

THE PORTRAITS OF INDONESIAN PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS' EMOTIONAL GEOGRAPHIES AND COPING STRATEGIES

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Abstract: This research reported on English pre-service teachers' (henceforth PSTs) emotional dynamics during their teaching practicum in Indonesian schools. Research data were collected from retrospective reflections and stimulated recall with ten PSTs. Deploying Hargreaves' (2001a) emotional geography, the research sought to portray PSTs' emotional understandings and misunderstandings resulting from the engagement with school community. This study also examined PSTs' emotion regulation strategies, as the orchestra to construct and re-construct their belief, skills, and professional identity. The findings document contoured emotional experiences characterized by three major themes, *inter alia* (dis)engagement, (dis)orientation, and distress; personal support and social acceptance; and compliance, cooperation, and completion. PSTs resort to antecedent-focused strategies to cope with the emotional dilemma due to their contextual relevance, effectiveness, and their peripherality in the school community. The research implication substantiates the need for restructuring the policy and practice of teaching practicum to accrue an exemplary foundation for teacher education.

Keywords: emotional geographies, emotion regulation strategies, English pre-service teachers, teacher education

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15639/teflinjournal.v34i1/60-78>

Teaching was once considered to be confined to classroom walls, yet burgeoning discussions have revealed its robust allusion to matters beyond the class, signifying potential challenges to both novice and veteran teachers throughout their careers (Gleavesa & Walker, 2010). One rationale for this is that teachers' professional communities are laden with diverse values and conventions among their members (Zembylas, 2007a), and these dynamics may not be readily overt or accessible to teachers as they attempt to immerse themselves in the communities.

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As a corollary, blending into a professional community may cause understandings and misunderstandings, particularly for new teachers as they grapple with various undertakings for which they possess no moral frameworks and coping strategies (Hastings, 2010; Haukås & Mercer, 2022). As such, teachers' success requires not only pedagogical insights but also strategic competence in maintaining their emotionality upon dealing with the dynamics in the professional community. The inquiry into teachers' emotions thus offers promising values in understanding how their feelings determine their resilience and frustration (Burić et al., 2017). However, over the last two decades, teachers' emotionality in teaching duties has received only scant attention (Hargreaves, 2001b; Liu, 2016; Zembylas, 2011), especially in EFL teacher education.

This study aimed to extend the discussion of EFL pre-service teachers (PSTs) in consideration of empirical and epistemological voids. Empirically, most studies scrutinized the emotional geography of in-service teachers (e.g., Cowie, 2011; Liu, 2016). Understanding PSTs' emotions bears greater urgency than that of in-service teachers as the former encounter personal and professional affect more acutely than at any other time throughout their career (Gleavesa & Walker, 2010). Unfortunately, PSTs' emotions have been largely investigated in science instruction (e.g., Bellocchi et al., 2014; Maulucci, 2013). Although existent, studies on EFL PSTs have only examined emotion as psychological constructs, such as emotional intelligence (Koçoğlu, 2011), mindset orientation (Haukås & Mercer, 2022), and cognitive appraisal (Kizilaslan, 2012). Koçoğlu (2011) employed an emotional quotient inventory to investigate PSTs' emotional intelligence, yet the inventory failed to discover how PSTs understood their emotion since it overlooked contextual factors. Likewise, Kizilaslan (2012) did not address emotion in his open-ended survey since it was subordinated to personal, social, and professional challenges. While Haukås and Mercer (2022) examined the blending of growth mindset and fixed mindset regarding PSTs' competencies, their sorting task and semi-structured interview only examined emotion as enthusiasm, confidence, and emotional awareness.

From epistemological viewpoint, previous works rarely employ explicit epistemological underpinning (Liu, 2016). In response, this study follows Zembylas' (2007b) epistemological approaches to emotion for exploring EFL PSTs' emotions and emotional coping strategies. These approaches comprise emotions as intrinsic (psychodynamic approach); emotions as a sociocultural entity (social constructionist approach); and post-structuralist perspective (interactionist approach). The psychodynamic approach reduces emotions to intrinsic character and its behavioural manifestation as the momentary response to a situation. The post-structuralist approach perceives emotion as 'embodied, enacted, and performed' (Zembylas, 2007b). In this approach, individuals experience emotions differently based on their past emotions. Sociocultural approach identifies emotion as dynamic system of meaningful experiences through social encounters.

