

**Enhancing the Incorporation of Emotional intelligence into the Teacher Education Curriculum in Zimbabwe**

By

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**Abstract**

Teachers in Zimbabwe face a myriad of challenges that cause stress, burnout and loss of emotional composure and professionalism and necessitate that they be equipped with emotional intelligence skills. In addition, there is public concern over growing cases of teacher suicide (Goba, 2019; Tshili, 2020; Anonymous, 2022; Naitha, 2022) and teachers have consistently been under public criticism for alleged professional incompetence (Ncube, 2023), corruption (Moyo, 2022) and poor interpersonal relationships. These allegations and cases of teacher suicide suggest a need for Teacher Education in Zimbabwe to enhance emotional intelligence education and training. Enhanced emotional intelligence education and training would enhance teachers' professional conduct, ability to cope with stress and relationship building skills (Vesley, Saklofske & Leschied, 2013; Mafuzah & Jais, 2015; Chen & Guo, 2018; Reddy & Bhaskara Rao, 2018; Brackett & Katulak, 2018; Soanes & Sungoh, 2019; Hen, 2020; Baba, 2020). However, there is lack of information and guidelines on how and what content to integrate to enhance the incorporation of emotional intelligence into the Teacher Education Curriculum in Zimbabwe. This study therefore, explored measures that could be adopted to enhance the incorporation of emotional intelligence into the Teacher Education Curriculum of State Universities in Zimbabwe. It adopted a multiple case study design, within the interpretivist paradigm. Data were sourced from 16 purposively drawn university teacher educators and 40 student teachers registered for the Bachelor of Education Degree. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and documents. The revised Mayer, Caruso and Salovey Ability Model (2016) served as the theoretical basis for this study. The thematic approach was adopted for data analysis. The study found that the incorporation of emotional intelligence into the Teacher Education Curriculum of State Universities in Zimbabwe, could be enhanced through emotional intelligence capacity development for university teacher educators, through integrating explicit emotional intelligence-focused content into Teacher Education modules and by introducing a stand-alone emotional intelligence module. This study recommends that emotional intelligence capacity development workshops be conducted for university teacher educators, that explicit emotional intelligence-focused content that is informed by emotional intelligence theories, be incorporated into the Teacher Education programmes and that interactive, experiential and reflective instructional approaches be adopted in emotional intelligence education and training. The study further recommends that Teacher Education in Zimbabwe, introduces a complete stand-alone emotional intelligence module at the Master of Education Degree level.

**Keywords:** Emotional intelligence; Emotional intelligence-focused content; Teacher education curriculum; University teacher educators; Student teachers

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### **Introduction**

This study explores measures that could be adopted to enhance the integration of emotional intelligence education and training into the Teacher Education curriculum of State Universities in Zimbabwe. Emotional intelligence is the capacity to recognize one's own feelings and those of others, to motivate oneself, and to effectively manage emotions in oneself and others (Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 2016). To put it another way, emotional intelligence is a collection of critical competencies that student teachers must develop in order to function well, form connections, and manage the responsibilities and stressors associated with the teaching profession. It was important to conduct this study because Teachers in Zimbabwe face a myriad of stressors such as lack of necessary facilities and resources for teaching and learning, work overload, financial strains, high expectations from parents and drug abusing learners among others. Teachers must possess the necessary emotional intelligence skills to address these. The public is also concerned about allegations of various types of teacher misbehavior and corruption (Goba, 2019; Tshili, 2020; Anonymous, 2022; Naitha, 2022; Moyo, 2022). These issues and accusations highlight the need for teachers' emotional intelligence competencies to be further developed in order to enhance their professional behavior, interpersonal skills, and capacity for managing stress and burnout.

