Introducing Metapathy as a Movement beyond Empathy: A Case of Socioeconomic Status

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Abstract

Drawing on the concepts of apathy, sympathy, and empathy and their correspondence with emotioncy, this paper aimed to present the concept of *metapathy*, as the next and highest level of concern about others. It also sought to investigate if teachers' concern for their students depends on the students' socioeconomic status. As the first step, the *Teacher Concern for Students (TCS)* scale was developed to measure teachers' types (i.e., apathy, sympathy, empathy, and metapathy) and levels of concern for their students. Next, the construct validity of the scale was verified using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The statistical analysis of the results obtained from 716 participants revealed that teachers teaching in low and mid socioeconomic groups tend to mostly *metapathize* with their students by showing a high level of concern for their future. On the other hand, teachers teaching in the high socioeconomic group were found to equally metapathize, empathize, and sympathize with their students.

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1. Introduction

Social interaction is an inseparable part of dwelling in a social environment. To thrive in such interactions, humans need to understand others' concerns and emotional states and decide in what ways they are to react to them. Humans differ in the extent they are concerned about others' feelings and how much they demonstrate this concern. While some remain indifferent or only minimally share others' state of affect, others might show a deeper understanding or even go beyond and react more reasonably. If individuals display unconcerned behavior, they are in a state of apathy, which is a failure to express emotional reaction and initiate action when faced with a peer undergoing an emotional state (Nobis & Husain, 2018). Such inability might result from a tendency to suppress one's emotions, lack of social skills, avoidance of emotional involvement (Fahed & Steffens, 2021), or a sheer lack of concern for the others. The two other states of feeling that humans experience in reaction to others' sentiments are sympathy and empathy, which are considered key components of successful social interaction (Cutierrez et al., 2011; Decety et al., 2016; Morelli et al., 2015). Although sympathy and empathy are often used interchangeably in public usage, they are two fundamentally different terms (Lamm et al., 2019). Eisenberg et al. (2015) defined sympathy as the feeling of sadness and apprehension towards a needy and troubled individual, which is experienced based on a comparison of one individual's situation and circumstances with another. Therefore, concern exists within sympathy, but it is kept at a minimum. Empathy, on the other hand, does not involve such an emotional experience; rather, it is an effort to put oneself in the other person's shoes and imagine their experience as one's own. Sympathy means touching the painful feelings of others, whereas empathy refers to having the motivation to help others (Aslani & Eskandari, 2019). Empathy has two dimensions: socio-cognitive and socio-affective. Cognitive empathy means understanding another feeling and point of view, while the second dimension of empathy is emotional empathy, which means emotional connection with others and sharing their emotional states (Preckel et al., 2018). Therefore, human beings' level of concern can mingle with emotioncy levels (Pishghadam et al., 2013), forming a continuum from avolvement (apathy) to exvolvement (sympathy) and involvement (empathy). This study assumes that as the emotioncy level has gone beyond involvement to matavolvement (Pishghadam, Ebrahimi, et al., 2019), which is a more profound and pragmatically-oriented state, there seems to be another emotional response in human beings beyond the state of empathy, which embodies a higher level of concern about the others, compared to sympathy and empathy. In accordance, this study proposes *metapathy* as the state of emotional metavolvement or overengament, which happens when individuals go beyond a reaction to relieve or elevate others' current emotions momentarily; rather, they are so concerned about the others that they opt for a more thoughtful reaction having long-term benefits for their future life. Such a concerned reaction might seem to be rough for the moment, but it aims to help others reach a promising future.

To have a more objective view of these concepts in the classroom setting, the *Teacher Concern for Students (TCS)* scale was developed and its psychometric robustness was verified. Followed by that, the scale was used to discover Iranian high school students' perceptions of their teachers' types (i.e., apathy, sympathy, empathy, and metapathy) and levels of concern, and a comparison was made between their concern for students across low, mid, and high socioeconomic groups. The reason for this comparison could be that teachers' concern for students might vary across different socioeconomic statuses. The following section thoroughly reviews the concepts of apathy, sympathy, and empathy. In subsequence, the proposed concept of metapathy and its related notions are elaborated.

2. Theoretical Frameworks

2.1. Apathy

Apathy has been defined as individuals' failure to show concerns or behavioral reactions due to a diminishing ability to choose among a variety of reaction options and initiate actions (Nobis & Husain, 2018). Another conceptualization of this term is lack of motivation or concern, which directly influences individuals' behavior, cognition, and emotion; it also represents the deficits in their executive functioning skills (Montoya-Murillo et al.,

