

Review

Language teacher emotional intelligence: A scoping review

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CITATION

Cai Y, Liu H. Language teacher emotional intelligence: A scoping review. *Forum for Education Studies*. 2024; 2(4): 1599.
<https://doi.org/10.59400/fes.v2i4.1599>

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 7 August 2024
Accepted: 18 September 2024
Available online: 6 November 2024

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Abstract: The current study reviewed and synthesized empirical research on foreign/second language teacher emotional intelligence (EI) using a scoping review approach. Specifically, 15 articles published between 2018 and 2024 were included and analyzed with a particular emphasis on the theoretical perspectives, research themes, research background, and methodologies. The results indicated that there were a variety of models and theories in language teacher EI research, with the trait EI model and theories of self-efficacy and emotion regulation receiving the most attention. Moreover, most reviewed studies regarded language teacher EI as an independent variable or antecedent, examining its impact on other individual and environmental variables. Underdeveloped regions, other target languages apart from English, multilingual teachers, and primary or secondary school teachers haven't received much attention in the included articles. Additionally, homogenization in research design among these studies was noticeable, with quantitative studies, cross-sectional design, and self-reported questionnaires being prevalent. Finally, implications were provided based on these findings for the further development of language teacher EI.

Keywords: language teachers; emotional intelligence; scoping review; foreign language; second language

1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) was first proposed by Salovey and Mayer [1] as a set of skills concerning the appraisal, regulation, and utilization of one's emotions. This construct can be traced back to Thorndike's [2] research on social intelligence and Gardner's [3] theory of multiple intelligences. It is considered an indicator of individuals' well-being, career success, and interpersonal relationships [4]. With the development of positive psychology, EI has become an issue of concern. In the field of language education, language teaching is recognized as an activity that involves interaction and collaboration with the target audience, thus encompassing a range of emotional experiences. In this process, EI may help teachers manage negative emotions, ultimately improving the quality of teaching and contributing to teachers' personal development. So far, research has substantiated the essential role of EI in offsetting teacher burnout [5] and improving professional performance [6] among language teachers. Nevertheless, inconsistent views exist on the definitions, structure, models, and instruments of language teacher EI. Some EI theories have not been further developed in the language teaching field due to a lack of sufficient empirical evidence, with research on language teacher EI almost coming to a standstill in recent years. Nevertheless, various definitions have indicated that EI is not an innate and unchangeable ability or trait. This means that teachers can acquire EI skills or improve their level of EI. Given the significance of EI on language teachers, it is necessary to develop a comprehensive perspective on the complex research on language teacher EI,

which to our knowledge has not been reviewed by scoping studies before. The current study adopted a scoping review approach to analyze the empirical articles published during 2018–2024 on language teacher EI, attempting to depict an overview of available studies in terms of their theoretical perspectives, research themes, research background, and methodologies. Hopefully, this study could provide theoretical implications and suggestions for future studies on teacher EI in the context of language teaching.

2. Methods

Scoping reviews, also called scoping studies [7], involve a systematic and structured analysis of relevant literature based on strict inclusion and exclusion criteria, and they are relatively new in the field of education [8]. Scoping reviews aim to “map rapidly the key concepts underpinning a research area and the main sources and types of evidence available and can be undertaken as standalone projects in their own right, especially where an area is complex or has not been reviewed comprehensively before” [9]. Systematic reviews typically focus on well-defined questions, with defined methodologies to assess article quality [10], whilst scoping reviews encompass broader topics that can be approached using various study designs [7].

The current scoping study was guided by the five-stage framework of Arksey and O’Malley [7], which follows a strict process of transparency, allowing for the replication of the search strategy and increasing the reliability of the findings [11]. The five stages are (1) identifying the initial research questions, (2) identifying relevant studies, (3) study selection, (4) charting the data, and (5) collating, summarizing, and reporting the results.

2.1. Identifying the initial research questions

The present review aims to summarize the overall features/trends of teacher EI research in the language teaching context, mapping their theoretical perspectives, analyzing the research foci methodological features of the available articles, and identifying the research gaps. Hence, two initial research questions are formulated as follows:

RQ 1: What is the current state of language teacher EI research in terms of theoretical perspectives, research themes, research background, and methodologies?

RQ 2: Where are the research gaps in the existing literature on language teacher EI?

