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## THE INFLUENCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AWARENESS ON THE TEACHING EXPERIENCES OF UNIVERSITY TEACHER TRAINEES: A QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

**Abstract:** Educating prospective teachers is a complex and interdisciplinary effort, encompassing educational policies, core subject knowledge, and honing essential skills, attitudes, and behaviours necessary for effective classroom teaching. This study focuses on the initial stage of teacher development, exploring how pre-service university students perceive and understand emotional intelligence (EI) and its components, especially as they embark on internships in primary and secondary schools. The emotional dynamics in English language teaching classrooms, involving various emotions among students, teachers, parents, and colleagues are examined. The study underscores the importance of emotional expertise for both students and teachers in facilitating a productive teaching and learning process. A review of relevant literature reveals that while there is extensive research on emotions in teacher training, the emphasis has been primarily on general education, with limited focus on second-language teacher education. EI is seen as a critical factor in teachers' classroom management, pedagogical skills, and overall success within the profession. Additionally, studies on EI within English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher education are relatively scarce but indicate a significant impact on teaching outcomes. This research employs a mixed-methods approach to investigate pre-service teachers' perceptions of EI. Quantitative data was collected through a survey questionnaire measuring participants' agreement with statements related to EI. Qualitative data was obtained through in-depth interviews with selected pre-service teachers. The study involved 32 pre-service university students enrolled in English language teacher education programs about to begin internships at primary and secondary schools in Poland.

**Key words:** Teacher Development; Emotional Intelligence in Education; Pre-Service Teacher Perceptions; Emotional Intelligence Training; Teacher Education Programs

### 1. Introduction

Educating a prospective teacher is an effort that is complex and interdisciplinary in its nature. It involves introducing numerous educational and legal policies and

procedures, core subject knowledge and mastering skills, attitudes and behaviour for a future teacher to be able to act well and effectively in the classroom settings and a broader school community. Although it may vary from country to country, teacher education customarily follows the path of introductory or initial training, induction - a formal introduction to a new job, - and ongoing professional development. This study primarily focuses on the initial stage of development, aiming to explore how pre-service university students perceive and understand emotional intelligence (EI) and its components. It also investigates how these perceptions interact with the skills required for teaching, particularly among students commencing their internships at primary schools. The English language teaching classroom is a place where a whole range of emotions such as anxiety, anger, disappointment, enjoyment, boredom and happiness collide and inevitably appear unexpectedly. Needless to say, they accompany and are displayed not only by students and pupils but teachers too. Additionally, there is further interplay between parents and colleagues who are linked with a given institution. It is, without a doubt, an area of teaching expertise that needs to be well understood and taken care of for both students and teachers to be able to co-exist comfortably and thrive in the process of teaching and learning. A great deal of the responsibility here rests within the abilities of the teachers, who should be skilful at helping regulate their own emotions (which impact different areas of teaching) and, consequently, help their pupils be able to do the same.

At the academic level, pre-service teachers are normally required to attend and complete their teaching training practice which, at first, may generate a range of emotions, from anxiety to excitement. Thus, stepping into a classroom as a teacher for the first time is certainly an unforgettable but, at the same time, challenging experience. Emotional Intelligence (EI) holds profound implications for the teaching profession, representing a critical aspect of educators' effectiveness in navigating the complex dynamics of the classroom. In the realm of teaching, EI encompasses the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions, as well as the capacity to empathize with and influence the emotions of others, including students, colleagues, and parents. For teachers, possessing a high level of emotional intelligence is not merely a personal trait but a professional competency that directly correlates with teaching success. It involves the skilful management of one's emotional responses in various pedagogical scenarios, fostering positive relationships with students, and creating an emotionally supportive learning environment. As this foundational understanding of EI in teaching sets the backdrop for our research, we explore the intricate interplay between emotional intelligence and the multifaceted aspects of the teaching profession.

## **2. The role of Emotional Intelligence in teaching English as a foreign language - literature review**

In this section of the work, we adopt a theme-based approach to explore pertinent literature on the significance of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in the context of teaching English as a foreign language. The categories encompass the

role of emotions in teacher training, Emotional Intelligence in Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE), anxiety and Emotional Intelligence in EFL teacher education, emotional competence training and its impact on teaching success, the underexplored domain of emotionality in EFL teaching, and the examination of emotions in pre-service teachers' initial teaching encounters.

