'Another Place, Another Feeling': Narrating the Emotional Geography of an Indonesian English Teacher

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ABSTRACT

Commencing his teaching career as a university students' English teacher in a religious surrounding, Harry, with his free-will and open-minded personality, has experienced a turbulent feeling. He was sometimes confused to situate himself in certain situations which turned him out to be a little bit more clunky. Within the framework of Hargreaver's (2001) emotional geography, this present study explores the life of Harry amidst his two years teaching experience at one university in Tasikmalaya, West Java, Indonesia. This scrutiny was geared by employing in-depth interviews. Utilizing narrative inquiry as the research methodology, the researchers share the stories of Harry when updating into a novel teaching and cultural circumstance and delving into his emotional ups and downs. The findings of this study revealed five major issues, namely (1) Harry needs to be more careful when engaging with the students (2) teaching is the work of the soul, no matter what (3) exhaustion is very human, (4) experienced-based teaching practice, and (5) having supportive colleagues truly help.

KEYWORDS
emotional geography,
narrative inquiry

ABSTRAK

Mengawali karir mengajarnya sebagai seorang dosen Bahasa Inggris di lingkungan religius telah membuat Harry dengan kepribadiannya yang bebas dan terbuka mengalami perasaan yang bergejolak. Ia terkadang mengalami kebingungan untuk menempatkan dirinya dalam situasi tertentu yang membuatnya menjadi sedikit lebih kikuk. Menggunakan kerangka geografi emosional Hargreaver (2001), penelitian ini mengeksplorasi kehidupan Harry selama dua tahun mengajar di salah satu universitas di Tasikmalaya, Jawa Barat, Indonesia. Pemeriksaan ini diarahkan dengan menggunakan wawancara mendalam. Dengan menggunakan inkuiri naratif sebagai metodologi penelitian, para peneliti berbagi cerita mengenai Harry ketika ia beradaptasi ke dalam lingkungan mengajar dan situasi budaya yang baru serta menggali pasang surut emosi yang dialaminya. Temuan penelitian ini mengungkapkan lima masalah utama, yaitu (1) Harry perlu lebih berhati-hati saat berinteraksi dengan siswa (2) mengajar adalah

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Geografi emosional,
pencarian naratif

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pekerjaan jiwa, apa pun yang terjadi (3) kelelahan sangat manusiawi, (4) praktik pengajaran berbasis pengalaman, dan (5) memiliki kolega yang mendukung amatlah membantu.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is an emotional practice: it activates, colors, and expresses people's feelings." (Andy Hargreaves)

Emotions are always present in every part of human life, whatever we do in life we always involve emotions (Hargreaves, 2001). Similarly, the teaching process is also an activity that always brings up the teachers' emotions. This is in line with what Nias (1996) argues that teaching is extremely charged with feelings and it is not only a technical effort but also closely related to the teachers' personal life. Teachers' emotion becomes an issue that is currently being discussed. It is evidenced by the existence of some studies relevant to teachers' emotions that have increased interest among educators and practitioners (see Abdullah & Lulita, 2018; Misdi, Rachmawaty, Hartini, Nurhadi, Hendriwanto, 2021; Pyndiah, 2018; Schmidt, 2000; Susanto and Rahayu, 2020; Zembylas, 2010). They have constructed accounts of teachers' negative and positive emotions and their role in teachers' professional and personal development. Regarding the emotional role in teaching, it plays an essential part in emphasizing the teacher's values and in the maintenance of the circumstance relationship (Zembylas, 2003). Those relationships and values are experienced every day, therefore both are very important. When the teacher feels an emotion, then those emotions will bring up the action and this action determines their teaching development. In short, understanding teachers' emotions is amongst the pivotal issues to improve the quality of education (Rianti, Hidayati, Pertamana, Abdullah, 2020). However, teachers may experience different emotions due to the geographical diversity because a particular place serves a certain diverse circumstance in terms of cultural and political backgrounds.

