

Teachers' Emotional Intelligence: Does Teaching Experience Matter?

Kecerdasan Emosi Guru: Adakah Pengalaman Pengajaran Penting?

Norila Md. Salleh

*Faculty of Education and Human Development, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris
Tanjong Malim, Perak, Malaysia
e-mel: norila@fppm.upsi.edu.my*

Abstract

This article discusses the findings of a study which was conducted to identify the emotional intelligence among school teachers in Malaysia and the difference across teaching experience. The study adopted a survey research design in which questionnaire was used to collect data from the selected samples. The questionnaires were mailed to the selected schools. A total of 805 primary and secondary school teachers who are serving in schools under the administration of Malaysia Ministry of Education were involved as samples. Reaction to Teaching Situation was used as an instrument to measure teachers' emotional intelligence. Reaction to Teaching Situations comprises four branches of emotional intelligence which are identifying emotions, using emotions, understanding emotions, and managing emotions. The result showed that generally teachers possess moderate level of emotional intelligence. The result revealed that there is no significant difference in the levels of emotional intelligence among teachers of 0 to 5 years, greater than 5 to 15 years and greater than 15 years teaching experience. The result also revealed that there is no significant difference in the levels of the emotional intelligence constructs among teachers across teaching experience. With moderate level of emotional intelligence of teachers found in this study and the previous, relevant programmes to improve teachers' level of emotional intelligence need to be taken into consideration. It is hoped that this research will add the literature on emotional intelligence of teachers.

Keywords *emotional intelligence, teachers, teaching experience*

Abstrak

Artikel ini membincangkan hasil kajian yang dijalankan untuk mengenal pasti kecerdasan emosi dalam kalangan guru-guru sekolah di Malaysia dan perbezaan pengalaman mengajar. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah tinjauan di mana soal selidik telah digunakan untuk mengumpul data daripada sampel yang dipilih. Soal selidik telah dihantar kepada sekolah-sekolah yang dipilih. Seramai 805 orang guru sekolah rendah dan menengah di bawah pentadbiran Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia terlibat sebagai sampel. Reaksi kepada Situasi Pengajaran terdiri daripada empat aspek kecerdasan emosi iaitu mengenal pasti emosi, menggunakan emosi, memahami emosi dan menguruskan emosi. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahawa guru-guru mempunyai kecerdasan emosi tahap sederhana. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa tidak terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan terhadap tahap kecerdasan emosi dalam kalangan guru yang berkhidmat antara 0 hingga 5 tahun, lebih besar yang berkhidmat di antara 5 hingga 15 tahun dan pengalaman mengajar melebihi 15 tahun. Hasil kajian juga menunjukkan terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan terhadap tahap pembinaan kecerdasan emosi dalam kalangan guru-guru merentasi pengalaman mengajar. Dengan tahap sederhana kecerdasan emosi guru-guru yang terdapat dalam kajian ini dan sebelumnya, program-program yang berkaitan untuk meningkatkan tahap keperluan kecerdasan emosi guru perlu diambil kira. Diharapkan kajian ini akan menambah literatur berkaitan penyelidikan ke atas kecerdasan emosi dalam kalangan guru.

Kata kunci *kecerdasan emosi, guru, pengalaman mengajar*

Introduction

Teaching profession has become increasingly challenging in preparing the future generation. Teachers' roles and responsibilities have changed in accordance with the challenges in the post

modernization age. Therefore, teachers must be well prepared not only with the content knowledge of the subjects they teach but also skills and competencies to face the challenges and competitions, predictable or unpredictable.

Background of Study

Researchers have found that emotional intelligence and ability to handle feelings rather than I.Q. will determine one's success and happiness in all walks of life. Brearley (2001) pointed out that "Emotional intelligence is the ability to control and use our emotions to enhance our success in all aspects of our lives". This is in accordance with Weare (2004) who pointed out that "... if we look at those who do well educationally, the differences in work outcomes and personal success are more dependent on their emotional and social abilities than on their IQ, ...".

The importance of emotional intelligence to determine success includes in the field of education. Teachers' role extends beyond the four walls of the classroom. Teachers are responsible to handle students from all aspects including intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical development. This has demand teachers' patience to control themselves in whatever situations arise which sometimes might be very challenging.

Problem Statement

Teachers' roles are becoming more complex. Teachers are facing an ever increasing roles. With new teaching and learning methods been introduced, students' disruptions such as skip classess, rude, complaints and classroom discipline, class control as a result of increased class size, parents' expectations and rapid changes in technologies, today's teachers are facing challenges which are linked to a sense of stress which will affect their effectiveness. Hence, teachers need skills and competencies in order to deal innumerable challenges and demands as well as to play different roles in school successfully. Despite the fact that teachers cannot control certain issues such as students' behaviour or class sizes, they are able to develop skills to handle stress.