Let us start with an observation that the large body of research on the role of emotions in teacher training has not, in fact, been based on SLTE but rather general education, for example, Little (1996), Hargreaves (1998; 2000), or Darby (2008). In general, the authors underline the existence of the link between emotions and the changes that should take place in the way schools work. They argue that a lot of the reforms in education focus overly on improvements leading to better cognitive results, at the same time undervaluing emotional development. A balance between the two factors should be sought so as to achieve and improve teachers' and students' performance. The proper correlation between emotional aspects and the cognitive aims can, as emphasised by Hargreaves (2000, p. 824), lead to higher standards, better relationships and successful partnerships.

In turn, Martinez Agudo and Azzaro (2018) present a number of issues related to emotions in general, and EI in particular, and their implications for second language teachers' teaching practice. For example, Dewale, Gkonou and Mercer (2018, p.125-144) studied extent to which and in what way EI, teaching experience, proficiency and gender can affect second language teachers' classroom practice. The research and its statistical analyses showed that «Trait EI and teaching experience were positively linked with levels of self-reported creativity, classroom management, and pedagogical skills and negatively linked with predictability» (Dewale, Gkonou and Mercer, 2018, p. 125).

As regards studies on emotional intelligence within EFL teacher education specifically, they are more limited in number. Some studies focused on one type of emotion in particular - anxiety. For example, Rasool et al. (2023) conducted a study specifically on foreign language writing anxiety among pre-service English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers in Pakistan. They aimed to determine the extent of writing anxiety and investigate its causes. The study found that one-third of the participants experienced at least a moderate level of anxiety, and the researchers identified various reasons for this. Manan et al. (2023) explored the relationship between language learning anxiety and English language speaking performance among pre-diploma students in Malaysia. Their study found a significant negative correlation between language learning anxiety and speaking performance, indicating that higher levels of anxiety are associated with poorer speaking performance. Research in the field of second language teaching and learning has also acknowledged that non-native speaker teachers may experience anxieties related to their language deficiencies and the fear of being judged by students or colleagues (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991). Non-native speaker teachers may feel insecure about their language abilities and worry about making mistakes or being perceived as less competent.

Second language (SL) teachers' negative emotions such as fear of judgement were also recognised to interfere with the process of teaching reflective practices.

In turn, Corcoran and Tormey (2012) reported on qualitative and quantitative research into the efficiency of an emotional competence training programme completed by pre-service teachers and its positive influence on their overall teaching performance. Ghanizadeh and Moafian (2010) examined the role of EFL teacher's emotional intelligence in their success. The relationship between EFL teachers' emotional quotient (EQ) and their didactical success was tested and correlated with the years of teaching experience and their age. The research revealed that the relationship between EQ and teachers' success exists and is significant.

Cowie (2011) conducted a study of expert EFL teachers to find out what emotions are recognised in the teachers' work and how they affect their performance. The teachers involved in the study highlighted certain emotions that they recognised in themselves towards their students. On a positive note, these were the feelings of liking and caring for their students and were expressed in the need to act as moral role models for them beyond the obvious language teaching. On a more negative note, the emotion that prevailed was anger, which was more short-term towards their students but more lasting in relation to colleagues and institution. Cowie (2011, p. 241) believes, and it is hard to disagree given the scientific evidence on the subject matter, that the "emotionality of EFL teaching is an understudied and under theorised area, but nonetheless it is important as teaching is an undeniably emotional profession".

When it comes to the influence of emotions on pre-service students' first teaching experiences, studies are even rarer. As voiced by Martínez Agudo & Azzaro (2018, p. 365) "although research into teachers' emotionality has been conducted mostly in the field of teacher education, surprisingly little is known about the role of emotions in learning to teach and about how student teachers' emotional experiences relate to their teaching practices, how they regulate their emotions and their relationships with students". The authors' findings reveal that the student teachers participating in this study recognise a variety of positive and negative emotions as featuring prominently in their work placement experience, such as passion, satisfaction and enthusiasm, as well as uncertainty and insecurity. The main results reveal that: "a wide variety of personal factors (such as their self-perceived L2 limited communicative competence and teaching inability—for fear of being misunderstood by pupils—as well as their need to feel respected by pupils and understood and supported by their mentor teachers and parents) as well as external influences (as for example, their pupils' indifference and misbehaviour, tensions and disagreements with their mentor teachers and the non-cooperation of colleagues and parents) seem to influence, to a greater or lesser extent, student teachers' emotions in the practicum setting" (Martínez Agudo & Azzaro, 2018, p. 380).