### **Background of the Study**

Many countries in the West appreciate the importance of emotional intelligence in teaching and learning and have incorporated it into their school, college and university curricula (Torrente, Rivers & Brackett, 2016; Kimberly & Schonert-Reichl, 2017; Hoffman, et al, 2020). These countries have reaped benefits such as improved professional performance, enhanced ability to build positive relationships and enhanced skills in managing burnout and stress (Vesley, Saklofske & Leschied, 2013). Lack of emotional intelligence is associated with failure to relate well with others, failure to handle stress, lack of self-control, failure to work as teams, failure to care for fellow humans and failure to be responsible citizens (Bojana & Kornelija, 2021; Frezel, Dariel, & Buric, 2021). The importance of emotional intelligence is also recognised and recommended by some countries in Africa (Lubbe (2012; Bello & Yusuf, 2017. However, studies that investigate the incorporation of emotional intelligence into school, college and universities in Africa are scarce. A study conducted by Moyo and Mushoriwa (2022) found that emotional intelligence- focused content is not adequately incorporated into the Teacher Education Curriculum of State Universities in Zimbabwe. Additionally, there is a lack of knowledge and criteria regarding how and what emotional intelligence-focused material should be included in Zimbabwe's Teacher Education Curriculum. The present study therefore, explores approaches that can be adopted for enhancing the incorporation of emotional intelligence into the Teacher Education Curriculum of State universities in Zimbabwe.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Teachers in Zimbabwe deal with a variety of stressors, including a lack of resources and facilities for teaching and learning, work overload, financial pressures, high parental expectations, and drug-abusing students, among others. These challenges cause stress, and burnout (Gopal & Jagadeesh, 2018; Chen & Guo, 2018) and teachers need emotional intelligence skills to manage and cope. In addition, ongoing press reports in Zimbabwe, on issues such as teacher suicide (Goba, 2019; Tshili, 2020; Anonymous, 2022; Naitha, 2022), alleged professional incompetence (Ncube, 2023), poor interpersonal relationships among teachers, and among teachers and learners, and public school examination misconduct (Moyo, 2022), further suggest a need for Teacher Education in Zimbabwe to enhance emotional intelligence education and training in order to enhance teachers' professional conduct, ability to cope with stress and burnout and to enhance their relationship building skills (Vesley, Saklofske & Leschied, 2013; Cefai, Bartolo, Cavioni & Downes, 2018). Furthermore, studies (e.g., Moyo and Mushoriwa, 2022) found that very limited emotional intelligence-focused content is incorporated into the Teacher Education Curriculum of State Universities in Zimbabwe, and that the universities lack a clear approach for integrating emotional intelligence-focused content to equip student teachers with requisite emotional intelligence competencies (Moyo and Mushoriwa, 2022). Further still, there is a lack of information and guidelines on how and what to integrate to enhance the incorporation of emotional intelligence into the Teacher Education Curriculum in Zimbabwe. By investigating measures that could be used to improve the integration of emotional intelligence education and training into the Teacher Education Curriculum in Zimbabwe, the current study aims to close these gaps.

### **Research questions**

This study sought to address the following main research question and sub-research questions:

#### **Main research question**

- (i) What measures could be adopted to enhance the incorporation of emotional intelligence into the Teacher Education Curriculum in Zimbabwe?

#### **Sub-research questions**

- (ii) What explicit emotional intelligence-focused content could be incorporated into the Teacher Education Curriculum in Zimbabwe?
- (iii) What instructional methodologies could effectively develop emotional intelligence competencies in student teachers?
- (iv) What strategies could be adopted to enhance the incorporation of emotional intelligence into the Teacher Education Curriculum in Zimbabwe?

### **Review of Related Literature**

The review of related literature (e.g., Zeidner et al., in Pool & Qualter, 2012; Dolev and Leshem, 2017; Gilar-Corbi et al., 2018a; Hen, 2020; Waheed & Ghazal, 2020; Kyriazopoulou & Pappa 2021), revealed that studies that specifically investigate emotional intelligence learning content, pedagogy and techniques that could enhance the incorporation of emotional intelligence into Teacher Education are scarce. Therefore, in order to identify appropriate emotional intelligence

learning content, effective teaching methods and ways of incorporating emotional intelligence into the Teacher Education Curriculum, the researcher looked at the content of experimental emotional intelligence programmes that were found effective in enhancing emotional intelligence levels in the teaching population (e.g., Pool & Qualter, 2012; Dolev & Leshem, 2016; Gilar-Corbi et al., 2018a; Hen, 2020; Waheed and Ghazal, 2020; Kyriazopoulou, 2020). These provided valuable insights into the content and pedagogy that could enhance the incorporation of emotional intelligence into the Teacher Education Curriculum. The next section briefly outlines emotional intelligence-focused content, teaching approaches and ways of enhancing emotional intelligence that were identified in the reviewed literature.

