the afternoon per day. During this break, the teacher and/or the headmaster control the behavior of the pupils in the courtyard. The break of ten or twenty minutes is often filled with shouting, yelling, hit and run on the part of children, and fighting between the pupils, mainly in public schools. More explanations, descriptions and interpretations of this situation will be given in the following sections.

Method

Research Design

The present research is qualitative as the researchers chose not to analyze the collected data numerically. In fact, it may be irrelevant to analyze the participants' answers statistically when the ultimate objective is not to count answers but rather to deconstruct them. Also, this study is exploratory. Its major aim was to unveil how emotions are neglected in Algerian primary schools and relate the fact of ignoring learners' emotions to failure and achievement in the educational milieu. In fact, exploratory research is used to examine a problem that is not clearly defined or un-explored previously, as is the case with the issue under study.

Participants and Setting

Our participants were 30 children who studied in three Algerian primary schools. Their age varies between 6 and 11 years. The three selected primary schools were all public. The researchers did not choose private schools because most educational institutions in Algeria are public. We assume that pupils, teachers, and the administration are different in private schools. It is important to highlight that most people who go to private schools in Algeria belong to a social and economic class that represents a minority in the society; only rich people or people with high social status can go to private schools because of the expensive fees these schools require.



Moreover, the majority of people in this country go to public schools, and this is what makes the behaviors and phenomena investigated in these schools correspond to what is shared among the majority of Algerian people; by this, we mean that the common social behavior or habitus (Jenkins, 1992) is what is found in public schools as it is a representation of what is general among the majority of people. The three schools are situated in Oran and Mostaganem in the west of Algeria, two schools in Oran and one in Mostaganem. We would have selected schools from rural areas, too; however, we assert that choosing schools from smaller towns in Oran/Mostaganem or other cities of Algeria would represent another variable that may change the results of this investigation. Moreover, we found it quite challenging since people in rural areas are not cooperative enough regarding emotions, sentiments, and recording the kids in schools.

Research Tools

In this exploratory study, we used two research tools. The first tool was an observation of the kids while going out of their schools for one week. The second tool was focus group discussions (FGD) with thirty primary school learners. Focus groups are used to/ collect data in participatory research, especially when involving young people (Bagnoli and Clark, 2010). Focus groups have become a popular research tool in social sciences because they allow participants to tell their own reflections, express their opinions, and even draw pictures without adhering to a strict sequence of questions. Many researchers assume that this method is often suitable for collecting data from children, youths, and parents for this and other reasons. However, the use of focus groups in social research is relatively new and was first understood as a utility method in the preparatory phase of quantitative studies or to foster the interpretation of qualitative data (see Hoppe et al., 1995, p.102). Today, focus groups are an integral part of the methodological canon. They are well used to take advantage of group dynamics and tensions between the participants and gain more information than single interviews. For its importance, when dealing with children, researchers must perceive some other factors that need to be considered in addition to the traditional issues related to conducting focus groups mainly because of cognitive, linguistic, and psychological differences between children and adults. Therefore, we had to be careful while creating the focus groups with our participants who were not familiar with interviews and talking about their emotions.

Data Analysis

This research took the researchers three weeks of investigation. The researchers spent the first week observing the pupils of the three selected schools going out of their institutions at 11:15 am and at 3:30 pm during the month of February 2021. The observation inside the school or the classroom was impossible. In fact, it is not allowed to enter schools, interview teachers or administration staff, talk to pupils and make observations inside any school without the authorization of the directorate of education. Due to administrative bureaucracy, the researchers could not get this permission. As a matter of fact, the methodology of this research was modified accordingly, and only one choice for the stage of observation was possible; this was standing at the entrance of the three selected schools to watch the children going out of the school to analyze their behavior.

While observing the children leaving the school, the researchers took notes to describe the emotional behavior of the kids when leaving their schools. As mentioned above, observing the children inside the school and the classroom

was missing in this stage; this is a significant limitation of the present research; however, with focus group discussions, we expected to have the necessary data about the children's emotions inside their classrooms through their answers to our questions.