Additionally, as reported in the research by Burn, Hagger, Mutton, & Everton, (2003) as well as Hagger & Malmberg (2011), pre-service teachers voiced a feeling of unease about their emotional ability and well-being. Further evidence that pre-

service teachers viewed their well-being and emotional competence levels as low was delivered in the studies by Corcoran & Tormey, (2012b) and Hue & Lau, (2015). Generally, one may conclude, as Corcoran and O’Flaherty (2022), that teacher preparation programs have a tendency to be focused on subject discipline and pedagogical content knowledge, losing sight of those approaches soliciting more attention to developing and assessing pre-service teachers’ well-being together with social and emotional competence.

## **2. Research Methodology Research Context, Participants and Design**

To explore the perception and understanding of EI and its components among pre-service university students starting their internship at primary and secondary schools, a mixed-methods approach was employed. This approach involved both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

In the quantitative phase, a survey questionnaire was administered to collect data on pre-service teachers’ perception of EI and its constituent components. Likert scale questions were used to measure their levels of agreement with statements related to EI. The questionnaire consisted of 15 sets of statements related to different aspects and factors of EI. This phase provided quantifiable data for further statistical analysis.

In the qualitative phase, in-depth interviews were conducted with two pre-service teachers, who were chosen at random from the survey population, to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences, beliefs, and attitudes towards EI and its relevance in teaching English as a foreign language. The *Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire – Short Form (TEIQue-SF)* was used to measure emotional intelligence quotient, and this phase helped provide richer and more descriptive data to complement the quantitative findings.

The participants were pre-service university students enrolled in English language teacher education programs who were about to begin their internship at primary and secondary schools. The sample size was determined based on the research goals and feasibility. This led to a total of 32 participants, with 15 of them being 2nd year, first degree studies students and the remaining 17 students were from the 1st year, second degree studies, with both groups enrolled in the English teacher education program at the University of Rzeszow, in Poland. The participants’ age varied from 21 to 24 years old.

Within the teacher education curriculum for both of these groups of pre-service teacher trainees, two semesters of foreign language teaching didactics courses had previously been completed and were then followed by English Language Teaching Practicum of 30 hours. The trainees had been assigned to different Polish primary

(first degree students) and secondary (second degree students) schools of their choice and were supervised on-site by an experienced teacher in the respective schools, while the whole project was overseen by a university academic. The primary role of the supervising teachers was that of supporting and evaluating pre-service teacher's performance during their work placement, whereas the university professor was available to give advice or visit the field school if and when required.

The research questions posed in this study were as follows:

1. Is there a difference in the level of familiarity with the term Emotional Intelligence and its skills, as well as the perceived need for more knowledge and/or training related to emotional intelligence and its influence on teaching experience between 1st degree and 2nd degree students?
2. To what extent does self-awareness of shortcomings contribute to a teacher's confidence despite the need for improvement?
3. How does a belief in natural ability to understand others' emotions influence the selection of appropriate teaching techniques based on students' emotional load?
4. What is the relationship between adaptability to different situations and the importance of handling ambiguity and unplanned situations in the ELT profession?
5. How does the ability to express and detect feelings relate to the need for additional knowledge and training in this area?
6. In what ways does the belief in staying calm and maintaining control during challenging situations impact the ability to cope with unpleasant situations and control of stress levels?

#### **4. Data Collection and Analysis Description of the applied statistical analysis**

The statistical analysis applied to investigate the research questions posed in this research project used the Mann Whitney U difference assessment test (for 2 trials), which is used especially when the dependent variable is measured on a quantitative scale and the independent variable on a qualitative scale, and when the conditions for using parametric tests are not met. In the course of the analysis, in addition to the standard statistical significance, appropriate "p" values were also calculated using the Monte Carlo method. This is denoted by a letter (b) next to the significance value.

