Emotions as an Accelerator: Case Studies on the Effects of Emotions on Teachers' Perception and Learning When Being in Conflicts with School leaders

Yin-yung CHIU
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Abstract

Teachers' emotions are critical to positive student-teacher relationships and quality teaching in the classroom, though the importance of teachers' effective management of emotions has been recognized (Chen, 2020), the reverse effects of teachers' emotions on teachers' learning have been underplayed in the field. Teachers are expected to be professional learners (Locke; Jarvis, 2009; Magill, 2021), meanwhile, emotions are often framed as a dichromatic disturbance to their professional learning, hence the effect of emotions is often downplayed, if not neglected. Emotions, however, are innate and inseparable from one's perception of their own lived experience, it affects how one perceives his/her identity and relationship with the world, thereby playing an important role in learning *per se* (Jarvis, 2006). Through narrative analysis, the teaching trajectories of three Hong Kong Secondary school teachers are studied. The life stories of these three cases have revealed in this research that emotions indeed serve as an accelerator to critical reflection, reflective learning and perspective transformation, thereby leading to transformative learning on both personal and professional levels during disjuncture triggered by conflicts with school leaders. By employing Chen's (2020) Teacher Emotion Model and Liu & Hallinger's (2020) partial mediation model, this research provides empirical evidence to the indispensable effects of emotions on teachers' perception of power distance orientation; how the interactive, dynamic process affects their response; the way emotions act as an accelerator in transformative learning; and how teachers reharmonize disjuncture that are embedded in emotionally charged relationships in the social world in their learning trajectories.

 Keywords: conflicts with school leaders; disjuncture; perspective transformation; power distance orientation; teachers' emotions

## 1.	Introduction

Research on teachers' learning has put emphasis on cognition and motivation, but the emotional dimension has been underplayed (Chen, 2020). Although the importance of emotions has become more recognised (Burić et al., 2019; Chen, 2020); the topic has been approached as a separate subject from teachers' learning; meanwhile, instructional leadership is a crucial factor that influences teachers' learning (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Marsh, 1992; Pan & Chen, 2020; Liu & Hallinger, 2021). The emotionality (Little, 1996; Zembylas, 2008) connected with

learning and the assemblage of personhood/ 'learning as a whole-person' (Jarvis, 2006) needs to be addressed (Hargreaves, 2001; Mansfield et al., 2016; Chen, 2020; Jacobs et al., 2021). Therefore, this research places emphasis back on the effects of emotions on teachers' perception of power distance orientation and the emotionality-charged interactions between teachers and school leaders (Sjolie et al., 2018; Liu & Hallinger, 2021).

Literature has acknowledged the necessity of meaning-oriented reflection in face of critical disjunctures, it has been established that the most desirable outcome is transformative learning (Mezirow, 2009; Bakkenes et al., 2010). Although the close connection between teachers' critical reflection and transformative learning has been established (Jarvis 2006; 2009; Kovacs, 2018; Yaacob et al., 2021), the roles of emotions in the reharmonizing process is not often researched. Using Liu & Hallinger's (2020) partial mediation model and Chen's (2020) Teacher Emotion Model (TEM), this article illustrates how emotions act as an accelerator to three Secondary schoolteachers in their learning trajectories in their interactions with school leaders. This article first discusses the reverse effects of teachers' emotions on their perception of power distance orientation and explores the often neglected dynamic and interactional characteristics of instructional leadership (Smylie, 1995; Hallinger at al., 2013; Li et al., 2016; Pan & Chen, 2020); next, using narrative analysis, it demonstrates how emotions acted as an accelerator in these teachers' perspective transformation, occasionally resulting in transformative learning.

The article begins by laying out the conceptual relationships between teachers' emotions, learning, and teachers' perception of power distance orientation. Teachers' emotions as an indispensable element of personhood and critical reflection during disjuncture are also discussed through exploring these individuals' reharmonization. This article attempts to merge the TEM model with the partial mediation model to give a more holistic view on teachers' learning and to shed light on the pressing needs to recognise and legitimise the harmonic coexistence between teachers' emotions and professional learning.