As proposed by Goleman (1995, 1998), EQ contributes about 80% of one's success in life or job. Many researchers have investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. Findings had shown that there is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction (Anari, 2011; Mousavi, Yarmohammadi, Nosrat and Tarasi, 2012). However, teachers are finding it increasingly tough to balance their lives and meet the challenges faced in trying to support school effectiveness, increase standards, but nevertheless make the educative process holistic, enjoyable and sustainable (Sharp, 2001).

Mayer and Salovey (1997) had identified four branches of emotional intelligence which are perception, appraisal and expression of emotion, emotional facilitation of thinking, understanding and analyzing emotion, reflective regulation of emotion. Failure to acquire these capabilities of the emotional intelligences might affect the teachers, and hence to portray unstable emotional in the form of speech or actions, uncontrollably. Thus, it will be the aim of this study to identify the teachers' emotional intelligence and the difference across teaching experience.

Literature Review

Teachers should be mentally and emotionally prepared to face the forthcoming challenges in order to commit their duties and responsibilities (Norila Md Salleh & Ikhsan Othman, 2013). Teachers' workloads are not limited in dealing with students in the classroom and school areas but dealing with the administrators, students' parents, society and stakeholders. Thus, teachers should be emotionally intelligent in order to put themselves in a positive state of mind (Rani, 2012) and be able to face the challenges.

Emotional intelligence and job satisfaction are interrelated. As pointed by Anari (2011) and Mousavi et al. (2012) there is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. Previous research also had shown that job satisfaction is related to teachers leaving their jobs (Ruzina Jusoh, 2012). Teachers who possess lower job satisfaction have greater tendency to leave teaching profession. Teachers with high emotional intelligence level are likely to be able to

minimize work conflicts (Anari, 2011). Thus, teachers should possess high level of emotional intelligence so that job satisfaction among teachers will increase.

Selva Ranee Subramaniam and Lau Sau Cheong (2008) had conducted a survey research to explore the level of emotional intelligence of 325 teachers in Malaysia who teach Form One Science and Mathematics. Emotional Intelligence for Mathematics and Science Teachers (EIMST) was used as the instrument to determine the teachers' level of emotional intelligence. EIMST comprises three subscales which are utilization of emotion, regulation of emotion, and appraisal and expression of emotion. The study showed that the Form One Science and Mathematics teachers possess average level of emotional intelligence. However, the study found out that the difference in the level of emotional intelligence among Science and Mathematics teachers was not significant. However, analysis based on the three subscales of emotional intelligence showed that there exists significant difference in emotional intelligence between Form One Science and Mathematics teachers for the subscale of regulation of emotion where the means were 3.88 and 3.98 for Science and Mathematics teachers respectively.

The importance of emotional intelligence among teachers is obvious as emotional intelligence is one of the components in Malaysian Educator Selection Inventory (MEdSI). MEdSI is a psychometric test administered to student teacher candidates since 2008. It consists of four components which are personality, career interest, integrity value, and emotional intelligence. The Malaysian Teacher Standards has outlined three standards. The standards are:

- Standard 1: Practices of Professionalism Value of Teaching Profession;
- Standard 2: Knowledge and Understanding; and
- Standard 3: Teaching and Learning Skills

Standard 1 had three main domains which are Personal Domain, Professional Domain and Social Domain. Personal Domain refers to teachers own values which should be developed for teachers to contribute efficiently to the teaching profession in order to achieve the education goal. The values focused in this domain are faith in God, trust, sincerity, knowledge, love, patience, courtesy, justice, considerate, endurance, competitiveness, tough, fit, active and healthy, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, volunteerism, and efficient. In this study, focus is on intrapersonal and interpersonal in Personal Domain of Standard 1 in Malaysian Teacher Standards. Intrapersonal Intelligence and interpersonal intelligence are related to the idea proposed by Gardner (1983) and the definition of emotional intelligence defined by Salovey and Mayer (1990). The theoretical framework of this study is summarized in Figure 1.

Research Questions

The research questions of this study are:

- a. What is the level of emotional intelligence among teachers?
- b. Is there any significant difference in emotional intelligence level between teachers of less than 5 years teaching experience, more than 5 years to 15 years teaching experience, and greater than 15 years teaching experience?
- c. Is there any significant difference in the level of emotional intelligence constructs between teachers of less than 5 years teaching experience, more than 5 years to 15 years teaching experience, and greater than 15 years teaching experience?