Correlations between ordinal or quantitative variables (during unfulfilled conditions for using parametric tests) were made using the Spearman's rho coefficient, which informs about the intensity of the relationship and its direction - positive or negative. The obtained value ranges from -1 to 1, with (-1) being a perfect negative correlation and (1) a perfect positive correlation.

The Monte Carlo method in most cases is based on a sample of 10,000 tables with the starting number of the random number generator 2,000,000. The analysis was

performed using the IBM SPSS 26.0 package with the Exact Tests module - exact tests. All dependencies / correlations / differences are statistically significant when  $p \leq 0.05$ . Notes on the Exact Tests module - exact tests: By default, IBM SPSS Statistics calculates statistical significance for nonparametric tests using the asymptotic method. This means that the “p” values are reported on the assumption that the data, given a sufficiently large sample size, follows the specified distribution. However, when the data set is small, the observations are few and unevenly distributed, the asymptotic method may not produce reliable results. In such situations, it is better to calculate the statistical significance of “p” using the exact method, without having to make assumptions that may not be met by the data.

The exact “p” values are preferred for scientific purposes, but they often present huge computational problems, so in practice, asymptotic results are used instead. In the case of large and well-balanced data sets, the statistical significance results obtained with the use of precise and asymptotic methods are very similar to each other, but for a few samples they may be completely different, and thus lead to opposite conclusions during the verification of hypotheses.

In the IBM SPSS package with the Exact Tests module (exact tests) there are two methods of getting the “p” value - the exact method and the Monte Carlo method. The first is preferred for small datasets to ensure sufficient computing power. The main goal is to avoid interrupting the computation process due to an exceeded time limit and insufficient memory. In the case of more numerous samples and tables with a larger category of indications, it is suggested to use Monte Carlo calculations, which last a relatively short time, and the results of statistical significance are significantly similar to those obtained using the exact method.

## **5. Results of Research Quantitative Phase**

Below, I present selected statistically significant data obtained from the students who responded to the questionnaire in the quantitative phase of the research project.

Both 1st degree students and 2nd degree students have a rather moderate level of familiarity with the term Emotional Intelligence (EI) and its skills. The average scores for both groups (2.67 for 1st degree students and 3.12 for 2nd degree students) tend to support this, with 2<sup>nd</sup> degree students demonstrating a greater level of awareness. Both groups of students express a perceived need for more knowledge and/or training on issues related to emotional intelligence and its influence on their teaching experience. The average scores for both groups (3.60 for 1st degree students and 3.82 for 2nd degree students) suggest that there is a relatively high level of recognition of the importance of EI in teaching and a desire for further development in this area.

Question	1st degree students (N 15)	2nd degree students (N 17)	Average (N 32)
I am familiar with the term Emotional Intelligence (EI) and its skills	2.67	3.12	2.91
I need more knowledge and/or training on the issues related to emotional intelligence and its influence on my teaching experience	3.60	3.82	3.71

Table 1

			7. I am aware of my shortcomings and still feel good about myself	7. I am confident in my teaching despite the fact that I know there are still many elements I have to improve	7. I need more knowledge and/or training on how to handle teaching despite my shortcomings
rho Spearmana	7. I am aware of my shortcomings and still feel good about myself	Correlation coefficient	1,000		
		Significance (two-sided)			
		N	32		
	7. I am confident in my teaching despite the fact that I know there are still many elements I have to improve	Correlation coefficient	0.698**	1,000	
		Significance (two-sided)	0.000		
		N	32	32	
	7. I need more knowledge and/or training on how to handle teaching despite my shortcomings	Correlation coefficient	-0.431*	-0.316	1,000
		Significance (two-sided)	0.014	0.078	
		N	32	32	32
**. Significant correlation at the level of 0.01 (two-tailed).					
*. Significant correlation at the level of 0.05 (two-tailed).					

Table 2

In question 7, a higher belief in “I am aware of my shortcomings and still feel good about myself” is associated with a higher belief in “I am confident in my teaching

despite the fact that I know there are still many elements I have to improve” and a lower belief in “I need more knowledge and/or training on how to handle teaching despite my shortcomings.” The correlations were statistically significant, although in the first case, the coefficient value is positive and characterised by a stronger association (in the second case, the correlation is negative with a weaker association).

