INTEGRATION OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN TEACHING PRACTICE AMONG UNIVERSITY TEACHERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Purpose - Emotional intelligence abilities of university teachers are more likely to establish suitable emotional teaching and learning environments through their teaching practice, thus promoting learning motivation and engagement among students. Despite the emphasis on the importance of teachers' emotional intelligence abilities in teaching, it continues to be under-acknowledged and underdeveloped. This is evidenced in a few studies reported on the relationship between emotional intelligence and teaching practice particularly in higher education. Guided by the Four-Branch Emotional Intelligence Ability Model, this study aimed to explore the integration of emotional intelligence in teaching practice among university teachers in higher education.

Methodology - A qualitative design of a descriptive case study was applied on 10 university teachers recruited through purposeful sampling. The data gathered from semi-structured interviews conducted with the university teachers was analyzed through five phases of analysis namely; raw categorization of individual interviewees, group categorization of interviewees, raw key points, refined key points and themes. The credibility and trustworthiness of the data were achieved through prolonged engagement, member check, and interrater reliability.

Findings - Seven themes namely implementation of structured teaching flow, empathetic pedagogical approach, fostering student learning engagement, consideration of students' emotions, reflection of university teachers' characteristics, mutual teaching and learning sessions and meaningful learning sessions were generated.

Significance - The study demonstrated the importance of developing emotional intelligence abilities among university teachers as these abilities directly influence teaching and learning processes. In fact, these abilities are subconsciously embedded and demonstrated through teaching practice. Thus training on emotional intelligence needs to be developed by including it as one of the competencies required for university teachers.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, teaching practice, university teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional Intelligence in Teaching and Learning

Emotional intelligence in teaching and learning processes has been recognized as one of the emerging trends in higher education. Of utmost importance is the way emotional intelligence is integrated with teachers' personalized characteristics which subsequently influence their teaching practice. Hargreaves (2001) in his writing on emotional geographies and teaching emphasized the fact that teaching and learning are concerned with knowledge, cognition, and emotional practices. The complementary aspect of emotional practices includes an embedded practice that produces an expected or unexpected emotional alteration in the inner and outer streams of experience of a person. Furthermore, it radiates through a person's body and streams

of experience, giving emotional culmination to thoughts, feelings, and actions (Denzin, 1984, as cited in Hargreaves, 2001, p. 89). The context of the practices illuminates both conscious and subconscious emotional internalization and implementation that may be embedded during teaching and learning experiences. Similarly, (Silver, 1999, as cited in Armour, 2012) stressed the essential role of emotions in the learning process and stated that failing to involve emotional intelligence in teaching is equivalent to failing students. Meanwhile, Mortiboys (2005) reiterated two main goals in developing and using emotional intelligence in a learning setting; the first being to recognize and respond to teachers' and students' feelings and the second goal is to encourage students' emotional state to one that is conducive to learning.

As much as students benefit from the inclusion of emotional intelligence in their learning experiences, teachers remain as fundamental essence of such experiences. The need for teachers to possess or acquire the abilities of emotional intelligence is crucial to maximizing learning experiences. According to Powell and Kusuma-Powell (2013), the need is substantiated by the notion that emotionally intelligent teachers are more capable of fostering students' learning desires, minimizing the gap in teacher-student relationships, promoting the accuracy of emotional understanding, recognizing the merge of cognition and emotion in learning processes and creating a learning environment that is physically and psychologically safe. As teachers hold the position to create a safe and conducive learning environment, it leads to students feeling comfortable to express their ideas and opinions (Roth et al., 2019; Sekreter, 2019). Syiem (2012) shared a similar perception that emotional intelligence assists teachers to make better learning and teaching plans and decisions with certainty and assurance. Furthermore, he stated that emotionally intelligent teachers would have higher opportunities in acknowledging and understanding students' emotions and feelings.

Students' learning experience in higher education are supported by two main elements; teachers' expertise in the subject matter and their knowledge of learning and teaching methods (Mortiboys, 2005). The elements can be translated into the depth of knowledge and the methods of structuring the knowledge to be presented, the use of materials to aid deliveries and related pedagogical approaches. Both are thought to sufficiently contribute to students' learning experiences. As such, the emotional component, especially among university teachers, has yet to be acknowledged as part of the experiences. Furthermore, very

few studies focused specifically on studying teachers' emotional competence (Botey et al., 2020). However, studies of teachers' emotional intelligence have been conducted, ranging from identifying the link between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy beliefs (Sarkhosh & Rezaee, 2014; Valente et al., 2020), the level of emotional intelligence (Hans, et al., 2013), teaching effectiveness (Ramana, 2013), managing disruptive behaviours (Jordan & Le Metais, 2000; Kelley, 2018), and workplace productivity (Noriah et al., 2006). The list of studied variables demonstrates extensive possibilities that confirm the role of emotional intelligence in teaching and learning processes. However, the focus on the actual emulation of emotional intelligence in teaching practice is noticeably lacking. Sutton and Wheatley (2003, p. 328) highlighted the lack of recognition, stating that researchers know surprisingly little about the role of emotions in learning to teach, how teachers' emotional experiences relate to their teaching practice and how little is known about the way teachers regulate their emotions.

The past decade has seen a growing interest in emotional intelligence and teaching in higher education. Mortiboys (2005) proposed the idea of teaching with emotional intelligence that suggested subject matter expertise, pedagogical competence, and emotional intelligence to be integrated as elements of learning experiences. According to Mortiboys (2005), an excellent teacher can be defined as integrating teaching and learning methods, subject expertise, and emotional intelligence. The integration is demonstrated in the following figure.