2019; Nobis & Husain, 2018). In other words, in the state of apathy, individuals experience a sense of indifference resulting from the suppression of feelings, such as worry, excitement, motivation, or passion. In fact, the reason that apathetic people fail to react and remain indifferent is that they are uninterested or unconcerned even about their own emotional, social, spiritual, or physical life (Fahed & Steffens, 2021). In addition, an apathetic person may not have that much ability to achieve their goals and lack a sense of worth, purpose, or meaning in their life. They may also show signs of sluggishness or insensibility (Fahed & Steffens, 2021). Apathy is also defined as a state of mind in which people believe they lack the necessary skills to react to a situation. It could simply be the effect of not seeing any kind of challenge at all or finding it irrelevant (Fahed & Steffens, 2021). Apathy is a natural reaction to sadness, dejection, and stress that everyone experiences at some point, but apathetic people decide to forget such unpleasant feelings through the strategy of showing no reactions and remaining indifferent (Nall, 2019). This form of common apathy is normally only felt for a short time, but it can sometimes turn into a long-term or even lifetime state, leading to deeper social and psychological problems. Someone who is numb to many difficult life circumstances, such as losing a job, is an extreme kind of apathy.

2.2. Sympathy

Sympathy was used as an explanatory concept in ancient philosophy for a wide range of phenomena based on the observation that the same thing happens to two entities in a larger total without any obvious direct influence. However, its introduction to the English language in the 17th century shifted its meaning to a sense of togetherness between people or, psychologically speaking, the act of sharing others' feelings (Jahoda, 2005). In other words, it means entering into others' feelings so that whatever affects them affects us as well (Aring, 1958). Though sympathy was not originally used to define interpersonal attachment but rather the "coaffectibility" (Schliesser, 2015, p. 9) of many entities—physical, biological, or psychological—it has increasingly been extended to social, moral, and socio-political interactions since the 16th century. The attraction between persons or the correspondence of their feelings is then denoted (Hutcheson, 2006; Shaftesbury, 2001).

Philosophically speaking, David Hume (1902) and Adam Smith (1976) considered sympathy as a bond holding societies together through feeling how and what our companions feel (Jahoda, 2005). Hume (1902) believed that sympathy explains how humans think and feel about each other's feelings or the social activity of exchanging sentiments and ideas based on a universal human nature premise. Its mechanism is based on the likeness and proximity of the self and the other. When one observes another's expressions, one tries to deduce the reasons for them and discovers a certain attachment or passion. The idea of that passion will then be activated in one's own mind. Everyone has a strong sense of their own emotions and psychological conditions. The thought of another person's affections is related to one's own affections through sympathy, allowing one to finally experience the same passion as the other. Smith (1976), though influenced by Hume, regarded sympathy as putting ourselves in others' situations and trying to feel the way they feel (Macfie, 1959). Thus, for Smith, sympathy was the innate desire to see others happy (Jahoda, 2005). According to Smith (1976), the essential method through which compassion works is mentally placing oneself in the other's shoes in order to figure out what it would be like for oneself to be in that circumstance. This can lead to a match between one's own psychological state and that of the other.

2.3. Empathy

The social world humans live in demands way more than only sharing our feelings; they need to understand how others feel, what they think, and infer what they intend to do (Ferrari & Coudé, 2018). To meet this demand and thrive in social interactions, individuals possess two unique capacitates: empathy as the socio-affective understanding of others' emotions (Gallese, 2003) and the Theory of Mind (ToM) as the socio-cognitive understanding of others' mental state (Preckel et al., 2018).

Empathy can be defined as the process of sharing not only feelings and emotions but also the ability to understand what goes on in others' internal states, to react to it, and even to understand one's separateness from the others

(Ferrari & Coudé, 2018). Empathy means finding a way to another person's feeling as if one feels oneself into what is being observed. This "in-feeling", can happen only if one is aware of oneself and one's own experiences because, unlike sympathy, one has to see oneself separate from the observed. In other words, previous feelings and relationships help understand others' feelings and relationships (Aring, 1958). Numerous scholars consider empathy a complex multi-dimensional phenomenon that has emotion recognition, emotion contagion, and emotion priming functions (Decety & Jackson, 2006; Jackson et al., 2006; Singer, 2006; Walter, 2011). Thus, empathy holds a continuum, at one end of which lies mimicry and imitation, called which is a shared capacity of some mammalian species (Tramacere & Ferrari, 2016). Simultaneous imitation triggers a recall of one's own previous feelings related to the perceived expression. The emotion thereby felt is subsequently projected onto the other as their alleged inner state. This process, however, is not limited to observing other individuals; it can also be used to observe objects, such as geometrical forms having anthropomorphic aspects (Breyer, 2020). The other end of the empathy continuum is where lies cognitive empathy or ToM, which is a conscious process of understanding and "mentalizing" others' beliefs and intentions, making inferences about them from their physiological state, and even predicting what actions they are going to take (Keysers & Fadiga, 2008; Preckel et al., 2018; Zaki & Ochsner, 2012).