Methodology

This is a survey research using simple descriptive approach where data were collected using questionnaires. This study involves two types of research variables namely dependent variables and independent variables. The independent variable in this study is teaching experience. Teachers teaching experience is divided into three categories namely less than 5 years teaching experience, more than five years to 15 years teaching experience, and greater than 15 years teaching experience. The dependent variables in this research are teachers' emotional intelligence and its four constructs.

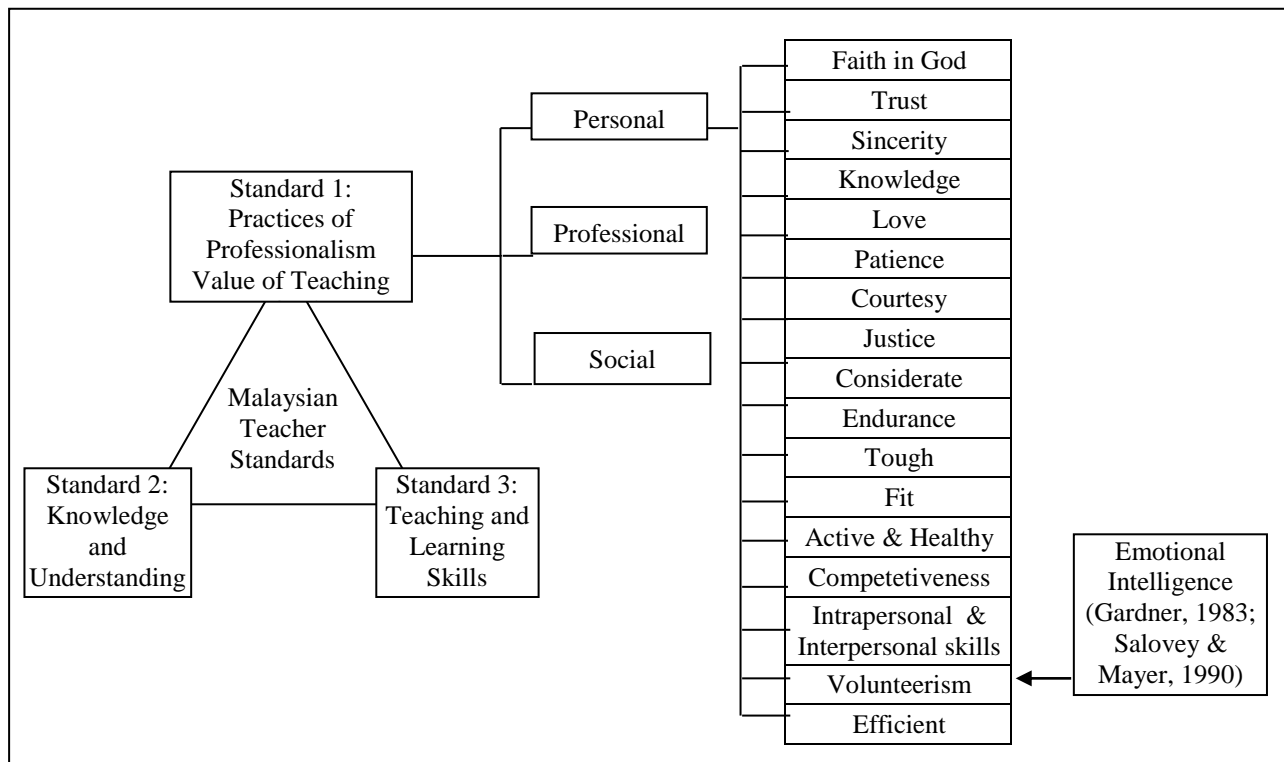


Figure 1 Theoretical Framework

The four constructs of the emotional intelligence are identifying emotions; using emotions; understanding emotions; and managing emotions. The research framework is shown in Figure 2.

Questionnaires were sent by post to the selected schools. The questionnaire consists of two parts; Part A collects respondents' demographic information and Part B consists of an instrument used in this research, i.e. Reaction to Teaching Situations by Perry, Ball & Stacey (2004). Reaction to Teaching Situations measures four branches of emotional intelligence which are identifying emotions, using emotions, understanding emotions, and managing emotions. Reaction to Teaching Situations presented ten teaching situations. For each situation, four possible reactions were provided and respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement to each reaction. The likelihood of the respondents' agreement to each reaction was rated as never likely (1), seldom likely (2), sometimes likely (3), usually likely (4), and always likely (5). A total of 805 questionnaires from 145 schools were completed. Data were analysed using SPSS 21.0 to answer the research questions posed.