Observing The Children Leaving The School

This type of observational method used in this investigation is called "anecdotal records."The latter involves factual accounts of events that have taken place, and they represent detailed narrative descriptions of an incident involving one or several children. They are used to document unique behaviors and skills of a child or a small group of children; anecdotal records may be written as the behavior occurs or at a later time. The following is the sample of the anecdotal records we used:

ANECDOTAL RECORD	
Child's name:	Age:
Observer's name	
Date:	Time:
Setting (place, people involved, atmosphere, etc.):	
Conclusion:	

We had five different anecdotal records during one week. In addition, the researchers had to write about unusual incidents while observing the children leaving their schools in the morning and the afternoon. It was challenging to cover the behaviors of all pupils as they were many. Yet, we tried to focus on masses of pupils rather than on a given pupil in isolation. The following is the conclusion of the different anecdotal records the researchers wrote:

Anecdotal record 1

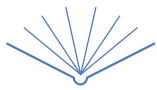
The first incident researcher 1 noted on the anecdotal records was a first-year grade girl leaving school crying. (1) The girl explained to her mother that the teacher shouted at her because she could not answer the question; she did not follow the teacher because she was talking to her friend. So, the girl was crying hysterically. The mother was angry at her daughter's teacher. The girl seemed uncomfortable, annoyed, and sad. The girl told her mom that she did not want to come back to school again.

Anecdotal record 2

A second incident was a third-grade boy in another school: He spoke loudly with his friends. He was cursing his teacher and insulting her. The researcher understood from the boy's discussion with his friends that he was throwing papers at his friend during the French session. The teacher saw the kid doing this and immediately brought a short wooden baton and hit the kid on his right hand twice while threatening him in French; this was a common way among many primary school teachers to punish their pupils for a mistake or misbehavior. It is noteworthy to recall that beating pupils is strictly forbidden. The law that prohibits beating pupils has existed since 1991. However, many teachers still beat their pupils, mainly young learners, violently. The boy was angry, but he seemed to show strength and victory over his teacher. I knew later that this boy was very weak in French. This behavior of insulting teachers was expected mainly among boys in the third, fourth, and fifth grades.

Anecdotal record 3

A third incident occurred while researcher 2 was observing the kids of a third school. A fourth-grade epileptic girl fell on



the ground once she went out of school. The girl was yelling and crying while hitting her head on the floor. The researcher saw her teacher running toward her; she was frustrated and tried to stop her, but she did not know how to handle the situation. She called the headmaster immediately, and the latter came after a few minutes. There was no medical unit in this. After a short while, the girl calmed down, and her friends accompanied her to her house. Apparently, the teacher did not know that the girl was epileptic.

Anecdotal record 4

A fourth event took place on the third day of the observation period. Again, this incident was related to a teacher of French. Two male pupils described their teacher as harsh, unkind, wicked, and crazy. Researcher 2 could understand why the two kids were angry as they said they do not know French and the use of learning this language. It was clear that these two boys hated French because they hated their teacher, who was unkind to them.

Anecdotal record 5

A fifth incident was different from the previous ones. This time, fifth-grade pupils were going out of their school with their teacher. They were having a discussion full of affection and positive emotions. This scene reflected the pupils' emotionally solid relationship with their teacher, and researcher 2 knew that this teacher was the best in this school and that her pupils were the best. This lady was the only teacher in her school to have such a reputation.

Analysis of The Anecdotal Records

The analysis of the five written records was through three steps: making inferences, summarizing and assessing. The inferences made by the researchers aimed to answer the following two questions: what kind of emotions do the recorded incidents carry? And how can we explain these emotions? After making inferences, a summary of each incident was displayed on the chart to be presented later in this section. The last part of the records' analysis concerns the assessment of every select child's behavior. The latter was tentative since the researchers are educators and not child psychologists. In the following paragraphs, we will present the three charts that display the inferences, the summaries and the assessment of the five anecdotal records.

