

Emotional Supports: The Lacking Knot in Online Teaching Mode.

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Abstract:

This article examines the impact of emotional support in enhancing teaching and learning in online environments. Data was collected through questionnaires completed by teachers and students of Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS) of Bouzareah. Both groups acknowledge the emotional challenges associated with teaching online. Due to difficulty focusing and technical issues, participants report feelings of isolation, demotivation, and anxiety. This implies that, unlike face-to-face classroom settings, online instruction may hinder social and emotional interactions. Participants stress how crucial emotional support is to raising student engagement and academic achievement. Students point out a gap between educational goals and practical applications. Also, the degree of emotional support varies based on teachers' professional and personal qualities. To foster better engagement for students' outcomes in online settings, a more efficient approach to emotionally supportive practices is more than necessary.

Keywords: Online teaching; emotional support; positive feedback; anxiety and isolation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Online teaching has its origins in the development of computer-based training systems and distance learning efforts dating back to the 1960s. Online instruction developed into a significant educational force during the 1990s as the internet became more widely used. A more dynamic and accessible learning environment was produced by the growth of online degree programs and web-based learning management systems. At first, online courses lacked interactive components and were mostly text-based. However, the incorporation of multimedia resources, such as audio and video simulations, was made possible by technological advancements, and this greatly improved learning outcomes and student engagement.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which forced schools and universities worldwide—including in Algeria—to transition to distant learning, was a major contributing factor to the rapid adoption of online learning. This sudden shift highlighted both the benefits and drawbacks of online learning. While it allowed education to continue in times of crisis, it also highlighted the need for improved facilities, teacher preparation programs, and student support. These days, a lot of universities and schools around the world are switching from traditional in-person instruction to online instruction due to the growing popularity of online learning.

But teaching is more than just passing along information. It comprises fostering deep engagement, communication, and critical thinking between teachers and students (Freire, 1970). When teaching online, it is particularly crucial to consider the attitudes and emotions of the students. Emotions are important in learning processes because students' achievement emotions, such as enjoyment, anxiety, or boredom, impact motivation, engagement, and academic outcomes (Pekrun, 2006). Emotion, according to Cleveland-Innes and Campbell, is a crucial component of virtual learning environments and should be considered a part of the educational process, especially in remote learning contexts. Emotional presence is regarded as a crucial component that influences students' engagement and educational experiences in virtual learning environments (Cleveland-Innes & Campbell, 2012).

Thus, this article aims to investigate the alleged lack of emotional support in online learning and its effects on students' academic performance and emotional growth. The study seeks to answer three major research questions: what challenges students face during online teaching sessions; whether there is a relationship between emotional support in online teaching and students' achievements; and, finally, to what extent can integrating emotional support improve learners' academic and emotional growth. To this end, two questionnaires were distributed to English Language teachers of Ecole Normale Supérieure of Bouzareah, Algiers, Algeria, and four years students at the same college, as target population.

2. Literature Review

Over the past two decades, Online teaching has become a central component of many educational programs in the world. Universities and educational institutions have adopted various learning management systems and communication tools to support virtual instruction, including audio / video conferencing, discussion forums, and collaborative platforms. where teachers and students engage virtually as opposed to in conventional classroom settings. This mode of teaching enables learning to occur across geographical boundaries and offers flexible access to educational resources, thereby transforming the conventional dynamics of teaching and learning (Anderson, 2008). These technologies not only allow instructors to present course contents, monitor student progress, but also maintain communication with learners despite physical distance (Moore & Kearsley, 2012). As a result, online teaching has become an important alternative to face-to-face instruction, especially in contexts where accessibility, time constraints, or external circumstances limit traditional classroom interaction.

Despite its numerous advantages, online teaching also presents several pedagogical challenges, and one of the most discussed issues in the literature concerns the absence of social and emotional interaction between instructors and learners. Emotional absence in distance learning triggers negative emotions like anxiety, boredom, frustration, and hopelessness, which impede students' cognitive processes, motivation, and overall academic performance. While some studies find no direct link between emotional presence or absence and students' grades, despite prevalent negative feelings, insufficient teacher presence often leads to reduced engagement and learning outcomes.

Research in educational psychology highlights that learning is both a cognitive and emotional process. Therefore, teaching, in face-to-face contexts or in digital environment, is not only about providing knowledge, but also about fostering learners' emotional growth and well-being. Teachers play a crucial role in creating supportive environments where students feel understood, valued, and confident to participate (Hargreaves, 2000; Pekrun, 2014). When educators acknowledge students' emotions and respond with empathy and encouragement, they help reduce anxiety, enhance motivation, and strengthen learners' connection to the subject and the classroom community (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007).

2.1. Related studies

Recent research in online learning situations demonstrates a strong link between emotional engagement and academic success. Emotional involvement is defined as learners' affective responses to learning activities, such as curiosity, enthusiasm, or dissatisfaction. When students experience good emotions while studying, they are more likely to persist in academic tasks and achieve higher levels of success (Hargreaves, 2000; Pekrun, 2014).

Negative emotional experiences, on the other hand, can weaken motivation and raise the likelihood of academic burnout (Ge, 2025). Furthermore, emotional support from instructors has been highlighted as an important aspect in increasing students' learning engagement. According to Patel (2023), students feel more connected to the learning environment and are inspired to actively participate in online courses when teachers display empathy, encouragement, and understanding (Patel, Addicott, & Buelow, 2023).

Despite the widely acknowledged need of emotional support, many online education settings fail to adequately address students' affective requirements. One of the most significant issues is the lack of nonverbal clues such as facial expressions, gestures, and quick feedback, which are generally used by instructors to assess students' emotional states in traditional classrooms. Instructors frequently struggle to recognise dissatisfaction, perplexity, or disengagement during online sessions due to the limited visibility of learners' emotional responses.

Another problem is instructors' ability to manage students' emotional needs in virtual environments. Many teachers are trained largely in technical tools and instructional design, rather than emotional facilitation or socio-emotional communication. As a result, emotional support may remain an underdeveloped aspect of online teaching. According to Anderson (2018), a large portion of early online education research and practice concentrated on learner achievement, instructional design, and technology. Whereas emotional variables, which have an impact on learning performance, engagement, and motivation, are frequently disregarded. This appears to be a "lacking knot" in the online teaching / learning chain.