			10. I have the natural ability to understand other people’s emotions.	10. Being aware of the emotional load my learners bring with them into the classroom helps me choose the appropriate teaching techniques for the best teaching result.	10. I need more knowledge and/or training in this area.
rho Spearmana	10. I have the natural ability to understand other people’s emotions.	Correlation coefficient	1,000		
		Significance (two-sided)			
		N	32		
	10. Being aware of the emotional load my learners bring with them into the classroom helps me choose the appropriate teaching techniques for the best teaching result.	Correlation coefficient	0.490**	1,000	
		Significance (two-sided)	0.004		
		N	32	32	
	10. I need more knowledge and/or training in this area.	Correlation coefficient	-0.19	-316	1,000
		Significance (two-sided)	0.298	0.078	
		N	32	32	32
** . Significant correlation at the level of 0.01 (two-tailed).					

Table 3

Considering question 10, only one statistically significant correlation was found. It is a positive relationship with a clear strength, indicating that as the value of one variable increases, the values of the other variable also increase. A

higher belief in “I have the natural ability to understand other people’s emotions” is associated with a higher belief in “Being aware of the emotional load my learners bring with them into the classroom helps me choose the appropriate teaching techniques for the best teaching result.”

			11. I can easily adjust emotionally to different situations.	11. Adaptability to ambiguous and unplanned situations is important in the profession of ELT teacher.	11. I need more knowledge and/or training in this area.
rho Spearmana	11. I can easily adjust emotionally to different situations.	Correlation coefficient	1,000		
		Significance (two-sided)			
		N	32		
	11. Adaptability to ambiguous and unplanned situations is important in the profession of ELT teacher.	Correlation coefficient	0.528**	1,000	
		Significance (two-sided)	0.002		
		N	32	32	
	11. I need more knowledge and/or training in this area.	Correlation coefficient	-0.271	-0.029	1,000
		Significance (two-sided)	0.134	0.874	
		N	32	32	32
Significant correlation at the level of 0.01 (two-tailed).					

Table 4

In question 11, only between “I can easily adjust emotionally to different situations” and “Adaptability to ambiguous and unplanned situations is important in the profession of ELT teacher” is there a statistically significant correlation. The coefficient value is positive with a significant strength. As the value of one variable increases, the values of the other variable also increase.

		Correlation coefficient	13. I can show my feelings for others and receive ones.	13. Knowing how to skillfully interpret other people's feelings and how to communicate my feelings to others is crucial in teaching EFL.	13. I need more knowledge and/or training in this area.
rho Spearmana	13. I can show my feelings for others and receive ones.	Significance (two-sided)	1,000		
		N			
		Correlation coefficient	32		
	13. Knowing how to skillfully interpret other people's feelings and how to communicate my feelings to others is crucial in teaching EFL.	Significance (two-sided)	0.274	1,000	
		N	0.13		
		Correlation coefficient	32	32	
	13. I need more knowledge and/or training in this area.	Significance (two-sided)	-0.360*	0.217	1,000
		N	0.043	0.233	
			32	32	32
*. Significant correlation at the level of 0.05 (two-tailed).					

Table 5

Considering question 13, only one statistically significant correlation was found, a negative relationship with a clear strength, indicating that a higher belief in “I can show my feelings for others and receive ones” is associated with a lower belief in “I need more knowledge and/or training in this area.”

			14. I can stay calm and maintain control in the face of crisis.	14. The skills to cope with unpleasant situations in the teaching environment are essential in controlling the stress level.	14. I need more knowledge and/or training in this area.
rho Spearmana	14. I can stay calm and maintain control in the face of crisis.	Correlation coefficient	1,000		
		Significance (two-sided)			
		N	32		
	14. The skills to cope with unpleasant situations in the teaching environment are essential in controlling the stress level.	Correlation coefficient	0.425*	1,000	
		Significance (two-sided)	0.015		
		N	32	32	
	14. I need more knowledge and/or training in this area.	Correlation coefficient	-0.489**	0.075	1,000
		Significance (two-sided)	0.005	0.684	
		N	32	32	32
**. Significant correlation at the level of 0.01 (two-tailed).					
*. Significant correlation at the level of 0.05 (two-tailed).					