### **Emotional intelligence-focused content that could be incorporated into Teacher Education modules**

An analysis of the content of emotional intelligence experimental programmes (e.g., Zeidner et al., in Pool & Qualter, 2012; Dolev and Leshem, 2017; Gilar-Corbi et al., 2018a; Hen, 2020; Waheed & Ghazal, 2020; Kyriazopoulou & Pappa 2021), revealed that emotional intelligence learning content should include in-depth study of the following: emotional intelligence theories; emotional intelligence competencies; how to achieve competence in the emotional intelligence skills; how emotional intelligence impacts teaching and learning processes (the quality of social relationships, professional effectiveness and personal well-being) emotional intelligence assessment tests.

### **Content on emotional intelligence theories and competencies**

The reviewed literature indicated that emotional intelligence course content should be based on a clear theoretically sound theory of emotional intelligence for it to effectively address key emotional intelligence competencies (Pool & Qualter, 2012). Three major emotional intelligence theories were identified in literature, namely: the Mayer, Caruso and Salovey Ability theory (2016); the Goleman Competency theory (1995) and the Bar – On Personality Traits and Characteristics theory (2004). Emotional intelligence course content should be based on these theories. The theories complement each other in painting a comprehensive picture of the construct of emotional intelligence. The Mayer, Caruso and Salovey Ability theory (2016) identifies: accurately perceiving emotion in the self and others, using emotion to assist thinking and decision-making, understanding emotion in the self and others and effectively managing emotion in the self and others as the four competencies that constitute emotional intelligence, therefore, emotional intelligence learning content should include in-depth training on how to achieve competence in identifying, using, understanding and managing emotions in self and in others. Reference to the four thematic areas during the process of developing emotional, ensures that explicit emotional intelligence-focused content is included in the learning content and that learning activities are tailor-made to develop each of the four key competencies (Gilar-Corbi et al., 2018a; Kyriazopoulou, 2020). Evidence that emotional intelligence learning content should be grounded in emotional intelligence theory is provided by Waheed and Ghazal (2020) who used the Mayer, Caruso and Salovey Ability theory (2016) as a theoretical basis in the experimental instructional module that they compiled for enhancing the emotional intelligence of adolescents in Pakistan.

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### **Content on how emotional intelligence impacts teaching and learning processes**

It also emerged from the reviewed literature (Singh & Sankulkar, 2017; Gopal & Jagadeesh, 2018; Chen & Guo, 2020; Hoffman, Brackett, Bailey & Willner, 2020) that emotional intelligence learning content should include content on how emotional intelligence enhances the quality of social relationships, professional effectiveness and personal well-being. For instance, when individuals are aware of their own and others' emotions, their interaction with others becomes better as they are more likely to respond to others' emotions more appropriately and to control their emotions and this in turn improves their relationship with others (Corcoran and Tormey, 2012b). In addition, high levels of emotional intelligence improve capacity to generate positive emotions, thoughts, moods, and feelings as well as to adjust in the face of stressful circumstances and this enhances psychological well-being (Palomera et al., 2008). Furthermore, individuals with high emotional intelligence exhibit more integrity and have better working relationships with other employees which in turn improves performance (Dhani & cShamar, 2016).

### **Content on emotional Intelligence Assessment Tests**

Reviewed literature (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, & Sitarenios, 2003; Fiori & Vesely-Maillefer, 2018) indicates that emotional intelligence assessment tests such as the Mayer, Salovey and Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT), the Multi-Factor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS), the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I), the Schutte Self-report Inventory (SSRI) and the Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI), should be included in emotional intelligence training. These tests provide knowledge of the level of one's capacity to understand and manage emotion. This knowledge helps in identifying the competencies that students have and those that they lack and need to work on in order to improve their emotional intelligence.