Figure 1

Teaching and Learning Methods, Subject Expertise and Emotional Intelligence
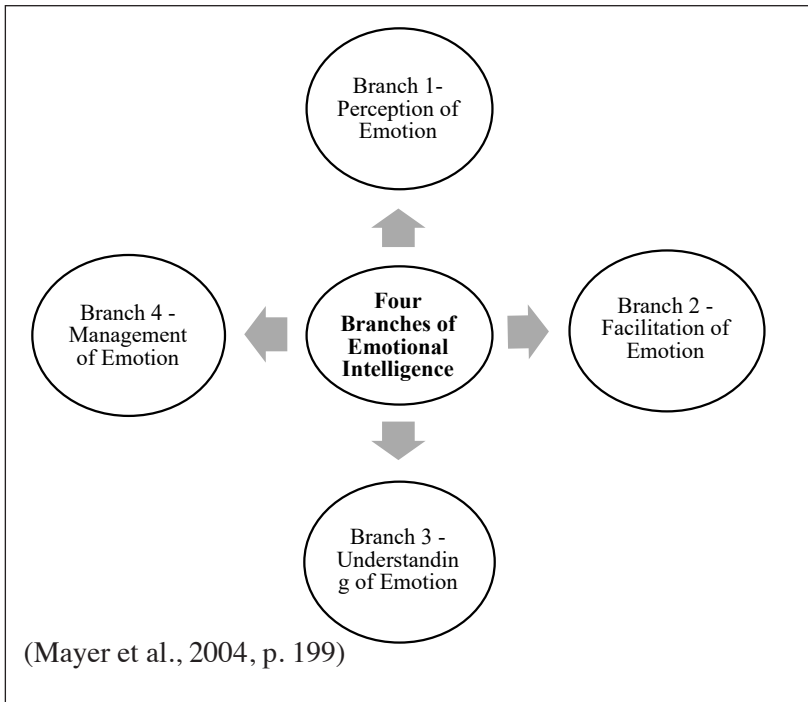

(Mortiboys, 2005, p.3)
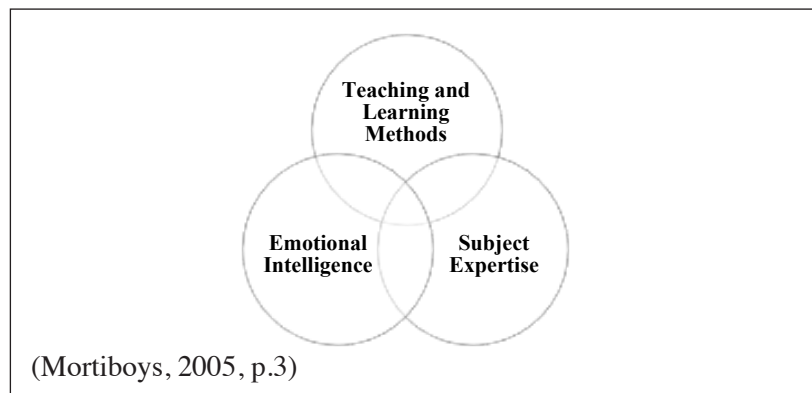
Four Branch Emotional Intelligence Ability Model

Mayer et al. (2004) divided emotional intelligence abilities into four branches, namely perception, facilitation, understanding, and management of emotion. The branches are shown in the following figure.

Figure 2

Four Branches of Emotional Intelligence

(Mayer et al., 2004, p. 199)

Each branch describes a specific ability expected of emotional intelligence;

Branch 1 – Perception of emotion involves the ability to recognize emotion in other's facial and postural expressions.
Branch 2 – Facilitation of emotion demonstrates the ability of emotion to assist thinking.
Branch 3 – Understanding of emotion reflects the ability to analyze emotions, appreciate the probable trends over time, and understand their outcome.

Branch 4 – Management of emotion revolves around the rest of an
           individual's personality.

The branches are perceived sequentially as they all represent
the "degree to which the ability is integrated within the rest of
an individual's overall personality" (Mayer et al., 2004, p.199).
Furthermore, the skills involved in each of the ability can potentially
be developed from basic to more advanced levels.

In the present study, emotional intelligence abilities are seen as vital
elements in teaching practice, thus in need of further exploration.
Practices integrated with emotional intelligence may be actualized
through emotionally intelligent university teachers who are thought to
consistently and continuously perceive, use, understand and manage
emotions that are of their own and their students, in planning lessons,
delivering lessons, communicating in or outside of teaching/learning
settings and providing feedback. Teachers with abilities to recognize
and understand emotions are more likely to identify discrepancies
between what students feel and their outward behaviour, thus know
when and how to provide support accordingly (Valente et al., 2020).
The way emotions are integrated through teaching practice may hold
promise for effective teaching and maximizing students' learning.
The exploration is also deemed needful as the awareness of emotional
intelligence as an integral part in the teaching and learning processes
may not be realized (Ezzi, 2019) by university teachers.

Emotional Intelligence and Teaching Practice

Emotional intelligence integrated into teaching practice remains
ambiguous with few works of literature indirectly relating the
application of both. According to Sutton and Wheatley (2003, p. 332),
the complexity of the emotional process foreshadows how teachers'
emotions are manifested in teaching. The fundamental element
in achieving the integration is the recognition of the emotional
dimension as operating levelly with cognition and motivation. Sutton
and Wheatley (2003) further elaborated that emotions may influence
teachers' thinking, motivation, and physical and physiological
behavioural reactions in a way that is realized by students.

Trigwell (2012) proposed that teachers' approaches to teaching are
associated with their conceptions of teaching. Teachers who perceive
teaching as a means to transmit knowledge concentrate more on the
content to be taught and what they do in teaching. They tend to focus

on organizing, structuring, and presenting the content to aid students' understanding. On the other hand, teachers who conceive the perception of a student-focused approach see teaching as facilitating student learning and support the knowledge-construction processes. These teachers attempt to develop students' existing conceptions and encourage the students to construct their own knowledge and understanding and then focus on what students do concerning these efforts (Trigwell, 2012). It is observed that the latter approach is particularly relevant in indicating higher emotional abilities.