1.2 Understanding learning, emotions and transformative learning

Learning has been central to the evolution of humanity, it is a process that is fluid and ever-changing; forward-looking and is not unidirectional, it is a series of becomings and is critical for the effective functioning of society (Jarvis, 2006). Emotive learning was discussed by Jack Mezirow (1977), who postulated the close connection between emotions and perspective transformation and listed critical reflection and emotions as crucial elements of transformative learning. The coexistence between emotions and learning has been recognized, and the approach is heavily influenced by Cell (1984)'s theory of emotions' functionality and how it affects people's sense of self-worth; the appearance of Vygotsky (1988)'s theory of zone of proximal development shifted the focus back to the life-world; Goleman (1996)'s study then demonstrated how one's emotional brain overpowers the thinking brain and the way in which emotional commitment affects one's perception and responses to situations. Jarvis (2006) has

furthered the idea and postulated that "emotions cannot be separated from any stage in our understanding of learning" (p.183).

Experiential/ transformative learning has added an ontological perspective to the epistemological dimension; learning in general, is still defined as "the relatively permanent change in behaviour which occurs as a function of practice" (Saltz, 1971, p.5); yet it is no longer viewed as a mere process of knowledge acquisition under the experientialists' perspective (Jarvis; van Oers, 2008). The person-in-the-world is the focus of experiential learning, it is the experiences *per se* that matter; Dewey (1938) emphasized social experiences in the learning process and postulated that continuity and interaction are basis of learning; Rogers (1983) discussed learning as a process of one's becoming to a real and whole person; Cell (1984) postulated four types of experiential learning which include response, situation, trans-situational and transcendent; and Boud (1985) established the interconnection between reflection and learning, in which reflection is viewed as the precondition of experience-recapturing which is the center of learning.

The discussion of learning has been expanded to the exploration of one's personhood and the person-in-the-world under the experiential approach. The connection between learning and emotions lacks a clear roadmap, but the intertwinement is long established in the discussion of learning, from Goleman's biological perspective regarding the emotional brain and thinking brain, to Boud's and Mezirow's emphasis on self-reflection, critical reflection and emotions in learning, to Jarvis' disjuncture theories. It can be observed that emotions and learning are inseparable in spite of the interpretation that one employs to understand and explain the mechanisms of learning (van Oers, 2008, p.5).

1.3 The Connection between emotions and transformative learning

Although currently there lacks a common definition of emotions in the academic field (Chen, 2020), its close connection with learning and transformative learning has long been recognised. Jarvis (2006) postulated that emotions are part of our learning process and has three components: judgement, feeling and action tendency (p.109); Gadamer (1985) spoke of emotions as a profound, mysterious and beautiful subject and that they are inseparable from one's memories, since memories are essential to learning, by extension, emotions are also inseparable from learning. Learning is hermeneutical, as personhood lies at the heart of teaching (Gage, 1977), there is a need to connect teachers' emotions to their learning in order to shed light back on teachers' whole person learning; learning is hence, a process that needs to be studied with consideration of learners' emotions.

Transformative learning was first postulated by Jack Mezirow (2000), which he defines as a process of changing one's taken-for-granted assumptions to make them more inclusive and truthful (p.4). According to Mezirow, an essential component to foster transformative learning is holistic orientation which engages two other ways of knowing--- the affective and relational.

As pointed out by Brown (2006) and Taylor (2009), research has put much emphasis on relational discourse and dimension of transformative learning but insufficient work has been done on affective dimension; where in fact, affective knowing, which involves a "see-feel-change sequence" (Brown, 2006. p.732), is how learners usually change and transform. By all means, transformative learning requires learners' awareness of feelings and emotions, which enables a reflective process thereby contributing to critical reflection. Through engaging emotions in the classroom, it provides the platform of dialogic learning and communication that involves deep learning that occurs at a deep and whole person level. Dialogue is the medium for the actualization of critical reflection, which helps the development of trust between and amongst learners (in this article learners refer to both teachers and students), (Mezirow, 1991; Taylor, 2009), which contributes to openness and changes in one's habit of minds, id est transformative learning.