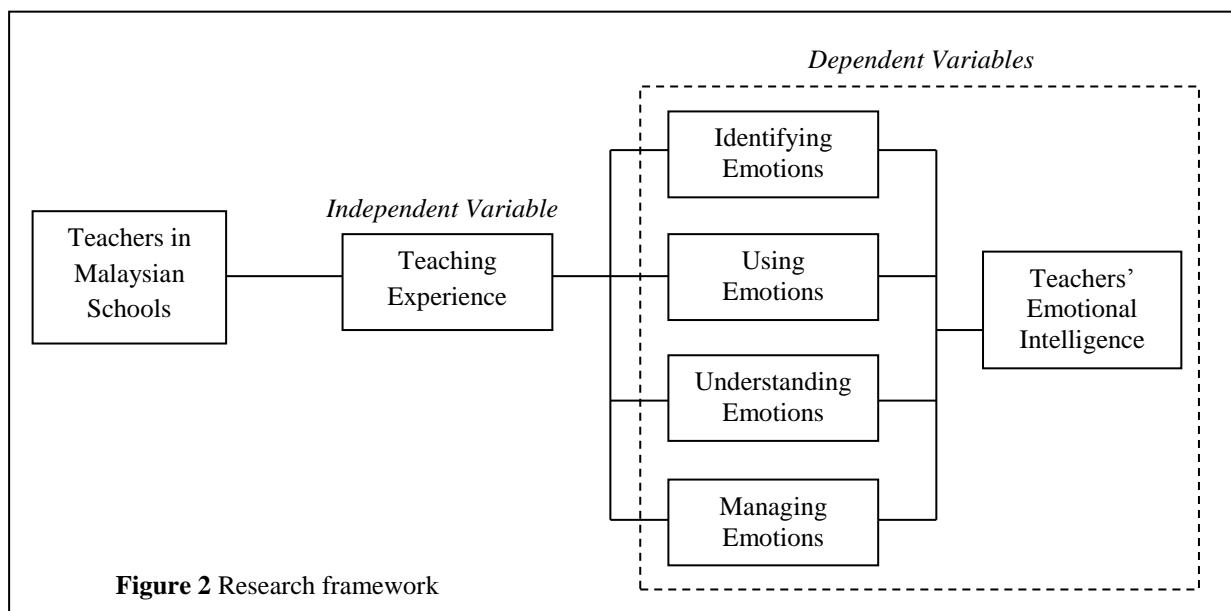


Figure 2 Research framework

Data Analysis

Table 1 shows the demographic data of the samples. There are three levels teaching experience among teachers, 0 to five years, greater than five to 15 years and greater than 15 years.

Table 1 Demographic data of samples

Teaching Experience	Number of samples
0 – 5 yrs	201 (25.0)
>5 – 15 yrs	271 (33.6)
>15 yrs	333 (41.4)
Total	805 (100)

Research Question 1: What is the level of emotional intelligence among teachers?

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the emotional intelligence among teachers across teaching experience.

Table 2 Teachers' emotional intelligence across teaching experience

Teaching Experience	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
0 – 5 yrs	201	3.1090	.42192
> 5 – 15 yrs	271	3.1149	.45691
> 15 yrs	333	3.1657	.47331
Total	805	3.1344	.45563

Based on the data in Table 2, the mean score of emotional intelligence among teachers of 0 to five years teaching experience is 3.1090 (S.D. = .42192, N = 201). Among teachers of more than five to 15 years teaching experience, the mean score of emotional intelligence is 3.1149 (S.D. = .45691, N = 271). Whereas among teachers of more than 15 years teaching experience, the mean score of emotional intelligence is 3.1657 (S.D. = .47331, N = 333). Research Question 2: Is there any significant difference in emotional intelligence level between teachers of less than five years teaching experience, more than five years to 15 years teaching experience, and greater than 15 years teaching experience?

To examine the significance of the differences of the means, data were analysed using ANOVA. The result of the ANOVA analysis is as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 One-way ANOVA of teachers' emotional intelligence across teaching experience

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
EI * Teaching Experience	Between Groups	.559	2	.279	1.347	.261
	Within Groups	166.347	802	.207		
	Total	166.906	804			

The analysis showed that there is no statistically significant difference at the level of $p < 0.05$, $F(2, 804) = 1.347$, $p = .261$. Thus, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers' emotional intelligence among teachers of 0 to 5 years teaching experience, teachers of more than five to 15 years teaching experience and teachers of more than 15 years teaching experience. Research Question 3: Is there any significant difference in the level of emotional intelligence constructs between teachers of less than 5 years teaching experience, more than five years to 15 years teaching experience, and greater than 15 years teaching experience?