Emotional geographies of human interaction are not merely concerned with physical phenomena. We can feel distant from people who are right next to us, yet close to loved ones who are miles away (Hargreaves, 2001). Those emotional geographies concept helps us identify the supports for and threats to the basic emotional bonds and understandings of schooling that arise from forms of distance or closeness in people's interactions or relationships (Hargreaves, 2001; Andriani & Abdullah, 2017). This also can help us identify the teachers' feelings while teaching, whether any significant difficulty when building the closeness with students and colleagues, or the difficulty in dealing with the different characters. Given this fact, the practice of emotional geography is urgent to examine. Regarding those emotional geography concepts, we are interested in investigating the emotional geography of an English teacher in a higher education setting. This study is based on a teacher's initial emotional experience amid his first two years of the language teaching process. The teacher, Harry (pseudonym), was the main character of this story. According to the preliminary interviews conducted with some students, it was revealed that they felt Harry's teaching style was among the best they had ever experienced. He inspired them and

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brought so much excitement during the teaching time. However, Harry personally admitted that he needed a truly hard effort to adjust to the situation in his teaching circumstance. This was because Tasikmalaya, the city where the university was located, was far from the multicultural cities where he was born, raised, and taking degrees. Tasikmalaya which is popular for its nickname "*Kota Santri*" or the city of Islamic students has a relatively homogenous population (Risdiana, 2017). According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (2015), 98.7% of the total population is Muslim. This condition impacts the social life of the people which considers the balance of modernization and the improvement of sharia and moral values of the community. As a result, Harry experienced culture shocks when adapting with his students at the outset. Recognizing his inner struggle to achieve an outstanding performance, we are interested in portraying his personal emotional experience deeper.

The study related to this issue was conducted by Liu (2016) which investigated the emotional experience of an immigrant English teacher in England. The study demonstrated the emotional experiences in a teacher professional community. The result of the study informs that the teacher had understandings and misunderstandings of different schooling aspects which bring about various emotions, both positive and negative. To survive those emotions, a wide range of strategies is needed to manage the emotions. Moreover, the need to engage in an emotional understanding of each other's work is really important. Another study was also conducted in the Indonesian context. Misdi et al. (2021) explored an initial experience of an Indonesian female pre-service teacher in the EFL setting. They report that the participant articulated several positive and negative emotions when dealing with a 'scary-imaged' figure, being more attentive employing bilingualism during the instruction, getting customized with varieties of instructional media, and being good feeling (p. 106). While the previous study focused on a female pre-service teacher, this current study portrays the initial teaching experience of a male in-service teacher.

Since this study is about exploring the emotional geography of an English teacher at the university level, Andy Hargreaves's (2001) emotional geography framework which focuses on the physical, moral, socio-cultural, professional, and political geography was employed. Physical geography refers to the closeness and/or distance created by time and space; moral geography refers to the closeness and/or distance created by different purposes and senses of accomplishment in professional practice; sociocultural geography refers to the closeness and/or distance created by the differences of gender, race, ethnicity, language, and culture; professional geography refers to the closeness and/or distance created by different understandings of the norms of professionalism and professional practice, and political geography refers to the closeness and/or distance created by different understandings of power. This study is expected to be able to help and give benefits to novice English teachers who are just starting their careers as English teachers, especially in higher education.

METHOD
This study aims to examine an English teacher's experiences through his personal stories. Therefore it adopted the narrative inquiry as a research method (Barkhuizen, 2014). According to Webster and Mertova (2007), narrative inquiry is set in human stories which provide researchers with a rich outline through which they can examine the ways humans

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experience the world represented through their stories. The investigation was geared to explore the experience of a young English teacher's emotional geography who has just begun his career. The participant of this study is a 28-year-old male English teacher working in a university in Tasikmalaya, West Java, Indonesia. Harry, as we mentioned earlier, was his name. He is an Indonesian who was born to Malay and Sundanese parents. He has an advanced English proficiency evidenced by 8.0 in IELTS score. Harry accomplished his BA (double degree) in STBA Yapari-ABA, Indonesia, and Humboldt State University, USA (BA in English and Political Science. He went to continue his Master's degree at The University of Edinburgh, UK (MSc in TESOL). Understanding his multicultural experiences, it is undoubted if Harry found it difficult to work in a monocultural society, Tasikmalaya.