Unlike face-to-face classrooms, where teachers can easily observe students' reactions and emotions, online settings may limit opportunities for spontaneous communication and emotional expression (Cleveland-Innes & Campbell, 2012). These emotional expressions may reveal students' satisfaction, but also discontentment, anxiety or boredom. This limitation can affect students' engagement, motivation, and overall learning experience. The reason is that researchers increasingly emphasize the need to integrate strategies that address not only cognitive learning outcomes but also the emotional and social dimensions of online education.

Research shows that emotions are not just 'feelings', but integral components to learning processes. For Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, (2012), positive emotions like interest, satisfaction and enjoyment can enhance attention and memory, while negative emotions like frustration, boredom and anxiety can hinder performance. In the same context, Borup, West, & Graham (2012), believe that when online environments fail to support emotional experiences, learners may feel isolated, disengaged, or overwhelmed. Given these factors, it is critical to investigate the nature of online teaching and consequences for both teachers and students.

Understanding how teaching approaches adapt to digital environments, as well as how emotional and social aspects influence the learning process, can help improve online education's effectiveness. According to research, effective online learning environments require three types of presence: interactive, cognitive, and social (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000). Emotional features are frequently mentioned in terms of social presence, which refers to learners' and instructors' abilities to express and recognise affective emotions in an online context (Richardson et al., 2017). Emotional presence has been connected to student engagement, willingness to actively participate, and overall happiness with online courses. Students that lack emotional presence are more likely to disengage, participate less, or drop out. Studies also show that online instructors who willingly address learners' emotions, for example, by creating supportive discussion spaces using encouraging feedback, or directly acknowledging challenges, improve learners' sense of belonging and motivation (Ice et al., 2019). On the contrary, instructors who purposefully overlook the emotional factor risk attaining merely surface-level interaction rather than deep cognitive engagement (Martinez, 2021).

Several factors contribute to making emotions a “lacking knot” in online teaching and learning chain. First, the invisibility of affective cues in digital environments reduces the richness of interaction that typically exists in face-to-face settings. In online interaction, teachers often have limited access to students' facial expressions, tone, and body language, which makes it more difficult to recognize and respond to learners' emotional states (Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997). Second, teacher readiness represents another challenge, as many instructors receive training mainly in content delivery and the use of instructional technologies rather than in facilitating emotional or social interaction in virtual classrooms (Borup et al., 2012). In addition, assessment priorities within online education systems tend to emphasize measurable outcomes such as grades, participation metrics, and course completion rates, while aspects like learner satisfaction and emotional well-being receive comparatively less attention (Dawson et al., 2020). Finally, cultural and individual differences also play a role, since students from diverse backgrounds express emotions in varied ways, and online learning platforms may not effectively accommodate this diversity unless emotional considerations are intentionally integrated into course design (Zembylas, 2013).

Educational technology advancements have introduced tools that help record and respond to emotions, such as sentiment analysis in discussion forums or virtual agents that adapt to user affective signals (D'Mello & Graesser, 2015). However, technology alone is not sufficient. Online course design must actively provide emotional support, such as encouragement, positive feedback, and chances for introspective expression (Hew & Cheung,

2014). When these factors are missing, learners may struggle, even if the content and technology are of high quality.

In conclusion, the literature shows that integrating emotions into digital learning is vital since it influences students' learning experiences and outcomes. Thus, including emotional support measures into online pedagogy is critical for creating more effective and human-centered learning environments.

3. Problem statement

As online training has become an increasingly popular alternative for many educators, particularly when face-to-face teaching is not possible, it is then critical to thoroughly study its effectiveness. Regardless of the reasons behind its adoption, practical experience indicates that teachers and students often struggle to achieve fully satisfactory outcomes when online teaching is conducted without adequate preparation, pedagogical adaptation, and institutional support. Emotions such as frustration, anxiety, or enthusiasm provide important feedback about the effectiveness of teaching strategies and the level of support perceived by learners (Pekrun, 2014). In online learning environments, however, these emotional signals are often less visible and therefore more easily overlooked by teachers. This is why emotional support may be referred to as a "lacking knot" in the online teaching-learning process. There appears a gap between educational goals and reality practices.

The present paper, thus, examines the extent to which teachers recognise the significance of emotional support in online teaching, and explores the potential consequences of neglecting this dimension on students' learning outcomes.

4. Aim and significance of the Study

The potential absence of emotional support in online education may have a negative impact on both teacher performance and student learning results. Emotional support is essential for developing motivation and engagement in digital learning environments. Investigating both instructors' and students' views of emotional support in online instruction may help uncover the elements driving such concerns and shed light on challenges that impede the effective integration of emotional support into digital pedagogy. Understanding these perceptions may also help instructors overcome the pedagogical and environmental barriers that prevent meaningful interaction and emotional connection in virtual classrooms.

The findings of this study contribute to efforts of rethinking methods of online instruction in Algerian higher education. It provides insights into the importance of emotional support in digital learning, which can be used to improve professional development activities. Stakeholders in Algerian institutions, such as the ENSB, will likely benefit from these findings.

5. Research Questions

Even though modern technologies make it easier to share information, digital learning environments often offer less chances to teachers to recognize and meet the emotional needs of their students (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000; Pekrun, 2014). The transition to online instruction prompted the researcher to examine educators' practices in such new mode. To gather evidence, the researcher will try to answer three main research questions (RQ, henceforth) expressed as follows:

RQ1. What emotional challenges do students commonly experience in online learning settings?

RQ2. Does emotional acknowledgment in online instruction mediate the relationship between student engagement and academic performance?

RQ3. How does integrating emotional support strategies in online teaching impact students' academic achievement and engagement?

6. Data collection

The choice of methodology is a crucial stage in any research process because it determines how data are collected, analysed, and interpreted to address the research problem. In our study, we will try to provide the overall framework that guides the study and ensures that the investigation is conducted in a systematic and rigorous manner (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Since the aim of our study is to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and meanings in greater depth (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018), we opted for a qualitative approach using questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument.