Emotion contagion or affective empathy occurs when an emotional estate is transmitted from the source to the observer, such as yawning after observing someone else's yawning (Ferrari & Coudé, 2018). This transmission happens because the same neural mechanisms are active when one observes certain sensations and when one directly experiences them themselves (Lockwood, 2016). Neurobiologically speaking, when humans contact biologically similar individuals, a mechanism of action–perception matching is active in their brain, in which neurons produce resonance with that individual's motor and the affective states (Ferrari & Coudé, 2018). Differently put, observing others' behavior involves exactly the same neurons as when the same behavior is executed; these recruited neurons are called

mirror neurons which fire both when an action is experienced and when it is performed by another individual (Ferrari & Coudé, 2018). Therefore, the existence of mirror neurons can well explain why humans are capable of empathizing with others and theorizing what goes on in their minds.

2.4. Emotioncy

When discussing empathy which is an emotional representation, it is critical to underline what provokes emotion firsthand. In fact, it is our sensory experience that awakens our sentiments (Pishghadam et al., 2013, Pishghadam et al., 2021), which in turn leads us to understand others' states of mind and affect (Schurz et al., 2021). More recently, this integration of sense and emotion, as well as how frequently they occur, has been proposed as "emotioncy" by Pishghadam et al. (2013). Pishghadam et al. (2016) defined it as emotions provoked by sensory experiences which can relativize our cognition. Therefore, if emotioncy can have a role in how we understand the world, it is highly likely to affect our understanding of other people's mental and affective states. In expanding the notion of emotioncy, Pishghadam et al. (2013) highlighted that even the frequency of sensory experiences could propel higher levels of emotioncy and bring about more cognitive influences. Pishghadam et al. (2013), Pishghadam, Makiabadi, et al. (2019), and Pishghadam and Shayesteh (2017) proposed that people's emotional states are diverse, owing to their senses. They also claimed that the number of senses involved in a person's task participation affects their emotionality degree. For example, in vocabulary learning and retention, the kind and quantity of senses involved in the task (i.e., hearing, seeing, etc.) have to be taken into account. Hence, Pishghadam (2015) proposed a hierarchical model for various types of emotion, ranging from null, auditory, visual, kinesthetic, inner, and arch.

In particular, a person in the null stage has never heard of, seen, or encountered a thing or a concept. The auditory emotioncy stage is when a person has simply heard about a word or idea. When it gets to the visual emotioncy stage, people have the sensation of hearing and seeing the object. People who have heard about, seen, and touched a real thing have reached the fourth

level of kinesthetic emotioncy. People progress to the next stage, inner emotioncy, after having directly experienced something. Finally, arch emotioncy occurs when people are actively involved in the learning process and have done considerable investigation to gain new information. Avolvement (null emotioncy), exvolvement (auditory, visual, and kinesthetic emotioncies), and involvement (inner and arch emotioncies) are the three categories of

emotioncy. Later, Pishghadam, Ebrahimi, et al. (2019) established the extended model of emotioncy (Figure 1), which includes mastery and metavolvement to describe how someone who reaches this climax has fully mastered the materials and may produce and teach them to others. As a result, metavolvement refers to a person's maximum level of emotionality, as determined by all of his or her senses and feelings.
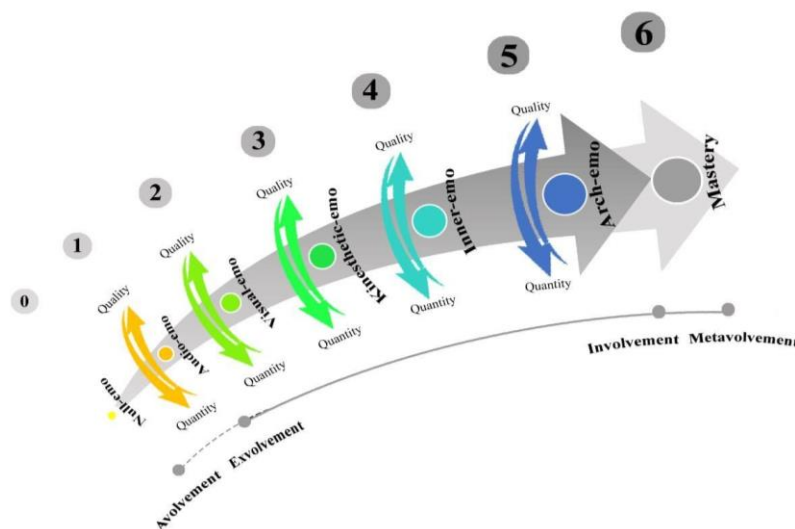

Figure 1
Emotioncy Levels (adapted from "A novel approach to the psychology of Language education" by Pishghadam, Ebrahimi, et al. 2019, p. 219)