### **Effective instructional methodologies for developing emotional intelligence competencies**

Extant literature (e.g., Kuk, Czechowski & Femiak, 2015; Dinkel-Vanvalkenburg, 2016; Behera, 2016; Gilar-Corbi et al., 2018b; Kyriazopoulou, 2020) shows that reflective, experiential and interactive instructional methodologies such as: reflective emotion diaries, coaching, role-play, group work, presentation, conversation-circles, attachment teaching practice, focus group discussions, and video-based discussions are commonly adopted in experimental studies investigating the efficacy of emotional intelligence intervention programmes. These instructional methodologies provide opportunity for individuals to learn through reflection and experience on real emotional situations that are found in their profession. Behera (2016) notes that in order to effectively teach emotional intelligence skills, priority should be given to exercise and practise not verbal instruction. Therefore, interactive, experiential and reflective instructional methodologies would provide opportunity for individuals to work on their behaviours, attitudes and habits so that emotional intelligence competencies become part of their repertoire.

### **Strategies for promoting the incorporation of emotional intelligence**

The reviewed literature showed that a number of experimental studies investigated the efficacy of emotional intelligence training programmes (e.g., Zeidner et al., in Pool & Qualter, 2012; Dolev and Leshem, 2017; Gilar-Corbi et al., 2018a; Hen, 2020; Waheed & Ghazal, 2020; Kyriazopoulou & Pappa 2021). These experimental studies indicate that emotional intelligence

learning content can be successfully integrated into the Teacher Education Curriculum, as on-going professional staff development workshops; as an explicit topic in Teacher Education modules and as a complete stand-alone module allocated credits.

Dolev and Leshem (2017) indicate that emotional intelligence can be incorporated as part of on-going professional development workshops for teachers. It is however important to note that a professional development workshop may be optional and hence, may or may not be conducted. In addition, a professional development workshop may provide limited coverage of the concept of emotional intelligence. In addition, leaving the teaching of emotional intelligence to optional professional development workshops may not provide the required time, attention and practice required for the development of emotional intelligence in student teachers. Therefore, more effective ways of incorporating emotional intelligence into the Teacher Education Curriculum could be used.

Emotional intelligence could be incorporated as an explicit topic in Psychology of Education modules and in other regular Teacher Education modules as indicated by Gilar-Corbi et al. (2018a). Gilar-Corbi et al. (2018a) found that it was possible to integrate emotional intelligence content into the Educational Psychology course. Though this approach was found effective, its weakness is that coverage of emotional intelligence content could lack depth that may be realised when the construct is addressed in a complete module, since it would be competing for time and attention with topics that the university teacher educators will be more familiar with.

Studies (e.g., Zeidner et al., in Pool & Qualter, 2012; Gilar-Corbi, et al., 2018a) show that a complete stand-alone module on emotional intelligence would be a more effective approach because the development of emotional intelligence competencies is an on-going process that requires significant time and effort for practice on the part of student teachers and teacher educators. Furthermore, a complete stand-alone module would allow the teaching of emotional intelligence to be more explicit, deliberate, given time, depth and reinforcement. Zeidner et al., in Pool and Qualter (2012) further observe that in a stand-alone module time could even be allocated to assessing mastery of the different emotional intelligence competencies.

Overall, the experimental studies found in the reviewed literature revealed that first, learning materials for emotional intelligence training should be based on reliable emotional intelligence theory and should emphasize the development of the emotional intelligence competencies of identifying, using, understanding, and managing emotions. Theories of emotional intelligence, emotional intelligence competencies, strategies for developing emotional intelligence proficiency, the impact of emotional intelligence on interpersonal relationships, productivity at work, and personal well-being, as well as emotional intelligence assessment tools, should all be covered in the learning material. Second, experiential, interactive and reflective teaching approaches should be used to facilitate practice and mastery of emotional intelligence competencies. Third, methods of integrating emotional intelligence that allow prolonged practice of emotional intelligence competencies should be adopted in incorporating emotional intelligence into the Teacher Education Curriculum.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Approach and Research design**

The qualitative research approach was considered appropriate for examining a social phenomenon such as enhancing the incorporation of emotional intelligence, since the concept could not be numerically measured. The multiple-case study design, which involved an in-depth study of four State University cases in Zimbabwe was used. This design was preferred because findings from multiple-case studies are grounded in several empirical evidence are more convincing (Creswell, 2018).