In a study on the implementation of actively promoting positive student emotions with the aim of increasing students' course satisfaction in an online science course involving human nutrition, Urbi Ghosh (2014) described teaching practice that helped to decrease students' anxiety and frustration such as;

i.   providing opportunities for students to express their concerns and seek feedback from peer support during a project;
ii.   frequent and regular reassurance and positive communication between teachers and students;
iii. preparing detailed online tutorials;
iv.   providing online checklists;
v.   decreasing negative emotions

These practices allowed teachers to respond to the unique needs of each group of students to improve clarity of direction, communication, course satisfaction, and overall student achievement (Urbi Ghosh, 2014). Turner and Curran (2006, as cited in Armour, 2012) concurred that negative emotional states such as stress caused by heavy workloads, negative feedback, and negative evaluations during presentations can provide a negative effect on student engagement and achievement.

Other significant practices integrated with emotional intelligence include positive attitudes such as using meaningful verbal praise to continuously encourage students' participation in the learning process (Borich, 2000, p.15 as cited in Wang & Guo, 2013), adopting a personal touch through simply calling students by their first names (McDowell & Westman, 2005, as cited in Wang & Guo, 2013), projecting a sense of humor, having a willingness to admit mistakes even to students, forgiving, showing respect and having a sense of belonging. In addition, Cherwin (2011) suggested that approaches to utilize emotional intelligence in the classroom include creating an

environment of respect between the teacher and learner, managing one's own emotions as teachers, setting an example of being honest and validating students' emotions.

Teaching activates and expresses the feelings and actions of teachers and those they influence, specifically students. Emotional abilities and skills are advantageous elements that most likely ensure that appropriate practices in teaching are carried out. This study, therefore, aimed to explore the integration of emotional intelligence with teaching practice among university teachers in higher education.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Sampling Method

A total of 10 university teachers (four males and six females) across different programmes such as Human Biology, Psychology, Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Pharmacy, Nursing, Dietetics with Nutrition, Foundation in Science, and Pathology were recruited through purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling which is based on the "assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (Merriam, 2009, p. 77) included the following inclusion criteria; university teachers from higher learning institutions; who have had teaching experiences in large groups such as lectures and small teaching groups such as problem based learning or tutorials for at least three years to establish familiarity and consistency in teaching practice and obtained a median score within 8–10, based on a teaching effectiveness rating on a scale of 1 (least effective) to 10 (most effective) for five semesters as rated by students in the Faculty of Evaluation.

Table 1

Inclusion Criteria of University Teachers

No.	Participant	Gender	Years of teaching at university	Median
1	Participant 1	Male	10	9.08
2	Participant 2	Male	20	9.33

(continued)

No.	Participant	Gender	Years of teaching at university	Median
3	Participant 3	Female	5	9.33
4	Participant 4	Female	10	8.96
5	Participant 5	Female	10	8.86
6	Participant 6	Male	10	9.16
7	Participant 7	Male	15	9.50
8	Participant 8	Female	17	9.04
9	Participant 9	Female	4	8.99
10	Participant 10	Female	4	9.20

Research Design

A qualitative design of a descriptive case study with a semi-structured interview was adopted. A case study is a research approach which involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system (setting or context) (Creswell, 2007, p. 73). It is defined based on twofold definitions of scope and features. The approach facilitates the exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 544). It is the preferred method in situations where research questions are 'how' and 'why' in nature; an in-depth investigation is required; there is a lack of control towards intended behavioural events and the focus of the study is a contemporary phenomenon (Yin, 2014). This study established a question on how emotional intelligence integrated with teaching practice in a specific higher learning institution. Furthermore, emotional intelligence and teaching practice were independent of the researcher's control and this study also reflected the current context of practice in higher education.

Semi-structured interviews with the participants were conducted, guided by an interview protocol. The interview protocol was constructed based on the 'Interview Protocol Refinement Framework' (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). The framework comprised a four-phase process for systematically developing and refining an interview protocol (Appendix). The phases comprised;

> Phase 1: Ensuring interview questions were aligned with research questions;
> Phase 2: Constructing an inquiry-based conversation;
> Phase 3: Gathering feedback on interview protocols;

Phase 4: Piloting the interview protocol (Castillo-Montoya, 2016, p. 812)

Data Analysis

According to Yin (2014, p.126), "data analysis in the context of a case study consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, testing, or otherwise recombining evidence to draw empirically-based conclusions". In this study, the obtained data was analyzed thematically through five phases of analysis, guided by the question; *"What is the teaching practice integrated with emotional intelligence that affect students' learning experience in higher education?"*

The first phase involved the analysis of individual participant's transcription where keywords relevant to the question were identified and extracted, for example, *'respect students' input'*, *'appreciate student engagement'* and others.

In the second phase of analysis, keywords relevant to the question from the transcriptions of participant number one to number 10 were collated and compared. The consistent mentioning of keywords from the collation were extracted. For instance, keywords such as, *'respect students'* and *'student engagement'* were highlighted as different participants indicated similar words across the collation.

The third phase focused on constructing a specific code for the identified keywords. In this process, a code such as *'teaching and learning'* was created based on the keywords of *'respect students'* and *'student engagement'*.

In the fourth phase of analysis, potential themes such as *'mutual teaching and learning'* were generated based on the specific code that was created.

In the final phase of analysis, themes such as *'mutual teaching and learning sessions'* were finalized.

Credibility and Trustworthiness

The credibility and trustworthiness of generated themes were accomplished throughout the process of collecting and analyzing the data through several methods that included prolonged engagement in a field and member check (Klopper, 2008).