The present study engaged a sociocultural view to identify how contextual bearings (re)shape one's feelings and trigger emotional regulation strategies (Hargreaves, 2001a, 2001b; Liu, 2016). The research objective was twofold. First, it sought to portray EFL PSTs' emotional understandings and misunderstandings during teaching practicum. Second, it investigated their strategies to address the emotional dilemma stemming from these understandings and misunderstandings. The following inquiries guided the research:

1. What emotional experiences do EFL PSTs encounter throughout their teaching practicum?
2. How do EFL PSTs cope with the emotional challenges arising from these emotional experiences?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional Geography

Literature documents teachers' diverse emotions as discrete psychological constructs ranging from negative to positive emotions (Burić & Frenzel, 2021; Lee & van Vlack, 2018). Although fruitful in examining the emotional response to an emotional event, the general concept of affect cannot capture context-specific emotional experiences as important element in teacher professional development (Liu, 2016), and thus a more complex conceptualization is needed to better understand emotion and emotion regulation strategy, as related sociocultural entities (Pappa & Hökkä, 2021).

In that scenario, Hargreaves (2001a, p. 1061) posits that emotional understandings and misunderstandings can be defined as emotional geographies, which "consist of the spatial experiential patterns of closeness and/or distance in human interactions and relationships that help create, configure, and colour the feelings and emotions we experience about ourselves, our world, and each other". Hargreaves' (2001a) emotional geography sets the conceptual and analytical framework in this study. The framework involves physical geography, moral geography, sociocultural geography, professional geography, and political geography.

Physical geography pertains to the closeness and/or distance due to spatial and temporal framework. Teaching is inherently hectic job, and it oftentimes leaves insufficient time for teachers' reflection and collaboration (Zhu et al., 2018). Collegial support is essential throughout PSTs' first and lifelong teaching since it gives them the space to support one another in understanding learning, teaching, identity, and professional community (Güngör & Güngör, 2018).

Moral geography refers to the closeness and/or distance posed by different goals and accomplishments within professional praxis. Moral standards are entirely new to PSTs as they only grapple with positivistic theoretical outlooks of teaching. As such, they need to establish and restructure their understanding of the legitimate moral standards of practice. Such emotions as shame, guilt, and self-doubt are likely to occur during this process (Zembylas, 2007a).

Sociocultural geography is pertinent to the closeness and/or distance resulting from the differences in race, gender, ethnicity, culture, and language. Although PSTs may work in a community living by values, language, and ethnicity known to them, these cultural entities may not always be overt to them. This cultural dilemma can wax or wane upon interacting with new teachers, students, school staff, and parents (Zembylas, 2011).

Professional geography is germane to the closeness and/or distance posed by various understandings of professionalism and professional praxis. Haukås and Mercer (2021) contend that different communities dictate distinctive standards of teaching and learning, and PST may see professional benchmarks in many ways. This professional closeness and/or distance colours PST's professional identity, legitimacy, and appropriateness, which might evoke stress, anxiety, and frustration.

Political geography deals with the closeness and/or distance stemming from different understandings of power relations. Power structure impacts professional communities and determines the mechanism as well as social values of teaching practice. This highlights the need to identify one's own and others' statuses and roles. Misunderstanding these rules may result in such emotions as guilt and embarrassment.

Emotion Regulation Strategies in Teaching

Emotion regulation strategies aid in developing positive affect and perceptions of self across occupations, such as social workers (Steinkopf et al., 2021), college students (Brockman et al., 2017), and teachers (Burić & Frenzel, 2021). Studies in teachers' emotion regulations have engaged multiple methodologies, predominantly diaries and interviews, and self-reported surveys. These studies acknowledged that emotion regulation determines teachers' identity development (Pappa & Hökkä, 2021), well-being and professional performance (Burić & Frenzel, 2021; Liu, 2016), and classroom management self-efficacy (Lee & van Vlack, 2018).

Emotional regulation refers to how individuals manage their emotional responses to specific circumstances in contextually appropriate ways (Pappa & Hökkä, 2021). Gross (1998) defines emotion regulation as the process by which individuals consciously or unconsciously manipulate which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express them. He distinguishes between antecedent-focused and response-focused emotion regulations. The former deals with situation selection to modify emotional outcomes by focusing one's attention on a particular situation. Response-focused emotion regulation includes modifying the experiential, physiological, or behavioural responses to emotion. Finlayson et al. (2021) elucidate that teachers' emotion regulation strategies may conform to either socially expected emotional displays or emotion devoid of feeling authenticity, as elaborated below.

Teachers apply various emotion regulation strategies even within one emotional episode, such as situation selection, situation modification, cognitive change, and attention deployment (Jiang et al., 2016). Antecedent-focused emotion regulation is a more desirable strategy than response-focused emotion regulation. In classroom engagement, faking emotion is more strongly correlated to elevating students' cognitive, emotional, and behavioural engagement, compared to deep acting and hiding emotion (Burić & Frenzel, 2021). Teachers tend to fake emotions to attain their instructional objectives, such as pretending to be angry to stop students from misbehaving.