2.2. Identifying relevant studies

Our literature selection was conducted by searching for Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) journal articles on the Web of Science, where articles with high impacts in a field were mostly included. To ensure a broader retrieval coverage, “topic” (which includes ‘title’, ‘abstract’, ‘author keywords’, and ‘keywords plus’) was used in the search queries; the time span was set open, and the output was restricted to the document type of “article” indexed by “Web of Science core collection” and published in the English language. The following retrieval formulae were written in Boolean expressions under the mode of advanced search: (emotional intelligence OR EI) AND

(teach* OR educat* OR instructor OR facult*) AND (language OR L2 OR English OR ESL OR EFL OR FL). The retrieval was executed on 9 September 2024, and generated 515 entries in the database.

2.3. Study selection

According to our initial research questions, we narrowed down the pool and identified primary studies following the flow diagram in **Figure 1**. The initial search resulted in 515 articles with no duplication. However, many articles were not qualified for various reasons (see **Figure 1**). A full-text review of these studies identified 15 core empirical articles that fit the criteria for inclusion.

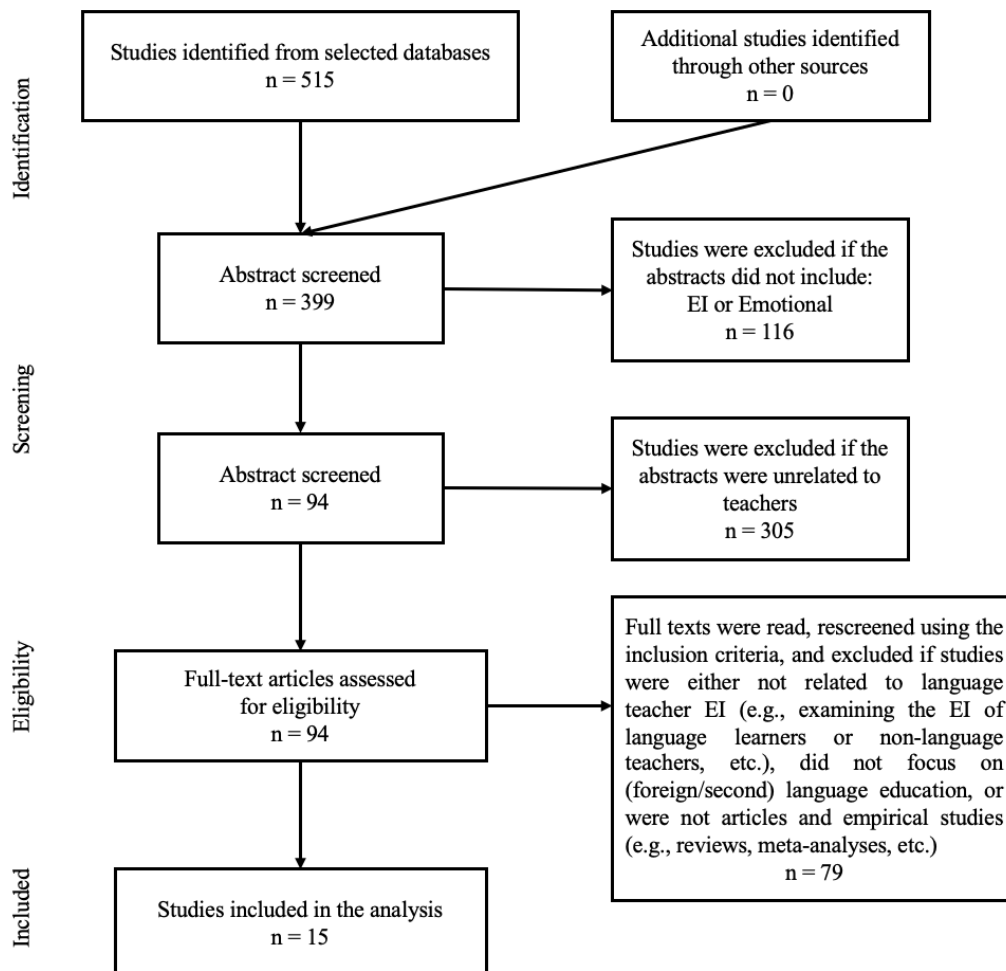


Figure 1. Flow diagram for article selection.