Prolonged Engagement

Credibility and trustworthiness can also be enhanced through prolonged engagement in a field for a researcher to familiarize him/herself with an explored phenomenon. In this study, the data collection took four months, between October 2017 and January 2018 to complete. During the period, two semi-structured interviews were conducted with each university teacher, contributing to a total of 20 interviews conducted. The prolonged engagement in the field enabled the researcher to enhance familiarity with the focus of the study. It helped in assessing various perspectives regarding the role of emotions and teaching practice which were integrated with emotional intelligence.

Member Check

During the member checking session, the researcher returned to the participants to check whether the shared experiences had been accurately described and interpreted. This was to alleviate possible miscommunication and inaccuracies and to help obtain additional useful feedback (Ary et al., 2006). In the member checking process for this study, the summary of the findings which consisted of research questions, themes, subthemes, and samples of excerpts, were sent to the participants for checking and feedback. As there was no feedback or additional information received from the participants; hence the summary of the findings was taken as capturing the shared views on the roles of emotions and experiences of teaching practice reflecting emotional intelligence.

RESULTS

The exploration of the integration of emotional intelligence with teaching practice among university teachers at higher learning institutions led to the emergence of seven themes.

Figure 3

Themes of Teaching Practice Integrated with Emotional Intelligence
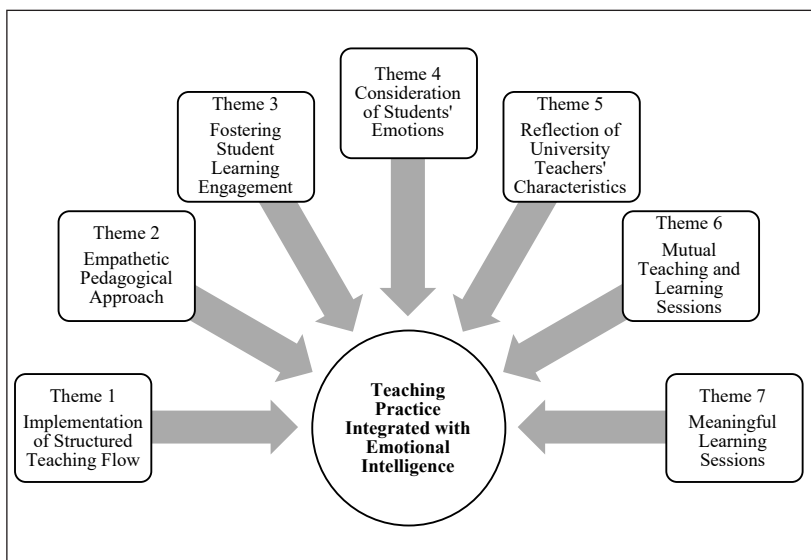
Theme 1 – Implementation of Structured Teaching Flow

The first theme concentrated on the way teaching flow is implemented to facilitate students' thinking. For instance, there was a plan to promote students' thinking earlier in the planning phase before teaching sessions took place in order to maximize the chances of student learning;

> *In the beginning of the lecture I ask them a couple of questions to gauge where they are and I can pitch my knowledge but during planning phase, what am I supposed to deliver, what level the students are and to plan …. I sometimes [try to understand students'] level of understanding to feel that they are involved. (Wisteria Purple: L135-L138)*

The practice flow was elaborated in the first half followed by the second half of the teaching session. The first half was focused on promoting students' thoughts and the second half was more into details and practice;

> *(The) first half of the session should be understandable even for below average students so I started with the very basic for the first half of the session, I will try to make sure that all of them (students) get interested in finding out more. During the second half, then I will add details and make it more difficult or more practical or more applicable so that each student can find something when I deliver the lessons to them. (Wisteria Purple: L113-L118)*

Likewise, the practice of explaining the content from a basic level and only then move up to an advanced level to facilitate students' thinking during teaching and learning sessions was described as follows,

> *I would actually start from the very basic steps, so that they can understand the basic ones, then go to the intermediate level, and then go to the advanced level so on and so forth, they will see the progress because when they see the progress, they will be very willing to learn (Mousy Indigo: L58-L61)*

Theme 2 – Empathetic Pedagogical Approach

Theme two highlighted the ability to facilitate students' thoughts which was defined through the inclusion of an empathic element in teaching approaches. Teaching practice on understanding aspects from students' perspectives is generally related. For example, being empathic was described in terms of feeling for the students;

> *I try to feel for the students but another fact also the respect comes in, not judgemental also will be more appropriate (White Oak: L73-L75)*

Putting oneself in the students' shoes at various stages of teaching and learning sessions was mentioned in terms of looking at things from students' point of view during preparation for class, in particular teaching materials. The trait of emotional intelligence was reflected by having empathy for the students. Moreover, teachers even placed themselves in the shoes of high achieving and underachieving students to optimize the effectiveness of teaching and learning sessions;

> *I (should) be able to teach from students' point of view, you know rather than think of myself as a high level math lecturer. That's why when I prepare for my class or my teaching materials I will always place myself in my students' shoes you know. Ok, if I'm the student, how will I want the topics to be taught. So I think that's where EQ comes in (Mousy Indigo: L441-L443)*

The empathy was extended to conveying an understanding of the students' situation, especially when they had attended a series of sessions and experienced tiredness;

> *You (students) just finished micro practical, I know you are very tired. So we go directly to the topic, ok? So, learning today, our aim is this, and we will finish it. Something that you have to negotiate, you have to understand their situation also. (Whitish Green: L110-L113)*

Theme 3 – Fostering Student Learning Engagement

In the third theme, fostering and engaging with students in many ways were shared. Students were engaged through their emotions;

> *It could be joy, it could be sadness, it could be fear, it could be whatever, but I realize that if I can tap into your emotion as a student, you have no choice but to be engaged because it would rile you up to fight me, you will be laughing along with me, whatever but the point is you are engaged with me. (Aloeswood Brown: L276-L280)*

Another way was to directly engage with students by involving them in activities such as getting them to ask questions in class.