Notwithstanding, faking emotion as a surface acting, that is the modification of emotional expressions, poses draining effects on teachers' frustration, while deep acting positively correlates with enjoyment and pride (Lee & van Vlack, 2018). Deep acting, as the ability to regulate internal feelings and display expected emotions, positively correlates with enjoyment as the drive to classroom management self-efficacy. In contrast, surface acting positively correlates with anxiety which is negatively correlated with classroom management self-efficacy. This accounts for why deep acting is preferable over surface acting. In harmony, Pappa and Hökkä (2021) contend that cognitive change occurs most often among teachers, followed by response modulation and situation modification at a similar rate, while attention deployment and situation selection occur last.

METHOD

Research Setting and Participants

This qualitative case study investigated EFL PSTs' emotional experiences and emotion regulation strategies in teaching practicum. Following Xu et al. (2021), this study collated data from information-rich interviewees, by recruiting ten EFL PSTs assigned to do the teaching practicum at eight schools at different levels and locations. This enabled the scrutiny of their emotional experiences as they interacted with their social settings. However, given the sensitive natures of emotional experiences (Hastings, 2010), the recruitment was also based on participants' discretion, rather than seeking the balance between school locations and levels. Careful generalization of potential research implications is highly advised since most participants were assigned to senior high schools within urban areas. All participants were 20 years old. The demographic data of the PSTs are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Data of Research Participants

Pseudonyms	Gender	School Level	Location
Azmee	Female	Senior high school	Urban
Rifat	Male	Senior high school	Urban
Hida	Female	Senior high school	Urban
Azul	Female	Vocational school	Urban
Lily	Female	Junior high school	Urban
Ivan	Male	Junior high school	Urban
Nirmala	Female	Junior high school	Urban
Mawar	Female	Junior high school	Urban
Hendy	Male	Senior high school	Urban
Anto	Male	Senior high school	Suburban

Data Collection and Analysis

Before the research commencement, we met the participants in the first week of their teaching practicum to describe the research purpose and data collection procedure through written reflection and stimulated recall, and their written consents were collated afterward. They were encouraged to compose one retrospective reflection on their emotional experiences and emotional regulation strategies during a two-month teaching practicum, and we collected the reflections after the practicum was over. The reflection was guided by Hargreaves' (2001a) framework of emotional geography, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Reflection Guideline

No	Dimensions	Questions
1	Sociocultural geography	1. How do the cultures, norms, and language at the school determine your engagement with the school community?

No	Dimensions	Questions
		2. Do you find any difficulties to settle in the community?
2	Moral geography	1. What goals does the school expect from pre-service teachers? 2. How do you find yourself in meeting those standards?
3	Professional geography	1. Are there any specific teaching standards you have to meet? 2. How do you manage to teach well in the teaching context?
4	Physical geography	1. How much time do you have to talk or discuss with your colleagues? How does the engagement with them affect your teaching practicum? 2. Do you have the access and time to engage with the school community? How does the engagement with the community affect your teaching practicum?
5	Political geography	1. How do you find yourself complying with the school policy or rules? 2. How much do the policy or rules affect your teaching practicum?

We highlighted emotional experiences in PSTs' reflections and probed into these experiences through the stimulated recall interview, which was done face-to-face for 30-45 minutes and audio-recorded. The stimulated recall aimed to clarify and expand the stories in their reflections. Indonesian language was used to help the participants maintain the accuracy and flexibility of their reflections and interview responses.

This study followed the social-constructionist nature of emotions in teaching, which Hargreaves (2001b) considers integral to the interactions between teachers, and to the organizational, cultural, and social arenas wherein emotions arise. Given that emotions and emotion regulation strategies co-occur in reciprocity (Hargreaves, 2001b; Pappa & Hökkä, 2021), data analysis sought to identify general emotional experiences, i.e., themes, in which more than one emotional geography and regulation strategy were identified. This enabled a more authentic account of PSTs' emotional experiences and regulation strategies to be coherent with Hargreaves' (2001a) emotional geography.

Grounded within Hargreaves' (2001a) emotional geography, the data analysis employed Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis. First, the researchers perused the reflections and interview transcripts to generate initial coding and general categories representing emotional geographies and coping strategies. Afterward, axial coding was operative upon identifying the correlation between codes and evaluating their relevance to the research questions. Finally, we conducted a thematic analysis to synthesize the relations between emotional experiences and coping strategies as the basis for research conclusion. For example, we identified related emotional challenges in one of Hendy's reflections:

(It was fine to me, encountering those cultures), (but somehow it turned out weird because we eventually felt like a complete outsider). (We had to work out our plan on our own, unless we came to seek help).