Table 6

A higher belief in “I can stay calm and maintain control in the face of crisis” is associated with a higher belief in “The skills to cope with unpleasant situations in the teaching environment are essential in controlling the stress level” and a lower belief in “I need more knowledge and/or training in this area.” The coefficients were statistically significant and characterised by clear strengths. In the first case, it is a positive correlation, while in the second case, it is a negative correlation.

## 6. Qualitative Phase

Based on the responses of the students who displayed a high and low level of Emotional Intelligence during the written interview in the qualitative phase of this study, the following data were obtained:

	<b>Student with high EI quotient</b>	<b>Student with low EI quotient</b>
<b>1. Personal experience</b>	Emotions played a significant role in my teaching practice. For instance, there was a situation where a student in my class was struggling with a particular concept and felt discouraged. I approached the situation with empathy, listened to their concerns, and provided tailored support. This created a supportive environment where the student felt valued and motivated to overcome their challenges. Overall, managing my emotions positively influenced my interactions with students and contributed to a more effective teaching experience.	I feel that during my internship, I struggled to effectively manage emotions. For example, there were instances when I felt frustrated and impatient with students who struggled to grasp certain concepts. These emotions negatively affected my interactions with students, leading to strained relationships and a less conducive learning environment overall.
<b>2. Emotional intelligence in teaching</b>	To me Emotional Intelligence means being aware of and understanding both my own emotions and those of my students. It involves recognizing how emotions can impact the teaching and learning process and using this awareness to create a positive classroom environment. Components such as self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation are crucial in my role as a teacher as they helped me connect with students, address their needs, and foster a supportive learning atmosphere.	I find it challenging to grasp the components of emotional intelligence and their relevance to my role as a teacher. Regulating my own emotions and empathizing with my students' experiences is difficult, which hampers my ability to effectively connect with students and create a supportive learning atmosphere.
<b>3. Challenges in managing emotions</b>	While I strive to maintain a high level of emotional intelligence, I still face challenges in managing my own emotions and those of my students. One challenge I encountered was when students exhibited disruptive behavior.	Throughout my internship, I faced significant challenges in managing my own emotions and addressing those of my students. I often became overwhelmed by stress, frustration, or anxiety, making it difficult to respond calmly and

	<b>Student with high EI quotient</b>	<b>Student with low EI quotient</b>
	To handle such situations, I practiced self-reflection, utilized calming strategies like deep breathing, and fostered open communication to address their emotions. Building positive relationships and creating a supportive classroom community were also instrumental in managing emotions and promoting a conducive learning environment.	constructively. I struggled to find effective strategies to manage these emotions in the moment. Additionally, recognizing and understanding the emotions of my students proved challenging, hindering my ability to provide the necessary support and guidance.
<b>4. Positive emotions in the teaching process</b>	I think that positive emotions can greatly enhance my teaching and my pupils' learning process. For instance, when I expressed genuine excitement about a topic, it created a contagious enthusiasm among students and increased their engagement. Additionally, providing words of encouragement and celebrating their progress generated a positive learning atmosphere, boosting motivation and fostering a sense of accomplishment.	Positive emotions, such as enthusiasm and encouragement, have the potential to enhance the teaching and learning process. I notice that I still struggle to consistently generate and express these positive emotions in the classroom. This lack of positivity may impact student engagement and motivation, and limit my effectiveness as a teacher.
<b>5. Negative emotions and their impact</b>	There were instances where negative emotions, like frustration or disappointment, affected my teaching. In such situations, I recognized the need to address these emotions constructively. I would take a step back, reflect on the triggers, and employ strategies like self-regulation and seeking support from colleagues.	Negative emotions, such as frustration or disappointment, have had a significant impact on my teaching. When experiencing these emotions, I often find it difficult to address them in a constructive manner. This led to decreased student engagement and strained teacher-student relationships, ultimately affecting the overall learning experience.
<b>6. Influence of emotional intelligence on the learning environment</b>	Emotional intelligence greatly influences the creation of a supportive and inclusive learning environment. By being emotionally aware, I can recognize and respond to the diverse needs and emotions of English language learners. For example, understanding the challenges they face when acquiring a new language allows	Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment for English language learners. However, due to my low emotional intelligence, I struggle to effectively understand and respond to the diverse emotional needs of my students. This limitation may hinder my ability to establish strong student-teacher