> *Ask them to be a part of the teaching process. Involve them in activities. (Golden Oak: L63-L64)*

In addition to getting students to ask questions, the importance of a classroom environment set by teachers to enable students to engage was also pointed out;

> *The mood of the class…if the class is gloomy, the learning environment is not lively and active. As a lecturer who doesn't speak in a monotone, and engage with students and all, they–notice you, they can pay more attention; they are more attentive (and) more focused (Plum Purple: L271-L274)*

Students' attention during teaching and learning sessions seemed to be the basis of knowing whether they were engaged or otherwise;

> *I allow them to interrupt during the class itself so I can see, unless they are paying attention to what they say, they can't question. And I told you last time that I do put in a couple of weird things and something that is obviously wrong (Light Yellow: L112-L114) / Those are all connected, you can see that they are paying attention, right and like l told you, I don't stand and talk to the class all the time, I get them to interact as well. So when students say something, someone else wants to add and contradict so I know they are engaged in what's happening (Light Yellow: L116-L117)*

On another interesting note, the effort to foster student learning engagement was guided by a mindset of 'don't ask stupid questions is not there'. When students are given the opportunity to ask any question without the fear of being labelled as stupid, their level of engagement will presumably increase;

> *The concept of don't ask stupid questions is not there. They will ask because they know that you are going to answer the question, even though you know 80% of the questions the class knows already. But 20% will be quiet, afraid to ask, because of certain reasons; that they are afraid they will be labelled by the other 80% as stupid and if you have a good rapport with them, definitely they will ask even though it's just a repeated question or whatever (Golden Oak: L40-L44)*

Similar ways of moving around the classroom during the sessions to get students engaged were consistently shared. The first step of trying to engage students was reducing the feeling of intimidation, thus walking around and asking questions facilitated the learning environment;

> *If I am in a big classroom I do not want to stand on the stage or behind the podium, I do not want to intimidate the students, so I want to be among the students and I usually walk around. Sometimes I go to them and ask questions and whatever; so I try first of all not to intimidate them by my presence so they feel at ease (Wisteria Purple: L146-L150)*

To sum it up, it was concluded that the whole lecture or teaching sessions were equivalent to the process of communication where asking and responding practices were involved, indirectly indicating student engagement.

> *The whole lecture is like a communication (Red Birch: L366). Not only the lecturing, maybe after a few slides you just communicate with them. It's like talking communication so they (students) respond to you, then only you continue the second half of your slides and at the end of the lecture (Red Birch: L368-L370)*

Theme 4 – Consideration of Students' Emotions

The impact of emotion on teachers and students in various aspects of the teaching and learning process was earnestly considered. A teacher prepared herself emotionally prior to her teaching sessions, knowing that emotion might affect herself and her students;

> *Every class that I go in, I will prepare first, no matter if it's small group teaching or large group teaching, I will spend at least 30 minutes to look through what I am supposed to do, teach. What's the flow, so I have to set up the flow, that day I really, really had a tough time. So that 15 minutes, I say ok, no matter what happens for that 15 minutes I have to go early at least to prepare myself emotionally or technically, or all the things I have to set up, so I have to stay calm and I have to remind myself, I cannot let this emotion defeat me. (Mousy Indigo: L185-L190)*

In terms of giving feedback, careful consideration of students' feelings and the impact from the way feedback was given to the students was

demonstrated. For example, there was an emphasis about giving negative feedback in a compassionate manner;

> *I try to give them not so good feedback in a compassionate manner. (Wisteria Purple: L250-L251)*

Furthermore, a balance between giving feedback on weaknesses and providing ways for improvement to ensure that the feedback was taken positively by the students was suggested;

> *If you give feedback about their (students) weaknesses, then you also have to give them a plan for improvement or some suggestions how they can improve. So think besides the feedback, there should be a follow up (Wisteria Purple: L267-L269) / It should be a continuous process to make sure that the feedback is taken positively by the students and it is having a good impact on them rather than a bad habit (Wisteria Purple: L271-L272)*

A teacher's ability to understand the impact of emotion was further viewed from the perspective of making sure that students were not treated in a condescending manner be it individually or in front of their peers. The effect of such practice on students' emotions was emphasized;

> *Don't criticize them in front of their peers. Don't use labels. These are things that really hurt them you know. (Light Yellow: L409-L410)*

The way of handling situations so as not to embarrass or humiliate the students was elaborated;

> *If a student turns in late, I will just say something like, oh thanks for your guest appearance or something, the rest of the class is giggling, so it's not a negative thing. To look at it for students to purposely do it is not a fair thing for the students as well. Maybe there was something genuinely wrong. If you think that this particular student is doing it over and over again, probably the class is not the best place to address it. Talk to them on an individual basis. Being angry with a single student and showing it in front of the class*

> *is not something I would like to do. (Light Yellow: L125-L130)*

The understanding has guided university teachers to think more of the students instead of considering it as disrespectful behaviour;

> *I don't talk down to them. You see, they are 19 and above. And, they have a very good reason to be in the private university. They are investing and they are looking for return on investment as well. So there is no way that I have to consider that these students indulged in inappropriate behaviour because they want to be disruptive. (Light Yellow: L96-L100)*

Theme 5 – Reflection of University Teachers' Characteristics

The characters that emanated elements of emotional intelligence which eventually integrated with teaching practice were observed based on the sharing of the teachers' teaching practice.