Despite the initial engagement with the school culture marked in the first segment in brackets, the next two segments documented negative emotions, namely, alienation and confusion, viewed from physical geography and moral geography, respectively. It was clear that

he experienced disorientation, disengagement, and eventually distress of not knowing what to do, due to the dearth of interpersonal engagement with the teachers and their moral support.

Ensuring trustworthiness, we established rapport with the PSTs by listening to their complaints as well as corrections and keeping their identities confidential. Second, the reflections and stimulated recall results were triangulated to ascertain consistent findings. Finally, we coded the data independently and discussed emerging differences before reaching final codes and themes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This study garnered PSTs' reflections on their emotional experiences and emotion regulation strategies throughout their teaching practicum. The findings highlighted three broad themes: (dis)engagement, (dis)orientation, and distress; personal support and social acceptance; and compliance, cooperation, and completion. Due to the reciprocal relationship between emotions and emotion regulations (Hargreaves, 2001b; Pappa & Hökkä, 2021), the analysis sought to identify a distinctive emotional event or a series of emotional events, i.e., theme(s), as the embodiment of associated emotional experiences and emotion regulations.

(Dis)engagement, (Dis)orientation, and Distress

The PSTs encountered unique professional communities at both macro and micro levels, with resultant understandings and misunderstandings as to the cultures, codes, and norms. Although these communities were characterized by common Indonesian cultures, the PSTs were frequently disengaged and disoriented due to the power asymmetry between them and the professional community. Their peripheral role and subordination in the school hierarchy led them to a submissive stance when emotional challenges arose as they were unable to diffuse fear, insecurity, and frustration.

They acknowledged the ease of settling in the school community due to their familiarity with school cultures. This was considered pivotal for seamless engagement with a new community, as described in Rifat's initial encounter with school culture below.

Adapting school culture was quite effortless because the existing culture was conservative as they were based on religious values, such as kissing teacher's hand, respecting teacher... There was no hurdle to adapting to the culture, except the high continuity of exercising the culture, as was the case in kissing teacher's hand... What helped my adaptation was observing school members and the teacher interaction with students and having my friends' supports.

Hendy also reported that "the school culture was strongly laden with educational cultures, and it was quite simple to adapt to". However, it appeared that cultural connectedness was not the sole reason for such seamless adaptation. The following stories implied the value of physical, personal, and moral proximity, which, when absent, might pose challenges to engaging with the community.

Negative emotions emerged as the PSTs felt disengaged and disoriented, due to the absence of moral and emotional supports from the teachers. Being a newcomer instilled a sense of insecurity and loneliness. Ivan clarified how physical distance affected his interaction with the school members.

Our office was separated from the main building, which made it difficult for us to interact with the teachers. The only time we went to the main building was when we had to teach and replace an absent teacher.

Also, personal and moral supports seemed to outweigh social acceptance and curricular support. Hendy mentioned that “the school was supportive as they gave curricular guidance to plan the teaching praxis”. The PSTs were formally admitted to the school and received curricular guidelines for their teaching practicum, yet the absence of emotional understanding left them in confusion, as described in Hendy’s account below.

... We eventually felt like complete outsiders. The school members did welcome us and they gave us directions as to what to do, but then there was nothing more than that. We had to work out our plan on our own...

Conflicts can easily come to the surface when intense communication and mutual understanding are absent. Azul’s story portrayed how emotional distance made the PSTs feel alienated and disengaged.

My colleagues and I often talked about the lack of interaction with the teachers, and we worked out some solutions by greeting and initiating communication. It worked for some teachers, but failed for some others. The school did not even manage to introduce us to the teachers.

The feeling of being a misfit interfered with their emotional well-being and discouraged them from closing the emotional gap with the teachers. Azul mentioned that “the school principal suddenly put a paper saying ‘respect teacher’s privacy’ (on the door to teacher’s office) without any explanation. Furthermore, it was difficult to consult the student teachers’ programs to the principal because “he never even once talked to (the student teachers)”.

Azul retold a quarrel in the teacher's office once some PSTs by accident entered the teachers’ office, which was deemed a serious rule violation by the teachers. This incident exemplified that emotional misunderstanding could result in acute conflict and distress. These PSTs who were kept beyond the professional community could only accept the policy and self-control their negative emotions, without working out any solution. Azul said,

... We were afraid of the teachers, so discussions on the gaps were never an option. At that time, we could not even think about inquiring explanation for the regulation in the teacher’s room since it was directly made by the principal...

Azul mentioned that the distress of being under such an authoritarian leader intensified due to the emotional distance from the supervising lecturer. Equally serious was that the emotional

distance between the PSTs and the supervising lecturer prevented them from sharing their frustration since they “were not so close to the lecturer, so the student teachers were not so confident to initiate a consultation on the gaps with the teachers. The lecturer once asked about the problems at school, but none was willing to address the inquiry since the discussion took place in the teacher’s office”. Azul and her colleagues had to deal with a more heart-breaking moment as “the principal suddenly rejected the proposal (of teaching practicum projects) in front of the students during a ceremony, which was extremely painful”.