We conducted in-depth interviews to understand Harry's situation as well as collected the data. The obtained data were transcribed and analyzed using narrative analysis that aims at developing an understanding of the participant's meaning regarding his lived experience (Kim, 2016). The analysis of this study involved five points of the emotional geography perspectives; a) Sociocultural geography, b) Moral geography, c) Physical geography, d) Political geography, and e) Professional geography (see Hargreaves 2001, p. 1062-1075). Meanwhile, the narrative analysis process used in the research is Labov's model consisting of six stages; (1) Abstract (a summary of the story and its point), (2) Orientation providing (a context such as a place, time, and character to orient the reader), (3) Complicating action (skeleton, plot or an event that causes a problem as in 'And then what happened?), the author will frame the issue appeared in the story, (4) Evaluation (evaluative comments on events, justification of its telling, or the meaning that the teller gives to an event) and, (5) Result of Resolution (resolution of the story and the conflict), (6) Coda (bringing the narrator or the listener back to present).

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Sociocultural Geography: *I have to be more careful*
Before Harry started his career in the university, he had previously taught at an international school where the students were far more diverse. In this regard, Harry was very concerned in determining the discussion topics since he understood that Tasikmalaya has held very strong Islamic values. In the classes he taught, most female students wore headscarves, making him speculated that they were more introverted. However, Harry claimed that his female students were still very good at doing any school assignments. Moreover, Harry often told his students how important it was to learn from each other. He said that he always learned many things from his students too. He learned how to understand his diverse students and treated them better. Furthermore, Harry did not face any significant difficulties regarding social and cultural issues, yet he still thought that he had to be more careful in determining the topics of discussion, especially regarding sensitive matters, such as religions and political views.

Excerpt 1

"... Since Tasik is known as the "Islamic students' city" and previously I was teaching to the international schools where the students were more diverse, I think the difference might be to the female students because the majority of the students are Muslim and most of the female students wear the hijab so I think I have to be more careful because there are certain things that can't be discussed in class, especially like something sensitive."

"...Most of them wear headscarves, so I automatically thought they were more introverted than the other students. But as it turns out, they are still very good at doing any school assignments, just like the other students."

"...I often say in class that "you learn from each other", I used to teach foreigners abroad and now teach Indonesian students who are also diverse, I learned to better in understanding the way how to treat them differently, learn to adapt too."

Regarding the gender issue, Harry does not feel any significant difficulties, even though there were more female students than males. He claimed that he did not value the students based on gender, rather, their creativity and activeness. According to Harry, females and males were the same, the only difference was in the way they respected each other.

Excerpt 2

"... because nowadays it is dominated by women, but the difference lies is only in the way I respected my female students by not touching them."

Hargreaves (2001) conceptualized socio-cultural geography as the closeness and/or distance created by race, gender, and ethnics. In this theme, the interaction was mainly focused on Harry with his students. Before Harry began his career as an English trainer here, he taught elementary school students in the United States. He has also taught higher educational students in Jakarta where the majority of students were Chinese, while his current students were mostly Sundanese. Therefore, he faced some challenges but over time, he got used to the differences. He even felt happy to be able to teach a diverse group of students because it made him got a lot of teaching experience.

Excerpt 3

"...when I was in Jakarta majority of my students were Chinese, then now in Tasik there are many Sundanese ethnic groups, it has challenges but I think it is more about how we learn from each other"

"...it has a challenge but I think the point is about how we learn from each other"

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However, Harry felt that his experience gave him a chance to learn how to treat different students from a cultural perspective. He felt this was one of the benefits for him. He claimed that the more diverse students he taught, the more diverse the teaching experience he would get. According to his experience, it was very important for teachers, lecturers, or trainers to have a lot of teaching experiences to increase their teaching competence, to get more appropriate teaching methods for any different students, and to learn how to understand and respect each other's differences.