Emotional experiences play a significant role in individuals' construction of knowledge in learning, they change and vary based on social contexts. Emotions are functional as they contribute to one's self-identity, self-worth and self-esteem; which are essential components to how one interprets one's being-in-the-world, thereby affecting how in-depth critical reflections of these individuals might be (Jarvis, 2006; Zembylas, 2008). As pointed out by Strauss (1964) and Jarvis (2006), one's emotional commitment influences the way one sees and responds to situations and the way one learns from them; in other words, emotions are changeable through experiences and at the same time mediates how individuals experience the experiences. Emotions are, therefore, an inseparable process of and is a part of transformative learning.

1.4 The interconnection between emotions, perception and power distance orientation

Emotions and perception are closely connected, and emotions also play a significant role in individuals' actions. Perception refers to the construction of experience, it is about how a person perceives and understands the external world and the way in which they are transformed into knowledge and memories. It is internal (Dewey, 1895) and concerns the mental states of individuals and enables one to make meaning while experiencing the world. In the meaning-making process, emotions contribute significantly to how individuals reflect and make sense of the lived experiences, which is defined as reflective learning according to Jarvis (2006) and Mezirow (2009). It is important that we recognize the inseparability between learning, emotions and perception.
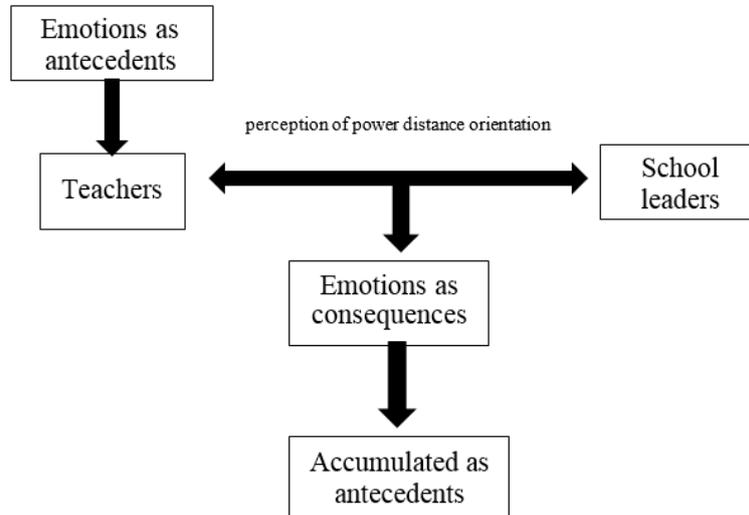
Perception of power distance orientation is the extent to which people accept unequally distributed power in a society or in an organization (Liu & Hallinger, 2020); it is how one perceives power relationships in a given context. The partial mediation model proposed by Liu and Hallinger (2021) has incorporated the perception of viewing instructional leadership as a partial mediation which has both direct and indirect effects on teachers' learning, power distance orientation has been incorporated as the boundary condition which shapes instructional

leadership (p.216). (Li, Hallinger and Ko, 2016; Sjolie, Francisco & Langelotz; Yin & Zheng, 2018). Emotions, both positive and negative ones, affect how one perceives everyday events and interprets one's social reality (Dewey, 1895; Jarvis, 2006), it also plays a significant role on how teachers perceive power distribution and respond to school leaders. Teachers' response to instructional leadership determines their commitment at work, and such commitment is positively correlated critical reflection (Little, 2012; Liu & Hallinger, 2020).

1.5 Weaving the two models together

Building on Chen (2020)'s TEM, self-efficacy is included as antecedents and consequences of teachers' emotions in their learning. Illustrated in Figure 1, the emotional dimension is the determinant factor, the antecedent that affects teachers' perception towards power distance orientation, simultaneously, emotions are also the consequences of such interactional process between school leaders and teachers. Current literature shows that one's perception change according to one's emotions (Jarvis, 2006; Little, 2012; Zanyim-Kurtay, 2020). For example, Zanyim-Kurtay's (2020) research demonstrated that teachers' emotive experiences during educational reform affect their perception and reactions towards those changes. By the same token, teachers' perception of power distance orientation also undergo changes based on their emotions, such instability is embedded within instructional leadership. Figure 1 proposes that teachers' perception has been prejudiced by their emotions, influenced by factors such as their previous experiences, affecting their perceptions of power distance orientation. In which the perception of such heavily influences the interactional process between teachers and school leaders, resulting in emotions (as consequences), which circles back to the accumulated emotional complex in teachers and continue to act as antecedents, this model is named as the emotion-perception cycle.