The following stories further acknowledge how power asymmetry leads to physical, psychological, and emotional exhaustion. Azul retold her experience of being assigned to replace her supervising teacher to handle one class with student misbehaviour. It turned out that the substitution was meant to off-load teaching duty from the teacher.

... that (substitution) was extremely burdensome because I had to handle someone else’s class. The students in the class were completely hard to control.... My colleague was so distressed that she cried as we could not get them to stop talking or remain seated, let alone ask them to do their assignment.

Another episode of powerlessness was the story of Azmee and her colleagues being assigned to organize trophies.

There were two rooms containing trophies gained since the 1900s, and we were asked to put them on a shelf and organize them based on the year... We found out that it was a direct order from the principal.

These two stories depicted how personal interests of those in charge trigger negative emotions although a professional community is inherently driven by political agendas and regulations. All the PSTs could do was being obedient to prevent controversy and accomplish their teaching practicum.

Personal Support and Social Acceptance

The PSTs came to the school as outsiders, and this put a barrier to establishing emotional proximity with school members because emotional understanding and personal support were initially scarce. They retold that maintaining webs of friendliness with the school members was a crucial strategy to gain personal support and social acceptance. Azmee mentioned that upon arrival the PSTs played the role of outsiders.

When we were first in touch with the teachers, we sensed a big wall between us. We felt like we were students to them since we learned from them, so we treated them like our lecturers.

Azmee and her colleagues maintained their friendliness with the teachers, without attempting to intensify their moral relationship with the teachers. She mentioned that “although some teachers welcomed the student teachers, some seemed reluctant to break the ice”. This initial limbo land sparked a greater sense of being a misfit although they received only a gentle warning concerning the PSTs’ being in the teachers’ office.

We only had two weeks to get to know the teachers and the surroundings, but an issue came up just as one of us got a gentle warning from one of the teachers who pointed out that they were afraid of having their privacy interfered by our presence in the office.

Addressing this gentle rejection, Azmee and her colleagues tried to maintain their positive emotions by being selective as to whom they would rather get along with. Although this did not minimize the emotional distance, it was simply workable and helpful to keep them safe, as described by Azmee below.

We did not try to minimize the gap with those who kept distance between us, but we simply wanted to be safe by interacting only with those open to us.... To remain comfortable, we oftentimes selected whom to interact with, but of course, we remained friendly to any of the teachers.

The PSTs' immersion in the community allowed them to gradually develop an emotional understanding with most of the teachers. Teachers' support was essential to help them settle into professional circles. Azmee mentioned that "at first it was anxious to work alongside a teacher in teaching one or two classes, but this anxiety gradually turned out to be comfort once (student teachers) understood the interaction patterns with the teacher and discovered what he expected". In this case, communication was indeed essential to build emotional understanding and gain social acceptance, as Rifat stated below.

We always communicated with those in charge at schools, such as the principal, the vices, and other figures. This helped us to find out what we were allowed to do and build mutual understanding between us.

A friendly environment was pivotal to help the PSTs settle in and interact with the school community. Unlike Azmee, Mawar voiced social acceptance and personal support omnipresent right from the outset of their practicum.

The interaction was so flexible. For example, when we needed to see the principal, we could just go to his office, or we could talk to him in the class or school corridor. I did not think there was any issue when we interacted with the teachers and the principal.

Mawar was immersed in a community, which finely fused the professional and sociocultural geographies. Not only did this environment give her a sense of acknowledgment and empowerment, but it also forged a feeling of equality and intimacy. She mentioned that "all of the teachers were friendly and kind to (student teachers). They even invited (student teachers) to a regular gathering".

In the classroom, social acceptance grew as the PSTs worked with their students and built mutual understanding between them. Proximity and intensity of communication between them aided in bonding respect and trust, which were rather scarce at the outset. Azmee's account exemplifies how physical emotion lends itself to further forging moral understanding.

The students typically viewed us as a foreigner, so they did not readily pay respect to us being a new teacher to them.... However, in the following weeks, they became respectful to us.

Personal support aids in establishing positive moral emotion within the classroom setting, which may come from colleagues and the supervising teacher. Having a moral understanding as to what is important to achieve affords reflective and collaborative space through which the PSTs improve their praxis. To that end, Azmee explained that working with her colleagues helped maintain quality teaching and well-being.

We shared information with colleagues teaching other courses, teaching experiences to handle different classes and tricks in dealing with the students.

