



# The Influence of the Suzuki Method on Violin Teachers' Emotion Wellness in Malaysia

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## Abstract

Despite growing enthusiasm for music examinations, the music education landscape in Malaysia has led to dissatisfaction among music teachers due to limited developmental growth in violin pedagogy. Based on the available literature, a research gap is observed in violin pedagogy and the emotional wellness of music teachers in Malaysia. This qualitative, exploratory, ethnographic research investigates the influence of the Suzuki Violin Method, recognized for its holistic benefits globally, on the emotional well-being of violin teachers in urban areas of Malaysia. Semi-structured interviews with six Suzuki-trained violin teachers are analyzed thematically to examine the effects of the Suzuki method on teachers' self-identity, focusing on self-efficacy, commitment, agency, and musician-teacher comprehension. Using symbolic interactionism and Wagoner's framework of music teacher identity, the findings reveal that the Suzuki method fosters a positive teaching identity, contributing to meaningful interactions and positive experiences that result in the teachers' positive emotional wellness. The study highlights the potential of Suzuki philosophy to enhance both teaching practices and teacher well-being, encouraging the need for wider adoption and promoting awareness of self-reflection and emotional well-being among the teachers involved. Furthermore, this study provides insight into the challenges unique to this demographic, contributing to the development and regeneration of Malaysia's music education.

**Keywords:** Suzuki Method; violin teachers; emotional wellness; self-identity

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## INTRODUCTION

Music education in Malaysia has been a subject of concern regarding its effectiveness in achieving its objectives since 1983. Influenced by the colonial legacy of the British and Malaysia's exam-oriented education system, music education in the country has prioritized examination results over holistic musical development. This exam-centric focus has raised dissatisfaction among music teachers and is further exacerbated by the low priority

given to music education and the lack of interest in public music activities. Society's attitude towards exam-centric music education has neglected the emotional well-being of music teachers (Ross, 2002; Shah, 2006). Furthermore, this focus is evident in the growing interest in music board examination enrollment through the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), which reveals that piano is the most preferred instrument in Malaysia (Ross, 2002). Hence, this limits the development and focus on violin pedagogy, preventing

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the exploration of alternative potential pedagogical approaches, such as the Suzuki Violin Method.

Based on the aforementioned scenario, while concerns exist regarding the effectiveness in achieving the learning outcome, the emotional wellness and pedagogical aspects among music teachers are equally neglected from both academic and non-academic perspectives. The emotional wellness of a teacher plays a vital role in ensuring the quality of both the teaching and learning process (Manasia et al., 2020; Puertas Molero et al., 2019; Yin et al., 2016). As highlighted by several scholars, teachers experience positive emotions through a positive evaluation of their self-identity (Tsang & Jiang, 2018), which is essential for enhancing their well-being and effectiveness in their profession (Manasia et al., 2020).

In contrast to Malaysia's exam-oriented method, the Suzuki Violin Method has demonstrated its emphasis on a holistic approach to student development. Globally recognized for its pedagogical freedom and adaptability to diverse cultures, including Malaysia (Akutsu, 2019), the Suzuki Violin Method suggests the need to explore its impact on the emotional wellness of violin teachers, particularly in its approaches and ideology. Thus, this research proposes to investigate the significance of the Suzuki Method by focusing on the emotional wellness of violin teachers in urban areas.

### Research Questions

1. How does the Suzuki Violin Method influence the emotional wellness of Suzuki violin teachers in Malaysia?
2. How does the Suzuki Violin Method influence a teacher's evaluation of self-identity?
3. How does the Suzuki Violin Method influence teachers' perception of self-efficacy, commitment, agency and musician-teacher comprehension?

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Malaysia's Music Education Landscape

Many researchers have discussed the detrimental impact of society's emphasis on musical examinations on music education in Malaysia (Musaeva et al., 2017; Ross, 2002; Shah, 2006). Certificates from Western music board examinations have become a symbolic meaning of musical proficiency in shaping societal demands to meet syllabus requirements (Ross, 2002). This approach restricts music teachers in designing lesson plans in fulfilling examination boards' criteria (Ferm Almqvist et al., 2016; Ross, 2002). In contrast to the envisioned roles of Malaysian music teachers, the system falls short in providing adequate teaching resources to address challenges such as low musicianship skills, limited music appreciation, and low interest in music education, which negatively impacts music teachers' emotional wellness (Ang et al., 2019; Ross, 2002). Studies have also highlighted the piano-dominant culture in Malaysia (Ross, 2002), which neglects the focus on violin pedagogy, thereby increasing dissatisfaction among violin music teachers. Attempts to fill the gaps in violin pedagogy in Malaysia have been expressed through Musaeva et al. (2017) on integrating Galamian violin principles with Malaysian folk tunes.