6.1. Research Instruments design

The qualitative nature of our study prompted the researcher to use two independent questionnaires, designed for teachers and students at the Ecole Normale Supérieure of Bouzareah, (ENSB) in Algiers, Algeria. Ten of the twenty teachers who have been submitted the questionnaire, two men and eight women, completed and returned it. The second questionnaire was created for twenty EFL fourth-year students enrolled in the same department and institution. Thirteen students out of the selected number have answered and returned the questionnaire in a timely manner.

The teachers questionnaire includes ten open-ended questions and an additional question aimed at allowing participants to communicate more about the issue. Gender and professional experience are two main components considered in teachers' profile. The first is important in this kind of research since male and female have distinct perspectives on emotions. In terms of experience, it is evident that novices and teachers with long experience have encountered different situations. Other questions target three

primary areas: (1) the common emotional challenges encountered in online learning; (2) emotional recognition and its mediation function; and (3) the emotional support strategies employed in online instruction. The last question of the questionnaire aims to bring the teachers share their own professional development and experience in terms of students' emotional development.

As far as the questionnaire designed for the students is concerned, it includes three different primary aspects including open-ended questions which move from general experiences to mediation and impact, allowing for in-depth qualitative data collection: 1) Emotional difficulties in distance learning, 2) Emotional acknowledgment and engagement and 3), Emotional support strategies and academic outcomes. Participants are offered space through an additional question in which they are asked to share their ideas, opinions, and expectations as regards emotional manifestation in online learning. Contrary to the teachers questionnaire, the students' questionnaire did not include gender and experience as criteria.

The two questionnaires were designed using Google Forms templates and distributed to participants through their respective professional email addresses. This procedure was adopted because it facilitates the organization and analysis of responses through digital data-processing tools, making the data analysis process more efficient for the researcher.

6.2. Participants

This study's target audience includes teachers and students from the English department of the Pre-service Teacher Training College of Bouzareah (ENSB), in Algiers, Algeria. The chosen teachers are assumed to have experience with digital teaching because the school previously experimented with such a training style during the health outbreak, and most of them still deliver online instruction to both undergraduate and post-graduate students. The second questionnaire was administered to twenty students enrolled in a four-year (PEM) or five-year (PES) Diploma of Initial Teacher Training program at the same department of the same institution. Students who agreed to participate in such an inquiry were chosen at random from four groups of four-year classes.

7. Data Analysis

Data collected from the questionnaires was analysed using qualitative thematic analysis. The researcher used this method to obtain detailed information about the attitudes and challenges of teachers and students toward online teaching mode. Qualitative analysis method provides a well-organised process for obtaining an overview and identifying the primary themes of the research. It is regarded as the most adaptable and secure approach for researchers. Finding themes and comprehending experiences, ideas, or behaviours throughout a data set are its goals (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

As a result, thematic analysis was applied to the information obtained from the ENSB teachers' and students' questionnaires. The surveys were first classified, sorted, and then arranged into meaningful headings. After that, those headings underwent additional analysis, dissection, and theme classification. To see if the themes fit the facts, they were examined and improved. The concepts were finally identified and defined.

7.1. Teachers Questionnaire Data Analysis.

As previously mentioned, the researcher adopted qualitative thematic data analysis method based on themes previously defined.

A/ Teachers' profile

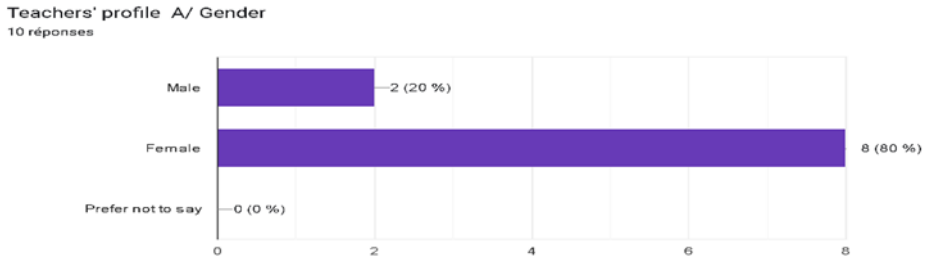
Profile constitutes a significant theme to tackle in the teachers questionnaire. To obtain a clear picture of the participants, the researcher relied on gender and professional experience as key criteria. Gender is an important variable in this type of research because studies suggest that males and females often display different perspectives and sensitivities toward emotions and emotional supports in educational contexts (Brody & Hall, 2008; Schutz & Zembylas, 2009). Considering gender therefore helps identify possible differences in how teachers perceive and provide emotional support. In terms of professional experience, it is widely recognized that novices and more experienced teachers encounter different classroom situations and develop different coping strategies over time (Day & Gu, 2007; Hargreaves, 1998). Consequently, their understanding and management of emotional support, especially in online teaching environments, may vary depending on the length of their teaching experience.

- Gender

It is critical to identify participants' genders in such a topic since gender can influence teachers' attitudes regarding emotional support in online teaching. According to Borup, West, and Graham (2012), emotional presence in online courses is often fostered through immediacy behaviors such as supportive messages, responsiveness, and recognition of students' emotional needs. In online learning settings, where face-to-face cues are limited, female teachers may place a greater emphasis on maintaining communication, acknowledging students' feelings, and fostering a supportive virtual classroom climate. Moreover, research in educational psychology indicates that female teachers are more likely to prioritise relational and affective aspects of teaching, such as empathy, encouragement, and emotional responsiveness to students' needs (Avissar, 2023). This does not imply that male instructors disregard students' emotions. Though they are more likely to focus on the instrumental or task-oriented aspects of teaching, such as content delivery, technical guidance, and

performance results, rather than explicit emotional engagement (Li et al., 2025). It is usual to claim that female teachers predominate in Algerian education, and our findings, a (80%), are largely in line with this claim. The following figure illustrates the actual tendency.

Fig.1 Participants' gender.

