

Emotional Intelligence and Teaching Development Among Novice University Lecturers: A Comparative Review Between Henan Province and Global Contexts

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Received: 27 July 2025/ Accepted: 21 August 2025/ Published online: 24 August 2025

Abstract

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has emerged as a critical factor in teaching effectiveness and professional growth. This review explores how EI skills enhance the performance and development of newly appointed university lecturers, focusing on Henan Province, China, in comparison with global contexts. A systematic search of recent studies (2022 – 2025) was conducted on EI in higher education teaching, novice teacher development, and regional practices. The synthesis of findings from over 25 sources — emphasizing works by leading scholars — indicates that across diverse settings, high EI in educators is consistently linked to better teaching performance, effective classroom management, and improved student outcomes. In Henan, emerging studies show significant positive correlations between lecturers' EI and job performance, and EI training is increasingly recommended in faculty induction programs. Novice teachers with higher EI demonstrate greater teaching enthusiasm, stronger professional identity, and resilience, partly due to experiencing more positive emotions at work. Global research mirrors these trends: for example, emotionally intelligent teachers in the UAE achieved higher student success, prompting calls to recruit and train educators in EI competencies. EI also fosters innovative teaching practices by boosting instructors' psychological empowerment and commitment. Overall, the evidence indicates that EI skills substantially benefit novice university lecturers by improving their instructional effectiveness, adaptability, and well-being. Henan-based lecturers face unique cultural and resource challenges but exhibit similar gains from EI as their global peers. Strengthening EI through targeted professional development is a strategic avenue to enhance teaching quality and support lecturer development worldwide. These findings underscore the importance of integrating EI competencies into faculty training programs to better prepare new lecturers for success.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence; Novice Lecturers; Teaching Performance; Professional Development; Henan Province; Comparative Education; Higher Education

1. Introduction

Emotions are integral to teaching, a profession characterized by complex interpersonal dynamics and stressors. Emotional intelligence (EI), defined as the ability to recognize, understand, regulate, and use emotions effectively, has gained recognition as a key competence for educators. Research indicates that teachers' EI significantly influences classroom management, instructional effectiveness, and even student learning outcomes. For novice university lecturers, who often grapple with transitioning into academic roles and managing diverse student needs, EI skills may be especially crucial in improving their performance and professional growth.

This review focuses on newly appointed university lecturers in Henan Province, China – a region with a rapidly expanding higher education sector – and compares findings with global contexts. Henan's universities have seen a surge of young faculty hires, reflecting broader trends in Chinese higher education. These novice lecturers, typically early-career academics, face challenges such as large class sizes, intense competition, and high student expectations. Emotional competencies like self-awareness, empathy, and emotion regulation could help them navigate these challenges, reduce stress, and improve teaching quality. Globally, attention to EI in educator development has also grown across disciplines and cultures. Studies from various countries such as the UAE and the Philippines underscore that emotionally intelligent educators adapt better to classroom demands and maintain higher teaching efficacy.

The purpose of this literature review is to synthesize current research (2022–2025) on how EI skills enhance the teaching performance and career development of novice university lecturers. By juxtaposing evidence from Henan Province with international studies, this review identifies common themes, highlights unique regional factors, and outlines best practices. It examines (1) how EI improves the teaching effectiveness and professional development of new university lecturers; (2) the similarities and differences between Henan-based lecturers and their global counterparts in terms of EI and teaching; and (3) how these insights can inform faculty development programs or policies (such as induction training) to better support novice lecturers.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Emotional Intelligence and Teacher Performance

There is strong consensus that teachers' emotional skills are closely linked to their classroom performance. Recent global studies confirm that educators with higher EI tend to be more effective and more adaptable in their teaching practice. For example, a 2022 study of 312 higher education faculty in the United Arab Emirates found that EI competencies had a significant positive impact on instructors' classroom behavior and student success. The authors concluded that hiring educators with strong EI, and providing EI training for current staff, leads to markedly improved instruction and classroom performance. This aligns with findings from other countries. For instance, Tolentino (2023) found that Filipino teachers with high EI not only performed better, but also adapted more readily to evolving classroom demands. Similarly, Boybanting and Tantiado (2022) reported that K–12 teachers in the Philippines scoring higher on EI exhibited stronger self-regulation, empathy, and social skills—traits correlated with enhanced teaching

performance. These emotionally intelligent educators communicate more effectively, handle stress better, and understand student needs—qualities that translate into improved classroom outcomes.