### **Population Sample and Sampling**

The population of the present study comprised all Faculty of Education university teacher educators (n=160) and all students in the Bachelor of Education Degree (n=400) in the four State Universities studied. In the present study, purposive sampling was used in selecting 4 research sites, 16 university teacher educators and 40 student teachers. As observed by Creswell (2018), in purposive sampling the researcher specifies the characteristics of the population of interest and then intentionally locates individuals with those characteristics to participate in a research study. Purposive sampling was therefore preferred in the present study because it allowed the researcher to select research sites and participants that had characteristics that were relevant to the study.

### **Instruments**

The researcher employed semi-structured telephone interviews to generate data from university teacher educators and virtual focus group discussions to generate data from student teachers. Semi-structured telephone interviews and virtual focus group discussions allowed the researchers to probe and to successfully collect data in a COVID-19 context.

### **Data trustworthiness**

Data triangulation, member-checking, thick description, peer-debriefing, and prolonged engagement were engaged to enhance data trustworthiness.

### **Ethical issues**

Ethical issues were adhered to during the processes of data collection, data analysis and data interpretation. Institutional approval was obtained, protection from harm was ensured, informed consent was obtained from participants, and privacy and confidentiality were maintained.

### **Results and Discussion**

Results were presented and discussed following the order of the Research Questions. Interviews generated the main results while results from focus group discussions were used to buttress observations made through the interviews. On the first sub-research question which sought to identify emotional intelligence-focused content that could be incorporated into the Teacher Education Curriculum in Zimbabwe, the university teacher educators expressed the following: UTE-5 said: “We do not cover that module. I am not aware of any of the content.” Another university teacher educator (UTE-D13) said:

Emotional intelligence is basically a new field to me. I am not able to help you with the content that should be covered.

The quotes above indicate that the university teacher educators were not aware of the explicit emotional intelligence-focused content that needs to be integrated into the Teacher Education Curriculum. This view was expressed by most university teacher educators in the four universities that were studied. The lack of knowledge of relevant emotional intelligence content, shown by the university teacher educators was of concern to the researcher as it influences the university teacher educators' decision on whether to integrate emotional intelligence or not. The responses above further indicate a need for emotional intelligence capacity development to equip the university teacher educators with knowledge of emotional intelligence content that should be covered in order to develop emotional intelligence competencies in teachers.

A few university teacher educators, however, had this to say about emotional intelligence learning content: UTE-B7 said:

Various theories that talk about emotional intelligence should be incorporated in learning content.

Another university teacher educator (UTE-C9) concurred:

*Psychological theories that deal with emotional intelligence should be addressed.*

The above quotes indicate that the few university teacher educators were aware that content on emotional intelligence theories needed to be integrated into Teacher Education modules. The observation made by the few teacher educators are in line with the content that is indicated in a number of experimental emotional intelligence training programmes that were found effective in enhancing emotional intelligence competencies in teachers (e.g., Gilar-Corbi et al., 2018a; Hen, 2020; Waheed & Ghazal, 2020; Kyriazopoulou & Pappa 2021).

On the question that sought to identify instructional approaches that could be used to develop emotional intelligence competencies in student teachers. UTEB-5 said:

I do not teach emotional intelligence. I don't think I can answer the question on methods of teaching it.

The quote above indicates lack of knowledge of effective teaching methods that could be used to teach emotional intelligence. This was a common response among the interviewees from Universities A, B, C, and D, most probably because emotional intelligence was not deliberately taught. However, a perusal of a number of experimental emotional intelligence training programmes (e.g., Dinkel-Vanvalkenburg, 2016; Dolev & Leshem, 2017) indicated that successful programmes employed interactive and reflective teaching approaches such as: role-play, group work, presentation, conversation-circles, and attachment teaching practice, focus group discussions, and Video-based discussions. The focus group discussions revealed that the student teachers could not identify the teaching methods for teaching emotional intelligence because they had never been taught about the concept.