2.5. Sense of *Metapathy*

Most people consider empathy different from and superior to sympathy. As a matter of fact, empathy refers to imagining oneself in another person's place and trying to feel as they feel (Ferrari & Coudé, 2018), while sympathy is limited to only recognizing how our fellows feel (Jahoda, 2005). In other words, in sympathizing with others, we give verbal responses to others' sentimental states, but when empathizing, we move one step further and try to understand others' situations from their own perspective (Ferrari & Coudé, 2018). Thus, empathy seems to be a more powerful human capability, which most probably leads to helping others. However, if we go beyond that and try to get past the current feeling of people and react in a way that is beneficial for their own sake and future, we enter a new state, which results from one's real concern about others' future well-being. This new state, namely *metapathy*, was first proposed and

named by Pishghadam (2022). For example, on a cold winter afternoon, a boy comes home from school extremely exhausted, but he has got an important exam the following morning. An empathetic father, understanding how tired his son is, will tell him to go and rest, even implying that it is ok if he studies less. However, a *metapathetic* father, being aware of the essentiality of the upcoming exam and its influence on his son's future, will encourage him to grab a cup of coffee, go to his room, and start studying. The latter father also loves his son, but he has passed the emotional state of empathy which works for the moment and focuses on the consequences of this moment for his son's future (Pishghadam, 2022).

2.6. Emotioncy and Concern

Based on the different levels of emotioncy (Pishghadam, Ebrahimi, et al., 2019), emotional interactions can be categorized and analyzed accordingly. Based on Table 1, the avolvement state, in which individuals are

indifferent and disengaged towards other people, and do not think about them, is the state of apathy; the exvolvement state, in which individuals think a little about how others feel, is the state of disengagement or sympathy; the involvement state, in which individuals are engaged with how their companions feel, is the state of empathy; and the metavolvement or overengagement state, in which individuals go beyond the moment and understand others' current feelings, but try to show a reaction which serves their future success in the long term, is the state of *metapathy* (Pishghadam, 2022).

In other words, *metapathy* means moving beyond empathy, considering an individual's future life, and making hard decisions, which might seem to be against our empathetic tendency but will be significant in the long run. *Metapathy,* like metavolvement aims to create changes in people's lives, but it may not be appreciated since it does not have a short-term effect. People sometimes fail to realize the *metapathetic* behavior of others and thus, get disappointed. Reactions toward *metapathy* differ across cultures and countries. The more open people are to *metapathy* in a society, the more that society may improve (Pishghadam, 2022).

Table 1
Concern Types in Light of the Emotioncy Model (Adopted from "104 Educational Concepts" by Pishghadam, 2022, p. 85)

	Apathy	**Sympathy**	**Empathy**	**Metapathy**
Disengagement	Avolved	---	---	---
Underengagement	---	Exvolved	---	---
Engagement	---	---	Involved	---
Overengagement	---	---	---	Metavolved

The degree of people's involvement in social relationships can greatly differ. As can be seen in Figure 2, when people are avolved and unconcerned about each other (i.e., at the bottom of the pyramid), they are in a state of apathy or indifference towards each other's emotional experiences. If there exists a limited level of concern, then individuals are exvolved in their relationship; therefore, in cases of emotional turmoil, a reaction of sympathy or a superficial understanding of the other's feeling

suffices. However, as we go upward in the pyramid, the degree of involvement in human relationships grows, and a more genuine empathetic understanding of other people's emotions is formed. Finally, on top of the pyramid, the highest level of involvement exists in relationships, such as parent-child or teacher-student, in which one party is so concerned about the other's future that a *metapathic* reaction is chosen since it promises a brighter future for the individual.
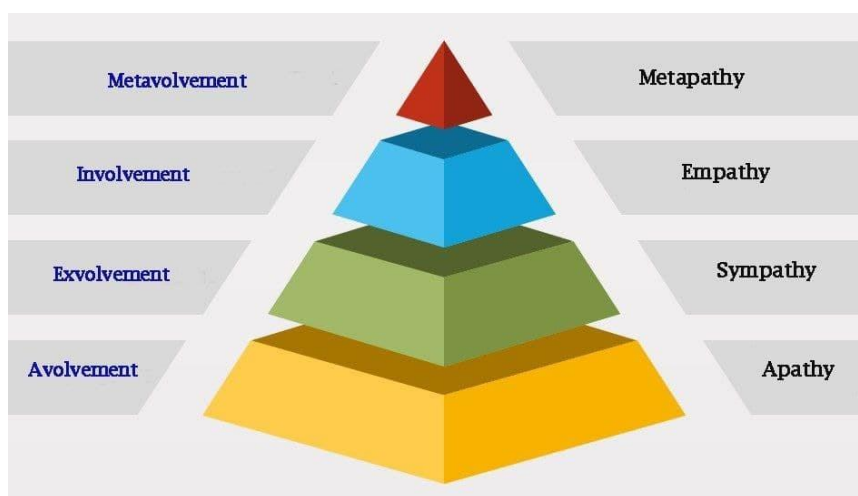

Figure 2
Concern Types

It seems that today's society needs people with a more powerful sense of *metapathy*, since it enables them to recognize other people's problems. Empathy by itself does not suffice since it only enables us to help each other and change one another's feeling momentary without considering each other's future affective state. Some people are empathetic; they understand others' feelings and can change their mood; however, they fail to perceive and conceive emotions from a deeper and wider perspective. Imagine a president who has made a mistake. Empathy encourages us to forgive him, but *metapathy* prevents us from doing so that such mistakes do not get normalized (Pishghadam, 2022).