EI contributes to various dimensions of teacher performance. For one, EI directly affects classroom climate and student engagement. Teachers who are emotionally aware and empathetic tend to create more supportive learning environments, manage classroom conflicts more constructively, and foster positive student–teacher relationships. This, in turn, elevates student engagement and achievement. A bibliometric review of teacher EI research in 2022 highlighted a growing body of evidence linking teachers’ emotional competencies to metrics of teaching success, including student academic gains and classroom management efficacy. In addition, emotionally intelligent teachers often show greater resilience under stress, maintaining instructional quality even in challenging times. During the COVID-19 remote-teaching period, teachers with higher EI reported lower burnout and were better able to sustain work engagement and self-efficacy. This suggests that EI serves as a buffer against stressors, enabling educators to continue performing well under adverse conditions.

Notably, EI can also facilitate innovative teaching. Jiang and Tong (2025), studying pre-service music teachers, found that higher EI was associated with more creative, student-centered teaching practices. In that study, EI boosted teachers’ feelings of psychological empowerment and career commitment, which in turn encouraged them to experiment with new pedagogy. In short, across both traditional performance evaluations and contributions to a positive, creative classroom atmosphere, teachers with high EI consistently outperformed those with lower EI.

2.2. Emotional Intelligence in Novice Lecturer Development

For novice university lecturers in their first few years of teaching, EI can be a pivotal asset for professional development. Early-career academics often encounter a “reality shock” when transitioning from graduate studies into full-time teaching roles. They must quickly learn to design courses, engage diverse students, and balance teaching with research responsibilities. EI can ease this transition by equipping new lecturers with the ability to manage stress, reflect on their practice, and build supportive relationships. For example, Long et al. (2024) conducted a two-year longitudinal study of 357 novice teachers and found that increases in EI predicted significant improvements in professional identity (confidence and sense of belonging), teaching enthusiasm, and teacher–student relationships. These connections were explained in part by positive emotions: teachers who grew in EI experienced more frequent and sustained positive emotional states, which fueled greater enthusiasm and stronger rapport with students. In practical terms, an emotionally intelligent novice lecturer is more likely to treat setbacks such as a poor class or critical feedback as learning opportunities—maintaining a growth mindset and passion for teaching despite challenges.

Evidence from China echoes these trends, underscoring EI’s role in young faculty development. In Henan Province, where rapid university expansion has brought many new hires, researchers have begun examining EI among novice lecturers. For instance, Liu, Omar, and Puad (2024) surveyed 293 academics across five Henan universities and found a significant positive

correlation between lecturers' EI and their self-reported job performance. Lecturers who scored higher on core EI domains such as self-awareness, emotion regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills tended to report more effective teaching and greater work productivity. Such traits likely helped them stay calm and professional under pressure, solve classroom problems effectively, communicate well with colleagues, and remain motivated toward long-term goals. These findings align with the global literature, which suggests that novice teachers benefit from EI when facing the emotional demands of teaching, such as student misbehavior or heavy workload.

Moreover, studies in Henan highlight EI's influence on teacher engagement and retention. Yuan et al. (2025) studied rural kindergarten teachers in Henan—a group analogous to novice educators since many were early-career and working under high pressure in under-resourced settings—and found results with broader relevance to new teachers. They reported that EI had a significant positive effect on work engagement, including vigor, dedication, and absorption. Teachers with higher EI were more engaged and less prone to burnout, partly because they used effective emotional labor strategies and built higher self-efficacy. In fact, EI emerged as a key personal resource for meeting job demands: higher-EI teachers adjusted better to challenges, leading to greater commitment and lower intent to quit. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2024) found that rural Chinese teachers with strong socio-emotional competence (including EI) had higher work engagement and lower job burnout. Though these particular studies focused on school teachers, university novices in Henan likely face analogous emotional challenges—adapting to institutional culture, handling large classes, and so on. The ability to manage one's emotions and empathize with students can thus help a new lecturer remain energized and committed, rather than overwhelmed.