Excerpt 4

> *"... We are as teachers should have a lot of teaching experience, because I think that the more teaching experience, we have it would be influencing our teaching performance because we can learn more about choosing the appropriate context that we can use in our teaching, we can learn from each other, learn to understand and appreciate any differences"*

Following this, the socio-cultural distance often creates stereotypes between each individual (Hidayati, 2018; Waller, as cited in Hargreaves, 2001). When Harry stereotyped his female students, who wear a headscarf by saying they are introverted students, it signified the distance that exists between her and her rival. The stereotype emerged often leads to the individual assumption and expectation about the issue (Levin and Riffel, 1997 as cited in Hargreaves 2001). Nevertheless, Harry always tried to understand and respected his students. Moreover, building frequent interactions and intense communications will create a better understanding between two different individuals (Dowling, 2008 & Goffman, as cited in Hargreaves, 2001;).

Moral Geography: *Teaching is the path of my life*
At the outset, Harry never thought that teaching would become his profession. He did not even like teaching, since he was more interested in hospitality. He learned about it at the college for a very long time. However, everything has changed when he started his career teaching to the third graders of an elementary school in the United States. At that time, he began to enjoy his teaching activities until now, and he even thought that teaching is the path of his life. Due to his experience in hospitality, Harry became a perfectionist, especially when it came to teaching services. He often got annoyed if he saw wrong or inappropriate teaching services. When he started teaching, Harry realized that teaching activity were also related to the hospitality that he learned before. He thought that teaching was also about service; it was about how the teachers provided the best service for their students.

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Excerpt 5

".... At first, I never want to be a teacher or teaching I do not like teaching because I was more inclined towards hospitality. I was learned about hospitality for a very long time. So, I never thought about teaching before, but I realized that teaching is also about services, so I felt annoyed if I see improper teaching services since I was learned about hospitality for a very long time.

"...So, my first teaching, began with the 3rd-grade elementary school children, and it turned out to very fun to teach the kids up to two years, then now I'm teaching in a higher education"

"...I believe now, that teaching is the path of my life so I enjoy teaching"

Hargreaves (2001) conceptualized moral geography as the closeness and/or distance created by the difference of purpose and accomplishment. Harry always wanted to learn and read more since he always loved and enjoyed studying and learning new things. Furthermore, he claimed that his first teaching experience made him automatically enjoyed his new career as a teacher. At the very first time when he decided to teach, he aimed to study since he enjoyed any kind of academic things such as studying, reading any books and journals, and created PowerPoint slides.

Harry felt enjoy in studying because by becoming a teacher, he was obligated to study every day. He claimed that being a teacher made him study more. Reading new journals, learning new trends in teaching, and doing other academic things he was always fond of.

Excerpt 6

".... It just because I love learning, I like reading and also making PowerPo because I think that being a teacher is require you to learn every day whether re journals or learn about the new trend"

Harry felt the benefits regarding his teaching experience so far, not only improving his teaching performance but also increasing his belief in humanity. Therefore, he believed that as a teacher who taught humans, the concept of humanity was very important to be practiced in daily teaching practices.

Excerpt 7

"... I think it is improving my belief about humanity, for me teaching is about humanity because we teach humans, right? so we have to go back to that first concept"

He became more aware of the social matters and very concerned about the human concept in his life, especially during his teaching activities. Hence, he taught that the main point about

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teaching was humanity. He said as long as he taught humans, he had to go back to the first concept in humanity. The values he brought into his teaching practice built the cultural sensitivity towards the diverse background his students had (Hidayati, Mohnawawi, and Ramdani 2019). This results in the improvement of teachers' cultural awareness that facilitates the students' learning success, reduces anxiety in their performance and improves learning motivation (Garhani, Supriyono, and Saputra, 2021; Hidayati and Santiana, 2020; Jabbar, Hidayati, and Supriyono, 2018).

Physical Geography: *Sometimes I felt tired in preparing the materials*
During his career at this university, Harry possessed other activities outside the campus requiring him to go back and forth to several places and even out of town. He verbalized that he felt difficult at first. As an illustration, the most difficult thing is to prepare diverse teaching materials for different classes. Since Harry did not solely teach a course at this university, he should prepare teaching materials for distinctive classes. Even though he perceived that it was challenging initially, he still enjoyed every single activity. One of the most salient factors was peer supports.