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With regard to the question that sought to identify strategies for promoting the incorporation of emotional intelligence into the Teacher Education Curriculum. The university teacher educators expressed the following:

UTE-A1 said:

First, there is a need for staff development in order to give lecturers information and expertise in relation to emotional intelligence because the current lecturers are not well equipped to teach emotional intelligence.

Similar sentiments were expressed by UTE-C9 who added:

We should make sure that emotional intelligence is adequately articulated to the lecturers. We should be sure of their depth of knowledge, which is how knowledgeable lecturers are when we talk about emotional intelligence.

The quotes above indicate that the interviewees felt that emotional intelligence capacity development could enhance their knowledge and understanding of emotional intelligence. This finding is in line with reviewed literature (e.g., Fiori & Vesely-Maillefer, 2015) which indicates that capacity development is a widely adopted strategy for enhancing teachers' emotional intelligence levels in experimental research for enhancing teachers' emotional intelligence levels. Capacity development for the university teacher educators would be of paramount importance considering that Moyo and Mushoriwa (2022) found that the university teacher educators in Zimbabwe lacked knowledge and understanding of emotional intelligence. Capacity development would ensure that the university teacher educators were adequately equipped for integrating emotional intelligence content into their Course Outlines and Programme Regulations.

One university teacher educator felt that emotional intelligence was a cross-cutting competence that is needed by all university teacher educators and all student teachers hence it needed to be integrated as a cross-cutting issue in the Teacher Education Curriculum. This was expressed in the following comment:

UTE-A2 said:

Emotional intelligence is a very important construct required by all lecturers. We need emotional intelligence in our relations. It is a cross-cutting competence and we all need it.

The comment above indicates that some university teacher educators felt that all university teacher educators need emotional intelligence competencies and that emotional intelligence could be integrated and mainstreamed throughout teaching as a cross-cutting issues. This would create awareness and understanding of the concept among all the university teacher educators. However, Solheim (2020) warns that putting a concept into the mainstream at times has the disadvantage of making the issue disappear, because in becoming the responsibility of everyone it could become the responsibility of no-one. For this reason, while introducing emotional intelligence as a cross-cutting issue could be a strategy for enhancing the incorporation of

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emotional intelligence, it should be complemented by other strategies, so that in the event that most people do not enforce the concept as a cross-cutting issue, specific people take the responsibility to incorporate it using other strategies.

Other interviewees felt that the integration of explicit emotional intelligence focused-content would enhance the incorporation of emotional intelligence into the Teacher Education Curriculum. They expressed the following views:

UTE-B7:

I think one way of making sure that emotional intelligence is more visible is to craft module content where emotional intelligence is articulated as a specific component to be studied together with the theories that talk about it. Honestly, we need to make it more visible rather than just generalizing it. The area should be given more attention.

Another university teacher educator (UTE-C10) expressed similar sentiments on incorporating explicit emotional intelligence-focused content. UTE-C10 said:

If lecturers are constructing modules let it (emotional intelligence) be inserted somewhere within the modules. Let emotional intelligence be included in our module content in the university curriculum especially in the Faculty of Education where we are dealing with teachers.

The responses cited above indicate that the university teacher educators felt that emotional intelligence could be enhanced by integrating intelligence-focused content into Teacher Education modules. They further indicated that this would ensure that emotional intelligence was given more attention and that it became more visible in the Teacher Education Curriculum. In addition to visibility, the inclusion of emotional intelligence as module content would compel university teacher educators to give explicit instruction on emotional intelligence. Evidence of successful inclusion of emotional intelligence as explicit module content is well documented (e.g., Gilar-Corbi et al, 2018a; Kyriazopoulou & Pappa, 2021).

Other university teacher educators indicated that incorporating emotional intelligence as a complete stand-alone module with complete credits was an approach that could enhance the incorporation of emotional intelligence into the Teacher Education Curriculum. This was expressed in the following comments by UTE-A2 who said:

I can say introducing a module on emotional intelligence will do. It would be fertile ground for making sure emotional intelligence is well taught.