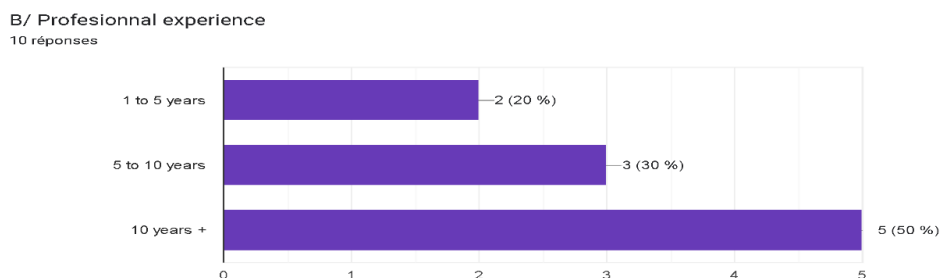


Source: Dahache, 2026, p.10

- Professional experience

The researcher believes that teachers' professional experience plays a significant role in shaping their attitudes toward the presence or absence of emotional support in online teaching environments. Our data show that 50% of our respondents have more than ten years of teaching experience. According to Hargreaves (2000), teaching is an emotional practice in which educators continuously interpret and respond to students' feelings, motivations, and anxieties in online settings. However, the absence of face-to-face interaction can make emotional cues less visible, requiring teachers to rely on deliberate strategies to maintain emotional connection with learners. Research suggests that instructors with greater teaching experience are more likely to recognize the importance of social and emotional presence in digital learning environments (Borup, West, & Graham, 2012). These instructors may use strategies such as personalized feedback, empathy in communication, and regular check-ins with students to create a supportive learning atmosphere. Such practices help mitigate the sense of isolation frequently reported in online learning contexts. In contrast, less experienced teachers may focus more strongly on the technical and cognitive aspects of online teaching, sometimes missing students' emotional requirements (Hargreaves, 2000). Our findings are consistent with scholars' perspectives in that a great deal of our respondents (80%) had extensive professional experience, allowing them to adequately address their students' emotional aspects in online teaching environments. The next figure highlights the value of experience in online settings.

Fig.2. Participants' professional experience



Source: Dahache,2026, p.11

B/ Teachers' Attitudes Toward Online Teaching mode

A total of four questions were devoted to tackling the first theme. The first question is intended to provide a clear picture of how teachers perceive online teaching. Nine replies out of ten perceive online teaching as emotionally different from face-to-face instruction. Most responses indicate that online environments reduce engagement, limit emotional cues, and create a sense of distance between teachers and students. Teachers particularly emphasized the absence of nonverbal communication, such as facial expressions and body language, which makes it harder to monitor students' reactions and build emotional connections.

Another key concern relates to interaction and feedback. Participants reported that face-to-face classrooms promote genuine dialogue and stronger teacher–student relationships, whereas online teaching often feels impersonal and mediated, sometimes resembling a monologue rather than a dialogue. Teachers also noted reduced opportunities for critical thinking engagement and immediate feedback, as well as feelings of isolation when students keep their cameras off. Although a few teachers mentioned that online teaching can reduce anxiety and increase confidence by removing the pressure of physical observation, most agreed that it weakens emotional and social interaction. Overall, the findings suggest that online teaching is generally perceived as less interactive, less engaging, and more isolating than face-to-face instruction, supporting previous research that highlights the limited social and emotional cues in online communication (Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997; Borup, West, & Graham, 2012).

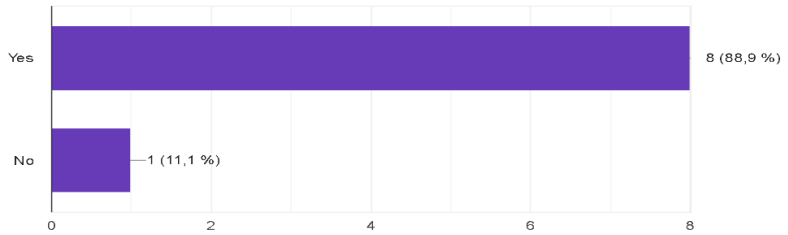
C/ Relationship between Online instruction and students' achievements.

Teachers' responses to Question 2 reveal a strong consensus regarding the relationship between emotional support and students' academic achievement in online learning environments, as shown in the figure below:

Fig.3. Online teaching and student's achievements

2. In your opinion, is there any relationship between emotional support during online teaching and students' academic achievement?

9 réponses



Source: Dahache,2026, p.12

Teachers agree on the critical connection between emotional support and students' academic achievement in online learning, with 89.9% affirming its significance. The minority of respondents (11.1%) who denied the relationship may reflect a more traditional view of teaching that prioritizes content delivery and technical aspects of online instruction over emotional or social dimensions. This consensus stems from the understanding that in online education, where interactions are less spontaneous, emotional support becomes essential for sustaining motivation and engagement. Research indicates that positive teacher-student relationships foster belonging and mitigate feelings of isolation, which enhances learning outcomes. Moreover, emotional support boosts self-confidence and reduces anxiety, further promoting cognitive engagement and academic success. Studies on social presence highlight that when students perceive emotional care and encouragement from instructors, they are more likely to participate actively and perform better academically (Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997). Teachers' replies to the four questions highlight some common themes about students' emotional and psychological experiences in virtual classrooms.

a. Isolation:

Feelings of isolation and detachment seem to be the most reported issue. Many teachers indicated that students feel disconnected from their classmates and instructors because of the lack of face-to-face engagement.

b. Demotivation

Respondents raised concerns about a lack of driving and participation. Several teachers noted that keeping students motivated is more tough in online environments since they interact mostly with a screen rather than a physical classroom group. As a result, students may demonstrate decreased

involvement, interest in course activities, and commitment to learning objectives. Studies on online learning confirm that limited emotional interaction and feedback can negatively influence students' motivation and persistence (Rena M. Palloff & Keith Pratt).

c. Stress and anxiety

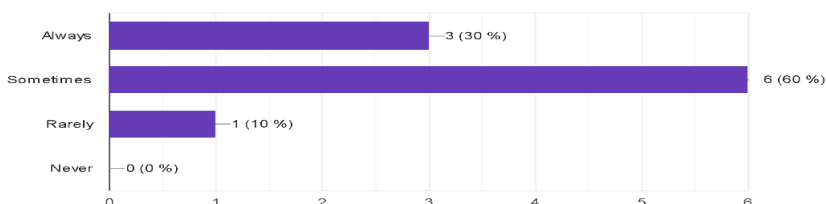
Another frequently cited issue is stress and anxiety, particularly when students face technological issues such as inadequate internet connectivity or unfamiliar digital platforms. Teachers reported that technological issues might upset students, increase their anxiety, and have a detrimental impact on academic achievement. Such difficulties can also undermine students' belief in their abilities to participate effectively in online classrooms. Teachers' replies reveal that emotional issues in online classes are primarily manifested as a lack of students / teacher contact. Teachers notice indicators such as silence during conversations, unwillingness to join, cameras turned off, and delayed responses, which may suggest fear, low motivation, or a lack of confidence. Some teachers report absenteeism implying that emotional challenges may cause retreatment from the learning process. Overall, these behaviours illustrate how emotional issues in online learning frequently manifest as restricted contact, passive involvement, and inconsistent attendance, while the absence of visual clues in virtual environments makes these challenges more difficult for teachers to notice.