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The participants of this study comprised 716 Iranian high school students who were requested to participate in this study based on opportunistic sampling. They were males (N = 390) and females (N = 326) (54.6% and 45.4 %, respectively) aged 15 to 18 (M = 16.42, SD = .94) with Persian as their mother tongue. The sample was collected from students studying in the second (50.6%), third (29.6%), and fourth (19.8%) grades of high school with different scores in their English language course (M = 16.02, SD = 4.01). The participants' high school majors included humanities (37.3%), sciences (40.4%), mathematics (7.4%), and other fields (13.5%). With regards to participants' socioeconomic status, they were from low (N = 490), middle (N = 181), and high (N = 45) social classes. Prior to initiating the study, the participants' written informed consent was obtained after assuring them of the confidentiality of their responses.

3.2. Instruments

For the purpose of this study, the TCS scale was developed, validated, and used to collect Iranian high school students' perceptions of their teacher's concern (see Appendix I for the Persian version and Appendix II for the English version of the scale). This scale consists of 24 items on a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree". It has four subconstructs, including apathy (6 items), sympathy (6 items), empathy (6 items), and the proposed concept of metapathy (6 items).

3.3. Procedure

To measure students' perceptions of their teacher's concern, the TCS scale was developed in the form of 24 Likert scale items. First, to assure clarity and discover potential problems, the scale was reviewed by two experts in the field and piloted with 20 participants similar to the sample participants. Second, the scale was distributed among 716 Iranian high school students from various regions of Iran through Google Forms. The data collection for this study started in January 2022 and finished in April 2022.

To analyze the data, SPSS (Version 22) and AMOS (Version 18) software were used. As for the first objective of the study, the construct validity of the TCS scale was verified using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The internal consistency of the scale and its sub-constructs were measured by Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficients. Furthermore, a series of single-factor repeated-measures ANOVA was used to investigate the difference in the type of teachers' concern (i.e., apathy, sympathy, empathy, and metapathy) for students across low, mid, and high socioeconomic status levels.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, for the underlying subconstructs of the TCS scale (i.e., apathy, sympathy, empathy, and metapathy) can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for the Subconstructs of the TCS Scale

Subconstruct	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Apathy	6.00	30.00	12.02	6.26
Sympathy	6.00	30.00	21.88	6.30
Empathy	6.00	30.00	22.15	6.62
Metapathy	6.00	30.00	23.02	6.65

As for the normality of the data, Table 3 showed that the Skewness and Kurtosis estimates were within the range of -2 and +2, indicating the normality of the distribution.

Table 3
Normality Test for the TCS Scale and its Subconstructs

Variable	Skewness	Kurtosis
TCS	-.51	.01
Apathy	1.06	.30
Sympathy	-.56	-.53
Empathy	-.70	-.45
Metapathy	-.89	.03