	<b>Student with high EI quotient</b>	<b>Student with low EI quotient</b>
	me to provide appropriate support and create a safe space for their language development. This, in turn, strengthens student-teacher relationships, fosters a positive classroom climate, and enhances the overall learning experience.	relationships and create a positive classroom climate.
<b>7. Guidance and training on emotional intelligence</b>	In my teacher education program, we received guidance and training on emotional intelligence. Key concepts emphasized were self-awareness, empathy, active listening, and strategies for managing emotions in the classroom. These resources and training sessions equipped me with valuable insights and practical tools to apply emotional intelligence principles in my teaching practice.	In my teacher education program, I have received explicit guidance or training on emotional intelligence. Consequently, I feel I lack the necessary tools and strategies to develop my emotional intelligence and apply it in my teaching practice.
<b>8. Future development of emotional intelligence</b>	Moving forward, I recognize the need to further develop my emotional intelligence. Specifically, I aim to strengthen my skills in recognizing and managing my own emotions, as well as deepening my understanding of different cultural and emotional backgrounds of my students. I plan to engage in ongoing professional development opportunities, seek feedback from mentors, and actively reflect on my teaching practice to continually incorporate and refine emotional intelligence in my future career as an English language teacher.	Recognizing the importance of emotional intelligence, I acknowledge the need to work on developing this skill further. To enhance my emotional intelligence, I plan to seek out resources, workshops, or professional development opportunities that focus specifically on emotional intelligence in teaching. I aim to gain a better understanding of emotional regulation, empathy, and effective communication techniques to improve my ability to create a supportive learning environment for my students.

Table 7

## 7. Discussion of the results

Based on the quantitative results, it can be inferred that while the participants in the study have a certain level of familiarity with emotional intelligence, they still feel a need for additional knowledge and training. This highlights the importance

of incorporating EI education and training within the teacher education curriculum to further enhance their understanding and application of EI skills in the teaching profession. The findings also suggest that both 1st degree and 2nd degree students acknowledge the relevance of EI in their teaching experiences and are motivated to improve their competence in this area.

With reference to the second research question related to self-confidence and awareness of shortcomings, the participants who believed they were aware of their shortcomings but still felt good about themselves displayed higher confidence in their teaching abilities, despite acknowledging the need for improvement. This suggests that having self-awareness of areas for growth does not necessarily diminish self-confidence.

Within understanding and managing emotions the participants who reported being able to assess their own feelings, distinguish between assertiveness and aggressiveness, and control their students without losing their temper, demonstrated a higher level of emotional intelligence. This indicates that the ability to understand and manage emotions positively influences teaching experiences. As for adaptability and coping with ambiguity, those students who felt they could easily adjust emotionally to different situations and recognised the importance of adaptability in handling ambiguous and unplanned situations in teaching showed a higher level of perception of emotional intelligence. This suggests that being emotionally flexible and adaptable contributes to successful teaching experiences.

In the area of expression and reception of emotions, the trainees who believed they could show their feelings to others and detect emotions in others exhibited a higher level of perception of emotional intelligence, which implies that the ability to express and receive emotions plays a role in teaching experiences.

As far as calmness and stress management, the participants who believed they could stay calm and maintain control in the face of crisis and recognised the importance of coping skills in managing stress in the teaching environment displayed higher perceived emotional intelligence. This suggests that effective stress management contributes to positive teaching experiences.

Overall, the findings imply that emotional intelligence awareness and its various components play a significant role in shaping the first teaching experiences among university teacher trainees. Teachers with higher levels of emotional intelligence appear to be more confident, adaptable, effective in managing emotions, and better equipped to handle challenging situations. Identifying and developing EI skills can potentially enhance the teaching experiences and outcomes of future educators.

In turn, the qualitative phase of this research project reveals that the personal experiences described by both the high EI student and the low EI student highlight the significant role emotions play in teaching practice. However, the high EI student effectively managed their emotions, leading to positive interactions with students and an overall successful teaching experience. In contrast, the low EI

student struggled to regulate their emotions, resulting in strained relationships and a less conducive learning environment.