2.4. Data charting and collation

After reading the above-selected articles, a detailed coding scheme was designed to cover these articles' theoretical perspectives, research themes, research background, and methodologies according to the initial research questions and the coding methods of previous scoping reviews [7]. Specifically, the included articles were encoded in the following parameters: (1) Substantive features, including journal, title, publication year, and author; (2) theoretical perspectives; (3) research themes; (4) research background, including the location where the study was conducted, target language,

teaching experience, and so force; (5) methodologies, including research methods (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, mixed-method), sample size, instruments, and the reliability and validity, research design (cross-sectional study, longitudinal study), etc.

2.5. Summarizing and reporting findings

First, a narrative synthesis giving a basic numerical analysis of the distribution, theories, themes, and methodologies of included articles was written in the “Findings” section. Secondly, a critical analysis of these articles was reported and gaps in this area were identified in the “Discussion” and “Conclusion” sections.

3. Results

3.1. The overall trend of publication

Figure 2 shows the overall publication trend on language teacher EI from 2018 to 2024. The figure substantiated that research on language teacher EI is still in its infancy, with the highest number of article publications in 2022, totaling six empirical studies. The number of studies fluctuated and increased from 2018 to 2022, but the publication volume was relatively small. The number of articles from 2022 to 2024 has significantly decreased, and there is insufficient motivation for developing empirical research focusing on language teacher EI.

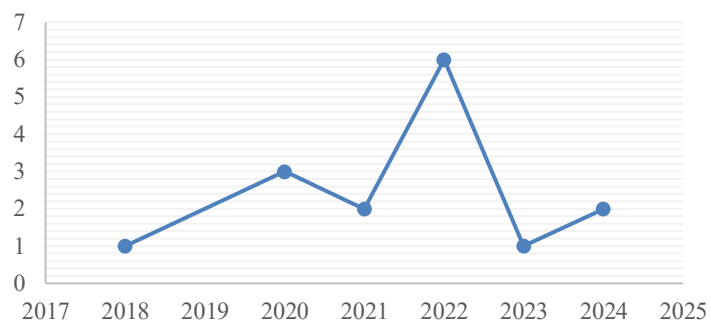


Figure 2. The line chart of the overall trend of publication.

3.2. Theoretical perspectives

According to the 15 articles selected in this review, various theories and models have been applied in the study of language teacher EI. Among them, theories and models concerning EI include the trait emotional intelligence theory [12] (6 articles), Bar-On’s [13] five-dimensional emotional intelligence model (2 articles); Wong and Law’s [14] emotional intelligence model (1 article); Goleman’s [15] theory of emotional intelligence (1 article); Salovey and Mayer’s [1] theory of emotional Intelligence (1 article); the Ability Model of Emotional Intelligence [16] (1 article). Four articles only employed instruments for measuring emotional intelligence or just described the existing emotional intelligence theories in the literature review section, without delving into the relationship between theories and their research questions.

In addition to EI, these studies involve 18 related theories and models: the theory of multiple intelligences [3] (3 articles); the social cognitive theory [17] (2 articles); self-efficacy [18] (9 articles); emotional labor (4 articles); emotional regulation (3

articles); complexity theory [19,20] (1 article); the model of teacher well-being [21] (1 article); the ecological model of teacher well-being factors [22] (1 article); resilience model (1 article); flow theory [23,24] (1 article); the Big Five theory of personality [25] (1 article); broaden-and-build theory [26] (1 article); the conservation of resources theory (1 article); job demands-resources theory [27] (2 articles); classroom management theory [28] (1 article); collaborative learning theory [29,30] (1 article); attachment theory (1 article); technology acceptance model [31] (1 article). Overall, theories about self-efficacy and emotion regulation have received the most attention among the selected studies on language teacher EI.