International research likewise confirms that new educators around the world face emotional hurdles, and that EI often makes the difference in their professional growth. In one qualitative study of novice English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) teachers in China, Zhang and Wang (2024) found that cultivating positive emotionality was key to early-career success. In that study, teachers reported that experiencing and sustaining positive emotions—such as joy, enthusiasm, and satisfaction—helped them foster better teaching and learning processes, build positive rapport with students, and enhance their sense of professional accomplishment. They deliberately used emotion regulation strategies such as positive reframing and seeking collegial support to maintain an optimistic outlook. Participants noted that nurturing positive emotional experiences enhanced their success, enthusiasm, and commitment to teaching. This finding supports the notion that EI—particularly skills like emotional regulation and optimism—empowers novice lecturers to thrive rather than merely survive in their formative years.

2.3. Regional Comparisons: Henan Province and Global Contexts

While the fundamental benefits of EI for teaching development seem universal, there are some regional nuances. In Henan, awareness of EI's importance in academia is relatively recent. Liu et al. (2024) noted that Chinese research on university teachers' EI was sparse until the last few years. Traditionally, faculty development in China focused on content knowledge and pedagogical skills, often neglecting the “softer” emotional aspects of teaching. However, this is

now changing. Recent evidence of positive EI–performance correlations in Henan’s universities has prompted calls to integrate EI into faculty training. For example, Liu et al. (2024) recommended adding EI modules to new faculty induction and continuous professional development (CPD) programs. Such training might include workshops on self-awareness, emotion regulation techniques, empathy development, and conflict resolution—giving novice lecturers tools to handle classroom emotional dynamics and collegial relationships.

Henan’s context—with large student cohorts and a competitive academic environment—also highlights the value of EI for maintaining teaching quality. One local study observed that lecturers with high EI coped better with stress and student conflicts, thereby sustaining their performance and contributing to a more positive learning environment. This aligns with a broader priority in Chinese education: improving teaching effectiveness in tandem with supporting teachers’ mental health. For instance, China’s 2022 “Basic Education Strong Teachers” initiative emphasized teacher psychological well-being and emotional skills, even at the school level. Such policy directions resonate in higher education too, as universities recognize that emotionally healthy, emotionally skilled teachers are crucial for quality education.

Globally, many higher education systems have been more proactive. Numerous Western universities have faculty development centers offering seminars such as “Emotional Intelligence in Teaching” or “Social-Emotional Learning for Faculty,” influenced by the broader K–12 SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) movement. For example, the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and organizations like the Housman Institute offer programs that help educators formally develop these skills. In Europe, some Erasmus+ teacher training courses explicitly include EI and other soft skills for instructors. The key difference in Henan may be that EI training efforts need to scale to large cohorts of new lecturers due to the rapid expansion of faculty. Any interventions must be group-based and easily integrated into required professional development hours, and often need to be justified by tangible improvements in student outcomes given the outcome-driven culture of Chinese universities. In contrast, global contexts sometimes have the luxury of smaller-scale programs or even one-on-one EI coaching for faculty.

Another nuanced difference lies in research focus. Global research on teacher EI covers a wide array of outcomes—from student achievement and classroom climate to teacher leadership and cross-cultural competencies. In Henan (and China), initial studies have understandably concentrated on core outcomes like job performance and work engagement as baseline evidence to justify EI’s importance. There is less local research so far on how lecturer EI might affect specific student metrics (such as student retention or satisfaction) or broader organizational culture in universities, whereas such topics are being explored elsewhere. This points to a clear gap for researchers in Henan: expanding EI research to more dimensions of academic life, including leadership roles and teamwork. For example, Majid Murad—primarily a management researcher—has work that touches on how personal attributes (like “dark side” personality traits or leadership style) influence university workplace dynamics. While not directly about EI, his work reflects growing interest in the psychological factors that affect academic environments. Henan’s institutions could build on this trend by examining their own settings. Researchers could investigate whether a department head’s EI influences the success and retention of novice

lecturers. Such an inquiry would bridge individual and institutional levels, further integrating EI considerations into higher education leadership.