D/ Emotional supports acknowledgement in Online teaching.

The responses reveal that teachers do not fully disregard emotional support during their online activities, but rather, they occasionally (60%) consider such a problem as seen in the figure below:

Fig.4. Teachers' emotional support acknowledgement

Section 2: Emotional Acknowledgment and its Mediating Role: 5.To what extent do you consciously acknowledge or address students' emotions during your online lessons?
10 réponses



Source: Dahache,2026,p.13

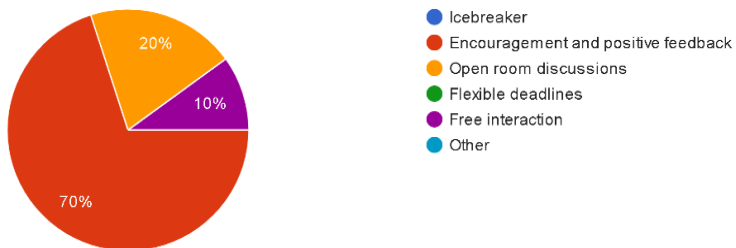
Teachers' responses to a series of questions related to their acknowledgment of emotional support in online teaching indicate a strong

consensus that emotional support significantly enhances students' learning experiences and academic performance in online teaching settings. They argue that recognizing students' emotional needs boosts motivation and engagement, increases learners' confidence and persistence. Emotional recognition also contributes to reducing anxiety and isolation, leading to stronger teacher-student relationships. Furthermore, it aids in creating a positive and inclusive online learning environment, which encourages collaboration and communication among students. Additionally, emotional awareness enables teachers to address academic difficulties more effectively by adapting their teaching strategies, ultimately helping students overcome obstacles and achieve learning objectives. Concerning the strategy they rely on, 70% of the participants stated “encouragement and positive feedback” as an effective strategy they use in class, besides to some more or less effective strategies. The following figure is more explicit.

Fig.5. Teachers’ emotional support strategies.

Section 3: Emotional Support Strategies in Online Teaching 7. What strategies do you use to deploy emotional support to your students in your online classes?

10 réponses



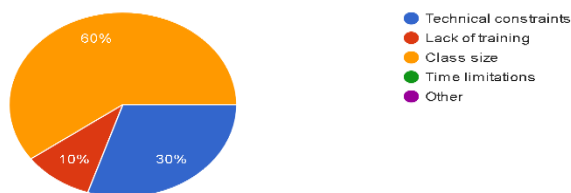
Source: Dahache, 2026, p.14

In the analysis of teachers' comments regarding "encouragement and positive feedback" in online teaching, several benefits for student motivation, confidence, and participation are highlighted. Teachers associate these strategies with heightened motivation and active participation, emphasizing that supportive comments stimulate student engagement in virtual settings where face-to-face interactions are limited. The feedback also boosts students' self-confidence, making them more likely to share their ideas and less fearful of mistakes in a digital environment. Furthermore, encouragement is seen as part of a broader emotional-support strategy that includes techniques such as icebreakers and open discussions, promoting psychological safety, reducing anxiety, and fostering collaboration among students, ultimately enhancing

emotional engagement. Some educators suggest that this encouragement may lead to better academic performance due to increased student engagement with course materials. But when it comes to providing emotional support in online instruction, the teachers identified a few obstacles. such as class size and the technological limitations. The following figure is more explicit.

Fig.6.professional challenges

Section 4: Reflection and Professional Development 9. What challenges do you face in addressing students' emotions in online teaching?
10 réponses



Source: Dahache,2026, p.15

E/ Open-end question data analysis

Teachers' responses to the open-ended question "*Is there anything else you would like to say about the impact of emotions in online teaching?*", one teacher emphasized that emotional intelligence is increasingly valuable in engaging EFL students in a technologically advanced setting, leading to improved comprehension of students' needs and better academic outcomes. This aligns with existing research indicating that teachers' emotional skills significantly enhance classroom interactions and learning results (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Goleman, 1995). In online teaching, where visual indicators are limited, emotionally aware educators are critical for recognising and responding to students' emotional states. Another teacher emphasised the importance of emotions in both teacher performance and student engagement, arguing that the lack of physical encounters in online education makes emotional connection critical for retaining motivation. This perspective is supported by studies showing that absence of face-to-face contact diminishes social presence and emotional ties unless teachers actively apply supportive practices (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000; Cleveland-Innes & Campbell, 2012).

7.2. Students questionnaire data analysis

Like the analysis of teachers' data, the researcher applied the same qualitative thematic analysis method to the data obtained from the students' questionnaires.