Although it was difficult to nullify emotional distance, these PSTs managed to establish a wide web of friendliness, with few special proximal bonds. This close friendship, as in the case of Azmee's companionship with her colleagues, afforded an ambient space in which they were able to vent their distress and diffuse negative emotions. The following account by Azul represents a vignette of such camaraderie.

... We (the PSTs) stayed in the teacher's office. Whenever we wanted to vent our frustration, we got afraid of teachers listening and complaining about us talking about our problems. To deal with that, we went to the library as the librarian was so friendly. When we vented about the issues with our supervising teacher and other school staff, he always calmed us down and he was a good listener. Also, we oftentimes met the vice of student affairs since he was so open and friendly.

Notwithstanding, sharing episodes with colleagues and those who were not involved in the issues was not quite helpful to solve the actual problems. These students never opted for open discussion, but they simply worked out their friendliness to keep them safe. Azul mentioned that "having a discussion among us outside the school did not solve the issues, but at least that could reduce the psychological burden. It was more effective to have direct consultation with the teacher, but it seemed impossible".

Compliance, Cooperation, and Completion

The outset of teaching practicum was generally fraught with misunderstanding and mismatch between what they learned in university and what was expected in a real class. As the ambivalence intensified, low self-efficacy, demotivation, and burnout were likely to arise. At this juncture, consulting colleagues and supervising teacher, followed up with reflection, to put theory and practice in harmony was fruitful to build emotional understanding. The following account by Rifat demonstrates how moral and professional misunderstandings affect his emotion.

We had to develop test items with a high level of difficulty. The students mentioned that the tests were too difficult. There was nothing we could do because that was the school standard. We worked together in developing the bank of test items and then selected only items considered difficult.

As the item selection was dilemmatic and they had no prior knowledge of students' competence, collaboration with peers was a decent option to critically reflect on the existing items. Rifat told that the PSTs "did multiple crosschecks among peers to determine which items

were difficult". This assessment policy sparked anxiety, guilt, and failure since most students failed to reach the minimum passing criteria. These PSTs were also assigned to help the students reach an exceedingly high standard. Azmee's story highlights the resultant anxiety, guilt, and failure.

We did not understand why the standard was so high. The scoring criteria were highly demanding, as grade A accounted for scores ranging from 94 to 100, and grade B ranged from 87 to 93.

Azmee once voiced her guilt as she "failed of becoming a good teacher due to the failure to help students reach minimum criteria, and the compulsory difficulty level was complicated, especially considering the low achievers".

Different professional standards rose ambivalence as the PSTs conducted their teaching. Rifat retold that "teachers had to minimize explanation and encouraged the students to explore the material, which was contradictive to what was taught in microteaching where ample explanations were deemed valuable". Another dilemma was concerned with the absence of moral standards. PSTs were consistently on the lookout for moral standards to build their self-efficacy. What follows is Azmee's story on the absence of moral standards.

The supervising teacher gave us ample freedom in designing lesson plans and materials, which put us at ease but at the same time drove us confused. We did not have any clear clues as to what we had to achieve. We did receive feedback after teaching, but it was not sufficiently detailed.

Likewise, Nirmala was confused since "the supervising teacher did not give any standard of teaching. The student teachers were simply asked to teach right from the first week". She furthered that the only option available was "working and discussing with a peer assigned to teach the same class". When the supervising teacher imposed complete compliance with the institutional standard in lesson planning, the PSTs experienced burnout as they saw their practice as a failure despite overlooking only a minute detail. Lily felt how imposed compliance with the lesson plan led to her sense of frustration and failure. Lily said,

Whenever we missed even one point in the lesson plan, we had to improve it in the next meeting. It was somewhat burdensome to me because not all parts of lesson plan could be actuated. However, the supervising teacher clearly demanded full compliance with the lesson plan. I felt incapable of meeting that demand.

The PSTs established a code of professionalism with an inherent orientation to becoming a friend to students, with more lenience upon dealing with the students. Aiming at emotional understanding with the students, Anto pointed out that "it was important to build emotional proximity with the students. Equally important was establishing spiritual understanding with the students, which helped to build a close relationship with the students and make them interested in the material". Azmee retold a similar outlook from her experience in supervising an examination.

I found some copied works, and during the examination, I hardly warned the students because I only had two months of teaching practicum. I did not want to be stringent with the students as they treated us as student teachers... However, I still proctored the examination ... as much as I could.

The PSTs had to address their classroom conundrum by themselves as the supervising teachers also had their institutional duties, leaving them in trials-and-triumph episodes. Armed with positivistic instructional theories, they were encouraged to orchestrate novel instructional activities for ecstatic teaching experiences. Relying on her knowledge in English for Young Learners (EYL), Azul involved games and songs to address boredom in her class.