Figure 1. The emotion-perception cycle

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│ Emotions as  │
│ antecedents  │
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       ▼                 perception of power distance orientation
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The proposed model also provides a lens to look into teachers' disjuncture, which is critical to critical reflection and transformative learning. Disjuncture is a present experience, it refers to one's awareness of one's temporality (Henri Bergson, 1999). The interpretation of events could be rewritten and reinterpreted. When our inner life is in harmony with the flow of time, our reality is taken for granted; when disjuncture occurs, this harmony is disrupted, non-learning becomes conscious learning, bringing disharmony between the interpretation of present experience of individuals and the social reality that one takes for granted (Jarvis, 2006). According to Chen (2020)'s TEM, teacher emotional exhaustion is a type of personal antecedents, it occurs when teachers face situations that require critical reflection and reinterpretation of their values. When considering emotional exhaustion as a result of disjuncture, reharmonisation is hence an emotional regulation (emotions as consequences) that constitutes teachers' emotional capacity (emotions as antecedents) through "reappraisal of adverse situations" (p.348). In the emotion-perception cycle, emotional regulation is both consequences that get carried on as antecedents while emotional capacity becomes the antecedents that continuously affect teachers' perception.

Reharmonized disjuncture involves perspective transformation, it refers to changes of perception towards the external world, a process that allows one to have meaningful lived experiences (O' Sullivan, 1999; Jarvis, 2006; Mezirow, 2009). This research serves two purposes, first, to reveal how teachers' emotions affect their perception of power distance orientation; second, to assess the emotion-perception cycle including in the aspects of transformative learning using empirical data. Disjuncture is identified in informant's narration during differences in opinion/ conflicts with school leaders in i. everyday practice relating to pedagogy and subject knowledge; ii. coping with changes in educational context in Hong Kong and iii. challenges in teaching and learning under covid-19.

2.   Methods

This paper encompasses a qualitative approach, using narratives of three local Secondary school teachers in Hong Kong as the basis of discussion. It is noteworthy that during the time which the research is conducted, Hong Kong is facing drastic changes in its educational context triggered by both socio-politics and covid-19. Therefore, triangulation could only be done occasionally especially when related to political sensitivity.

2.1 Case selection

Three cases are selected based on collective case studies, this study is exploratory in nature and case study enables an initial exploration on teachers' perception in face of disequilibrium; since emotions are not always conscious or describable to individuals, in-depth interviews are adopted to facilitate the identification of how emotions effect on these individuals' perception of the social world, specifically on power distance orientation which affects their relationships with school leaders. These cases are chosen on the principle of collective case studies, although each case is narrative in nature, this study has attempted to compare the data to strive for a balance of both external and internal validity (Creswell, 1995). Triangulation is done to a limited extent but is still attempted through the investigation of relevant documents.

2.2 Features of the three cases

All three individuals are male local teachers in their 20s-30s, who teach mainly non-language subjects. My informant in case 1 will be referred to as Michael, case 2 will be identified using the pseudonym Andy and case 3 will be referred to as Timothy.

Case 1: Michael teaches Mathematics in a single-educational band 1 school; he has recently been promoted and is in charge of technology and information innovation in the school. He has been teaching for four years and is very passionate about teaching. Michael has plans to be promoted and has even gotten a masters' degree to increase his upward mobility, but his plans are changed due to drastic changes in Hong Kong, which has negatively affected his relationship with his supervisors and school leaders in his school.

Case 2: Andy teaches Economics in a co-educational band 2 school; this is his second year of teaching and he is also a responsible teacher who is passionate about teaching. Andy has no plans about promotion yet, but he is deeply entrusted by school leaders in his school and is constantly provided with opportunities to make decisions which are usually made by school leaders or staff of the management levels.