4.2. Validation of the TCS Scale

In order to substantiate the construct validity of the scale, CFA was used (Figure 3). Prior to the CFA, Harman's single factor test was conducted. The result indicated that the first factor accounted for 48.1% of the variance, confirming the construct's multidimensionality. The scale includes four subconstructs of apathy, sympathy, empathy, and metapathy. Goodness-of-fit indices are reported in Table 4.
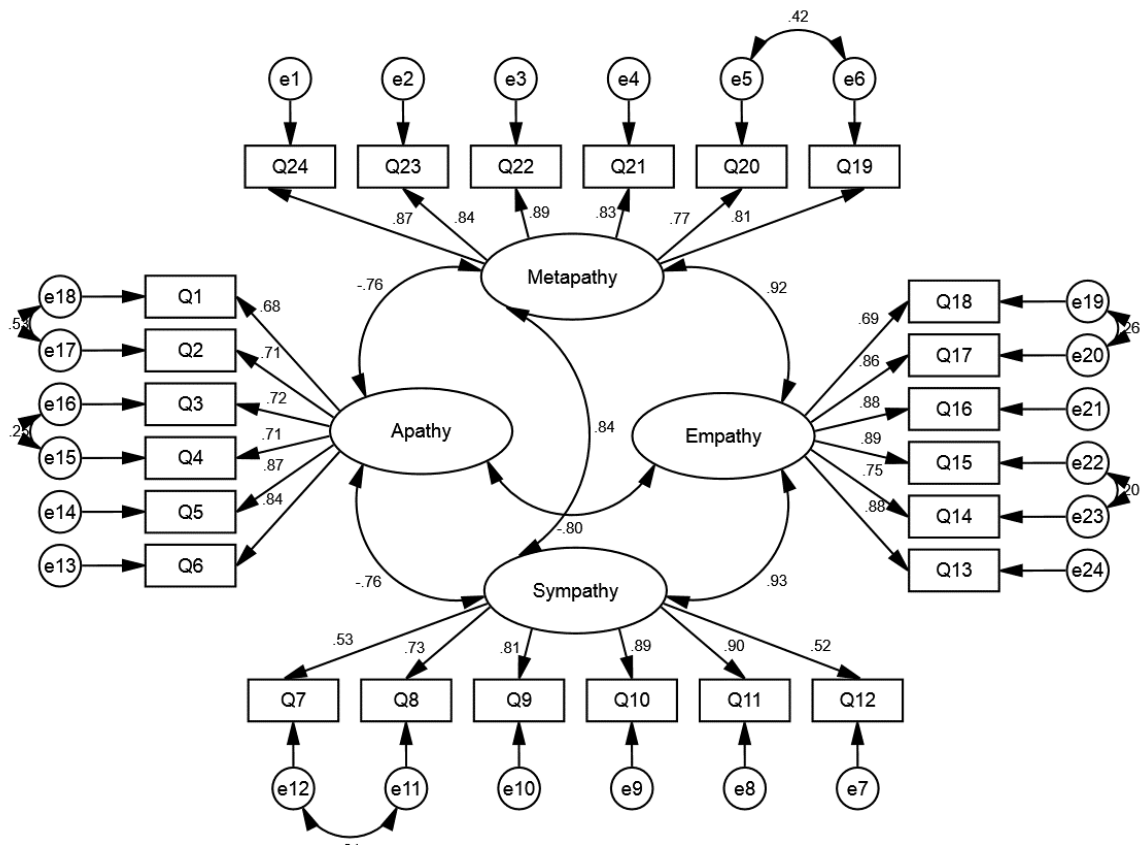

Figure 3
Measurement Model for the TCS Scale

Table 4 shows the relative chi-square, which equals the chi-square index divided by the degrees of freedom (χ^2/df), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Squared Error (SRMR). In the present study, values for χ^2/ df were within the acceptable limit of 5 or less (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010), TLI and CFI were over .90, and RMSEA and SRMR were equal to or less than .08 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993); thus, the model fitted the data adequately.

Table 4
Goodness of Fit Indices for the CFA Model

Model	χ^2/df	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
TCS	3.74	240	.95	.94	.06	.03

4.3. Reliability of the TCS Scale

The overall reliability of the TCS scale, along with its underlying subconstructs, can be seen in Table 5. Since the estimates are all above .80, they are considered acceptable.

Table 5
Reliability Estimates for the Teacher Concern for Students Questionnaire and its Subconstructs

	N	Cronbach's Alpha
TCS	24	.90
Apathy	6	.86
Sympathy	6	.80
Empathy	6	.87
Metapathy	6	.87

4.4. Repeated Measures ANOVA

In order to check the possible differences between the degree of apathy, sympathy, empathy, and metapathy across teachers teaching in the low, mid, and high socioeconomic groups, a series of single-factor repeated-measures ANOVA was used.

4.4.1. Teachers Teaching in the Low Socioeconomic Group

The F test for the low group teachers $[F (3, 540) = 142.47, p =. 001, \eta p^2 = 0.44]$ revealed that there are significant differences between the degree of apathy, sympathy, empathy, and metapathy. To identify the differences between the four subconstructs, the Bonferroni's pairwise comparison test was performed. The results showed that the mean estimate for apathy (M = 12.01) was significantly smaller than that of sympathy (M = 21.88, p < .01), empathy (M = 22.14, p < .01), and metapathy (M = 23.02, p < .01). The mean estimate for methapathy was significantly larger than that of apathy (p < .01), sympathy (p < .01), and empathy (p < .01). The mean estimate for sympathy was significantly larger than that of apathy (p < .01) and smaller than that of metapathy (p < .01). The mean estimate for empathy was significantly larger than that of apathy (p < .01) and smaller than that of metapathy (p < .01). In sum, it could be concluded that teachers in the low socioeconomic group showed a significantly higher level of metapathy, compared to empathy/sympathy and apathy, in descending order.

> **Apathy < Sympathy/Empathy < Metapathy**

4.4.2. Teachers Teaching in the Mid Socioeconomic Group

The F test for the mid group teachers $[F (3, 2145) = 504.61, p =. 001, \eta p^2 = 0.41]$ revealed that there are significant differences between the degree of apathy, sympathy, empathy, and metapathy. The pairwise comparison results showed that the mean estimate for apathy (M = 11.41) was significantly smaller than that of sympathy (M = 22.02, p < .01), empathy (M = 21.97, p < .01), and metapathy (M = 23.03, p < .01). The mean estimate for methapathy was significantly larger than that of apathy (p < .01), sympathy (p < .01), and empathy (p < .01). The mean estimate for sympathy was significantly larger than that of apathy (p < .01) and smaller than that of metapathy (p < .01). The mean estimate for empathy was significantly larger than that of apathy (p < .01) and smaller than that of metapathy (p < .01). In sum, it could be concluded that mid group teachers, similar to their low group counterparts, showed a significantly higher level of metapathy, compared to empathy/sympathy and apathy, in descending order.