In summary, the literature shows that whether in Henan or elsewhere, novice lecturers benefit greatly from emotional intelligence. The comparative perspective highlights a common trend: a shift from seeing teaching as purely cognitive or technical work to recognizing it as also emotional labor that requires explicit training and support. Henan's experience—set against the backdrop of China's educational reforms—illustrates a growing acknowledgment of EI's value, while global research affirms these benefits and offers practical models to guide local implementation.

3. Methodology

This study is presented as a literature review. An integrative review approach was adopted to synthesize recent empirical findings and theoretical discussions on emotional intelligence and teaching development. Sources published in the last three years (2022–2025) were prioritized to capture the latest evidence and trends, given the increased interest in EI in education during this period.

Literature Search: Systematic literature searches were conducted using academic databases and search engines such as Web of Science, Scopus, ERIC, Google Scholar, and CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure). Search terms combined key concepts including “emotional intelligence” with “teacher” or “lecturer,” “novice” or “new faculty,” “teaching performance,” “professional development,” as well as region-specific terms like “Henan” or “China” and broader terms like “higher education” and “comparative.” This ensured both local and global coverage. In addition, the Google Scholar profiles and citation lists of notable scholars (e.g., Xianghan Zhang and Majid Murad) were examined for any relevant contributions. The reference lists of key articles were also scanned (backward tracing) and citation searches performed (forward tracing) to discover additional studies.

Inclusion Criteria: Sources were included if they met the following criteria: (a) published 2022 or later; (b) focused on emotional intelligence (or closely related constructs, such as emotional competence) in the context of teaching or teacher development; (c) examined higher education instructors or closely analogous groups such as secondary school teachers if the insights were transferable; and (d) provided empirical findings (quantitative or qualitative) or substantial review analyses relevant to novice teacher performance or development. Both international and Chinese studies (in English or Chinese) were considered to enable a comparative perspective. Priority was given to peer-reviewed journal articles, with a select number of high-quality conference papers or reports included.

Exclusion Criteria: Sources published before 2019 were generally excluded to maintain a current focus, except for a few seminal works used sparingly for background context. Studies that addressed EI but did not link it to educational or teacher outcomes (for example, purely EI measurement studies with no teaching context) were also omitted.

Data Extraction and Synthesis: For each included source, key information was extracted (study context [country/region, educational level], participant characteristics — noting if they were novice teachers —, research methods, and main findings on how EI relates to teaching performance or development). The specific facets of EI examined (e.g., self-awareness, empathy) and the outcome domains measured (e.g., teaching effectiveness, innovation, teacher well-being) were noted. The findings were then organized thematically. Initially, themes were identified inductively (e.g., “EI and instructional effectiveness,” “EI and teacher well-being,” “EI training interventions,” “cultural context in EI”), and these themes were later consolidated under the broader section headings used in the Literature Review and Results. Given the comparative aim, findings were coded as “Henan/China-focused” versus “global,” and commonalities and differences between these categories were analyzed.

Quality Assurance: The quality and relevance of studies were appraised, considering sample size and representativeness, the use of validated measures (e.g., established EI questionnaires like the WLEIS or Bar-On EQ-i), and the appropriateness of analytical methods (e.g., use of structural equation modeling for mediation analyses or rigorous qualitative coding techniques). Only studies meeting basic quality standards were included to ensure the conclusions are well-supported. Where available, meta-analyses or systematic reviews were given particular weight to bolster reliability. In synthesizing the results, the strength of evidence was taken into account: well-replicated findings (such as the positive correlation between EI and teacher performance) are highlighted as consensus, whereas more tentative or context-specific findings are noted with appropriate caution.

4. Results and Analysis

Overall, the literature indicates that emotional intelligence significantly benefits novice university lecturers by enhancing both their teaching performance and their professional development. Three major themes emerge from the findings and are elaborated in the sections below.