3.3. Research themes

In the context of second/foreign language teaching, articles reviewed in this study have covered four categories of research themes. Firstly, the link between language teacher EI and teaching was investigated, including the relationship between language teacher EI and the use of emotional literacy strategies [32], teachers' reflective practices [33], teaching for creativity in EFL settings [34], and technology adoption by foreign language teachers [35]. The second category lies in the nexus between language teacher EI and other individual variables, such as self-efficacy [36], teacher effectiveness [37], Emotional labor [38,39], flow state [40], as well as teacher emotions such as burnout. Moreover, language teacher EI was postulated to be associated with external environmental factors. For instance, teacher-student relationships [41] and students' positive feelings and attitudes [42] were considered in the selected articles. Finally, studies attempted to disclose the role of EI in language teachers' professional development, which involves professional success and work engagement [6,43]. In conclusion, most studies focused on the relationship between language teacher EI and language teaching, individual/environmental factors, and presentational development, with teacher emotional intelligence being an independent variable. Only one article examined the mediating role of language teacher EI, and two considered EI as a constituent element of other psychological constructs.

3.4. Research background

Information about the location where these 15 studies were conducted, the mother tongue of the teacher participants, the target language, the educational stage of students, teaching experience, gender ratio, and participants' age were analyzed (see **Table 1**). Articles were arranged in alphabetical order based on the author's surname. It should be noted that studies from Moskowitz and Dewaele [42] examined students' perceived trait emotional intelligence of their teachers, with adult language learners serving as observers as well as participants.

Research on language teacher EI was mainly concentrated in China (7 articles) and Iran (2 articles), with relatively less research in other countries, as indicated in **Table 1**. Additionally, most studies focus on the language teacher EI in one specific cultural context, with only two cross-national studies [32,42]. As regards language background, 5 articles reported that Chinese was the native language of the participants, whilst more than half of the studies did not mention the participants' mother tongue. Among them, Dewaele and Wu's [44] article wrote a detailed

description of the participants' language background, which involved dialects, language variants, minority languages, and the number of languages they mastered. In terms of the target language of language teaching, 13 articles focused on English as a second or foreign language, and only one study by Kostić-Bobanović [36] involved English, Italian, German, French, and Russian. Regarding the educational stages in which participants taught, four studies did not provide sufficient information. The remaining studies put the most attention on higher education (7 out of 11), while two studies focused on primary school foreign language teaching, and six studies took teachers across different educational stages into consideration.

Table 1. Background information on language teacher EI research.

Author, year	Location	L1	Educational level	Teaching experience (years)	Female ratio (%)	Age
Anwar et al., 2021	Pakistan	/	Higher education	1–10	66.70	21–60
Cardoso-Pulido et al., 2022	Spain	/	Primary	Pre-service	71.60	M = 22.82
Chen et al., 2024	China	/	School and college	0–40	68.75	23–59
Dewaele and Wu, 2021	China	b	University, secondary, primary, junior college	0.5–42	82.38	21–58
Kang, 2022	Korea	Non-English	Primary	12	100	/
Kliueva and Tsagari, 2018	Cyprus (53%) and others	/	School and university	d	/	/
Kostić-Bobanović, 2020	Croatia	/	Elementary, secondary, university	e	71.36	/
Moskowitz and Dewaele, 2020	a	/	/	/	/	/
Shahivand and Moradkhani, 2020	Iran	/	c	0–21	52.17	19–48
Sobhanmanesh, 2022	Iran	Polish	/	/	72%	20–40
Su et al., 2022	China	Chinese	Secondary	/	92.50	/
Wang, 2023	China	Chinese	/	2–25	57.18	22–55
Yang, 2022	China	/	/	/	70.18	25–52
Yuan and Yang, 2022	Hong Kong, China	Chinese	University	25/10	50	/
Zhi et al., 2024	China	Chinese	Primary, junior high, college	0–13	57.47	25–35

^a28 countries, including Australia, France, United Arab Emirates, Japan, etc;

^b10 different Chinese dialects, 12 distinct regional variants/local speeches, and 2 minority languages, with Mandarin and the regional Mandarin variants/local speeches constituting the two largest groups;

^cHigher-intermediate to advanced English proficiency;

^d55.9% of participants had over 8 years of teaching experience, 20.6% had 4–7 years, 14.7% had 1–3 years, and 8.8% were in their first year of teaching;

^e5% of participants had over 30 years of teaching experience and 16% had less than 5 years of teaching experience.