Ang et al. (2019) explored the perspectives of parents and teachers in West Malaysia, highlighting the job demands and expectations on Malaysian group class teachers. Teachers reported stress from meeting parents' demands as they balance multiple roles, being an educator, an entrepreneur, and building trust with parents.

Although the paper revealed similar characteristics to Suzuki's principles, such as the partnership between teachers, parents, and students, it also highlighted the neglect of teachers' emotional wellness. In response to Ang's paper, Cheong and Koh's (2020) examined the parental role in teacher-parent partnerships in Malaysia. Tsang and Jiang (2018) and Manasia et al. (2020) highlight the importance of healthy social interaction in fostering a positive te-

aching experience. Based on past research in Malaysia, there have been attempts to define the identity of Malaysian music teachers; however, their emotional wellness was not considered in the process.

### **Teachers' Emotional Wellness**

Exploring teachers' emotional wellness in Malaysia is beneficial for identifying areas for improvement (National Research Council, 2013). Regarding the emotions in teaching, it highlights the consequential effect of teachers' emotional wellness on students' well-being and development, with poor emotional regulation skills negatively affecting students (Braun et al., 2020; Kovarovic, 2012).

The measure of one's well-being integrates both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being (Keyes, 2007). Fredrickson et al. (2008) supported this notion, categorizing positive emotions into two broad categories: positive self-esteem (Leary & Baumeister, 2000) and the mastery of purpose in life. In the context of teaching, this can be seen as the development of positive self-identity (Tsang & Jiang, 2018) through role theory (Wagoner, 2012). Wagoner (2012) defined music teacher identity which includes self-efficacy, commitment, agency, sense of belongingness and musician-teacher comprehension. Similarly, Tsang and Jiang (2018) employed symbolic interactionism to explore the relationship between teachers' identity and positive emotions in teaching. These perspectives collectively established a link between a music teacher's emotional wellness and self-identity, which evolved through social and professional experiences.

Self-efficacy refers to one's belief in their capabilities to organise and achieve teaching challenges and goals (Bandura, 1977), which influences a teacher's subjective happiness (Manasia et al., 2020). Teachers in multiple studies have similarly defined themselves as moral professionals (Isbell, 2015; Tsang & Jiang, 2018), dedicated to cultivating students' talents (Tsang & Jiang, 2018). Agency is the teacher's genuine enthusiasm to make positive changes

in their teaching. (Wagoner, 2012; Tsang & Jiang, 2018), and sense of belongingness is a teacher's sense of acceptance and trust in a system or organisation (Wagoner, 2012). The last identity is one's perspective of being both a musician and a teacher (Wagoner, 2012). Based on the discussed literature, self-efficacy, commitment, agency, sense of belonging, and musician-teacher comprehension comprise the identity of teachers.

A teacher's self-identity is shaped by both professional and individual experiences, as well as social interactions and the achievement of goals (Ivanova & Skaramincane, 2016; Manasia et al., 2020; Tsang & Jiang, 2018). Tsang and Jiang's (2018) studied on teachers in Hong Kong highlights that positive social interactions and successful achievement of teaching goals contribute to a positive evaluation of self-identity, ultimately fostering a positive teaching experience. Additionally, Manasia et al. (2020) described that personal goal achievement, combined with job resources (curricular design and management), is fundamental in managing job challenges and boosting teacher self-efficacy (Manasia et al., 2020). Building on this, past research suggested that a positive evaluation of self-identity can enhance positive teaching emotions. Therefore, Wagoner's (2012) construct of music teacher identity will be used to measure the emotional wellness of teachers in this research.

### **Suzuki Violin Method on Emotional Wellness**

Through symbolic interactionism, meaningful interactions and experiences in teachers' teaching profession influence positive evaluations of their perceived self-identity and emotions (Tsang & Jiang, 2018). This highlights the role music pedagogies play in constructing a music teacher's identity, and the emotional experiences influence the evaluation of self-identity in teaching. Despite these insights, there is a lack of research on teacher education resources that cater to supporting teachers' emotional wellness in Malaysia.