Excerpt 8
"...Preparing the time for each class, because it is all different right? And for preparing the different material for each class that's tired cause I have to stay until night to prepare all those things"

"...At first it was difficult but since I worked with a team that helped me, it was okay because I also enjoyed it"

Harry has been teaching English for approximately 9 years and his total teaching at the university level is four years while at this university he has been teaching for two years. Grounded in his teaching experiences, he assumed that his teaching performances were affected by his experiences. In this case, as an English teacher, he argued that continuous learning remains vital.

Excerpt 9
"...Yes, of course, it is like if you are a teacher or trainer you have to learn every single time, you learn from your class every day"

Given these facts, he began to comprehend that days in life varied dynamically, such as a good and bad day occuring interchangeably. He could not guarantee that his teaching performances can be actualized effectively every day. In other words, he occasionally encountered arduous days though he had prepared for teaching practices. On the other hand, he underwent a trouble-free day when teaching and learning practices ran as planned. For this reason, he regularly performed a self-reflection. In this sense, he contemplated what went well and what went wrong with his teaching performances. By doing so, he could improve his teaching practices to be better in the future. Obviously, he claimed that

conducting self-reflection enabled him to enhance his self-awareness and measure the quality of his teaching performances.

During his professional life as an English teacher, he has attempted to reach the perfection of his teaching performances. As an example, he should be able to maintain his appearance, teaching materials, and teaching performances to be perfect in front of his students. This occurrence made him trapped in perfectionist behavior. With this in mind, he kept learning to have better performances during English language teaching practices in the future (Tandiana, Abdullah, Komara, 2017).

Excerpt 10

"...because in my opinion being a teacher is sometimes not always in a good day, there is always the worst day even though we have prepared everything very well. So, when that happens, after class I usually sit down like doing self-reflection, thinking about what went well and what went wrong"

"...To be honest, it has a challenge for me in teaching, because we are as teachers are required to always perform well in every meeting and yeah, I think that's really hard sometimes"

"...But from that case I learned how to be better for the next meeting, what was not good today, I will try to fix it for the next day"

Nonetheless, when Harry commenced his teaching practices at this university, he perceived that his students were passive in speaking. Even though he knew that his students were extremely intelligent, they were more passive in speaking than his previous students. He assumed that this was caused by scarce exposure to carrying out dialogic or debating activities during English language learning. Even, he acknowledged encountering some challenges while guiding his students to engage in reading and discussing classroom-oriented activities.

Excerpt 11
"...I feel that the students are more passive in speaking, I know they are smart but in terms of speaking, they are not very active. A little bit different from my previous teaching experience, I think it was because their culture was more diverse and they were used in debate and discussion"

"...In Tasikmalaya, I feel more challenged in make them used in discussion, especially in terms of reading, I find it difficult to get them to read, but in the end, I found how to overcome those things"

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Hargreaves (2001) theorized physical geography as a social distance shaped by changing time and spaces. The time of the schedule set by this university made him shocked. To illustrate, when he should teach at 7 a.m. He perceived that it was too early for him to start an activity (e.g. teaching). Nevertheless, he was able to adjust himself to the scheduled time. One of the reasons was the time motivated his students to engage actively, think critically and communicate interactively though some of them seemed to be sleepy.

Excerpt 12
"...At first, I felt that 7-am class was too early for me, but as time goes, I even feel that 7-am class is the best time to start the class even though we are both felt sleepy but the students are more critical"

On the one hand, Harry was tired and shocked by his new professional activities in such a university. On the other hand, it shaped his work ethics to be more professional and to think positively. Dealing with this, Zembylas (2002) adds that restoring positive emotions and coping with the negative ones enable someone to reflect on better self-recognition and professionalism (Hidayati, Ramalia & Abdullah, 2021).

Professional Geography: *My experience greatly affects my teaching performances*
Since Harry had the experiences to learn in three different countries during his academic life, he gained more insights and inspiration from his lecturers. As an illustration, he acknowledged that his teaching strategies were inspired by his lecturers. He emphasized that someone intensively interacting with various people in miscellaneous institutions can be a salient factor to get influenced (e.g. teaching experiences). Nonetheless, He contended that it would be different if someone always studies at the same place with the same teacher for a long time. They might possess a lot of learning experiences.