First and foremost, teaching was reiterated as a calling and an opportunity rather than treating it as a job;

> *Some treat it (teaching) as a career that they want to climb, but I look at it as a calling, I look at it as an opportunity (Aloeswood Brown: L308-L310)*

The calling was substantiated by the aim of teaching and the thought of wanting to make a change among the students;

> *It comes from here, the heart, why are you doing this, what is your aim of doing this, what is the purpose of doing this and that kind of guide you, the extent you want to think for the students. So what is the outcome for yourself and how you want to affect the change in them, so that they can affect change in the world (Aloeswood Brown: L590-L593)*

The character was further defined by the willingness to accept the negative side of one's self;

> *As a teacher, you need to be professional and you must accept the negative side of yourself as well. (Golden Oak: L213-L214)*

A participant used the term 'mirror' to indicate the reflection of characters displayed by the teachers' behaviour in class where similar behaviours would be demonstrated by the students;

> *I would treat them like a mirror, if you want students to behave like this in class, you should behave like that in your class as well. If you want the students to learn, if you want the students to be eager to study your topics, you should portray that in front of the class. (Mousy Indigo: L159-L162).*

The effect on the students when teachers demonstrated certain emotions and behaviours was detailed;

> *If you want the students to eagerly study the topic, you must show that in front of them, instead of pushing and you yourself are moody and you scold them all the time, I think students will react. You do not respect me, why should I respect you. Correct or not. So you want them to respect you, you have to respect them first. So whatever you want students to show to you, you have to show the students first (Mousy Indigo: L164-L168)*

Theme 6 - Mutual Teaching and Learning Sessions

The importance of recognizing that there was mutual teaching and learning between teachers and students was perceived. The recognition probably originated from being humble in believing that teachers can learn from students too;

> *I think the key to the criteria to learn is to stay humble, you know keep learning (Aloeswood Brown: L115) / as much as we teach students, students teach us too (Aloeswood Brown: L369-L370)*

Similarly, each teaching session was treated as a learning session;

> *Every, every teaching session that I have, it's also a learning session for me (White Oak: L47)*

The equal attitude towards learning from one another was shared;

> *But actually instead of saying I'm teaching them, sometimes they are teaching me also because I'm lacking in experience, just two years. So, when good students and all, they come and ask challenging questions and all, I would think that it's not that I'm teaching them. What if we learn together; so I go back and research this question and you go back and find it yourself. Then, the next lecture we come and discuss what I have learnt and what you have learnt. (Plum Purple: L240-L244)*

Theme 7 - Meaningful Learning Sessions

The teaching practice of making learning sessions meaningful was highlighted. It can be traced to their personality of ensuring that students gained from a combination of knowledge and practical application;

> *Teachers concern about how you (students) understand, how you want to apply this, how do you make use of it so that it becomes something living, right rather than knowledge. (Aloeswood Brown: L15-L17) That I can tie in to real life and how it takes on a bigger meaning in the world because I want them to understand this is just the word on paper unless you make it alive, you make it real, you know. So, I try my best to tie in the knowledge and how they can use it to better understand people and make use of the information (Aloeswood Brown: L190-L193)*

Meaningful sessions were also relatable to making knowledge relevant in the modules taken by students;

> *Relevancy of certain modules in their field, (T1: L90) / when you are talking about history it must be relevant to them. (Golden Oak: L16-L17)*

Moreover, life experience was used to maximize the opportunities for students to relate and subsequently obtain meaningful learning sessions;

> *We could give them life examples, so what I do is, I use my practical life experiences for the past*

> *20 years and I start putting out cases to them reflecting from that stage, how I was involved and what used to be my challenges and most times, they could relate with those things and what they are suffering as well. (Willow Grey: L87-L89)*

The belief of making connections between what the students are currently learning and how it will be applied in their future profession was also detailed;

> *They also need to be convinced that it's worth their time being there, they are going to use what they are taught supposedly in the workplace. So, it's, if you make that connection, you see the importance of learning a particular topic, they start to focus. (Light Yellow: L70-L72)*

Having stated teachers' personalities based on the sharing of some practices, the context was captured through the philosophy of a partnership between teachers and students;

> *A philosophy of partnership. Students are basically our partners in this whole process (Wisteria Purple: L8-L9). Whatever instructions we plan, whatever medium of instruction we use, we have to keep in mind that they are the main stakeholders and whatever we are doing is for them. So it has to be in tune with their needs and it has to be in a non-threatening environment where they feel comfortable, they feel involved and their concerns and their voices are heard (Wisteria Purple: L11-L14)*

DISCUSSION

The study on the integration of emotional intelligence with teaching practice produced results indicating both are emphasized and practised in higher education. The idea of teaching with emotional intelligence that included the integration of teachers as subject matter experts, with pedagogical competence, and emotional intelligence proposed by Mortiboys (2005) had been demonstrated through seven themes which emerged based on the sharing by university teachers on their experiences in teaching.

Teaching practice integrated with emotional intelligence contextually encompassed the teachers' behaviour and communication through spoken discourse, visual representation, setting tasks, social interactions, and giving feedback (Alexander, 2001). Subsequently, the teachers shared pedagogical practices that they had adopted and implemented in the classroom.

Practices such as planning and implementing lessons, demonstrating empathy or putting oneself in students' shoes, and engaging students in learning were established. The university teachers thought thoroughly about the lessons to be delivered right from the planning phase, taking into consideration the level of their students' understanding from basic to advanced and according to the different semesters. Having an appropriate teaching flow helped to structure students' cognition and to ease them into absorbing the information being delivered. The emotional set up by the teachers showed an element of care and concern about students' ability to digest knowledge rather than just wanting to finish the required teaching tasks. The teaching flow was equally observed and conducted based on different semesters. For instance, facilitating the emotion of Semester 1 students would be different from triggering the emotion of Semester 3 students. This could probably be due to the teachers' ability to gauge students' cognitive and emotional maturity from different semesters. The structured and systematic flow of the implementation of teaching was corroborated by Creemers and Kyriakides's (2006) 'Dynamic Model of Educational Effectiveness'.