This knowledge gap underscores the need for comprehensive studies to investigate and address the emotional well-being of music teachers nationwide.

Since its inception in 1950, the Suzuki Method has continued to uphold its legacy in music education, with recent studies highlighting its relevance in the modern music education landscape (Akutsu, 2019; Holy, 2022; Howard-Hannock, 2024; Kim, 2023; Saleh, 2023). Akutsu (2019) discussed the changes the Suzuki Method has faced, concluding that its direction towards a more technical approach signifies its evolution. This growth is observed through studies integrating the Suzuki Violin Method with other theories and pedagogies (Holy, 2022; Howard-Hannock, 2024; Kim, 2023; Kovarovic, 2012; Saleh, 2023). Holy's (2022) study integrated Suzuki and Bonoff methods to assist beginner string teachers with a curriculum for beginner orchestra, reflecting Beauchamp and Thomas's (2009) and Manasia et al.'s (2020) notion on the role pedagogies play in creating a positive teaching environment. This demonstrated how Suzuki principles are adaptable and applicable across music disciplines. The two pedagogies examined in Holy's (2022) study differed in their approaches, although the Suzuki principles were discussed to help teachers build confidence. Reflecting on Wagoner's (2012) definition of music teacher identity, this research demonstrates how Suzuki's approach enhances the teacher's self-efficacy, leading to improved emotional wellness (Manasia et al., 2020).

The effects of the Suzuki Method on one's well-being were further studied through Kim's (2023) research, which explored the cognitive and physical development of children. Kovarovic's (2012) study, which fosters emotion regulation, serves as a guide for teachers. He believed that students observe emotional coping techniques firsthand from parents and teachers, aligning with Suzuki's mother-tongue approach, as they naturally adopt habits by watching how their caregivers handle stressful situations. This is further explored

through Howard-Hannock's (2024) study, which applies the Suzuki Method in a high-stress military family environment. Suzuki teachers observed positive change in parents' attitudes and the child's coping skills, self-esteem, and self-expression. These studies align with Wagoner's (2012) concept of music teacher identity, combined with symbolic interactionism, as Suzuki principles engage the teacher's agency to foster positive learning experiences.

Returning to Malaysia's music landscape, Suzuki principles have proven beneficial when they are implemented (Ang et al., 2019; Cheong & Koh, 2020). Their studies on parental involvement discussed the vital role that the parent-teacher-student relationship plays in music learning. However, the number of Suzuki trained teachers in Malaysia is limited with the absence of a Suzuki country association in the country as explained by chairman of Asia Region Suzuki Association (ARSA), L. K. Chen (personal communication, July 9, 2024), and therefore this research will not investigate teachers' sense of belonging from Wagoner's (2012) framework. Despite this, there is a lack of research on its application within the Malaysian context and a knowledge gap in understanding how to support teachers' emotional wellness. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by investigating the influence of the Suzuki Violin Method on the emotional well-being of violin teachers, thereby contributing to the development of music education in Malaysia.

## METHOD

### Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research approach with an exploratory ethnographic design to investigate the emotional well-being and self-identity of Suzuki violin teachers in Malaysia. Exploratory research is ideal for examining real-life experiences in context with limited prior research (Creswell, 2014). The study was conducted in urban areas, Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Georgetown, and Kota Kinabalu,



to capture the diverse teaching experiences and cultural nuances.

An ethnographic approach, including in-depth interviews and observations, was used to understand Suzuki teachers' self-identity through their behaviors and beliefs (Creswell & Guetterman, 2021; Krueger, 2020). This study focused on four key components of self-identity: self-efficacy, commitment, agency, and musician-teacher comprehension, examining how these elements shape teachers' self-identity and emotional experiences within the Suzuki framework. Specifically: a) Self-efficacy refers to teachers' confidence in their teaching abilities; b) Commitment reflects their passion and motivation for the Suzuki Method; c) Agency emphasizes teachers' roles in guiding students' musical development; and d) Musician-teacher comprehension explores the balance between their identities as musicians and educators.

Content analysis (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017) was employed to analyze interview data, reconstructing a large amount of text into organized key results. The analysis revisited Wagoner's (2011) framework on teacher identity, examining the interrelationship of self-efficacy, commitment, agency, and musician-teacher comprehension with teachers' emotional experiences. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study.