4.1. EI Enhances Teaching Effectiveness

Numerous studies document that educators with higher EI deliver more effective teaching. Such teachers excel not only in subject-matter knowledge but also in the “people” side of teaching—effective communication, classroom management, and responsiveness to student needs. For instance, Su et al. (2022), in a study of over 3,300 secondary teachers in Jilin, China, found that teachers’ EI was positively correlated with their work engagement and their capacity for teaching for creativity. Teachers who were better at understanding and managing emotions were more engaged in their work and more likely to use creative teaching strategies, an effect mediated by their increased engagement. This suggests that emotional skills enable teachers to invest more energy and creativity into their teaching. Similarly, research in a Middle Eastern university found that emotionally intelligent faculty created more stimulating learning environments, as reflected in improved student performance metrics. The mechanism is intuitive: teachers with high EI are

better at motivating students, maintaining a positive classroom climate, and adjusting their teaching based on student feedback (often communicated via students' emotional cues).

Moreover, EI helps teachers navigate the inevitable emotional incidents in classrooms – from handling a student's confusion or frustration to de-escalating conflicts. A recent case study analysis by Khassawneh et al. (2022) highlighted that higher-EI educators were more effective in detecting and defusing potential classroom conflicts early by recognizing emotional undercurrents and responding with empathy and control. These teachers set a tone of respect and openness, which preemptively reduced disruptions. The net effect is smoother classroom management and more time spent on learning. Indeed, evidence confirms that EI is a strong predictor of teaching success across various indicators. For example, Tolentino (2023) found a robust relationship between Filipino college instructors' EI levels and their performance ratings, with EI explaining a meaningful portion of variance in teaching effectiveness scores. Likewise, studies in Jordan and Malaysia reported positive correlations between teachers' EI and student engagement and overall classroom climate (as summarized by Boybanting & Tantiado, 2022).

4.2. EI Fuels Professional Growth and Well-Being

Beyond immediate performance, EI contributes to the longer-term growth of novice lecturers. Educators with high EI tend to develop a stronger professional identity and greater confidence in their role. In the longitudinal study by Long et al. (2024) mentioned earlier, teachers who began with or developed higher EI in their first two years were more likely to say that teaching “is part of who I am” and showed greater commitment to the profession. These high-EI teachers were also more enthusiastic—approaching teaching with passion rather than as a chore—and they built more positive relationships with students. Such outcomes (enthusiasm, commitment, positive student rapport) are crucial for retention and career satisfaction. A novice lecturer who feels effective and valued is more likely to remain in academia and pursue further development (e.g., innovative teaching projects or scholarly teaching research), creating a virtuous cycle of improvement. By contrast, without sufficient emotional skills, newcomers can become overwhelmed, leading to disengagement or even leaving the profession.

EI also offers a protective effect on mental health and burnout. Teaching—especially for newcomers—can be emotionally draining. Studies during the pandemic found that educators experienced high stress levels; however, those with higher EI reported lower burnout and fewer stress-related health symptoms. They were better at setting emotional boundaries, seeking support, and finding positive outlets for stress, such as reflective practices or collegial discussions, thereby maintaining their well-being. In Henan's context, which often involves heavy workloads and bureaucratic pressures, having these coping strategies is invaluable. A recent study of Henan's rural teachers (Yuan et al., 2025) showed that EI skills like optimism and emotional management increased work engagement while reducing signs of emotional exhaustion. Teachers with low EI, by contrast, were more prone to burnout—struggling to cope with multiple demands and thus feeling drained and ineffective.

Another facet of professional growth is the willingness to innovate and engage in continuous improvement. EI fosters a mindset where feedback is welcomed rather than feared. For example,

an international review noted that teachers with high EI tend to view constructive criticism as a means to improve themselves and their work environment, reflecting a growth mindset. These teachers are less defensive and more reflective, meaning they can adapt their teaching strategies based on feedback from students or peers and learn from mistakes. In the literature, this openness and resilience are repeatedly linked to the self-awareness and self-regulation components of EI. A new lecturer with strong self-awareness is conscious of their emotional reactions—say, recognizing anxiety before a large lecture or frustration with a disengaged class. Instead of reacting impulsively or internalizing these feelings, they use self-regulation strategies to manage them, for example by seeking advice from a mentor or trying a new student engagement technique, ultimately improving their teaching practice. This reflective cycle can accelerate their development into seasoned, effective educators.