Case 3: Timothy teaches Chemistry in a co-educational band 1 school; it is his twelfth year of teaching but his passion for teaching has remained. Timothy has worked in five different schools and is the most experienced amongst these cases, he is not a part of the school leading

positions but often offers help to novice teachers. He is trusted by his school but his focus, like many of his colleagues, is on students' content knowledge, and placing teaching of utmost importance is an aligned goal in his school.

2.3 Data collection & data analysis

In-depth interviews were carried out with each informant, each interview lasted about an hour and thirty minutes. Field notes and memos were written throughout the interview process, based on the principle of thick description (Geertz, 2000). Data analysis consisted of four stages: first, all three interviews were transcribed, second, the transcriptions were translated from Cantonese to English; third, coding was done based on the translated transcription; finally, thematic analysis was carried out based on the coded transcripts. The transcriptions were first colour coded and sorted into thirty-seven preliminary codes; afterwards, they were grouped and categorised into five themes: perception on power-distance orientation; teacher-students relationships; teaching philosophy and beliefs; changes in beliefs triggered by socio-political events and the pandemic; changes in power distance perception with principals. It is noteworthy that there are indeed more common themes that came out from the interviews; but only those related to power distance orientation are selected in this paper.

3.   Results

Building on Liu & Hallinger's (2020) partial mediation model and Chen's (2020) teacher emotion model, the emotion-perception cycle was created. It is found that teachers' emotions caused by past experience with leaders and colleagues in previous work place heavily influence their perception of power distance orientation; the emotional complex is carried forward and continues to affect their perception. It is also found that during disjuncture, perceptive transformation takes place in teachers' beliefs on a conscious level; reharmonisation does not always take place; the emotion-perception cycle affects teachers' passion, and when peaceful reharmonization is not possible, a state between disequilibrium and equilibrium is found, which could be understood as a prolonged stage of suffering from such disharmony (Jarvis, 2006).

The five themes reveal how emotions affects teachers' learning in the aspects which expand beyond professional learning and expands to teachers' self-perceived role and responsibilities to students; definition of teachers' comfort zones when working with colleagues, and self-perceived positions within school cultures. It is also found that student-teacher relationships is the major empowering factor that supports teachers emotionally, especially when experiencing isolation, loneliness and lack of understanding from school leaders. Moreover, power distance orientation perception is ever-changing, fluid and full of emotions. Disagreement between school leaders and teachers causes dissonance and disjuncture. The occurrence of transformative learning depends highly on individuals' emotions, reharmonisation is not a definite outcome of disjuncture.

4.   Discussion

4.1 Emotions as an accelerator of learning in the everyday practice relating to pedagogy

Power distance orientation is itself a moderator of instructional leadership, it affects teachers' self-efficacy. O'Neil & Stevenson (2011) found that school leaders do not necessarily see themselves as leaders but as facilitators; in other words, school leaders and teachers can be in an interactional relationship, depending on how school leaders position themselves in the interaction with schoolteachers. The amount of trust given from school leaders heavily influences teachers' perception towards power distance. Andy feels entrusted by his school leaders and is empowered by the positive emotions that comes from such trusts. In face of conflicts, Andy respects the opinions from school leaders, when he faces criticism about his pedagogical methods in the classroom, not only does he proactively reflect on himself critically, but he also seeks for more follow-ups from the school leaders. As described by my informant Andy,

"I am quite willing to discuss things with her (the principal), it doesn't feel like reporting to a boss, I tell her my thoughts openly and excitedly too if I have new ideas! Even if she isn't able to give me immediate feedback, she usually gets back to me in a few days. Having said that, she's still the principal, overall I feel close with her but sometimes I do feel distant, since she does have the power to lay off people. It's the power that a principal has, but on an individual level, I respect her not just because she's the principal, but because of her leadership. When she comments on my teaching skills, those comments make sense and are very contributive, it motivates me to keep trying. Once she's inspired me to teach an Economic concept using inquiry-based teaching, it works really well and I still do that. She didn't tell me to do that actually, but she guided me through a series of questions, I treated those words seriously and thought deeply about them for days and came up with the idea. It is mutual, she trusts me and so that makes me feel like I can really do it and that I can really keep getting better at my job. It made me feel like we were working together. Because of that, I think it motivated me to learn faster as I felt like I had to push myself further."