Table 1. The inferences made from each record

The incident	The inference made
The first-grade girl leaving the school crying hysterically	The six-year old girl would have negative emotions toward her teacher and learning
The third-grade boy making fun of his teacher of French with his friends	The nine-year old boy would have negative emotions toward his teacher of French and learning this foreign language
The fourth-grade epileptic girl having an epileptic seizure	The ten-year old girl would feel embarrassed and traumatized. She would probably hate going to school.
Two male pupils describing their teacher of French as harsh, unkind, wicked	The two boys would hate French and teachers of French for years ahead. Learning this foreign language would be difficult for them too.
The fifth-grade pupils leaving the school happily accompanied by their teacher	These pupils do have positive emotions inside the classroom, with their teacher and inside the school. They would love the learning experience.
Participant	2

Table 2. The summary of each record

The incident	The summary
The first-grade girl leaving the school crying hysterically	Young pupils of first grade get easily emotional
The third-grade boy making fun of his teacher of French with his friends	Male pupils make fun of their teacher of French because they do not understand this foreign language
The fourth-grade epileptic girl having an epileptic seizure	Neither the teacher nor the administrative staff is able to manage situations where they have pupils with disabilities or psychological disorders
Two male pupils describing their teacher of French as harsh, unkind, wicked	The teacher of French is disliked and hated by her male pupils
The fifth-grade pupils leaving the school happily accompanied by their teacher	The pupils of the fifth grade do love their teacher and feel comfortable when she is around.

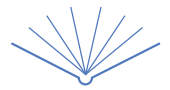
Table 3. Tentative assessments

The incident	The assessment
The first-grade girl leaving the school crying hysterically	The first year of schooling is decisive regarding the academic emotions of young pupils
The third-grade boy making fun of his teacher of French with his friends	Pupils' level in French as a first foreign is related to their emotions toward their teacher. The latter are often negative.
The fourth-grade epileptic girl having an epileptic seizure	Pupils with disorders and disabilities are not given any special care by teachers and administrative staff because the latter are not qualified to deal with such cases.
Two male pupils describing their teacher of French as harsh, unkind, wicked	Learning French as a first foreign language is often hated and disliked by pupils because the teachers of French at the primary level are not qualified to deal with beginners.
The fifth-grade pupils leaving the school happily accompanied by their teacher	Pupils do have positive emotions with a caring teacher. The learning experience, therefore, becomes amusing and interesting.

Through the analysis of the above charts, the researchers confirmed that negative emotions in the educational milieu are often related to the teacher. Pupils would have negative emotions with a teacher they hate, and they would love learning and have positive emotions if their teacher is caring, cool and open-minded. On another hand, foreign language learning, like French learning, is also often related to the amount of either negative or positive emotions pupils do have in the classroom with their teacher. The latter is often negative because French teachers do not consider the weaknesses of their pupils, and they take for granted that their learners should understand this foreign language. In what follows, we will present the second part of the data analysis that concerns the focus group discussions. The last section will be devoted to the final results the researchers have reached through the analysis of both data: anecdotal records and FGD's data.

Analysis of Focus Groups Discussions

In the second phase of this investigation, the researchers organized three FGDs with 30 selected children: 10 pupils in each group. The focus group discussions were the most crucial tool the researchers used so as to create a safe and comfortable environment for children to talk freely and openly about their feelings. In addition, they were estimated to allow the kids to tell their own stories. The discussions



ran in Algerian Arabic, the participants' mother tongue. Using the mother tongue with children in focus groups is the most effective way to get valid data, particularly if the aim is to uncover facts about how they feel in the school. Before organizing these focus groups, we had to get the permission of these children's parents. Indeed, the parents were cooperative, and they approved the issue's importance under investigation. All parents argued that their children's emotions inside the school and the classroom play a decisive role in the evolution of their kids academically and emotionally.

In fact, the focus group should be experienced as free-flowing and relatively unstructured, mainly with children. The researchers' different discussions with the young participants took place ten minutes before they entered the school at 1 pm. We organized two focus groups of ten participants in Oran and one focus group of ten children in Mostaganem. The groups were heterogeneous as there were boys and girls from the five grades. The two moderators, who are the researchers themselves, had to follow a pre-planned script so that discussions would be precise, short, and not boring. Rosanna Breen (2006) explained that the focus-group moderator should spend a large portion of the discussion time probing the participants' experiences, asking them to share and compare experiences, and discussing the extent to which they agree or disagree with each other (p. 468). So, after each moderator presented herself to the children of each focus group, she explained to them the topic of the discussion. The researchers had to simplify the issue of emotions and academic emotions so that the pupils would understand well the objective of our conversations. For the six 1st grade pupils we interviewed, it was not easy to have clear answers as they were too young to understand our questions, yet they expressed many ideas related to their emotions when they were inside the classroom. In what follows, we present the ten questions we asked the kids and how they responded to them. Though short and concise, these questions provoked our young participants to exteriorize their emotions towards school, teachers, learning, and other issues they could articulate like older people. It was surprising but expressive at the same time. The discussions with children were in Algerian Arabic to remind the reader because it is the participants' mother tongue. It was impossible to interview the participants in English as it is a language they do not master.