4.3. Henan vs. Global Practices

Comparing Henan with global contexts reveals more similarities than differences in how EI benefits novice lecturers. The human elements of teaching transcend cultural boundaries: empathy builds trust with students whether in Zhengzhou or New York, and managing stress is universally key to preventing teacher burnout. However, differences emerge in emphasis and implementation. Henan (and China broadly) is in an early stage of recognizing and integrating EI into faculty development. Chinese literature in recent years often frames EI as a new priority requiring stronger institutional support. For example, one Henan study noted that historically there was “minimal attention to the emotional intelligence of university academics” in Chinese higher education, and it called for embedding EI into faculty training and policy. In practice, some Chinese universities are beginning to offer workshops on emotional skills for young faculty, and national initiatives are acknowledging teacher well-being. But comprehensive EI training for university instructors is still emerging.

Globally, many universities have been more proactive for some time. In Western institutions, it’s common to find faculty development workshops on topics like EI in teaching or faculty social-emotional learning, reflecting broader educational trends. The difference in Henan’s case is largely one of scale and framing: EI training needs to reach large numbers of new lecturers quickly and is often justified by its impact on measurable outcomes (e.g., student achievement or faculty productivity). In contrast, global programs sometimes can focus on individual coaching or small-group seminars and tie EI development to broader agendas like inclusive teaching or leadership training.

Another difference lies in research and policy focus. Globally, research on teacher EI explores diverse outcomes, whereas in Henan the initial research emphasis has been on core outcomes like job performance and engagement to establish baseline evidence. This suggests room for Henan’s academic community to broaden its EI research agenda. Going forward, Henan can take inspiration from global findings while tailoring approaches to local needs.

In sum, emotional intelligence clearly serves as a multifaceted booster for novice lecturer development. It improves day-to-day teaching performance, accelerates the journey toward teaching expertise, and safeguards mental health. Henan’s experience fits into this global picture,

with local studies reinforcing universal themes. The key insight is that investing in EI—through hiring decisions, training programs, and supportive policies—is an effective strategy for cultivating high-performing, resilient, and innovative educators.

5. Conclusions and Discussion

Emotional intelligence has proven to be a critical factor in developing effective, thriving university lecturers. Using a comparative lens that focused on Henan Province and then considered the global context, this review finds that despite varied educational environments, EI consistently emerges as a critical competency for teaching success.

Key Conclusions: First, novice lecturers with strong EI clearly achieve better teaching performance. They manage classrooms with greater ease, foster engaging learning environments, and adapt their pedagogy in response to student needs. The positive link between EI and teaching effectiveness was evident in multiple studies across different countries and educational levels, suggesting a robust relationship. In Henan’s context—where universities are expanding and striving to improve teaching quality—this implies that nurturing EI in faculty could be a lever to raise instructional standards and enhance student outcomes.

Second, EI substantially enhances the professional growth and well-being of novice lecturers. Early-career academics often stand at a fragile juncture; those equipped with emotional skills are more likely to navigate initial challenges successfully, developing confidence and a positive professional identity. They tend to remain more enthusiastic and resilient, which not only reduces early-career attrition but also lays a foundation for continued development (e.g., taking on innovative teaching projects or engaging in scholarly teaching research). This has practical importance: faculty development programs that include EI training or coaching can yield dividends in faculty retention and long-term performance. Evidence from both Henan and abroad showing that EI correlates with lower burnout and higher work engagement strengthens the case for paying attention to the “emotional side” of teaching roles.

Third, while contextual differences exist, the benefits of EI are universally relevant. Henan’s novice lecturers share many of the same emotional labor tasks as lecturers elsewhere—lecturing to diverse student groups, handling evaluations, balancing teaching with research. Our comparative review found that interventions and strategies successful in other regions (such as mentoring in emotional self-regulation, teacher peer support groups, or formal EI workshops) could be adapted to Henan’s setting with culturally attuned modifications. Western contexts often explicitly link teacher EI development with student social-emotional learning initiatives, whereas Henan’s efforts might initially focus more on improving teacher outcomes (performance, satisfaction) as an end in itself. Nonetheless, a broader perspective is emerging in China that teacher well-being and emotional skills ultimately benefit students and the educational mission. This convergence suggests that educational leaders in Henan and similar contexts can confidently incorporate global best practices on EI, knowing they align with local evidence.