The participants in these articles exhibited a broad range of teaching experience, with one study concentrating on pre-service teachers in their senior year or graduating, and two studies comparing novice teachers to experienced educators. Additionally, all studies except one did not report the gender of its participants or included only one male and one female teacher, showing a female majority. This means that the majority

of existing studies typically include more female teachers than male teachers as participants. Taking China as an example, the gender gap might be common as the teaching profession in China has more females than males, a pattern likely to be mirrored in the English teaching field. Additionally, Dewaele [38] noted that this gender ratio is typical in online surveys related to language and emotions. In terms of participants' age, two studies focused on young teachers, seven studies encompassed teachers of various ages, and the remaining six studies did not report the age of their participants.

3.5. Methodologies

Information on research methods, sample size, instruments, reliability and validity, and research design are listed in **Table 2**. These studies are arranged according to research methods and instruments.

As indicated in **Table 2**, the majority of the research conducted was quantitative (11 items), with sample sizes ranging from 88 to 3307 people. Two qualitative studies had one or two participants, and two mixed studies had sample sizes ranging from 75 to 102 people. In qualitative research, reflective journals, interviews, observations, and informal conversations were applied; in mixed-method research, open/closed questionnaires and interviews were adopted. Self-reported questionnaires were frequently used in quantitative research to examine the EI level of the teacher participants. It should be noted that in one study, teacher EI was evaluated from the perspective of observers (students). The questionnaires about EI include: 1) EQ-i [45,46] (Emotional Quotient Inventory; 2 articles); 2) TEIQue-SF [12,47] (The Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Short Form; 6 articles); and the TEIQue 360°-SF [48] (1 article); 3) SEIS [49] (Emotional Intelligence Scale; 3 articles); 4) WLEIS [14] (Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale; 1 article). Inherent to these scales, there exist three categories of EI models: mixed model (e.g., EQ-i), trait model (e.g., TEIQue-SF, TEIQue 360°-SF), and ability model (e.g., SEIS, WLEIS). Based on the included articles, the trait model was the most popular one in language teacher EI research.

For reliability and validity, most articles reported reliability using Cronbach's alpha, r , composite reliability (CR), and McDonald's omega. Nevertheless, only three articles reported construct validity using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). There was also one mixed-method study that did not report reliability and validity. In terms of research design, two qualitative studies were longitudinal studies with a duration of 16 weeks [39] and one year [50], while the remaining 13 studies were cross-sectional studies.

Table 2. Methodologies of language teacher EI research.

Author, year	Method	N	Instrument	Reliability, validity	Design
Kang, 2022	Qualitative	1	Reflective journal, interview, observation	/	Longitudinal
Yuan and Yang, 2022	Qualitative	2	Interview, observation, informal communication	/	Longitudinal

Table 2. (Continued).

Author, year	Method	N	Instrument	Reliability, validity	Design
Zhi et al., 2024	Quantitative	214	EQ-i	r, CFA	Cross-sectional
Chen et al., 2024	Quantitative	400	SEIS	CR	Cross-sectional
Wang, 2023	Quantitative	369	SEIS	α , ω	Cross-sectional
Yang, 2022	Quantitative	322	SEIS	α	Cross-sectional
Moskowitz and Dewaele, 2020	Quantitative	129	TEIQue 360°-SF	α	Cross-sectional
Anwar et al., 2021	Quantitative	243	TEIQue-SF	α	Cross-sectional
Dewaele and Wu, 2021	Quantitative	594	TEIQue-SF	α	Cross-sectional
Kostić-Bobanović, 2020	Quantitative	213	TEIQue-SF	α	Cross-sectional
Shahivand and Moradkhani, 2020	Quantitative	230	TEIQue-SF	α , CFA	Cross-sectional
Cardoso-Pulido et al., 2022	Quantitative	88	TEIQue-SF	α	Cross-sectional
Su et al., 2022	Quantitative	3307	WLEIS	α	Cross-sectional
Sobhanmanesh, 2022	Mixed	75	EQ-i	/	Cross-sectional*
Kliueva and Tsagari, 2018	Mixed	102	TEIQue-SF, interview	α	Cross-sectional

*The participants' EI was measured once;
 α = Cronbach's alpha, ω = McDonald's omega.