Question 1: Are you happy now that you are entering your school?

Typical answers: Most pupils said they were happy to enter school not because they loved learning, their teacher, or the classroom, but because they loved to meet their friends, play in the courtyard, and spend funny moments with their friends. A few pupils said they were unhappy; most of them were boys. They said that they preferred staying at home playing video games or soccer. They also described the school as a jail.

Question 2: Do you prefer being in school or at home?

Typical answers: As expected, the majority of the participants said they prefer staying at home with their parents as they feel more comfortable and relaxed. School, they said, is a place of much work and many exercises. In addition, many participants said that their teachers shout a lot and are angry, unlike their moms.

Question 3: Do you love your teachers? And does your feeling towards them affect your academic performance?

Typical answers: Answers to this question were diverse, but the common thing in the pupils' responses is that they love the teacher who is kind to them, who teaches them well, and who is tolerant of them. We noticed that boys were more critical of their teachers than girls. However, most girls in the two groups said they loved their teachers. Also, the kids seemed aware of the correlation between hating or loving one's teacher or subject and their academic performance.

Question 4: Does your teacher love you? And how did you know that?

Typical answers: We noticed that this answer has puzzled and confused most participants. Most of them could not find an answer to this question, and they said that they did not know. On the other hand, we could detect from the kids' reactions that most girls answered with a 'yes' but could not justify or tell the researchers how they knew that.

Question 5: Do you feel comfortable inside the classroom?

Typical answers: Many pupils said they felt comfortable in the classroom except when there was noise or when the teacher started shouting and punishing the whole class, or when there was much work and many tasks.

Question 6: Do you feel angry when the teacher yells at you?

Typical answers: All pupils said they felt angry and annoyed whenever the teacher yelled at them. Some of them said their teacher sometimes yelled at them for no reason. Some of them described their teachers as crazy because they shouted a lot.

Question 7: Do you feel proud and happy when the teacher praises you?

Most typical answers: All pupils said they feel proud of themselves and happy when their teacher praises them.

Question 8: Does a negative or positive comment from your teacher or mate affect your motivation?

Typical answers: There were diverse answers to this question; while some of the participants (most of whom were boys) said they do not care about what others think of them and say about them, others said that they care most about the teacher's comments.

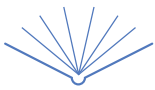
Question 9: How do you feel during the periods of tests and exams?

Typical answers: All participants, except for the first year grade pupils, said they feel anxious and stressed during the tests/ period exams at home and in the school because they spend long hours revising many lessons.

Question 10: Do you know what emotions and feelings are? And do you understand your emotions?

Typical answers: Most pupils were confused by this question. They started laughing and seemed embarrassed. It was clear that our participants were not familiar with such questions and topics.

After presenting a summary of the participants' answers, the next section is devoted to analysing both the anecdotal records and the pupils' responses to the questions of the focus group discussions.



Results

Through the various incidents we noted while observing the children leaving school, and from the answers of the selected 30 children during the FGDs, we could identify a number of facts related to the emotional state of primary pupils in their schools. These facts represent a validation of the hypotheses set out earlier. In what follows, we present our analysis of the children's responses.