A/ Students' attitude toward Online teaching

Students' responses to the question "*Can you describe how you usually feel during online classes?*" reveal a range of emotional and cognitive experiences. These responses can be thematically analysed into several recurring patterns, among these:

a. Comfort and Convenience

Many students report feeling comfortable and relaxed in online lessons and indicate that not having to go to college saves time and lessens fatigue. This convenience improves their emotional state and readiness for learning. For other students, the home environment provides a sense of comfort, making online sessions less physically demanding than traditional face-to-face lessons.

b. Distraction and Loss of Concentration

Despite this comfort, a large proportion of answers mention difficulties with concentration. Students regularly report feeling distracted, losing attention, or becoming bored during online lessons. Long amounts of screen time and a lack of stimulating interaction appear to amplify these emotions. Some respondents express openly that they struggle to participate or keep focused, demonstrating that sustained attention in online situations might be difficult.

c. Influence of Teaching Practices and Interaction

Students' emotional experiences are very intimately related to teachers' teaching techniques. For example, one respondent observes that boredom and confusion emerge when professors turn off their cameras or do not share visual materials such as PowerPoint slides. Motivation rises when teachers explain lessons properly and encourage involvement. These remarks indicate that teacher presence, visual assistance, and interactive teaching tactics are significant in shaping students' involvement and emotional comfort during online learning.

d. Technical and Environmental issues

Some students express concern about potential technological issues, such as inconsistent internet connections or having to speak into a microphone in a noisy home environment. These issues cause worry, which may limit their willingness to participate actively in online classes. In digital learning contexts, technical limits add to the emotional burden.

e. Preference for Face-to-Face Interaction

Several replies show that online classes are seen as less engaging than regular classroom settings. As a visual learner, one student states that

observing the teacher's body language and interacting directly in person helps them absorb the topic better. This implies that the absence of physical presence and nonverbal clues may impede comprehension and emotional connection to the instructor.

f. Practical Constraints

Finally, some students bring out practical difficulties like inconvenient class schedules, such as late sessions or lessons that conflict with mealtimes. These variables can make online lessons feel "heavy" or stressful, decreasing students' motivation to ask questions or engage actively.

B/ Students' challenges during online learning

Students' responses to the question "What emotional challenges, if any, have you experienced in online learning?" reveal several recurring emotional and psychological difficulties. A thematic analysis of the responses highlights the following main categories.

a. Distraction and Difficulty Maintaining Focus

One of the most frequently reported issues is the difficulty in staying focused during online classes. Several students report feeling distracted, losing focus, or struggling to stay attentive while learning on a screen for extended periods of time. Distractions can be caused by external causes such as simultaneous student discussions, or by the online environment itself, which can impair students' involvement with the class. These results suggest that the digital learning context may make sustained attention more challenging than in traditional classroom settings.

b. Lack of Motivation and Loss of Interest

Another key emotional difficulty is lost motivation. Some students report feeling less motivated during online classes and progressively losing interest in the subject. According to one responder, professors sometimes hurry through to the subject to end the session quickly, which can have a detrimental impact on students' involvement and participation. This lack of motivation can lead to feelings of boredom and disengagement with the learning process.

c. Feelings of Isolation and Limited Interaction

Many children report feeling isolated because of their limited engagement with classmates and professors. The lack of face-to-face communication limits opportunities for spontaneous discussion and social connection, which can leave students feeling estranged from the class group. This perceived social distance appears to pose a significant emotional problem in online learning contexts.

d. Anxiety and Stress Related to Technical Issues

Technical issues, particularly slow or inconsistent internet connections, are another significant source of emotional distress. Students indicate that connectivity issues might cause them to miss important parts of the teacher's explanation, disrupt communication, and increase anxiety during lessons. Such technological hiccups might disturb the learning process and cause dissatisfaction.

e. Discomfort with Online Participation

Technical issues, particularly slow or inconsistent internet connections, are another significant source of emotional distress. Students indicate that connectivity issues might cause them to miss important parts of the teacher's explanation, disrupt communication, and increase anxiety during lessons. Such technological hiccups might disturb the learning process and cause dissatisfaction.

f. Mixed or Positive Perceptions

Although many responses highlight challenges, a few students present more balanced or positive perspectives. For instance, one student notes that online learning can promote independence and responsibility, while another appreciates the quiet atmosphere and opportunities for discussion in digital platforms. These responses suggest that emotional experiences in online learning are not entirely negative and may vary according to individual preferences and learning styles.

C/ Emotional challenges and students' engagement

Students' responses to the question "How do these emotional challenges affect your participation in online classes?" indicate that emotional difficulties have a direct influence on students' level of engagement and participation. A thematic analysis of the responses reveals several key patterns.

a. Reduced Participation and Engagement

A recurring issue in the responses is a decrease in active participation. Many students express that emotional difficulties cause them to participate less frequently in online classrooms. Boredom, distraction, or a lack of enthusiasm reduces their willingness to participate in conversations or communicate with the teacher. Some responders even admit that they rarely participate in online sessions.

b. Hesitation to Ask Questions or Express Opinions

Another common impact is a student's unwillingness to talk or ask enquiries. Several participants report that when they feel alienated from the class or uneasy in the online environment, they are less likely to express their

ideas. Instead of participating in talks, some choose to be silent and listen. Shyness and lack of confidence may exacerbate this hesitancy.

c. Loss of Motivation and Interest

Students often report that emotional challenges, such as anger or attention, might reduce motivation. In other circumstances, missing a portion of the lesson due to technical challenges causes a lack of interest in the remainder of the session. Others say they want to finish class fast rather than actively participate, which limits their involvement with the learning process.

d. Feelings of Disconnection from the Class

Several replies express a sense of isolation from the lesson or the learning community. When students do not perceive an interesting environment or meaningful engagement, they become less engaged in class. This emotional detachment leads to less participation and communication with teachers and peers.

e. Conditional Participation

A few students report that their participation varies according to their emotional state. When students feel at ease, motivated, and engaged, they are more likely to participate in conversations and pay close attention to the lesson. In contrast, when or unmotivated, their level of participation drops.

f. Alternative Forms of Participation

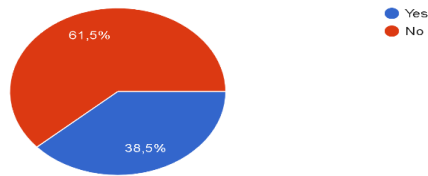
One respondent advises that instead of expressing questions during the online session, they would rather address their problems later in face-to-face meetings with the teacher. This demonstrates a preference for traditional communication situations where students feel more comfortable expressing themselves.