4. Discussion

4.1. Theoretical perspectives

As described in 3.2., there exist diverse theories in the included articles on language teacher EI. At the ontological level of emotional intelligence, theories related to trait emotional intelligence are most widely applied. Meanwhile, ability models and mixed models have also been applied in a few studies. Although most studies have comprehensively reviewed EI theories in the literature review section and focused on a certain type of model to examine teacher EI, one study did not mention the three types of models, and four studies did not use any of the three types of models as the theoretical foundation to answer research questions. However, the distinction between these models should be highlighted since the differences can be directly reflected in empirical studies, which demonstrated very low correlations between measures of trait EI and ability EI [51].

Theories and models of EI can be traced back to the same proximal roots of intra-personal and interpersonal intelligence in Gardner's [3] theory of multiple intelligences, with the latter foregrounding the capacity to interact with people, whilst

the former emphasizing the ability to understand oneself, to have an effective working model of oneself, and to use such information to regulate one's life. Considering the origin of EI, it should be noted that EI involves both declarative knowledge of self and others, as well as behavioral effectiveness of using this knowledge. The distinction between the ability EI model and the trait EI model lies in the perspectives of evaluating EI, which inevitably leads to discrepancies in measurement. The trait EI model conceptualizes EI as "a constellation of emotion-related self-perceptions and dispositions comprising the affective aspects of normal adult personality" [51]. By nature, trait EI is a personality trait and thus a pseudo-intelligence that requires measurement through self-report instruments [12,47,52]. Even though it is relatively stable, it is not genetically determined or fixed. Thus, as with the ability model, they may both be improved by training.

The ability model depicts a different picture of EI, foregrounding EI as an essential aspect of general intelligence that reflects individuals' ability to perceive, understand, manage, and use emotions to solve problems [46,53]. The ability model, which used to be the most pervasive one, concerns emotion-related cognitive abilities and thus requires maximum performance tests. As it stresses the intelligent nature of EI following Gardner's work, it was criticized for the discrepancy between the existing self-reported measurement and its requirement for objectivity. The challenge of measuring ability EI, or 'cognitive-emotional ability' [47], has not been solved yet. The mixed model was a combination of the trait model and ability model, but it might blur the difference between general intelligence, behavioral effectiveness of EI skills, and related declarative knowledge. These could explain the popularity of the trait EI model in the included articles. Given the subjectivity of emotional experience, trait EI is justified to operate in straightforward self-report scales since the construct comprises self-perceptions and dispositions. In alignment with the current trend, we suggest that the applying trait model is more practical in acknowledging the subjectiveness of emotional experience and taking into account more personal factors beyond traditional intelligence factors, while the performance-based ability model could be EI in a narrow sense. Given the differences in the conceptualizations and measurements of EI streams, future research is suggested to provide a clear definition of language teacher EI in the study to avoid blurring the categories of EI models. Meanwhile, considering the subject and cultural specificity of teacher EI, it is worthwhile to develop, verify, and modify the EI framework specifically for language teachers.

In addition to the models of emotional intelligence, 18 theories have been mentioned and applied in existing literature, covering fields such as psychology, sociology, and education. Among them, the theory of self-efficacy and emotion regulation were the most concerned. However, there was a lack of theoretical contributions in these articles. Some theories were only mentioned in the literature review section to explain the correlation between EI and a specific variable or were suggested as potential directions for future research in the discussions. However, these theories were not utilized as the theoretical framework for explaining and analyzing the research results, nor were they used as a basis for verifying or modifying a theoretical model. Future research should prioritize the theoretical foundation and academic value over being solely data-driven.

4.2. Research themes

As described in 3.3., most studies saw language teacher EI as an independent variable or antecedent to assess its influence on various individual and environmental factors. These factors include individual psychological variables such as self-efficacy and flow status, emotions such as burnout [54], and environmental variables like teacher-student relationships. However, there is a vacancy for research into the internal structure, influencing factors, and cultivation mechanisms of emotional intelligence among language teachers.