The model presented orderly processes of delivery based on teachers' instructional roles. The processes were sequentially listed beginning from orientation, structuring, questioning, teaching modeling, applications, time management, teacher roles in making the classroom a learning environment, and teacher evaluation. Even though the model was based on promoting effectiveness at school level, each process was relatable to teaching practice in a classroom setting of higher education. For instance, during the orientation process, the teachers provided the objectives of the lesson (equivalent to learning outcomes). In the structuring phase, the lessons began with an overview of the objectives and the content to be covered was outlined. The processes illuminated the practices shared by the university teachers.

Interestingly, the results showed a high level of empathy among the teachers. According to Cherwin (2011), a major part of emotional

intelligence was showing empathy. The teachers went to the extent of putting themselves in the students' shoes when they prepared teaching materials and designed the assessment. They took the approach of seeing and understanding materials to be delivered from both, good and weak students. The strategy helped to ensure that every student in the class had the opportunity to maximize their learning experiences. Arguably, the rule of 'one size fits all' was not applied. Similarly, they would intricately consider the students' point of view when they planned for different types of assessments to assess students. Being able to understand and consider the students' perspectives optimized the benefits of taking the assessment, otherwise, it would just be tools to categorically allocate students according to their scores and grades. Putting oneself in students' shoes and recalling the way one learned new concepts and the feelings associated with it may help ease and alleviate unnecessary stress faced by the students; similarly, in planning and preparing assessments. Another interesting finding related to empathy was that the teachers would pedagogically instill in students' thinking that they were professional right from day one. For example, when they enrolled in a medicine programme, they were put into a doctor mode instead of student mode. The practice presumably boosted the students' confidence, instilled a sense of responsibility, and most importantly embedded an element of empathy. Teachers' empathic approaches to learning situations may in turn enhance their problem-solving and mood management skills (Sekreter, 2019).

In fostering students' learning engagement, the teachers applied various practices including continuously creating opportunities for students to ask questions, exploring technology associated with students' interests and simply walking around the class. Bain (2011) reiterated that the best teachers would think of questions as playing important roles in constructing knowledge. A professor in his study opined that, 'When we can successfully stimulate our students to ask their questions, we are laying the foundation for learning' (Bain, 2011, p. 31). The practices implied that the teachers tried to facilitate and assist students' thinking through multiple ways to engage the students, eventually sustaining their attention and interest throughout the learning sessions. Naturally, teachers with a conception of teaching as facilitating student learning and supporting the knowledge-construction processes attempted to develop students' existing conceptions, encourage them to construct their knowledge and understanding, and focus on what students do in relation to these efforts (Trigwell, 2012). The nature of teaching is engaging students and engineering an environment in which they can learn (Bain, 2011). In accordance with this, Trigwell (2012) postulated

that teachers who adopted a student-focused approach to teaching indicated higher emotional abilities. Nonetheless, the results of this study have found that even though the teachers perceived teaching as a means to transmit knowledge and thus concentrated more on organizing, structuring, and presenting the content, they demonstrated the emotional competencies of helping students' understanding. Bikatwar (2014) stated that a good teacher needs an understanding of students' motivation and behaviour to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interactions, active engagement, and the motivation to learn about acknowledging one's own emotions. The environment can be sustained through continuous engagement and at the same time demonstrate respect and appreciation of students' sharing of ideas and views (Roth et al., 2019).

The understanding of students' emotions reflected another level of emotional intelligence demonstrated by the teachers. In this study, the teachers demonstrated practices that took into account the students' feelings. Among the practices include being careful in providing feedback to the students, as in striking a balance between positive and negative feedback. Furthermore, they also suggested ways to improve, so that students did not get discouraged, especially by negative feedback. In another instance, the teachers were against the practice of criticizing students in front of their peers as they understood that it might cause embarrassment and subsequently resulted in the students losing their confidence and self-esteem.

According to Mayer et al. (2004), the management of emotion was the last branch indicating a major part of the university teachers' personal traits as a result of perceiving, facilitating, and understanding their own and the students' emotions. The results showed that the personalities of the teachers were integrated with their beliefs in teaching which was eventually translated into their classroom practice. The teachers believed that there was mutual teaching and learning between them and the students which indicated a humble trait among the teachers that excluded a dominant or authoritarian approach in teaching. In the process, they were able to accept the negative side of them. Moreover, it also posited a 'mirror reflection' as teachers believed students' behaviour and attitude mirrored the behaviour and attitude demonstrated during learning sessions.

For example, when the teachers displayed negative feelings, it would similarly be reflected through negative feelings shown by the students and eventually affect the whole teaching and learning process. Thus,

it is particularly important for teachers to communicate a positive attitude. Another belief was making learning sessions meaningful through incorporating daily life examples either from the teachers, themselves or the students. The students can then see the relevance of the learning in the classroom compared to external situations. Powell and Kusuma-Powell (2013) stressed the need for teachers to have elements of emotional intelligence such as effective teaching and the facilitation of learning, fostering a classroom environment to maximize students' desire to learn; bridge the gap between themselves and their students; understand moods affecting perceptions, and the inseparable merge of emotions and cognition in the process of learning; create classrooms that are physically and psychologically safe; gauge the stress landscape (of eustress or distress) based on the degree of challenges in students' learning experiences, all of which are shown through the teachers' personalities and attributes. According to Arifin (2019) teachers can manage their emotional intelligence through five facets namely self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, self-motivation and relationship management. Furthermore, the best teaching can be found in the attitude of the teachers, in their faith in their students' abilities to achieve, in their willingness to take their students seriously and to let them assume control of their own, learning and in their commitment to let all policies and practices flow from central learning objectives and from mutual respect and agreement between them and the students (Bain, 2011, p. 78–79). On a broader impact, Zhang (2019) found a strong association between teachers' emotions in teaching and their organizational commitment within the higher education context. Teachers with positive emotions in teaching are linked to adaptive forms of organizational commitment while maladaptive forms are associated with negative emotions in teaching.