Focus group discussants in FGD 1 to FGD 4 also viewed the introduction of a complete stand-alone emotional intelligence module as an approach that could be adopted to enhance the incorporation of emotional intelligence. This was revealed in the following focus group responses. For instance, a discussant in FGD1 said:

Introducing a module that Emotional intelligence can be enhanced by having a module dedicated to emotional intelligence where you can comprehensively

address emotional intelligence content.talks directly about emotional intelligence would do.

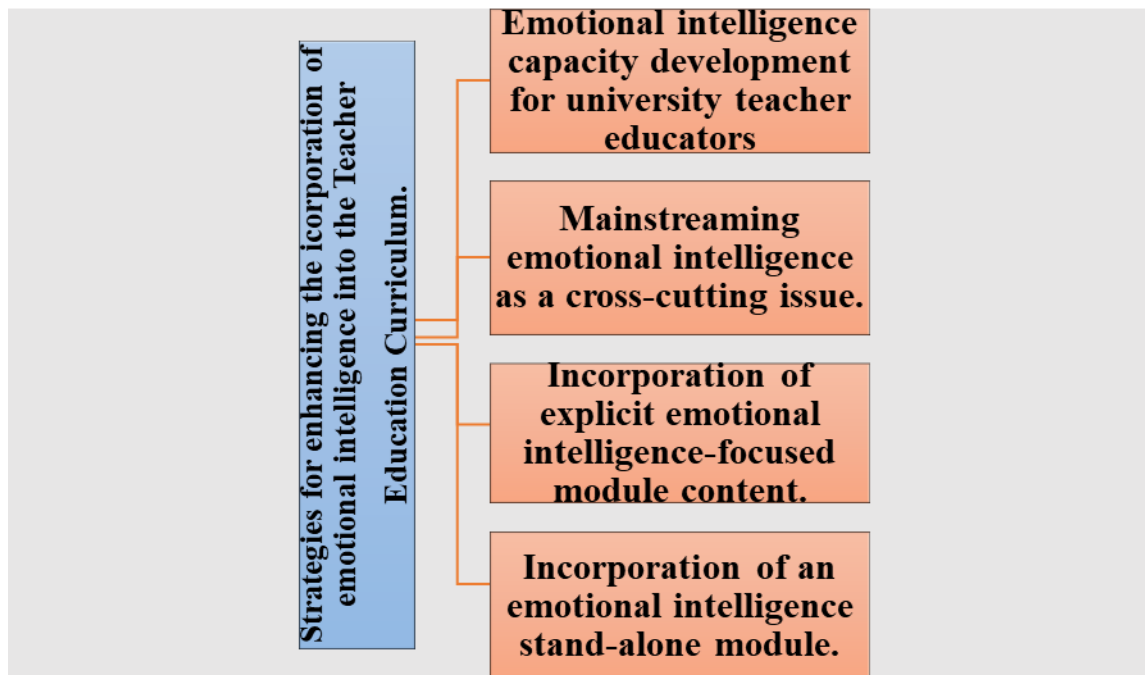
Another discussant in FGD 2 said:

The incorporation of emotional intelligence can be enhanced by introducing a module that talks directly about it (emotional intelligence).

The quotes further indicate that the research participants felt that a complete stand-alone module on emotional intelligence would ensure comprehensive teaching of the construct. This finding is consistent with what was found in an experimental study conducted by Hen (2020) to investigate the impact of an emotional intelligence training module among hospital teachers. The study found that a complete academic module in emotional intelligence equipped the hospital teachers with the emotional intelligence abilities that they needed to competently handle the educational needs of children in hospitals. As observed by Dolev and Leshem (2017), emotional intelligence development requires an extensive, routinized, long-term effort, which provides time for reflection, interactive dialogue, practice and repetition, therefore, a complete module would allow adequate time for practising and mastery of emotional intelligence competencies.

Overall, the foregoing discussion reveals that the strategies that can be adopted for enhancing the incorporation of emotional intelligence include capacity development workshops for the university teacher educators, mainstreaming emotional intelligence as a cross-cutting issue, incorporation of explicit emotional intelligence-focused module content at undergraduate level and incorporating a stand-alone emotional intelligence module with complete credits at Master of Education Degree level.