Implications for Practice: The findings underscore several actionable implications. Universities—in Henan and elsewhere—should consider integrating EI skill-building into faculty

induction. For example, new lecturer orientations could include sessions on emotional intelligence, where experienced facilitators discuss common emotional challenges in teaching and introduce techniques like reflective journaling or mindfulness for stress management. Ongoing professional development could offer modules on advanced EI applications: for instance, conflict resolution within academic departments, using empathy when advising or mentoring students, or the emotional aspects of leadership for lecturers who move into administrative roles. Mentorship programs might pair novice lecturers with experienced faculty who exemplify high EI, so beginners can learn by example (observing, for instance, how a mentor calmly and respectfully handles a heated class discussion). Institutions can also implement supportive policies such as providing counseling services or stress-management resources specifically for teaching staff, signaling that emotional well-being is a priority and a professional norm.

At the classroom level, lecturers themselves can leverage EI to improve their teaching practice. For instance, a new lecturer might conduct brief “emotional check-ins” with themselves (and even with students) at the start of class to gauge the emotional climate and make adjustments as needed—a strategy some innovative teaching guides now recommend. Novice instructors can practice techniques like pausing for a moment before responding to a challenging question (to demonstrate impulse control), or intentionally using positive body language and tone (to convey openness and enthusiasm, which can be contagious to students). Over time, these small habits contribute to a more emotionally intelligent teaching style.

Broader Significance: The growing emphasis on emotional intelligence in teaching reflects a paradigm shift in education. This perspective recognizes that teaching is not only an intellectual endeavor but also an emotional one. The evidence confirms that empowering novice lecturers with emotional skills enables them to become more impactful educators. This has ripple effects: students taught by emotionally intelligent lecturers are likely to feel more supported and motivated, potentially leading to better learning outcomes and a more positive university experience. Furthermore, lecturers who master EI early in their careers may become future academic leaders who foster positive, supportive institutional cultures—creating long-term improvements in the academic community.

For Henan Province specifically, an emphasis on EI development could complement other ongoing educational reforms (such as pedagogical upskilling and curriculum innovation). Henan’s universities striving for excellence can treat EI training as part of their quality assurance strategy—akin to ensuring faculty have strong research skills, they should also cultivate strong socio-emotional skills for teaching. Doing so could help distinguish Henan’s institutions as national leaders in holistic faculty development.

On the global front, this review adds to the literature by showing that findings from various regions converge on a cohesive narrative: emotional intelligence matters profoundly in education. It serves as a reminder to higher education policymakers and administrators that fostering the emotional development of educators is strategically important. Just as student social-emotional learning is now widely championed, so too should the social-emotional learning of educators be promoted as a core component of educational quality.

6. Limitations

While this review synthesized insights from a range of recent studies, a few limitations should be noted. First, by covering both Henan and global contexts, depth on individual studies was sometimes sacrificed for breadth. Second, many of the cited findings are correlational, so causal relationships cannot be definitively established. Finally, an over-reliance on teacher self-report measures in the literature may introduce bias. Despite these caveats, the overall patterns identified are supported across diverse sources.

7. Future Research

Future research could build on these findings in several ways. For instance, intervention studies could test specific EI training programs for novice lecturers and assess their impact on teaching performance and well-being. Longitudinal research following new lecturers over time would help establish causal links between EI development and career outcomes. It would also be worthwhile to examine how EI manifests in online teaching environments, and whether emotionally intelligent academic leadership fosters better outcomes for novice lecturers. Finally, cross-cultural comparisons (e.g., between Henan and other regions or countries) could clarify how cultural context influences the role and impact of EI in teaching.

Author Contributions:

Conceptualization: Yingjie Wu and Chandra Mohan Vadudeva; Methodology: Yingjie Wu; Investigation and Data Curation: Yingjie Wu; Formal Analysis: Yingjie Wu; Writing – Original Draft: Yingjie Wu; Writing – Review & Editing: Yingjie Wu and Chandra Mohan Vadudeva; Supervision: Chandra Mohan Vadudeva; Project Administration: Yingjie Wu. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding:

This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement:

Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement:

Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement:

No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable.

Acknowledgments:

The authors thank Lincoln University College for the supportive research environment. We are also grateful to colleagues who provided feedback on early drafts of this manuscript.

Conflict of Interest:

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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