Future research on language teacher EI could be approached from the following aspects: Firstly, the internal structure of teacher EI could be developed, verified, and modified in the context of language teaching. Although current research has noticed the uniqueness of language teacher EI, most studies failed to highlight the speciality of foreign/second language teaching, ignoring the language-centered characteristics and the influence of language-related cultural backgrounds on teacher EI [55]. Therefore, it is necessary to examine EI in different cultural and disciplinary contexts. Besides, the influencing factors of language teacher EI need to be explored from different perspectives, including cultural and social aspects. The emotional experience is always bound by cultural factors involving values and beliefs of human interaction, as well as social factors such as salaries and work requirements. Various cultural factors and complex social interconnections embedded in the language teaching practice [56] could shape the emotion-related constructs of language teachers. Therefore, there is a need to analyze the factors of language teacher EI from a broader perspective. For example, the antecedents of language teacher EI could be analyzed from an ecological perspective [57], encompassing the micro, meso, macro, and external levels. From the perspective of complex dynamic systems theory [58], the influencing factor of the fluctuation of language teacher EI remains to be identified. In addition, programs for cultivating language teacher EI are necessary, which requires further study on the training mechanisms for language teachers. Emotional training would be helpful for pre-service and in-service teachers in promoting their skills in managing emotions [59], cultivating EI at both knowledge and performance levels, and enhancing individuals' development of competence [60] and well-being [61].

4.3. Research background

There is a dearth of research on diverse cultural and social backgrounds, with socio-economic factors being considered. Results demonstrate that the current language teacher EI empirical study was based on a limited range of research areas, with nearly half of the related studies on language teacher EI being conducted in China, where English is taught as the most popular foreign language. However, in the expanded version of Bar-On's EI model, social factors were included, and the framework was renamed emotional-social intelligence [46]. Bar-On suggested that EI is a psychological construct highly correlated with social factors, encompassing several intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies, skills, and facilitators that combine to determine effective human behavior [46]. This means that competencies and personalities involving interpersonal interactions may have various interpretations in different cultural contexts; for example, in a collectivist culture, the needs and goals

of the group are usually prioritized over self-actualization, whereas the opposite may be true in an individualist culture. In light of this, the culture embedded in the target language can also influence how teachers perceive and express emotions. Hence, future research is encouraged to explore language teachers EI in other parts of the world from various cultural backgrounds with different target languages.

A need to consider socioeconomic variables and their impact on language teacher EI also exists. For instance, language teacher EI in rural areas with underdeveloped economic conditions probably differs from that of developed areas. A favorable socio-economic background may provide language teachers with more career development opportunities and training resources for enhancing emotional intelligence. In contrast, poorer socio-economic conditions may create more stress in the lives of language teachers, thus affecting their emotional regulation and coping skills.

Besides, more attention could be given to the language background, language proficiency, and language identity of participants (e.g., bilingual teachers, multilingual teachers). Although some studies have reported in precision the language-related information of the language teachers, the impact of language background, proficiency, and identity on language teacher EI remains to be explored. For example, multilingual teachers are likely to possess greater cultural sensitivity with a deeper understanding, awareness, and acceptance of other cultures, thus demonstrating higher levels of EI when dealing with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, allowing them to be more effective in dealing with multicultural classroom environments.

Apart from that, the most prevalent educational level of language teachers examined in selected articles was higher education. Nevertheless, teachers working at different educational levels might face different emotional challenges. For instance, there are differences in the emotional support and management of teacher-student relationships between language teachers at the primary school level and those at the university level. Primary school students are typically in the early stages of emotional and social skill development, so their teachers need to provide more emotional support and positive encouragement to help students build confidence and maintain interest in language learning. Additionally, primary school language teachers are required to exhibit emotional stability to handle unexpected classroom situations, as these can have a lasting impact on students' emotions and behaviors. In contrast, university language teachers work with a more mature student population and emphasize respect and reciprocity in the teacher-student relationship, with emotional intelligence more likely to involve the pressures of research. Therefore, disclosing the EI of language teachers in primary and secondary schools could be essential for improving the quality of language education as well as supporting teachers' professional development and well-being.

4.4. Methodologies

As stated in section 3.5., the quantitative approach was the most popular way among the reviewed articles, with self-reported scales being used to evaluate language teacher EI. However, emotional experiences are highly subjective. Quantitative research often uses standardized tests or questionnaires to measure EI which may not fully capture the complexity and depth of a language teacher's EI, which involves