> **Apathy < Sympathy/Empathy < Metapathy**

4.4.3. Teachers Teaching in the High Socioeconomic Group

The F test for the high group teachers[F (3, 132) = 61.59, p =. 001, ηp^2 = 0.58] revealed that there are significant differences between the degree of apathy, sympathy, empathy, and metapathy. The pairwise comparison results showed that the mean estimate for apathy (M = 10.77) was significantly smaller than that of sympathy (M = 23.02, p < .01), empathy (M = 23.55, p < .01), and metapathy (M = 24.13, p < .01). In sum, it could be concluded that high group teachers showed the same level of metapathy as empathy and sympathy, yet at a higher level in comparison with apathy.

Apathy < Sympathy/Empathy/Metapathy

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5. Discussion

This study sought to introduce the concept of metapathy as the highest level of concern about others and their future well-being. In this light, attempts were made to develop and validate the TCS scale, including the subconstructs of apathy, sympathy, empathy, and metapathy. As an additional aim, this study investigated the difference in teachers' concern for students across low, mid, and high socioeconomic groups.

With respect to the first objective of the study, the TCS scale was developed and its construct validity was confirmed with four subconstructs and 24 items. As for the second objective of the study, we found out that teachers in low and mid socioeconomic groups tend to metapathize with their students rather than just sympathize or even empathize. It is right to say that if we consider apathy as *introspection* (see inside oneself) and sympathy/empathy as *outrespection* (see outside oneself), metapathy is a kind of *anterospection* based on which individuals see ahead of themselves. Since metapathy represents concern about others' future well-being, it seems that students' future success is of utmost importance to teachers in lower socioeconomic classes of society. The main goal of teachers in these social classes is to make the future of their students and help them move up their social class and thrive in their future life (both educationally and professionally). More importantly, as the present condition of low and mid classes of society may not be quite satisfying for them, they are more engaged in futuristic thinking, which leads to their high sense of metapathy. Therefore, they constantly metapathize with their students by being hard on them, advising them to study hard, and not being sensitive to their momentary feelings. Another justification for the high level of metapathy, primarily in the low group, could be students' unwillingness to study. Students very often express emotional excuses for not studying or compensating for their inadequate education efforts. As a result, teachers are forced to invariably pinpoint their future life and its importance to encourage them and give them enough incentive to study.

On the other hand, teachers in the high socioeconomic group showed the same level of metapathy as empathy and sympathy, implying that they do not differentiate between the three. In other words, teachers' concern about their students' future is not serious enough to engage them in metapathy; therefore, in most cases, they just share their students' sentiments and show concern about their present-time problems, which may turn them into more considerate and easygoing teachers, compared to their counterparts in lower social classes. In addition, it seems that living a good future life is not as far-fetched for high social classes as it is for middle and low classes. Drawing upon the notion of capital (Bourdieu, 1986), it can be claimed that since higher classes of society possess higher economic and social capital, they can more easily achieve a bright future.

The findings of this study, in the first place, verify that metapathy exists and is perceived by students. It also clarifies that teachers' levels and types of concern about their students differ across social classes since students' needs are class-specific. Therefore, teachers need to know what to be concerned about in different socioeconomic classes so as to fulfill their students' needs. It is recommended that future studies go deep into the relationship between metapathy and variables, such as different forms of capital, and highlight what factors can be associated with people's sense of metapathy.

At the end, it is also worth noting that sometimes you are filled with empathy, you try to understand others' feelings and help them, and even further, you might also have *metapathy* and try to change others' emotional states with a more futuristic perspective.

However, the other person might reject your feeling of *metapathy*, because they like you to empathize with them. Thus, a mismatch is created. For instance, a *metapathetic* teacher pays attention to their students' future job opportunities, so they have to make decisions, which at that moment appear to be against their empathetic will, but in the long term, will improve students' lives. However, if students expect their teacher to empathize with them while the teacher is being *metapathetic*, both parties might feel a kind of misunderstanding, and their expectations might not be met. Therefore, there is a need for an emotional expectations analysis. Both teachers and students should have a clear understanding of each other's expectations; otherwise, their communication will probably fail. Hence, teachers are expected to explain their sense of *metapathy* to their students and encourage openness towards *metapathy* in educational settings (Pishghadam, 2022).