D/ Emotional acknowledgement during online sessions

Students' responses to the question "*Do your teachers acknowledge students' emotions during online classes?*" indicate that most participants perceive limited emotional recognition from their teachers in the online learning environment, as seen on the following figure:

Fig.7. Students' views toward teachers' emotional support acknowledgement

Section B: Emotional Acknowledgment and Engagement: 6. Do your teachers acknowledge students' emotions during online classes?
13 réponses



Source: Dahache,2026, p.20

The results show that 61.5% of the students answered “No,” while only 38.5% answered “Yes.” The prevalence of negative replies indicates that a large percentage of students believe their emotional states are not adequately acknowledged during online lectures. This notion could be attributed to the nature of online learning, in which communication is frequently carried out via digital platforms and opportunities for spontaneous engagement are limited. Without direct face-to-face contact, teachers may struggle to monitor pupils' emotional clues, such as facial expressions, body language, or symptoms of bewilderment and anger. As a result, students may believe that their emotions and troubles are disregarded during the learning process. Nonetheless, 38.5% of students who replied "Yes" show that some teachers try to recognise and respond to students' emotional needs. These teachers may employ supportive communication, encouragement, or interaction opportunities to foster a more compassionate learning environment.

Students' responses to the question “*How does it affect you when your teacher shows understanding of your feelings or difficulties during an online session?*” indicate that Teachers' emotional awareness has a significant positive impact on their pupils' learning experiences. Most students believe that when teachers address their concerns or issues, they feel more at ease, calm, and supported, which reduces stress and fosters a sense of emotional stability throughout online sessions. This helpful

attitude also boosts students' motivation and interest in the course, pushing them to work harder and pay attention during the class. Furthermore, numerous respondents say that teachers' empathy gives them more confidence to join, ask questions, and engage in discussions because they feel respected and understood.

This recognition of students' efforts and struggles helps to create a more supportive learning environment. However, one response shows that some teachers prioritise completing the course and rarely enquire about students' feelings, implying that emotional awareness is not consistently practiced.

Overall, the findings show that teachers' awareness of students' emotions is vital for reducing anxiety, increasing motivation, and encouraging active involvement in online learning.

C/ Emotional support strategies and academic outcomes

Students' replies to a question about emotional support strategies that teachers commonly utilise during online sessions reveal a level of consensus among students, with 53.8% expressing similar emotional support.

a. Encouragement and positive feedback,

Many students reported that receiving praise, comments, and supportive feedback from teachers boosts their participation and confidence.

b. Patience and understanding,

Some students noted that teachers show patience and understanding toward students particularly when they experience learning difficulties or technical problems.

c. Encourage interaction

Many students noticed that allowing students to ask questions for understanding helps them feel more comfortable and supported during the lesson.

d. Creating a friendly atmosphere

Teachers should sometimes speak kindly, use humour, or call students by their first names to establish a more personal connection.

e. Express their ideas and feelings,

Teachers often use short breaks or check-ins about how students are doing emotionally by asking them to express their emotions.

6. Emotional support is not consistently provided

However, few students state that certain instructors primarily focus on presenting lesson information, especially during catch-up sessions, and a few students report that no emotional support measures are used.

8. The findings

After careful analysis of data obtained from teachers' questionnaire, the following results were obtained:

a. Teachers' personal characteristics and emotional support

The findings indicate that teachers' personal and professional traits determine how emotional support is delivered in online learning environments. In terms of gender, female teachers may prioritise emotional

empathy and social engagement with students, whereas male teachers may occasionally take a more task-oriented approach. As far as professional experience is concerned, it appears to play a significant role. More experienced instructors have a deeper knowledge of the emotional dimension of learning and are more likely to use tactics that build emotional connection with students. In contrast, less experienced teachers may focus more on technological and cognitive aspects of instruction, sometimes overlooking the importance of emotional support.

b. Emotional challenges of Online Teaching

The findings show that online teaching is seen as less dynamic and engaging than traditional classroom learning. Teachers indicated that learners may feel alone in the online setting due to a lack of social and emotional cues. In other words, digital-tools mediated communication frequently restricts the transmission of emotional cues that would typically occur in face-to-face conversation (Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997; Borup, West, & Graham, 2012).

c. Students' Emotional Challenges in Online Learning

Teachers noted that students typically experience feelings of isolation, a lack of desire, anxiety about technical challenges, and difficulty staying focused during online classes. If these emotional challenges are not addressed properly, they can have a severe impact on students' participation and overall learning experience.

d. Indicators of Emotional Difficulties in the Online Classroom

Teachers observed numerous observable markers that could indicate emotional difficulties among students such as silence during online sessions, poor involvement, limited connection with classmates or instructors, delayed responses, absenteeism, and technology-related issues. Such acts could underly emotional disengagement or frustration.

e. Strategies to Foster Emotional Support in Online Teaching

The findings emphasise the need to establish techniques to increase emotional support in digital learning contexts, like encouragement and positive feedback, promoting students' motivation, self-esteem, and involvement in online classrooms. Indeed, create a friendly learning environment that promotes emotional well-being.

8.1. Findings from students data analysis

According to the data, students had emotionally varied experiences with online learning. While many students like the convenience and physical comfort of taking classes from home, they commonly cite challenges with concentration, communicating with teachers and peers, and navigating technical limits.

The findings indicate that emotional engagement in online classes is driven not just by the learning environment, but also by teaching tactics, technological conditions, and scheduling considerations (Hodges et al., 2020; Rapanta et al., 2020). Furthermore, students frequently face emotional issues such as lack of motivation, distraction, shyness, and feelings of detachment, which might affect their willingness to participate in online sessions. Such variables frequently deter students from asking questions, participating in discussions, or actively interacting with the course, reducing the efficacy of the learning process (Borup et al., 2014; Cleveland-Innes & Campbell, 2012).

According to students, emotional awareness in online teaching is still limited, as a significant proportion of replies highlight the absence or irregularity of emotional support techniques. This highlights the necessity of using more emotionally responsive teaching practices, such as encouraging open communication, monitoring students' well-being, and fostering a friendly and engaged online classroom environment (Garrison, 2017; Pekrun, 2014). Although some emotional support strategies are used in online education, their implementation appears to differ greatly between instructors, emphasising the need for more emphasis on the emotional aspects of online learning.

