

## ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN TEACHING

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### Abstract

Emotional Intelligence (EI) emerged in the 1990s as an ability-based construct comparable to general intelligence. However, later two different types of EI have emerged and they are “trait EI” and “mixed model EI”. EI can be defined as the ability to identify, express, understand, manage, and use emotions. The benefits of EI are many in both personal and professional success. The workplace represents a distinct social community and it has a growing appreciation that higher EI allows a person to understand themselves and others better, communicate more effectively, and cope better with challenging situations. EI has become a key factor in educational environment, which contributes to the improvement of teaching practice, enhance health and mental well-being of teachers, and has an impact on students’ educational development. This article presents an overview of the models of EI and includes a discussion on how and why the EI concept are important for Malaysian teachers.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Well-being, Teachers

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a highly emotional and stressful job<sup>1,2,3</sup> due to the extensive roles played by teachers and the demanding teaching ecosystem. Teachers are reported to have heavy workload and they are also continuously pressed for time. In addition, the implementation of School Base Assessment (SBA), unruly students, complicated school relationship, demanding attitudes of parents and role conflict<sup>4,5</sup> can also cause teachers to perform poorly.

Literatures highlight on the role of emotional demands among teachers;<sup>1,3,6</sup> teachers’ emotion well-being is claimed to be at stake since they often meet with negative emotions during interactions with students, parents, and colleagues.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, emotional demands are deemed to be among one of the greatest job-related risks to teacher’s occupational health and well-being.<sup>8</sup> However, teachers could overcome both of these challenges by developing their professional competencies and by developing their and their students’ emotional competencies.<sup>9</sup>

In education, researchers and scholars have explored the role of emotions and Emotional Intelligence (EI) to improve performance.<sup>10,11,12</sup> According to George<sup>13</sup> and Day et al.<sup>14</sup> teachers who have the ability to manage their own emotions are able to communicate their needs and able to deal with their own feelings in achieving their goals. Furthermore, they can withstand difficult task without suffering from severe burnout, and are known to be team players who can work well with their colleagues to achieve organizational goals.

EI is a skill that can help an individual to recognize and manage his or her emotions as well as to recognize others’ emotion and foster good relationships with people.<sup>15,16</sup> Hence, EI is one of the most important personal competencies of teachers. It assists teachers to adapt to the challenging working environment. EI plays a protective role which can be associated with reducing stress, enhancing well being, providing job satisfaction and having meaning engagement.<sup>17,18,19</sup> EI competencies are crucial for teachers because they are dealing with students from different backgrounds.

### 2.0 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

EI refers to the ability to understand one’s and others emotions and the capacity to control or use those emotions to manage and solve problems. EI consists of emotions and intelligences which are related to one another.<sup>20</sup> Person with worthy emotions should be able to think positively and constructively and vice versa.<sup>21</sup>

EI is originated from social intelligence which had been introduced by E.L. Thorndike<sup>22</sup> in 1920s. It was defined as the ability to understand and manage people as well as to act wisely. During 1940s, David Wechsler<sup>23</sup> defined intelligence as a person's total ability to act purposefully, to think rationally, and to deal effectively with his or her environment, and Wechsler believed that intelligent behaviour was comprised of more than just intellectual ability. Wechsler proposed that non-intellective abilities were crucial in predicting one's ability to succeed in life.

Later in 1983, Howard Gardner introduced a theory of multiple intelligences in his book "Frames of Mind"<sup>24</sup>. Of the nine intelligences that Gardner suggested, two personal intelligences (intrapersonal and interpersonal) are relevant to EI. He defined intrapersonal intelligence as the ability to understand one's own thoughts and feelings, and to use such knowledge in self-regulation, self-control and self-motivation while interpersonal is the ability to noticing differences in moods, temperaments and intentions of other people.<sup>24</sup>

Psychologists John Mayer and Peter Salovey<sup>25</sup>, introduced the concept of EI in the early 1990s which was later made popular by Goleman<sup>26</sup>. John Mayer and Peter Salovey considered EI as a set of conceptually related psychological processes involving the processing of affective information.<sup>27</sup> These processes include the appraisal and expression of emotions, assimilation of emotions in thoughts, understanding emotion, and the regulation and management of emotions.

The term EI was popularized by Daniel Goleman in his bestselling book "Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ?" in 1995.<sup>26</sup> According to Goleman, each person has a level of EI and anyone can enhance his or her EI in order to assess his or her own feelings and emotional conditions. Later, Goleman proposed a model consisting of four 'clusters': self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management<sup>16</sup> which indicated the development of more exclusive models of EI.