Excerpt 13
"...I think so because I've experienced study with any different lectures in three different universities and countries. They have their way techniques in teaching. If it was good, I always emulate and try to apply it in my teaching. So, I think the more learning experience you have, the more teaching techniques you will acquire"

"...But it would be different if we teach only in the same place with the same teacher, there won't be many teaching references and teaching methods that we can exemplify and apply"

Additionally, other learning practices beyond class meetings (e.g. being a speaker in a talk show or an academic conference) required him to keep learning. Fortunately, from the whole preparing process, he commonly obtained new experiences and knowledge to learn and contemplate.

Excerpt 14
> *"...Yeah, because I always learn even though I already knew about it, I think that I have to keep studying. So the point is that we always learn something new from each event preparation. Therefore, it can also give me another chance to get a new experience that can contribute to my teaching performance"*

As previously mentioned, Harry regularly performed self-reflections. He usually carried out reflections at the end of the semester. Likewise, he reflected through reading the reports of his students about him and the courses they had learned together. He consistently performed this activity at the end of the semester.

Excerpt 15
> *"…. I always do a self-reflection every day after class but it was only on my mind, I mean I always think about what I should improve for the next meetings. But every after I finished the semester, I always made kind of report and I always ask my students opinions about my teaching, and then I made it into statistics data"*

Further, once he read the reports, he was happier and more motivated to learn collaboratively with his students. Liu (2016) presupposes that emotional work can emerge when someone reflecting on his/her professional attainments. Briefly stated, he indicates positive emotions when knowing the students' reflections and appraisals of him and his teaching practices.

Political Geography: *My partners give me a full trust*

During his career as an English teacher at this university, he was under the guidance of EBAC (a non-profit foundation focusing on English programs in Tasikmalaya). He verbalized that he was happy to be given a full trust by EBAC. He uttered that he was not under pressure at all. On the contrary, he was comfortable with his professional life at this university.

Excerpt 16
> *"...our relationship is fine; I tell every single story that I find interesting to them"*
> *"... EBAC believes in me so whatever I do they trust me as long as I being responsible that's why I feel comfortable with their guidance"*

Sociologically speaking, the relationship among him with other lecturers and staff at this university remains fairly good. For instance, he did not perceive any pressure while cooperating with them. Moreover, he was allowed to revise the course syllabi to meet the learning outcomes, his academic stances, and his pedagogical beliefs. In short, he enjoyed his career at this university.

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Excerpt 17

> *"...All is well, I do not feel any demands. I feel they also trust me since they allowed me to correct the syllabus to avoid overlapping like before as previously"*

> *"...we are fine, and I do not feel any pressure at all"*

> *"...To be honest I do not feel any pressure at all, because it is all up to me, they trust me. And I think as a teacher you wouldn't like being regulated by anyone else because you are a teacher, you teach and you have to believe in yourself, you can teach according to your best"*

Grounded in his experiences, Harry was able to establish a good relationship with other faculty members and staff. In other words, inclusive and appreciative attitudes enabled him to magnify the opportunity to foster his professional life (Beatty, 2011). It went without saying, he constantly showcased his positive emotions in building a social relationship in a professional environment.

CONCLUSION

The current study aims at scrutinizing the stories of Harry when updating into a novel teaching and cultural circumstance and delving into his emotional ups and downs. The findings reported that Harry needs to be more careful when engaging with the students, teaching is the work of the soul, no matter what, exhaustion is very human, experienced-based teaching practices, and having supportive colleagues truly help. These affect him to cultivate his professional and social lives in the new workplace and atmosphere. Equally important, this provides valuable insights that teaching professional development (TPD) should be constructed in open-minded, reflective, and active attitudes.

Although this study offers useful contributions to the issue of teaching professional development and harmonious professional life, it indicates some limitations. First, the present study adopts narrative inquiry as a research design that merely focuses on personal experiences and shared stories reiterated by a sole participant. Future studies can be carried out to involve more participants for gaining a more representative portrayal of an investigated issue and employ a more exploratory and critical investigative approach (e.g. exploratory case study or critical discourse analysis). Second, this study only investigates the participant from his emotional geography experiences. Further studies are expected to touch on other investigative issues, such as sociocultural, sociocognitive, and critical perspectives.

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