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics of each construct of emotional intelligence among teachers across teaching experience.

Table 4 Teachers' emotional intelligence for each construct across teaching experience

Teaching Experience		Identifying Emotions	Using Emotions	Understanding Emotions	Managing Emotions
0 – 5 yrs	Mean	2.8388	3.5179	3.1970	3.2910
	N	201	201	201	201
	Std. Deviation	.41664	.57077	.48548	.47373
>5 – 15 yrs	Mean	2.8306	3.5096	3.2151	3.2989
	N	271	271	271	271
	Std. Deviation	.43006	.57579	.51907	.51449
>15 yrs	Mean	2.8556	3.5871	3.2823	3.3592
	N	333	333	333	333
	Std. Deviation	.47250	.59984	.55565	.51374
Total	Mean	2.8430	3.5437	3.2384	3.3219
	N	805	805	805	805
	Std. Deviation	.44453	.58506	.52727	.50467

To examine the significance differences of the means for each construct across teaching experience, data were analysed using ANOVA. The result of the ANOVA analysis is as shown in Table 5.

Table 5 One-Way ANOVA of Teachers' Emotional Intelligence Constructs Across Teaching Experience

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Identifying Emotions * Teaching Experience	Between Groups	.098	2	.049	.246	.782
	Within Groups	158.775	802	.198		
	Total	158.873	804			
Using Emotions * Teaching Experience	Between Groups	1.076	2	.538	1.574	.208
	Within Groups	274.125	802	.342		
	Total	275.201	804			
Understanding Emotions * Teaching Experience	Between Groups	1.132	2	.566	2.042	.130
	Within Groups	222.392	802	.277		
	Total	223.524	804			
Managing Emotions * Teaching Experience	Between Groups	.797	2	.399	1.567	.209
	Within Groups	203.978	802	.254		
	Total	204.775	804			

Based on the analysis in Table 5, the identifying emotions construct showed that there is no statistically significant difference at the level of $p < 0.05$, $F(2, 804) = .246$, $p = .782$. The using emotions construct showed that there is no significant difference at the level of $p < 0.05$, $F(2, 804) = 1.574$, $p = .208$. Similarly, the understanding emotions construct showed that there is no statistically significant difference at the level of $p < 0.05$, $F(2, 804) = 2.042$, $p = .130$. Finally, the managing emotions construct showed that there is no statistically significant difference at the level of $p < 0.05$, $F(2, 804) = 1.567$, $p = .209$. Thus, there is no significant difference between the mean scores of all the four construct of emotional intelligence among teachers of 0 to 5 years teaching experience, teachers of more than five to 15 years teaching experience and teachers of more than 15 years teaching experience.

Discussion

The result of this study had shown that there is no significance difference of teachers' overall emotional intelligence and its constructs across teaching experience. It shows that teachers' years of teaching did not help them to improve their level of emotional intelligence. With increasing

challenges in today's world of work, it cannot be denied that emotional intelligence capability is a necessity in workplace to manage any conflict that may arise. One should aware when and how to express or control emotions (Cherniss, 2000). Professional development programs are seen as efforts to improve skill and competencies of teachers. Thus, the Ministry of Education should prepare professional emotional development programs or training for teachers to help them handle different emotions in order to deal with difficult circumstances successfully.

Short courses to promote emotional intelligence competencies would be valuable for in-service teachers. Greater emphasize should be on identifying own emotions since this is the construct with least mean obtained from this study. Failure to identify own emotions correctly will cause teachers to exhibit inappropriate behaviour which may against the rules, act or laws.

At the early stage of being a teacher, novice teachers will face challenges and they need to adapt themselves in order to survive. During preservice teacher preparation programs with duration of four to five years, teacher preparation institutions should plan programs that emphasize on the development of emotional intelligence of future teachers. Preservice teaching courses and relevant activities planned should be included in the teacher preparation curriculum which aims to enhance emotional intelligence of the teacher trainees. This orientation is important to grant future teachers for survival in the profession as they move into practice besides producing highly qualified teachers.

Conclusion

Emotional intelligence is one of the capabilities need to be acquired by today's teachers. With moderate level of emotional intelligence of teachers found in this study and the previous, relevant programmes to improve teachers' level of emotional intelligence need to be taken into consideration. Finally, it is hoped that this research will add to increase the research on emotional intelligence of teachers.

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