Figure 1 below, illustrates the four strategies that were suggested by the interviewees and focus group discussants for enhancing the incorporation of emotional intelligence into the Teacher Education Curriculum.



**Figure 1: Strategies for enhancing the incorporation of emotional intelligence into the Teacher Education Curriculum**

## **6. Conclusion**

The following conclusions were drawn from the research findings and analysis by the researcher: Content that includes theories of emotional intelligence, key emotional intelligence competencies, strategies for developing emotional intelligence proficiency, the impact of emotional intelligence on interpersonal relationships, productivity at work, and personal wellbeing, as well as emotional intelligence assessment tools should be integrated as emotional intelligence learning content. This content should be grounded in sound emotional intelligence theory to ensure that emotional intelligence training focuses on key emotional intelligence competencies and that learning activities are tailor-made to develop each of the four key competencies.

Experiential, interactive and reflective instructional approaches such as reflective emotion diaries, coaching, role-play, group work, presentation, conversation-circles, attachment teaching practice, focus group discussions, and video-based discussions, could effectively enhance the development of emotional intelligence competencies in student teachers. These instructional methodologies would provide opportunity for individuals to learn through reflection and experience on real emotional situations that are found in their profession.

Emotional intelligence capacity development workshops for the university teacher educators, could be used by State Universities in Zimbabwe as a strategy to enhance the incorporation of emotional intelligence, into the Teacher Education Curriculum. Capacity development would equip university teacher educators with knowledge and understanding of emotional intelligence and prepare them for integrating emotional intelligence into their lectures, Course Outlines and Programme Regulations. Considering that Moyo and Mushoriwa (2022) found that university teacher educators in State Universities in Zimbabwe lacked knowledge and

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understanding of emotional intelligence, emotional intelligence capacity development for the university teacher educators would be of paramount importance.

Mainstreaming emotional intelligence as a cross-cutting issue could be used to enhance the integration of emotional intelligence into the Teacher Education Curriculum in Zimbabwe. It would create awareness and develop understanding of the concept among the university teacher educators and student teachers.

The incorporation of explicit emotional intelligence-focused module content at undergraduate level could also be adopted to enhance the integration of emotional intelligence. It would give emotional intelligence more visibility and compel university teacher educators to draw formal emotional intelligence lecture schedules and give explicit instruction on emotional intelligence theories and competencies.

The incorporation of a stand-alone emotional intelligence module at Master of Education Degree level could enhance the incorporation of emotional intelligence, into the Teacher Education Curriculum in Zimbabwe. A complete module on emotional intelligence would ensure comprehensive teaching of the construct since it would also compel the university teacher educators to plan the teaching and examining of emotional intelligence content. It would also allow a long duration of training that facilitates extensive practice on emotional intelligence competencies.

## **11. Recommendations**

Basing on the research findings, the researcher came up with the following recommendations for enhancing the incorporation of emotional intelligence into the Teacher Education Curriculum in Zimbabwe, in order to enhance student teachers' professional performance, ability to build positive relationships and skills in managing burnout and stress. The recommendations are explicitly delineated below:

Faculties of Education at State Universities in Zimbabwe, are urged to conduct emotional intelligence capacity development workshops to equip university teacher educators with knowledge and understanding of emotional intelligence and effective instructional approaches that could be used to develop emotional intelligence competencies in student teachers.

In addition, it is recommended that Faculties of Education at State Universities in Zimbabwe incorporate into the Teacher Education modules, explicit emotional intelligence-focused learning content at Bachelor of Education degree level. This content would include theories of emotional intelligence, key emotional intelligence competencies, strategies for developing emotional intelligence proficiency, the impact of emotional intelligence on interpersonal relationships, productivity at work, and personal wellbeing, as well as emotional intelligence assessment tools.

Furthermore, Faculties of Education at State Universities in Zimbabwe, are urged to incorporate a complete emotional intelligence stand-alone module at the Master of Education Degree level. The researcher also recommends that university teacher educators employ interactive, experiential and reflective instructional methods in teaching emotional intelligence in order to allow reflective thinking that facilitates mastery of emotional intelligence competencies.

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