



EXPLORING THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to explore the roles of emotional intelligence in English language teaching. With the diverse identities and backgrounds of learners, teachers are more often subjected to deal with different emotions and outlooks in life. The growing pressure on teachers' work and personal life would need a great emotional intelligence. I involved nine (9) public school teachers in Catalunan Pequeno National High School who are teaching junior high school learners. I categorized these participants into two groups: six (6) for in-depth interviews, and the remaining three (3) for focus group discussion. I utilized the phenomenological approach to collect authentic experiences from the participants. This research revealed the role of emotional intelligence in English language teaching, focusing on essential themes like managing classroom behavior, modeling emotional regulation, and supports differentiated and student-centered teaching. It explored on how teachers' emotional intelligence impacts their students in the learning process. The result revealed that teachers' awareness and knowledge of their emotions impacted students' motivation, classroom management, and students' attitudes towards learning English. These themes were essential to provide insights into how teachers perceived their emotions, react to students' behavior, cope with varied challenges, and how they see the importance of the roles of emotional intelligence.

KEYWORDS: Emotional Intelligence, English Language Teaching, Student-Centered, Differentiated

INTRODUCTION

The role of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in English Language Teaching (ELT) has gained increasing attention in recent years as educators recognize the profound impact emotions have on learning. Emotional Intelligence, which refers to the ability to understand, manage, and express emotions, plays a crucial role in creating an effective and supportive classroom environment. In the context of ELT, EI enables both teachers and students to navigate the complexities of language acquisition with empathy, self-regulation, and interpersonal skills. This research aims to explore the significance of Emotional Intelligence in English Language Teaching by examining how it enhances communication, fosters a positive learning atmosphere, and supports the emotional well-being of learners, ultimately contributing to more successful language learning outcomes.

In India, human can fully understand the world through their senses and emotions (Pishghadam, Jajarmi, and Shayesteh, 2016). This help shapes human's reaction and response to different phenomena in a different social context. According to Fathi & Derakhshan (2019), each teacher should know how to manage their emotions to better deliver their lessons in the classroom. Human emotions are complex and thus results to multiple benefits and consequences depending on how it was being perceived and utilized. Based on Ishak et al., (2010), teachers' working environment needs more patience and understanding. The present working condition may cause in teachers' fallout, emotional suffering, incompetence, and discontentment. Therefore, teachers should develop more of their emotional intelligence.

Meanwhile, teachers in New Zealand are perceived as the moderator of learning and such should possess all the necessary traits of a good educator. A study conducted by Goroshit and Hens (2016) revealed that, a teacher's empathy could help students improve their enthusiasm in learning, lower their discontent, and culminate stress in learning. Moreover, there is a correlation about emotional intelligence and speaking and reading skills. This is to imply that teachers who has an established emotional intelligence improves classroom management that accommodates students with a fostering and encouraging learning environment. Moreover, it will motivate students to freely express their opinions and sentiments without the fear of being attack or mistreated. Objectively speaking, this will enhance their speaking skills by continuously participating in continuous discourse with a regulated focus on vocabulary and comprehension.

A study conducted by Zarafshan and Ardeshiri (2012) among Iranian English as a Foreign Language learners, the research revealed that emotional intelligence has an effect towards language learning strategies on English language proficiency. The affective and metacognition of learning strategies combined with emotional intelligence greatly impact students' English language proficiency. The fear of committing grammatical errors would highly discourage a learner to perform better. This will instill in their minds they are not being recognized. Such feeling will lead them to be demotivated and unruly in often times.



In addition, English Language Teaching (ELT) in Metro Manila presents several challenges highlighted by the Department of Education (DepEd). One major issue is the lack of widespread teacher training and professional development on EI, which hampers the ability of educators to effectively integrate emotional awareness and interpersonal skills into their teaching practices. The DepEd has acknowledged that while EI can enhance student-teacher relationships and foster a positive learning environment, many teachers struggle with balancing academic pressures, large class sizes, and the diverse emotional needs of students (DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017) as cited in Go, et al. 2020.

On the contrary, there are reported complaints about teachers being violent and abusive. The Department of Education recently discovered that there are numerous cases of child abuse committed by teachers. According to Ombay (2023), a student in Antipolo, Philippines have died due to embarrassment and vulnerability. These factors alone compile the threat to someone's progress and productivity. Poor emotional intelligence equates to poor performance.

However, in Cebu City, Pelino (2021) pointed out that one significant challenge encountered by the teacher is the disparity in teacher training, as many educators may not have received adequate professional development in integrating EI into their teaching strategies. While EI is crucial for fostering positive teacher-student relationships and creating a conducive learning environment, teachers often face challenges such as large class sizes and the pressure to meet academic targets, which can limit their ability to focus on students' emotional needs. Addressing these issues requires targeted efforts from educational authorities to provide proper EI training for teachers and ensure that emotional development is prioritized alongside academic achievement to support both students' personal and language learning growth.