As revealed here, Andy's commitment to his job is directly proportionate to his good relationship with the principal; his perception towards power distance orientation is embedded with emotions, mainly how the principal makes him feel about himself and his ability. Andy has also highlighted that his respect for the principal does not come from the principal's power over him, but it is an emotional complex in which power is internalised consciously and willingly, Andy genuinely respects the principal for her extraordinary leadership and sensible decision-making. In fact, before Andy works in this school, his experience as a student-teacher was one filled with positive emotions and entrustments as well. Andy actually describes his teaching trajectory as "a path that is smooth and well", he also acknowledges the fact that not every novice teacher is treated with a great deal of trust pedagogically, and hence he also admits that the "past experience and the current one is definitely going to affect what he expects in the next workplace". Andy's feelings of entrustment has contributed to his positive attitudes and

proactiveness in learning and improving his teaching. The emotions such as sense of empowerment and excitement act as an antecedent which affects Andy's perception of power distance, it then contributed to Andy's engagement in open and effective communication with the principal, as a result, more positive emotions are generated owing to the positive feedback given by the principal. The emotions then got carried forward and are accumulated in Andy's emotions as antecedents, fitting into the emotion-perception cycle. In Andy's case, emotions act as an accelerator to his learning; moreover, as Andy has been given lots of decision-making opportunities that are rarely granted to novice teachers, those experiences have undoubtedly affected Andy's perception of power distance orientation, and are likely to affect his teaching trajectory continuously.

4.2 Emotions as an accelerator of learning when coping with social changes in Hong Kong

On the other hand, it is found that negative emotions also function as an accelerator of teachers' learning. In the narration of Michael's story, he got into dispute with the principal owing to their differences in political views. Interesting enough, direct confrontation has never taken place between them, nor did Michael or the principal proactively discuss any political events in the school. However, their conflict was triggered by a complaint from a parent, claiming that Michael was being politically biased when answering one of his students' question about political events in Hong Kong during an online session. Michael felt very wronged since he thought he simply stuck to factual description and even asserted several times in his response that it was only his own point of view and even encouraged his students to challenge him instead of taking his words as gospels. Upon receiving the complaint, the principal organised a private meeting along with other school leaders with Michael, the aim of the meeting, as described by Michael, "was to put on a show for the parent instead of to do justice for anyone since she did not even bother to find out what Michael had said,

"Originally, I was one of her (the principal) favourites… (Michael smiles and giggles happily), but since the incident, I could feel the difference in her tone, body language, and eye contact… it's obvious that there is a wall between us, it's definitely more distant than before. I don't know what to expect anymore when facing her, the incident showed me that she is not as sensible as I thought, indeed it is disappointing to me as well. When she wants to speak to me now, I wonder what I have done 'wrong' again. I know she doesn't trust me anymore so it's quite weird indeed, on one hand, my abilities are recognised, since she promoted me for my contribution in online teaching; on the other hand, we don't perceive each other the same as before. It's hard for me because I don't know how to make sense of her leadership anymore. Now I have given up, I simply tell myself that it's just a job, never mind her. All I care about now is my students, I mean, if I give in, who else is going to teach them about critical thinking? I will not initiate anything but at least when my students ask me about similar things again, I will respond in a wiser way that spares me from being complained, and just enough to convey my values implicitly."