individuals' perception of and response to the emotions of self and others. Besides, some of the existing questionnaires in the form of Likert scales are criticized for cultural adaptability and validity, as mentioned earlier in 4.3 and will be explained later. In addition, quantitative data usually provide statistical correlation rather than causal relation. Although quantitative studies can reveal the correlation between Language teacher EI and other variables, they may not be able to delve into the mechanisms of their development or the impact. Therefore, future research can adopt qualitative and mixed research methods to provide a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of language teacher EI and compensate for some of the limitations in quantitative research. Qualitative research can be more flexible in considering the effects of different cultural contexts on language teacher EI and discussing cultural factors that may lead to differences in EI. Mixed research can harness the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches, enhancing the explanatory power of the data. For instance, quantitative data can be used to analyze the statistical correlation between EI and professional burnout among a group of language teachers, while qualitative data would unveil the mechanisms through which language teacher EI buffers against burnout. Moreover, cross-sectional studies were dominating, and there existed only a few longitudinal studies. Given the limited role of cross-sectional studies to establish causality, longitudinal studies are needed to examine language teacher EI over time, analyze its causes, or apply the theory of complex dynamic systems to take multiple samples of emotional intelligence over a period for exploring its changes and development. Accordingly, it places high demands on the reliability and validity of the instrument.

Firstly, in the reviewed language teacher EI articles, the self-report scales were the most widely used instruments, probably owing to the feasibility of self-report measurements. However, the self-reported instruments were criticized for their subjectivity unless it was used for measuring trait EI [12,47,52]. The ability EI and mixed EI concerning emotion-related cognitive abilities ought to be tested by maximum performance tests or other-report measurements. However, the EI scales presently used have elicited the following three problems. Firstly, these scales were general EI scales that were not designed for teachers, especially language teachers. Actually, the EFL Teachers' Emotional and Social Intelligence Questionnaire (EFL TESIQ) [55] has been developed and tailored for foreign language teachers. The EFL TESIQ was the modification of the TEIQue-SF based on Goleman's five-dimension model of EI [15], including self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, and has been applied in empirical studies [62]. Further investigations adopting EFL TESIQ are required to further investigate language teacher EI.

Secondly, the adaptability of EI scales currently used varies in different cultures. In Dewaele and Wu's study [44], although TEIQue-SF displayed high overall reliability, its subscale reliability was close to the minimum threshold. The reason lies in cultural differences, as an EI component might carry different meanings in different cultural contexts. For example, the dimension of "sociability" had subtle differences between Canadian and Chinese cultures [12]. Therefore, future research concerning the adaptability of EI scales in different cultural contexts is appreciated.

Thirdly, the self-report measurements would potentially introduce shared method covariance biases [36]. Although language learners were rarely asked about their

views on language teachers, Moskowitz and Dewaele [42] conducted research on students' perceived language teacher EI with language learners being the observers. The other-report measurement could offer a different perspective on the teacher's emotional intelligence at the performance level, without contradicting the operationalization requirement of ability EI and mixed EI stream. Hence, language teacher EI could be rated by different observers, such as colleagues and students.

In addition to scales, researchers could ask the participants to think aloud as they carry out a task. Retrospective protocols such as stimulated recall, which requires participants' comments after they finish a task by using a video replay to jog their memories [63], could also be applied.

5. Conclusion

The current scoping review reported on an overview of research on language teacher EI from 2018 to 2024, with a particular emphasis on the theoretical perspectives, research themes, research background, and methodologies. Accordingly, research gaps and implications for future studies were provided. The results indicated that there was a variety of models and theories in language teacher EI research, with the trait EI model and theories of self-efficacy and emotion regulation receiving the most attention. However, theories about EI need to be better integrated into the analysis and interpretation of the results. Moreover, most reviewed studies regarded language teacher EI as an independent variable or antecedent, examining its impact on other individual and environmental variables. There was a lack of studies examining the internal structure of teacher EI in the foreign/second language teaching context, exploring its influencing factors and training mechanisms. Additionally, underdeveloped regions, other target languages apart from English, multilingual teachers, and primary or secondary school teachers haven't received much attention in the included articles. Finally, homogenization in research design among these studies was noticeable, with quantitative studies, cross-sectional design, and self-reported questionnaires being prevalent.

In sum, the language teacher EI was substantiated to be closely related to various individual and environmental variables. The present studies provided valuable insights into EI, enlightening future empirical studies on teacher EI in the language learning context to develop effective strategies for cultivating the EI of language teachers, improving language teachers' well-being and efficacy, reducing potential professional burnout, and facilitating professional development of language teachers.

Conflict of interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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