**Table 1: The Origins of The Concept Emotional Intelligence**

Year	Researcher	Theory
1920	E.L Thorndike	Social Intelligence
1940	David Wechsler	Intelligence
1983	Howard Gardner	Multiple Intelligence
1990	John Mayer and Peter Salovey	Emotional Intelligence
1995	Daniel Goleman	Theory of Job and Work Performance
1996	Reuven Bar-On	Emotional and Social Intelligence

### ■ 3.0 MODELS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

#### *John Mayer and Peter Salovey: Ability Model of EI*

There are three main models of EI which are the ability model, the trait model and the mixed model. The first is the ability model proposed by Mayer et al.<sup>27</sup> which defines ability EI as one's actual emotional ability from a cognitive perspective. For instance, the ability to recognize, process and utilise emotion-loaded information.<sup>28</sup> Ability- based EI models emphasize that EI should be viewed as a type of intelligence that is relatively independent of personality traits.<sup>27,29</sup> The most typical instrument of this model is the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT).<sup>30</sup>

#### *Petrides and Furnham: Trait Model of EI*

Trait EI (or emotional self-efficacy) refers to a group of behavioural dispositions and self-perceptions in processing emotional information from personality perspective such as empathy, impulsiveness, social intelligence and personal intelligence.<sup>31</sup> Trait EI is measured via validated self-report inventories such as the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue)<sup>32</sup> that measures typical behaviour<sup>32</sup> which was created by Petrides and Furnham in 2001.<sup>33</sup>

#### *Daniel Goleman: Mixed Model of EI*

Daniel Goleman has interpreted the concept of EI within job environment. His model, which is called mixed model describes EI as not only related to intelligence and emotion, but also connected to other personality characters and traits.<sup>26</sup> EI is not inborn talents, but rather learned capabilities.<sup>26</sup> Goleman's model uses "The Five Components" which includes self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills.<sup>34</sup> According to Mayer et al.<sup>35</sup> mixed models consist of a wide range of personality variables as opposed to Mayer and Salovey's ability model, which is a strongly cognitive definition of EI. Goleman<sup>34</sup> developed the Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI) as a measure of EI.

### **Bar-On: Mixed Model of EI**

Bar-On also defines EI as “an array of noncognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one’s ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures”.<sup>36</sup> Bar-On has identified five major areas that may contribute to success in life which are intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management and general mood.<sup>36, 37</sup> Bar-On developed Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) as a self-report instrument that evaluates the perceptions of participants.

This lack of consensus regarding the definition of EI has led to the development of different measures assessing EI. Although the three models basically measure the same construct, any correlations between them seem to be weak.<sup>38, 39</sup>

## **4.0 THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN TEACHING**

Similar to IQ, EI is a vital attribute in predicting positive outcomes in any profession or in areas of study.<sup>26,40</sup> Teaching is not an easy job; infact teaching can make teachers feel stressed, demotivated and burned out and all these have been reported to exist among teachers in Malaysia.<sup>41</sup> Hence, EI is needed for teachers to effectively handle the stress that they have in doing their job. Based on previous studies, stress may cause job dissatisfaction, mental health problem, reduced well-being, decrease personal accomplishment and reduce effectiveness at work<sup>1,2,3,42</sup> which in turn can affect the quality of teaching.<sup>43</sup> According to Brackett et al.<sup>44</sup> EI training can be an effective technique to address stress related issues.

Moreover, EI is important to boost self-efficacy among teachers. Self-efficacy refers to individuals’ belief in their own abilities to plan, organize, and carry out required activities to achieve given goals.<sup>45</sup> Self-efficacy is crucial among teachers because teachers need to make sound and reliable decisions in planning of curricular, in teaching as well as in communicating with stakeholders. Empirical results have shown that EI is positively correlated with teachers’ sense of self-efficacy.<sup>46,47</sup> Teachers with higher EI are able to better manage and motivate students’ learning.<sup>48</sup> Perry et al.<sup>49</sup> state that good teaching reflects the practice of EI. Therefore, self-efficacy can be instilled among teachers through the use of EI.

Besides, teachers’ EI can positively affect students. Emotionally intelligent teachers are capable of creating a healthy learning culture. This is because they are able to identify and understand the needs of students and students’ strengths and weaknessess. When this happens, students are expected to perform better and attain better grades. Teachers who are not emotionally intelligent may have difficulties in identifying and understanding their students’ behaviors and needs, thus they may not be able to create a conducive learning and teaching environment. Thus, when this is the scenario, students may not perform well and they may not be interested to follow the teachers’ lessons. As a result, learning can be unsuccessful and less meaningful and performance can be poor.<sup>50</sup> Teachers who have high EI are compassionate toward students, they are able to build trusting and strong bonding with students.<sup>51,52</sup> Consequently, students feel more secure and confident in which they feel unintimidated to ask questions or to discuss problems and they are empowered to involve more in the learning process. Eventually, this would make lessons more meaningful and productive for them.<sup>48,51</sup>

A study was conducted in Romania to identify the existence of the burnout syndrome among teachers and to explore the relationship between burnout and other internal factors such as EI, personality traits, and life satisfaction.<sup>43,53</sup> The sample consisted of 575 teachers from different levels of education. The results showed that the teachers’ EI made a difference regarding the burnout syndrome as the more emotionally intelligent the teachers were, the less exposure burnout syndrome they had. The results also showed a negative correlation between burnout teachers and their EI, satisfaction with life and personality traits.

An empirical study was conducted to investigate the relationship between teachers’ EI and self-efficacy and to determine whether the relationship was mediated by teaching performance.<sup>48</sup> Participants were 467 Chinese middle school teachers. These results indicated that an increase in EI largely enhanced teachers’ self-efficacy; in which emotional skills were successfully used to improve teachers’ performance.