Because of the incident, the differences between the principal and Michael has surfaced, Michael feels distrusted but it also contains feeling of unjustness; a sense if distrust has then occurred from the principal to Michael and from Michael to the principal. The feelings of injustice and distrust has affected Michael's perception of power distance, those feelings act as antecedents and have negatively affected communication and interaction between them. The resulting emotions/ emotions as consequences of such interactions include feelings of detachment and sense of insecurities at the job in Michael's point of view, as he thinks that his job prospects have been negatively affected by the incident. Moreover, the sense of uneasiness when interacting with the principal also prompted him towards a sense of detachment at work. However, these negative emotions still managed to work as accelerators in Michael's learning, as he has learnt to avoid troubles and complaints while striking a balance with expressing and/or suppressing his own thoughts when necessary. Emotions play an important role in Michael's perception, his emotions contributed to two extremes, while feeling disappointed and unjust, his passion for teaching and his belief in teaching philosophy supported him, and slightly overrode the disappointment, and prompted him to learn and make changes in his behaviours. These changes occurred on a conscious level since Michael was worried about "getting sacked someday" which could be counterproductive to his teaching philosophy, and therefore, he compromised and came up with other ways in guiding his students towards critical thinking, dodging sensitive political issues while giving just the right amount of hint to evoke meaningful and reflective discussion implicitly. Despite feeling more distant from the principal, the emotive experiences resulted from this incident became antecedents, and are carried forward in his teaching trajectory, once again fitting into the emotion-perception cycle. Michael manages to transform the negative emotions into a source of acceleration which sped up his learning out of consideration for his students and his strong belief in his own teaching philosophy. This "emotional baggage" (Shaughnessy et al., 1998) led him to critically reflect on his identity and responsibility as a teacher; there is no doubt that he now perceives the principal as someone distant and with power over himself, but the changes in perception of power distance orientation has contributed to his transformation, he has learnt to act smarter and be careful and mindful of what he says in the school to avoid troubles, but he did not internalise such forces as total self-oppression.

4.3 Emotions & transformative learning: reharmonizing disjuncture when facing challenges under Covid-19

In fact, the story of Michael is in direct contrast with that of Andy, both informants were trusted by their school leaders at first, but during disagreements, Michael's reharmonisation (Jarvis, 2006) is channelled, mediated and accelerated by negative emotions; Andy, on the other hand, is empowered by the principal's trust, and the disjuncture related to his pedagogy is reharmonised by positive emotions. In fact, as revealed in my third informant's narration, Timothy, who is as an experienced teacher, has undergone transformative learning

pedagogically triggered by the covid-19 pandemic. Disjuncture is found in Timothy's pedagogy since online teaching is a new realm of teaching to him, he is constantly worried and overwhelmed by concerns about whether his students "are there with him" and whether students "are really learning properly". During covid-19 pandemic, Timothy's concerns lie solely on his students' learning, but he was in slight conflict with his school leaders, since they were more concerned about whether the coping strategies were conducted based on advice by the Education Bureau in Hong Kong (EDB). It is revealed in Timothy's narration that both positive and negative emotions play a part in his perception of power distance orientation, that affect his interactions with school leaders, the emotions as consequences were a mixture of positive and negative ones as well. They have resulted in transformative learning demonstrated in Timothy's teaching pedagogy, and are carried forward as antecedents that continually affect his perception, which is parallel to the emotion-perception model postulated in this research. The online teaching experience as described by Timothy was quite challenging itself,

"In June 2019, we had first tasted how online teaching was like, there was a week of school suspension because of the socio-political events. During so, I realised that the high achievers were always more involved and were way more motivated in learning, but those with worst results, who are the ones that require most attention, were naturally neglected during these online sessions. They refused to turn on their cameras or be engaged in those online sessions, what should I do then? Do we give them up? My principal only wanted us to focus on students who were more 'self-disciplined', but I felt like there must be something else that I could do for the less motivated ones. I reflected deeply about the teaching job during that time. Later in February 2020, it was very scary since EDB announced prolonged school suspension multiple times, and it was after the long Chinese New Year break. My students' learning are at stake, I am sure. During those months, it was very challenging for me, I kept coming up with strategies and methods in engaging the weaker students, or even those with special educational needs. My school did not force students to turn on their cameras, out of understanding that not everyone's home is 'camera-ready' if you know what I mean. But some students abused that, they simply refuse to engage in the lesson, so then I encouraged them to turn on their cameras featuring their desks or notes. I know that's for myself actually, that's to provide me with a sense of security, I was very anxious about whether my students were learning properly. It wasn't a concern for my school leaders, perhaps they have assumed that students always get to decide the level of engagement in the lesson, but that's not true. Some students simply lack the resources or suitable environment, some of them didn't even have a proper desk to write on at home! Covid-19 has made such unfairness even more obvious. Originally, I thought so too, I think students' engagement is determined by themselves, but really it's not. So later on, I used other methods such as private chat room or breakout rooms to better engage my students, I was basically practising differentiated teaching, it was completely different from what I usually do in a face to face classroom. I have to ignore the better students in order to teach the 'worse ones' properly. It's something I had to get used to, good or bad ones, ignoring either group was

never my intention but there was nothing else I could do in an online session. I simply had to adapt somehow".