8.2. Results Triangulation:

The triangulation of teachers' and students' data reveals several converging points regarding emotional experiences in online learning environments. Both groups agree that online education poses considerable emotional challenges. Teachers indicate that students frequently experience loneliness, a lack of enthusiasm, anxiety about technical challenges, and difficulty concentrating during online lessons. Similarly, students affirm these issues by citing feelings of distraction, detachment, and a decreased motivation to participate in online discussions. This convergence suggests that teachers perceived emotional difficulties are largely consistent with students lived experiences, supporting the theory that online learning environments may reduce social and emotional interaction when compared to traditional classrooms (Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997; Borup, West, & Graham, 2012).

Another area of convergence is the importance of emotional support in improving student engagement and learning results. Teachers emphasise strategies like encouragement, positive feedback, and creating a friendly classroom environment to increase students' enthusiasm and participation. Students' replies reflect this notion, demonstrating that emotional engagement in online classrooms is influenced not only by the learning environment, but also by teaching tactics and the level of emotional awareness among professors. However, students believe that emotional support techniques are frequently inconsistent or insufficient, indicating a partial mismatch between

teachers' objectives and students' perceptions. This disparity emphasises the need for more systematic and consistent application of emotionally responsive teaching approaches in online education (Garrison, 2017; Pekrun, 2014).

Furthermore, instructors' findings show that personal and professional variables, such as gender and teaching experience, might influence how emotional support is provided. While students may not explicitly mention these qualities, their remarks about the variation in emotional support among instructors indirectly reveal that variances in teachers' approaches impact students' emotional experiences in online learning. Overall, the triangulation of the two data sets shows a strong alignment to the emotional challenges of online education and the importance of supportive teaching practices, as well as a need for greater consistency in addressing students' emotional needs in digital learning environments (Hodges et al., 2020; Rapanta et al., 2020).

9. Discussion of the results

The findings from teacher and student data shed light on the study's research questions, emphasising the emotional dynamics of online learning and the importance of emotional support in moulding students' engagement and academic experiences.

Regarding **RQ1**: *“What emotional challenges do students commonly experience in online learning settings?”*, results clearly show that students face a variety of emotional issues in digital learning environments. Both teachers and students describe comparable issues, such as feelings of isolation, decreased motivation, anxiety over technology problems, and difficulty staying focused during online sessions. Students also express attention, detachment, and reluctance to join in debates. These findings are consistent with previous studies indicating that the absence of physical presence and nonverbal communication in online contexts may reduce participants' social engagement and emotional connectedness (Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997; Borup, West, & Graham, 2012). The convergence of teachers' perceptions and students' self-reported experiences adds to the validity of these findings and demonstrates that emotional problems remain a major concern in online education.

In relation to **RQ2**: *“Does emotional acknowledgement in online instruction mediate the relationship between student engagement and academic performance?”*, data indicate that emotional awareness and acknowledgement by teachers play an important moderating effect. Teachers report employing strategies like encouragement, positive feedback, and establishing a supportive learning environment to increase student motivation and participation. Students' comments confirm this viewpoint, emphasising that their participation in online learning is heavily influenced by teaching

techniques and the extent to which teachers display emotional understanding. This confirms theoretical viewpoints emphasising the significance of emotional presence and affective participation in online learning communities (Garrison, 2017). Furthermore, research on accomplishment emotions shows that students' emotional experiences have a direct impact on their motivation, engagement, and academic performance (Peekrun, 2014).

Finally, concerning **RQ3**: “*How does integrating emotional support strategies in online teaching impact students’ academic achievement and engagement?*”, the findings show that emotionally supportive teaching techniques can improve students' learning experiences. Teachers feel that

strategies like encouragement and constructive comments help students develop self-confidence, motivation, and active involvement in online classrooms. Students' replies suggest that when teachers demonstrate emotional awareness and foster a supportive environment, they are more comfortable participating in discussions and interacting with course content. Nonetheless, the observed variance in the execution of emotional support measures This observation is consistent with research indicating that effective online teaching necessitates not only technological proficiency but also pedagogical approaches that incorporate emotional and social dimensions of learning (Hodges et al., 2020; Rapanta et al., 2020).

10. CONCLUSION

This study aims to raise educational stakeholders' awareness of the need to reconsider their practices, particularly with relation to online teaching mode. The findings show that recognising and incorporating students' emotional aspects during online teaching sessions can help to increase not only students’ cognitive growth but also their emotional dimensions, and hence their outcomes.

To address the emotional lack in online learning environments, a holistic approach is required, with emotions viewed as a crucial component of the teaching-learning process rather than secondary or optional characteristics. Thus, sensitising stakeholders about the importance of emotions in online practices and convincing them to accept this new vision appears to be the first step to consider. Next, developing a strategy that will provide instructors with professional development so that they can better recognise and respond to students' emotional cues during online discussions and collaborative activities, thereby improving the quality of teacher-student interaction and support (Hew and Cheung, 2014). Furthermore, learning activities in digital classrooms should be purposefully structured to enhance emotional safety and create a more supportive online teaching chain, where emotions are not missing but actively woven into the learning experience.

Doing so , opens doors to students to communicate their thoughts and emotions, and recognising the variety of learners' emotional experiences (Martin et al., 2020). It is also recommended that learning digital tools be used carefully to identify behaviours in student participation and engagement that may signal emotional difficulties, while also respecting learners' privacy and ethical considerations (Dawson et al., 2018). Furthermore, regulated peer contact, collaborative learning opportunities, and reflective exercises can help students form a stronger emotional connection to the course and one another (Rovai, 2002). Collectively, these strategies help to create a more supportive and resilient online learning environment in which emotional engagement is intentionally incorporated into educational experience.

The findings indicate a clear connection between emotional support and students' academic and personal development in online learning environments. Integrating emotional support strategies into digital instruction can increase students' engagement, motivation, and participation, thereby contributing to more effective learning outcomes (Martin & Bolliger, 2018; Pekrun, 2014). When teachers acknowledge students' emotional needs and provide encouragement, empathy, and understanding, they are more likely to feel valued and supported, which positively influences their learning experience (Hew & Cheung, 2014).

To conclude, one can say that as long as emotions and feelings such as isolation, anxiety, and lack of motivation are common in virtual learning contexts, teachers should recognise and approach these issues as an integral component of effective online teaching (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020; Cleveland-Innes & Campbell, 2012).

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