Another study was conducted to analyze the impact of teachers’ EI on students’ achievement for a sample of 224 teachers from 101 public sector schools in Pakistan.<sup>51</sup> Regression analysis was conducted to find the impact of EI on students’ achievement through the mediation of teachers’ commitment and school culture. The study results indicated that the relationship between EI and student achievement was mediated by school culture.

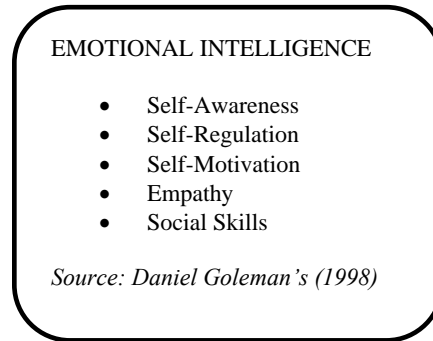
There was a study done to investigate the interplay among Iranian EFL teachers’ EI, classroom management, and their general English language proficiency.<sup>20</sup> Respondents were 118 EFL teachers. Findings showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between the EI and the classroom management of Iranian EFL teachers and there was a statistically significant relationship between the EI and the language proficiency of Iranian EFL teachers.

## **5.0 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND TEACHING IN MALAYSIA**

It is evident from previous studies that Malaysian teachers are suffering from negative emotional outcomes due to work demands. This situation has been in the picture for at least two decades. Studies demonstrated that the Malaysian teachers’ lack positive emotions. Therefore, they could not deal constructively with negative situations involving students.<sup>54,55</sup> The inability of the teachers to create a positive feeling towards their students may trigger disruptive behaviors among students. It is believed that the students were more likely to

react to teacher's behaviours as most of the students see their teachers as a role model. Consequently, it is debated that teachers' personality and behaviors toward students could affect the students' psychological and emotional states.<sup>56</sup>

The role of teachers is changing and they are expected to prepare for the recent development in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR4), or they would be at risk of being left behind. The technological revolution and educational reforms have improved the education system of Malaysia. In this era of globalization, teachers are no longer the primary source of information as students use multiple sources to find and gather the information they need. Teachers' role as dispenser of information has changed to a facilitator or a nurturer of creative thinking. This is where teachers face issues in identifying their roles in the community. Moreover, the societal demands make it difficult for them to balance their emotions at work. Therefore, there is a need to improve their EI so that positive work-related outcomes could be achieved. The Emotional Competence Framework is illustrated in the figure below.



**Figure 1. The Emotional Competence Framework**

Several Malaysian researchers chose Daniel Goleman's Model<sup>15,16</sup> in their studies because it had many elements that could justify the issues of emotional stability of the Malaysian teachers.<sup>4,10,57,58</sup> Goleman's model of EI falls under the trait approach where EI can be measured from five domains (self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy and social skills).<sup>15,16</sup> Goleman argued that EI defines one's ability for learning the practical skills based on two competencies; personal and social competencies. Personal competency has three domains; self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-motivation while the social competency encompasses two domains; empathy and social skills.<sup>15,16</sup>

A study was conducted among public secondary school teachers in Malaysia to examine the relationship among the domains of EI of Malaysian teachers and their implications on workplace productivity.<sup>58</sup> The findings from this study validated the existence of the five domains (self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills) of EI suggested by Goleman.<sup>16</sup> However, the five domains were not sufficient to describe EI among the Malaysian teachers. The respondents seemed to suggest that spirituality and maturity were imperative to the development of stable emotion. This was probably true for the teachers from the Asian region that included spirituality in many aspects of their life.

An empirical study in Malaysia investigated the role of EI in teachers' job performance<sup>10</sup>. This study analyzed the relationship between EI which consisted of four dimensions: self-regulations, self-awareness, self-motivation and social skill (relationship management) and job performance. The respondents were 212 teachers in six secondary schools in Kedah. Data was collected through survey questionnaire. It appeared that the four domains of EI had a greater impact on teachers' job performance.

Another study was conducted in Malaysia to identify whether EI influenced work values among educators in high schools.<sup>12</sup> The seven domains of EI being measured in this study were self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy, social skills, maturity and spirituality. A survey was done by selecting 338 high school educators from various boarding schools in Malaysia. Findings showed that there were four domains that significantly influenced work values among educators: self-motivation, empathy, social skills and spirituality.

## ■6.0 CONCLUSION

EI plays an important role in every aspects of teachers' life. EI should be developed among teachers since it helps to develop balanced and trusting relationships, to understand others better and to more clearly interpret behaviours of others.<sup>52</sup> EI provides teachers with the ability to control their emotions, making them stronger in facing challenges in doing their job.<sup>53</sup> EI develops the level of teachers' work involvement and boosts their confidence in personal and professional life. However, the success development of emotional skills requires motivation, effort, time, support, and sustained practice.<sup>53</sup> In order to explore the impact of EI among teachers, it is important for studies that address these concerns to be carried out in future.

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