Significantly, teachers in Davao City face several challenges in incorporating Emotional Intelligence (EI) into English Language Teaching (ELT), which affects their ability to create emotionally supportive and effective learning environments. One significant issue is the lack of comprehensive professional development programs that focus on EI, leaving educators underprepared to address the emotional needs of their students (Flores & Rodriguez, 2021). Many teachers also struggle with managing large class sizes and meeting academic standards, which can overshadow the need to foster emotional connections with students.

Moreover, socio-economic factors and external stressors, such as students' familial and financial challenges, hinder emotional engagement and contribute to behavioral issues in the classroom. These obstacles can create barriers to promoting EI, which is essential for enhancing student-teacher relationships and improving language acquisition outcomes. Overcoming these challenges requires increased attention to EI in teacher training and the development of support systems that address the emotional needs of both teachers and students in Davao City's schools (Flores & Rodriguez, 2021).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous researches have been made to test the role of emotional intelligence in English language teaching. According to Thao et al., (2023), emotional intelligence (EI) plays an essential role in language learning especially in English. It allows learners to have more depth in understanding language nuances. Moreover, it improves their motivation in learning the language. Through EI, students hone and improve their communication skills leading to a more progressive and effective learning experience.

Emotional intelligence has a significant part in language teaching where it hones educators on how to connect and interact with their learners. It also helps them to control and manage the variety of emotions in a classroom. Educators who possess a high level of EI are flexible and ready to meet students' demands and needs. They know how to regulate their emotions and builds an empathetic language learning environment (manaeducation.co.uk, 2024). The statements revealed the impact of teacher's emotional intelligence towards the progress of their learners in English language learning. It is very crucial that teachers are well-aware of their own emotions especially in managing classroom with dynamic learners. Their capability of incorporating such enough and appropriate emotions on particular classroom events could potentially affect their learners' attitude towards learning English.

As mentioned by Brackett and Rivers (2019), teachers who have high emotional intelligence are equipped enough to regulate their own emotions and fosters an accommodating relationship toward their students. These educators highly execute strong sense of adaptability, empathy, and language competence, which affect to develop students' academic progress. This simply indicates that there is a ratio between teachers' emotions and students' language learning progress. These two main variables play an interchanging role that affect teachers' language teaching and students' language learning. To support, Davis and Humprey (2021), mentioned that classroom management and emotional intelligence plays an integral part in developing and optimal learning environment. Emotional intelligence enables teachers to be more conscious and aware of their emotions especially in a stressful scenario. Language teaching is not an easy task that is why educators must possess such emotional intelligence.

Research Questions

The primary goal of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of teachers about the role of emotional intelligence in English language teaching. Therefore, it specifically aims to answer the following questions:



1. What are the lived experiences of teachers about the positive role of emotional intelligence in English language teaching?
2. What are the strategies applied by the teachers in implying emotional intelligence in English language teaching?
3. What are the teachers' insights about employing positive emotional intelligence in English language teaching?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A qualitative research approach through descriptive research design will be utilized in this research. The design is carefully selected based on the nature of the study which was to collect insights and experiences. According to Trombo and Tromp (2006), descriptive research design is a method of collecting data using interviews. This will help the researcher gather information regarding to people's habits, opinions, and altitudes. Moreover, a phenomenology approach was implied to gain actual experiences from the participants that are essential in the study.

Semi-structured questions were used allowing the flexibility of the responses to gather more specific information that aligns to the research objectives and goals. This was to give participants the freedom to express their answers freely especially if the topic is sensitive or concerns personal matters (Albudaiwi, D. 2017). The researcher conducted the interviews and gathered signatures of the participants to ensure proper documentations. Afterwards, the data recorded were transcribed and analyzed.

Research Participants

A nonrandom sampling was used in the course of this research. There were nine (9) targeted participants who have ample experiences in teaching students. A total of six (6) that were under in-depth interview to get the core of their responses. The remaining three (3) teachers were on focused group discussion so that they will have the chance to interact and share responses with others. According to Stanat (2024), focused group discussions allow participants to have rich discourse and probing, which is an advantage in qualitative research. It allowed the discussion to have in-depth insights and meaningful qualitative data. Moreover, participants can provide feedback and timely reactions about each of the responses. This will enable the conversation more dynamic and purposeful.

Research Instrument

A semi-structured interview guide was used in this study. According to Magaldi and Berler (2020), semi-structured interview is a type of exploratory interview. They explained that this type of interview is based on a set of guides normally focuses on the main topic that gives some shared patterns. Additionally, they have coined that this will give the researcher an opportunity to go deep for a discovery. Good interviews are a balance between main questions, follow-ups, and probes. This served as a guide that enabled the researcher to establish focus on the topics at hand without locking them to a specific format.

The nature of the interview was to openly motivate participants to respond with conviction from the reality of their experiences. This allowed them to open up more details about their live experiences about the roles of emotional intelligence in English language teaching. Moreover, they can express their narratives freely allowing the researcher to gather more information that are essential in the essential inquiry and goal of the study.

Data Analysis

The study used thematic analysis in exploring the roles of emotional intelligence in English language teaching. According to Nowell, Norris, White and Moules (2017), a rigorous thematic analysis approach can produce insightful and trustworthy findings. This was to seek common patterns within the respondents' responses through analyzing common thematic units in understanding an event.