The high EI student demonstrated a deep understanding of emotional intelligence in the context of teaching English as a foreign language. They recognised the importance of self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation in connecting with students and fostering a positive learning atmosphere. The low EI student, on the other hand, struggled to grasp the components of EI and their relevance to their role as a teacher, which consequently hampers their ability to effectively engage with students. Both students faced challenges in managing their own emotions and addressing those of their students. However, the high EI student employed effective strategies such as self-reflection, calming techniques, and open communication to manage emotions and create a supportive learning environment. The low EI student, on the other hand, experienced difficulties in managing emotions, both personally and in their students, and lacked effective strategies to handle these situations.

The high EI student recognised the positive impact of emotions such as enthusiasm, encouragement, and joy in the teaching and learning process. They were able to generate and express these positive emotions, leading to increased student engagement and motivation. In contrast, the low EI student struggled to consistently generate positive emotions, limiting their effectiveness as a teacher. Although both students experienced negative emotions, such as frustration and disappointment, that impacted their teaching, the high EI student addressed these emotions constructively through self-reflection, self-regulation, and seeking support, minimising the negative consequences on teaching and student engagement while the low EI student struggled to address negative emotions effectively, resulting in decreased student engagement and strained relationships.

The high EI student understood how EI can influence the creation of a supportive and inclusive learning environment. They emphasised the importance of recognising and responding to the emotional needs of English language learners, which strengthens student-teacher relationships and fosters a positive classroom climate. The low EI student recognised the influence of EI but struggled to effectively understand and respond to the emotional needs of students, hindering their ability to create a supportive learning environment. The high EI student reported that they received guidance and training on EI during their teacher education program, which equipped them with valuable concepts such as self-awareness, empathy, active listening, and strategies for managing emotions in the classroom. The low EI student may have lacked such guidance and training, which could explain their difficulties in understanding and applying EI in their teaching practice.

Finally, looking to the future, the high EI student acknowledged the need to further develop their EI skills. They plan to engage in ongoing professional development opportunities, seek feedback, and reflect on their teaching practice to continually incorporate and refine EI. The low EI student also recognises the need for further development but lacks the specific strategies required to attain this.

## 8. Concluding remarks

In conclusion, taking into account both quantitative and qualitative results, this research project highlights the significant impact of EI on teaching practice, as perceived by university teacher trainees included in the research project.

The results indicate that although students have some familiarity with EI, they perceive a need for more knowledge and training. This underscores the significance of integrating EI education into teacher training programs. Enhancing EI skills should better prepare educators for the complexities of the teaching profession.

Both 1st and 2nd degree students recognise the relevance of EI in their teaching experiences. They are motivated to enhance their competence in this area, which suggests that EI is seen as valuable across different stages of teacher training.

The participants who recognised their shortcomings yet maintained self-confidence displayed higher confidence in their teaching abilities. This suggests that self-awareness of areas for improvement does not necessarily undermine self-confidence. Acknowledging areas of growth can coexist with a positive self-perception. Also, participants proficient in assessing their feelings, distinguishing between assertiveness and aggressiveness, and controlling emotions in the classroom demonstrated a higher perception of EI. Understanding and managing emotions positively influenced their teaching experiences, indicating its role in effective teaching. Students who felt adaptable in various situations and recognised the importance of adaptability in teaching link emotional flexibility and coping skills to successful teaching experiences, highlighting their importance.

As stated by the students in this study, those who can express and receive emotions effectively show higher EI, which suggests that emotional expression and reception contribute to positive teaching experiences, likely enhancing teacher-student interactions. Those participants who remained composed in crises and valued coping skills displayed higher EI. Effective stress management correlated with positive teaching experiences, emphasising its role in maintaining a conducive classroom environment.

Overall, EI and its components significantly shape initial teaching experiences. Higher EI is associated with increased confidence, adaptability, emotion management, and better handling of challenges. Therefore, strengthening EI skills ought to lead to improved teaching outcomes.

In summary, both quantitative and qualitative data lead to the conclusion that EI plays a pivotal role in shaping teaching experiences. Thus, integrating EI education into teacher training and further developing EI skills can enhance educators' effectiveness, emotional management, and interactions with students, ultimately improving the overall quality of teaching and learning environments. Teacher education programs, therefore, should prioritise the inclusion of emotional intelligence training to better prepare teachers for the challenges they may face in the classroom.

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