I took [EYL] at campus, and when I was assigned to teach the first grader, I presumed they still lingered to their junior high school experiences. Whenever they looked bored, I always integrated games and songs to get them excited.

Such a pedagogical approach also stemmed from a different moral standard. Having observed her supervising teacher, Hida presumed that “the teacher hardly explored other instructional media, so the class was laden with lecturing, which was rather detrimental to students’ creativity”. As Hida taught Social science class, which was hard to control, she “managed to engage the students by involving games and exciting work, such as gallery work”.

Albeit the limbo land in teaching students of diverse personalities and competencies and complying with instructional demands, the PSTs eventually managed to develop positive personal, moral, and professional emotions. The more they taught their classes, the more emotional understanding they co-constructed with the students. This emotional bonding outweighed the dilemmas and distress colouring their initial weeks of teaching practicum, as voiced in Azul’s account below.

I knew some of the students were mischievous... Sometimes they slept during classes, and then I approached them and woke them up. I always maintained intense interaction and eventually in the following weeks, they could keep up with the lesson and did the assignment. To me, handling that class gave me a boost to be close to the students. I felt this mischievous class was also part of my responsibility, although it was only for several weeks.

Discussion

The Emotional Experiences in Teaching Practicum

The present study highlights that teaching practicum involves the trials and triumphs of working out the emotional bonding with the professional community, which eventually leads to a sense of accomplishment and positive self-worth, albeit disengagement, disorientation, and distress throughout teaching practicum. Resonating with Zhu (2017), the findings document the prevalence of emotional and ethical dilemmas in teaching practicum. First, the PSTs had to determine whether they should behave as outsiders or community members. They also found it complicated to shoulder the right roles at schools: a real teacher or office assistant. Third, they struggled with sorting out the paradox between the care of teaching and the classroom authority. Finally, teaching students of different tracks and levels was also dilemmatic.

These findings also confirm Frenzel et al. (2015) who underscore anger, enjoyment, and anxiety as the three most prevalent emotions throughout teaching practicum.

Power asymmetry is found to be the predominant cause of disengagement, disorientation, and distress. In line with Liu (2016), the findings describe how school principal, policymakers, and supervising teachers can regulate the discursive capital and power which determine PSTs' opportunity to build their agency as a member of school community. With PSTs' initial role as newcomers, a political practice that confines them in their peripherality will easily spark confusion, hopelessness, and demotivation. These negative emotions are also evident during the initial engagement in pedagogical practice where they have to comply with demanding professional and moral standards in teaching and testing. By contrast, engaging and supportive discourse between PSTs and those at the higher hierarchy of the school community is proven a real treasure that will empower PSTs to foment emotional understanding and stronger emotional well-being (Hargreaves, 2001a). When political system and practice allow PSTs to engage in professional, moral, and social practices on equal footing as any other old-timers in school, they will develop self-worth, confidence, and emotional well-being.

The findings also canvas the emotional experiences during PSTs' immersion in the professional and interpersonal interaction with teachers and policymakers. Their stories document how misunderstanding the rules of interaction with teachers and school principal leads to stress and frustration. A professional community that dilutes different emotional geographies in a supportive fashion helps PSTs sustain emotional understanding and encourages socially relevant emotional work (Finlayson et al., 2021). With this diffusion of emotions, PSTs sense greater equity, personal support, and social acceptance, and these encourage shared moral and professional understanding. As the emotional gap wanes, they gain more chances of accruing close bonds through frequent communication and strengthening mutual understanding and professional partnerships (Hastings, 2010). For such empowering partnership to thrive, growing physical and sociocultural proximity that brings PSTs, teachers, and policymakers together affords the initial learning pathway for PSTs to establish their identity.

Pre-Service Teachers' Emotion Regulation Strategies

Following Pappa and Hökkä (2021), our findings report that generally PSTs resort to cognitive change to address emotional challenges and misunderstanding. However, response modulation, situation modification, and attention deployment are also operative particularly upon managing their web of friendliness during emotional challenges against the professional community. PSTs are constantly engaged in various emotion regulation strategies even within one emotional episode, inside or outside the class (Jiang et al., 2016).

In this study, the familiarity with school cultures encouraged the PSTs' confidence to emulate school ethos. Although emotional misunderstanding arose at the macro or micro level, physical and sociocultural proximity opened the learning pathways through observation and reflection to better position themselves and meet institutional standards. Congruent with Zembylas (2011), the findings acknowledge that PSTs need to engage with school community to build institutionally expected identity. In-depth interaction with the community empowers

them to align themselves with the discourse of the community and nullify the gaps between divergent identities bound to socio-cultural, professional, and political codes (Liu & Xu, 2013).