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Appendix I
The Persian Version of the TCS Scale

کاملا مخالفم	مخالفم	نمی دانم	موافقم	کاملا موافقم	پاسخ خود را طبق گزینه های مقابل انتخاب نمایید.
					۱. او نسبت به ما بی تفاوت است.
					۲. به ما اهمیت نمی دهد.
					۳. در مورد آینده ما صحبت نمی کند.
					۴. فقط تدریس می کند و به مسائل دیگر زندگی نمی پردازد.
					۵. احساسات ما را نادیده می گیرد.
					۶ مشکلاتمان برایش مهم نیست.
					۷. او با ما همزبانی می کند.
					۸ دلش برای ما می سوزد.
					۹. در مورد مشکلاتمان صحبت می کند.
					۱۰. با ما همدردی می کند.
					۱۱. به احساساتمان توجه می کند.
					۱۲. تنها به تدریسش اهمیت نمی دهد.
					۱۳. با ما همدلی می کند.
					۱۴. به ما کمک می کند در دروس موفق شویم.
					۱۵. ما را درک می کند.
					۱۶. در مشکلات ما را همراهی می کند.
					۱۷. تلاش می کند ناراحتی ما برطرف شود.
					۱۸. احساسات ما بیشتر از تدریسش اهمیت دارد.
					۱۹. به سرنوشت ما فکر می کند.
					۲۰. در مورد آینده ما نگران است.
					۲۱. تلاش می کند در آینده موفق شویم.
					۲۲. در تصمیم گیری های آینده ساز ما را راهنمایی می کند.
					۲۳. صلاح ما را می داند.
					۲۴ُ. افزون بر احساسات لحظه ای، به حال خوب ما در آینده هم توجه می کند.

Apathy

او نسبت به ما بی تفاوت است.

به ما اهمیت نمی دهد.

در مورد آینده ما صحبت نمی کند.

فقط تدریس می کند و به مسائل دیگر زندگی نمی پردازد.

احساسات ما را نادیده می گیرد.

مشکلاتمان برایش مهم نیست.

Sympathy

او با ما همزبانی می کند.

دلش برای ما می سوزد.

در مورد مشکلاتمان صحبت می کند.

	با ما همدردی می کند.
	به احساساتمان توجه می کند.
	تنها به تدریسش اهمیت نمی دهد.
Empathy	
	با ما همدلی می کند.
	به ما کمک می کند در دروس موفق شویم.
	ما را درک می کند.
	در مشکلات ما را همراهی می کند.
	تلاش می کند ناراحتی ما برطرف شود.
	احساسات ما بیشتر از تدریسش اهمیت دارد.
Metapathy	
	به سرنوشت ما فکر می کند.
	در مورد آینده ما نگران است.
	تلاش می کند در آینده موفق شویم.
	در تصمیم گیری های آینده ساز ما را راهنمایی می کند.
	صلاح ما را می داند.
	افزون بر احساسات لحظه ای، به حال خوب ما در آینده هم توجه می کند

Appendix II
The English Version of the TCS Scale

How concerned are your teachers about you?					
Choose your answer according to the following options.	**Strongly disagree**	**Disagree**	**I don't know**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
1. S/he is indifferent to us.					
2. S/he does not care about us.					
3. S/he does not talk about our future.					
4. S/he only teaches and does not talk about other life issues.					
5. S/he ignores our feelings.					
6. S/he does not care about our problems.					
7. S/he shares our feelings.					
8. S/he sympathizes with us.					
9. S/he talks about our problems.					
10. S/he puts himself/herself in our shoes.					
11. S/he cares about our feelings.					
12. S/he does not only care about her teaching.					
13. S/he empathizes with us.					
14. S/he helps us succeed in lessons.					
15. S/he understands us.					
16. S/he is there for us in trouble.					
17. S/he tries to relieve our discomfort.					
18. S/he pays more attention to our feelings than his/her teaching.					
19. S/he thinks about our future.					

20. S/he is worried about our future.					
21. S/he tries to make us successful in the future.					
22. S/he guides us in future decisions.					
23. S/he knows what's good for us.					
24. Besides our momentary feelings, s/he pays attention to our well-being in the future.					

Apathy
S/he is indifferent to us.
S/he does not care about us.
S/he does not talk about our future.
S/he only teaches and does not deal with other matters of life.
S/he ignores our feelings.
S/he does not care about our problems.

Sympathy
S/he speaks to us.
S/he sympathizes with us.
S/he talks about our problems.
Our problems are his/her problems.
S/he cares about our feelings.
S/he does not care only about her teaching.

Empathy
S/he empathizes with us.
S/he helps us succeed in lessons.
S/he understands us.
S/he accompanies us in trouble.
S/he tries to relieve our discomfort.
Our feelings are more important than teaching.

Metapathy
S/he thinks about our destiny.
S/he is worried about our future.
S/he tries to make us successful in the future.
S/he guides us in future decisions.
S/he wants the good for us.
Besides our immediate feelings, s/he pays attention to our well-being in the future.