This analysis used inductive approach where themes emerged with the use of the collected data. Inductive analysis where the data are categorized without trying to follow the themes into a predetermined coding frame from the researcher's preconceptions about the research. This allowed the researcher to explore themes within the respondents' responses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implications

The study on Exploring the Roles of Emotional Intelligence in English Language Teaching has significant implications posited by Goleman's Emotional Intelligence. By definition, emotional intelligence is the ability to handle emotions to create connection, social-awareness, relationships and motivations. The study revealed that when teachers are able to understand their own emotions, they are creating a positive environment for learners to feel safer. It builds a building block for learners to established a connection that will allow them to boost their self-confidence in participating in the English language learning. Educators who are aware of their students' emotions are also successful in integrating a more inclusive and directed classroom instructions.

There are five key elements mentioned in the Goleman's Emotional Intelligence which was also revealed based on the responses of the participants. One key factor of being emotionally aware is to develop social skill. Teachers are



more capable of managing a relationship if they know how to handle themselves and their learners. Their social skill will produce a vibrant learning where students can develop trust and the sense of belongingness. Another key element is how teachers show empathy. Their sense of social awareness allows them to respond with understanding that is free from judgement. Relating themselves to their learners allows a greater venue for understanding. As mentioned by one of the participants of the study, showing empathy will allow students to take risk and learn from their mistakes in the classroom. Lastly, self-regulation and awareness will come into place. Being put on a diverse learning environment, teachers need to be composed and well-directed. Recognizing and managing their own emotions will allow them to shift from one teaching method to another depending on the present demand of the learners. For example, students show confusion during oral recitations that leads their actions to misbehave and disrupts the learning process. An emotionally aware educator and a self-regulated facilitator, teachers observe and understand the need to redirect students into focusing back in learning. Therefore, teachers will utilize other methods to catch students' attention.

The Behaviorism Theory in English Language Teaching also reveals important keys of teacher's emotional behavior in English language teaching. The theory implies that learners learn through imitation by means of observable behaviors in their surroundings. Hence, this depicted the reality that teachers' emotional response affects learner's progress. If teachers portray a negative behavior by means of responding negatively, it demotivates students. This will cause them fear of learning English. They will become passive learners. They will see learning as something that is not obligatory or something that will terrorize them. That is why, one of the responses revealed that, teachers should create a learning environment that will cater students needs and not to criticize or terrorize their learning. Teachers who acknowledge learners' emotions and behaviors are models of a quality learning session.

Another key implication of the study is on Reuven Bar-on Theory, which indicates emotional-social intelligence is related to emotional and social competencies. It determines how we truly perceived and express ourselves, apply empathy to others, and cope with daily demands. As evident in the responses, how teachers see themselves reflects their emotional response and understanding. How teachers address misbehaviors through verbal and nonverbal cues influences learners' attitude in learning. Moreover, with the changing demands of the academe, having emotional intelligence allows teachers to adapt with these changes. Instead of instilling fear when students misbehave and make mistakes, teachers should know to respond constructively to address the issue without damaging learners' confidence and self-esteem.

Finally, a key implication based on Constructivist theory was observed on the responses of the participants. Teaching learners on how to address their mistakes develop self-confidence. In this way, learners will be able to construct their knowledge rather than passively take in information. The development of learning is through experience and interaction. As participants that students have personal experiences that affect their learning, they can use this to imply lessons in real-life scenarios. The way they will utilize this through meaningful interaction, learners can be able to construct their own learning.

Future Directions

Considering the current scope of the study, further exploration is needed in understanding the role of emotional intelligence not only in English language teaching. Future researchers could consider exploring the role of emotional intelligence in other disciplines. This will allow other perspectives as well to be observed and discovered. Moreover, with the digital world, researchers may consider the implication of emotional intelligence in applying technologies in the English language teaching. They can give specificity on what are those challenges those teachers might encounter. Exploring on how they will manage classrooms allowing students learn with the use of ICT.

Another future direction is the exploration of emotional intelligence towards learners. Studies should also emphasize the capacity of learners in managing their own emotions toward their teachers and peers. This is to better understand on why do they respond like that in a certain situation. It is best to consider their insights and behaviors for educational institution to address such issues. Moreover, this will also allow students to reflect on themselves. Creating a greater venue for realization that will develop their emotional stability.

The participation of the educational institution should also be engaged for future studies. Their involvement in developing and honing teachers' emotional intelligence should be more discovered. Teachers also needs guidance and mitigations for them to feel that they are not alone in this journey. In the journey of instilling learning with a diverse and varying social backgrounds and emotional capacities. With the reported number of teachers' attrition, one contributor is their emotional distress in the learning and teaching process. Therefore, a careful scrutiny on how educational institution address these issues should be given emphasis.

Lastly, future researchers could include the comparison between the emotional intelligence of teachers teaching in the city or town and to those who are in remote areas. This is to discover whether the demographic location of the school compels different levels of emotional intelligence. Paving the way to a more accommodating and safe learning environment to different social context.



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