When social acceptance and personal support were scarce, the PSTs resorted to their circles where they could vent their distress and share possible solutions to surmount their dilemmas. This emotional bonding not only developed with those with whom they established personal intimacy but also emerged among new acquaintances who had engaged in the dynamics of teaching practicum. In addition, this context-bound friendship developed between PSTs and other school members of lower political hierarchy due to the absence of political, sociocultural, and physical distance. Hargreaves (2001b) argue that these webs of friendship create an ambient environment where PSTs can work out the emotion regulation strategies relevant to the sociocultural and professional practices. Furthermore, emotional bonding helps foster emotional understanding, intellectual enrichment, and the readiness to deal with institutional demands (Hargreaves, 2001b; Liu, 2016).

In the classroom context, physical and moral proximity gradually amplified the emotional understanding between the PSTs and supervising teachers. In resonance with Zhu et al. (2018), extensive reflection with supervising teachers and colleagues helped develop self-improvement and self-efficacy in complying with moral and professional standards. By extension, confidence and high self-efficacy, pave the avenue to reaching moral standards stipulated by supervising teachers or personalized by PSTs. The findings acknowledge Deng et al. (2018) who report that PSTs tend to view moral standards differently, compared to supervising teacher who oftentimes embraces teacher-centric teaching and traditional mentorship with minimum feedback and support. Consistently engaged in the quest for recognition and acknowledgment of their identity, PSTs sought to establish personal bonding with their students and organized their teaching around love and caring, which is important for developing supportive working condition and emotional understanding (Liu, 2016).

CONCLUSIONS

This research documents teaching practicum as a multidimensional learning experience fraught with political, sociocultural, personal, and academic phenomena which potentially spark positive and negative emotions at times. Such experience can spark emotional dilemmas from different stimuli, ranging from a mere mismatch between institutional standards and PSTs' needs to overt rejection from school communities. Addressing emotional dilemmas, PSTs generally resort to antecedent-focused strategies as primary emotion regulation strategies, given their contextual relevance, effectiveness, and PSTs' peripherality in the school hierarchy. By consulting significant others, i.e., supervising teachers, lecturers, and policymakers, and engaging in self- and shared reflection throughout teaching practicum, PSTs can eventually attain emotional understanding as the springboard to develop their self-efficacy, enjoyment, and optimism in their future identity.

The research implies the need for university-school collaboration to develop structured goals and strategies to help PSTs address the challenges of teaching practicum. Supervising teachers and lecturers should assess and support PSTs by taking into account consented performance benchmarks and data-driven classroom action. In addition, teacher mentors need

to be sensitive to potential emotional challenges and misunderstandings surrounding PSTs, due to the vulnerability of their peripheral role. Teacher mentors are also expected to develop a supportive stance to build emotional connections with PSTs for a successful teaching practicum. For instance, teacher mentors need to make explicit the commitment to teaching collaboration and open the discourses on multiple views of teaching excellence by engaging PSTs in structured and goal-oriented lesson study. PSTs can help the more senior teacher mentors to embark on research-informed pedagogical novelty, providing that the former is encouraged to voice their ideas. Perhaps, now is the time to form a new professional community bringing supervising teachers, lecturers, and PSTs together in genuine collaboration to optimize teaching practicum for academic, institutional, and personal development.

The research findings draw noteworthy implications for PSTs to survive teaching practicum. First, they need to establish close rapport with the members of the school community. Venting and repressing negative emotions are unproductive since these further mask emotional challenges and prevent gainful exploration of emotion regulation; cognitive reappraisal of emotionally-potential situations is more advisable to better identify the root of negative emotions and make a healthy response. Second, building a working environment that enables PSTs to reflect and work on their emotional challenges would help them exercise more agency and discover relevant emotion regulation strategies. PSTs can manage regular discussions to support reflective learning and agency building. For example, lesson study, dialogic journal writing, and teaching portfolios (Lunenberg & Korthagen, 2009), can help PSTs refine their views about teaching practicum, discover their practical wisdom, build their self-images as future teachers, and explore underlying factors driving their emotions.

Notwithstanding, a few limitations in the present study are worth noting. First, due to the brevity of the two-month teaching practicum and its substantial workload within and beyond teaching, the study did not intensively investigate PSTs' emotional experiences, which would otherwise be manageable through biweekly interviews in a more extensive teaching practicum (Liu, 2016). Furthermore, given the context-specific nature of emotions, the balanced involvement of PSTs from urban and suburban schools will generate a more robust understanding of emotional geographies in teaching. Third, the data collection only partially portrayed how PSTs managed their classes and related emotion regulations. Considering classroom practice as the core of teaching practicum, future studies need to collect detailed narratives of PSTs' pedagogical and emotional works in class through audio-visual recordings to foster reflection with supervising teachers and lecturers about their praxis.

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