CONCLUSION

The study has shown, albeit on a relatively small scale, the importance of having emotional intelligence abilities and skills as these directly influence the teaching and learning process. As a matter of fact, these traits and skills have been subconsciously embedded and demonstrated through teaching practice. Despite the indication of teaching practice integrated with emotional intelligence, a number of university teachers were not aware of the concept of emotional intelligence. This could imply a lack of recognition on the role of emotional intelligence in teaching. Consequently, its impact may not be realized even though

the university teachers were selected based on high ratings scored across different semesters.

Having viewed a considerable amount of emotional intelligence skills demonstrated through teaching practice and the equally felt impact by the students, training on emotional intelligence needs to be developed to enhance the effectiveness of the learning process and to supplement students' socio emotional development (Botey et al., 2020; Ezzi, 2019; Puertas Molero et al., 2019; Gill & Sankulkar, 2017). Perhaps it could be incorporated as one of the faculty competencies of university teachers to enhance their emotional abilities which in due course contribute to personal and professional development.

Lastly, the results from this study could add to the growing literature on emotional intelligence and teaching practice in higher education.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

Integration of Emotional Intelligence in Teaching Practice

1. **Demographic Information**

Interviewee's ID: _____
Interviewer: _____
Date: _____
Time: _____

2. **Introductory Protocol**

I would like to thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview. Allow me to inform you once again that this study focuses on the integration of emotional intelligence in teaching practice. Some background on the main constructs of this study namely emotion and emotional intelligence may help to enhance understanding of the context and further facilitate this interview;

"Emotion is an organized response of physiological, cognitive, motivational and experiential system (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). It includes elements such as facial and vocal expressions, physiological changes and changes in behaviour readiness (De Vierville, 2002, as cited in Wang & Guo, 2013). Emotional intelligence on the other hand is the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Emotional intelligence in teaching has been recognized as one of the emerging trends in higher education, and yet least emphasized. Both may be reflected in teachers' personal characteristics which subsequently influence their teaching practice. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the roles of emotion in teaching practice and how teaching practice reflect emotional intelligence among university teachers in a higher learning institution."

You have been selected to participate in this study based on your teaching experience and your consistent high global rating scores in the Student Evaluation of Teaching and Learning across modules and semesters.

Before we begin the interview, may I ask that you go through the consent form and if you consent for the participation to continue, kindly sign at the end of the form. The form is devised to meet IMU Research Ethics requirements. Essentially, the form states that (1) you have been verbally informed and understand the information given to you about your participation in this study; (2) you have been given the opportunity to discuss it and ask questions; (3) you voluntarily agree to take part in this study and (4) you understand that you will receive a copy of the signed form.

In addition, I would like to seek your consent to audio tape the interview to facilitate note taking of the interview. For your information, only the researcher will be privy to the recordings which will be kept for a period of time after transcription. This interview will last approximately one hour. Please let me know if at any point you want me to turn off the audio recorder or keep something you said off the record.

3.   Interview Questions

3.1   Introductory Questions

Script: *'Let us begin our interview. First and foremost, could you kindly share with me about your teaching experience?'*

3.1.1   How long have you been teaching?
3.1.2   What types of classes have you been involved throughout your teaching experience?
Cue: *Large group /small group*

3.2   Transition Question

3.2.1   How do you describe your teaching experience so far?

3.3   Key Questions

Script: *'Thank you for sharing your teaching background and teaching experience. We will now move on to the roles of emotion and teaching practice.'*

3.3.1 RQ1 - What are the roles of emotion in teaching practice among university teachers in higher education?

No.	Sub Research Question	Interview Question	Keyword	Probing Question
3.3.1.1	How do university teachers perceive the role of emotion in teaching?	How do you as a university teacher perceive the role of emotion in teaching?	*Role of emotion in teaching.*	
3.3.1.2	How do university teachers describe emotional abilities in teaching?	How do you describe emotional abilities in teaching? i. How do you express your emotions in class? ii. How do you release your emotions in class? **Cue:** *Expressing and releasing emotions.*	*Emotional abilities in teaching.*	

3.3.2 RQ2 - How do university teachers in higher education integrate emotional intelligence with their teaching practice?

No.	Sub Research Question	Interview Question	Keyword	Probing Question
3.3.2.1	How do university teachers in higher education see the importance of the integration of emotional intelligence with teaching practice?	How do you see the importance of teaching practice integrated with emotional intelligence? **Probe:** *Why do you think so?*	*Importance of teaching practice reflecting emotional intelligence.*	

No.	Sub Research Question	Interview Question	Keyword	Probing Question
3.3.2.2	What is the teaching practice integrated with emotional intelligence that affect students' learning experience in higher education?	From your perspective, what is the teaching practice integrated with emotional intelligence that affect students' learning experience? i. What is the students' attitude towards teaching practice? ii. To what extent do students appreciate the kind of teaching practice demonstrated? iii. How do students prepare for class? iv. To what extent are students willing to participate in class? **Cue:** *Personal teaching philosophy (preferences) and practice.*	*Teaching practice, emotional intelligence and students' learning experience.*	

No.	Sub Research Question	Interview Question	Keyword	Probing Question
3.3.2.3	What are some suggestions to enhance the integration of emotional intelligence with teaching practice in higher education?	What are your suggestions to enhance the integration of emotional intelligence with teaching practice in higher education? **Cue:** *Faculty emotional intelligence training*.	*Integration of emotional intelligence with teaching practice*.	

3.4   **Closing Question**

Script: *'Before we end our interview, any personal thoughts that you would like to share with regard to the role of emotion and teaching practice?*