From the five anecdotal records the researchers wrote, we could comprehend that teachers completely ignore pupils' emotions. Through the first incident, one can notice that her teacher's behavior emotionally harmed the 1st-grade girl; the latter made the young girl think of not coming back to school again. The second and fourth incidents reflect two main dilemmas to be often found in primary schools: the first one is related to the negative feelings, more particularly frustration (Pekrun 2005), many young learners have towards French as a first foreign language and which makes them weak in this language, and the second issue is related to the behavior of most male pupils in the classroom, a behavior often described by teachers as rebellious and evil. The third incident, we noted during the observation period, mirrored the paralysis of the school and its personnel in dealing with psychologically and physically disordered pupils. The epileptic girl is one case among many others, like pupils with autism or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and other behavioral, emotional, and psychological illnesses or issues. We cannot blame teachers for not being able to manage such a situation because the ministry of education must recruit psychologists in every school and organize seminars or training days where these issues are tackled and debated.

The last incident, though exceptional what we noticed, reflects the extent to which a good teacher-pupils relationship can influence academic performance and learners' motivation (Pekrun 2014). The pupils were attached to their teacher and most of their emotions inside the school and the classroom were positive. There was a state of affection and comfort on both sides (teacher and pupils). It was no surprise to know that this class was the best in that school.

From the participants' responses during the FGDs, the researchers deduced that most children do not have positive emotions inside the school as they feel high pressure because of the overloaded program and the many activities they have in one day. Also, the emotionlessness of their teachers affects their motivation. Children prefer compassionate and kind teachers. The pupils' responses also revealed that positive comments from their teachers boost their motivation while negative comments demotivate them. The participants' answers unveiled the other fact, the pupils' inability to understand emotions; this may signify that most pupils cannot manage and control their emotions, which could be viewed as one reason behind the rising violence in the educational milieu.

Discussion, Conclusions and Suggestions

Since pupils' emotions play a crucial role in the learning process (Pekrun, 2006, 2009 and 2017), this research addressed the consequences of ignoring students' emotions. In this paper, the researchers argued that this is one of the main issues that remain unnoticed by educational professionals in Algeria. This concluding section proposes a number of suggestions that should be taken into consideration by teachers, parents, and experts who write the syllabi for the five years of primary school. First, extensive research is needed to understand the

learners' emotional states in educational settings, how they interact with learning content, and the relationship between emotions, cognition, and learning. Then, field research proposes practical solutions and viable techniques. Also, positivizing the classroom is a crucial solution. Teachers must positivize their words and conversations: negative words like insults and verbal harassment should be avoided. Also, teachers should fill the classroom walls with pictures reflecting different emotions. Furthermore, teachers must create and use role-plays in various situations where emotional intelligence skills are developed. Other social and emotional activities such as taking turns taking charge could help kids develop emotionally and motivate them to love school and learning. (Pekrun, 2017)

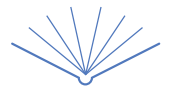
There are other considerations related to the classroom characteristics, notably the number of pupils per class that should not exceed 20. In addition, the structure and arrangement of the classroom should change from row seating to U-shaped as the latter encourages the pupils to interact more and feel they are all equal. Moreover, with this arrangement, the teacher is physically close to every pupil and can build a strong emotional relationship with all pupils. (Garret, 2008)

An important recommendation that we highlight at the end of this research is related to the program of what we call in Algeria "second generation books." The latter represents the reforms of the different curricula in basic education (2003/2004). However, when we access the website of the ministry of education (<https://www.education.gov.dz>) to read the objectives of these reforms, we find no single aim that refers to developing the emotional and social intelligence (EI, SI) of learners. Therefore, we suppose it is time for the ministry of education to review the curricula and their objectives to incorporate subjects and activities that enhance learners' EI and SI.

To conclude, this paper attempted to reveal that a major issue in the Algerian school is that it does not give importance to learners' emotions. The hundreds of studies done by researchers from other countries have encouraged us to introduce such a topic in our context to raise awareness regarding the gravity of ignoring young learners' emotions in schools. However, the present research's reliability and validity are shaped and limited by other independent variables and factors. These are the ones related to the socio-cultural specificity of each region in a country described as diverse and geographically big like Algeria. As already mentioned previously in this research, if we did the same investigation in private schools, the findings may have been different. Similarly, if we had done the same research with pupils from the south or East of Algeria, the findings would have also been different because the social context is different. Therefore, we highly recommend that similar research in other socio-cultural and regional contexts would add other dimensions to the present theorizations.

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