Timothy has never "believed" in online teaching, in fact, as a rather conservative teacher, he has always thought that online teaching is less effective than traditional teaching that occurs in a face-to-face setting. The pandemic has made online teaching an inevitable teaching method that many teaching individuals were 'forced into', Timothy described it as something that "he would not choose for sure if he got the choice" since online teaching has made "it impossible for him to observe his students' reactions", and that blocks him from knowing if he is "providing students with immediate help when they encounter difficulties". Nonetheless, due to the pandemic, Timothy has to adapt to the new classroom; his emotions towards online learning include resistance and even a bit of dislike at the beginning. However, since the underlying cause of such emotions lies on his concerns for students' effective learning, his attitudes remained open in the process since it was the only option he had. In addition, Timothy mentioned how school leaders in his school had asked him to focus less on students who were less engaged in the lesson. Timothy was quite reluctant towards that and was against the idea. However, owing to his previous experience in other schools, he has learnt that "it is wiser to keep your mouth shut even if you don't agree with something, but at the same time, it doesn't mean you have to do exactly as they say". Timothy's emotions as antecedents have affected his interaction with school leaders, he has learnt from previous experience about the "importance of silence". At the same time, the resulting emotions as consequences of such interactions were channelled into further consolidation of his thoughts towards school leaders in general. Additionally, transformative learning is found in Timothy's pedagogical skills as his feelings and perception towards online teaching and learning change after the pandemic. He is now less resistant and has even described that as "a gateway to a new realm that enables teaching even during bad weather conditions", and he thought that it is "better for students since they have got something to learn at least", though he also recognises that the outcome of such online teaching depends a lot on the teachers' experience, attitudes and execution.

5.   Conclusion

"You're right you know... teachers are often expected to know how to fix problems, but when we teachers experience emotional distress ourselves, there's basically no support for us. Either we figure out how to conceal it and not let it affect our professionalism, or we let it out and expect to be treated differently from that moment onwards...it's difficult for us but it's hard to be solved at the same time"

Timothy made his final comments as the conclusion of the interview. Teachers are often assumed to be experts in learning, with emphasis placed on their professional rather than personal identities (Locke; Jarvis, 2009; Magill, 2021). Emotions, as pointed out by Hargreaves (2002), Zembylas (2009), Jokikokko (2016) and Chen (2020) are interactional and embedded within social and political aspects. By recognising the multidimensional effects of emotions, we

are also acknowledging the teachers' personhood and shifts emphasis back on learning as a whole-person (Jarvis, 2006). Emotions lie at the heart of teaching (Hargreaves, 2002; Zembylas 2008; Zembylas and Chubbuck, 2011), and is key to quality teaching since its presence enables an authentic communicative process, not only between school leaders and schoolteachers but also between teachers and students. The emotion-perception cycle postulated in this research recognises the often downplayed point of view that regards teachers as learners with personhood and individuation (Mezirow, 2006). Teachers' perception vary and is influenced constantly by one's emotional experience. This research puts the focus on how this emotional complex affects tecahers

Perception specifically on power distance orientation, and how emotions as consequences then get carried forward and continue to affect their perception in a dynamic cycle. Through recognising the co-existence and inter-complementary relationship between the dual identity that teachers possess as teaching and learning individuals, the exploratory nature of teachers' learning/teaching is addressed, providing a more complete view towards transformative learning and possibilities of metamorphosis in teachers, filling the gap between human learning, teachers' perception and teachers' emotions. By extension, the emotion-perception cycle also legitimises teachers' emotions and its indispensable roles on teachers'' learning and perception, going beyond the dominant discussion of teachers' emotions pathologically, addressing the underlying and structural cause of teachers' stress and anxieties, possibly bringing hopes in the prevention of the 'loss of selves' among schoolteachers (Hargreaves, 2001; Hargreaves & Elhawary, 2018).

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