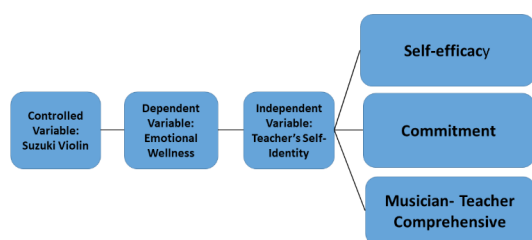


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of study

### Participants and Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to select participants with the necessary expertise and experience to provide meaningful insights to the research (Burns & Grove, 2011). Six Suzuki-trained violin teachers from different states in Malaysia were se-

lected based on the following criteria:

1. Certification in Suzuki violin training through the Asia Region Suzuki Association (ARSA).
2. Active application of the Suzuki Method in their teaching.
3. Experience teaching violin students using the Suzuki approach.

### Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted with two Suzuki-trained piano teachers via Zoom to assess the clarity and validity of the interview questions. The pilot study provided insights into refining the methodology and improving the interview questions to ensure they aligned with the research objectives (Chenail, 2011). Feedback from the pilot study highlighted the positive impact of the Suzuki Method on teachers' approach and mindset, informing refinements to the study design.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RQ1: How does the Suzuki Violin Method influence the Emotional Wellness of Suzuki Violin Teachers in Malaysia?

The findings show that Suzuki principles foster the participants' motivation through their agency, resilience, and adaptability, as well as a sense of satisfaction and community. They provide a platform for emotional regulation and support through the community and parents. A shift in emotions and mindset was reported by all participants, with enhanced resilience, increased satisfaction in their teaching experience, and appreciation for their personal and professional growth.

### Motivation and Altruistic Agency

Some participants reported that teaching using the Suzuki Method provides them with a deep sense of purpose and altruistic agency. Participants viewed their roles not only as music instructors but also as mentors who shape their students' musical and personal development. For instance, one participant described being "on a mission to guide them to the

end – maintaining their interest in violin playing,” which highlighted a strong dedication to supporting students through challenges. Another participant expressed a similar sentiment, reflecting, “I’m aware I’m shaping ... a lovely being and training them to concentrate and have discipline.” This displayed agency in line with Suzuki’s philosophy, “Every child can learn” (Suzuki, 1969/1983), reflecting a positive outlook as they recognized their meaningful contributions to the students’ long-term growth and happiness.

### **Resilience and Adaptability**

Several participants highlighted how Suzuki enhanced their resilience and adaptability in overcoming challenges. They described a shift from frustration to a more patient and optimistic teaching approach, supported by the structured yet flexible Suzuki Method.

All participants expressed satisfaction and fulfilment derived from witnessing their students’ progress, which significantly boosted their emotional wellness. Teachers effectively manage stress, persevere, and stay centred to avoid burnout. The step-by-step learning and positive reinforcement approaches enabled them to observe steady, incremental improvements, which validated their efforts. One participant described the joy of seeing “small but rewarding” (Participant 3) progress in students’ skills, while another felt fulfilled when students “share their self-evaluation” (Participant 5). This continuous feedback loop with students and parents reinforced their sense of accomplishment and enhanced overall job satisfaction.

### **Community and Support through Parental Involvement**

Participants emphasized the importance of a supportive learning community, central to Suzuki’s triangle, which involves parents, students, and teachers. Some participants reported kinder self-perceptions and greater compassion for others, with one participant acknowledging that she had become “less critical” (Participant

3) of herself and fellow musicians. Another expressed fulfilment in fostering collaboration by organizing student concerts, enabling families and friends to celebrate achievements. Additionally, a participant encouraged fellow musicians to join Suzuki Method training, aspiring to “grow together” (Participant 5) as a community. This supportive network enhanced emotional wellness by affirming participants’ efforts, deepening their connection with students, and providing motivation and support.

### **RQ2: How does the Suzuki Violin Method influence a Teacher’s Evaluation of Self-identity?**

The findings demonstrate alignment with Suzuki’s core principles, creating a positive environment, adopting a holistic, student-centered approach, emphasizing flexibility, and focusing on listening and repetition. Participants adapted these principles with personal variations and emphasis, tailoring them to their students’ needs and teaching style, reflecting shifts in their emotions and roles from music instructors to holistic mentors. Rooted in Suzuki’s philosophies, this transformation brought a renewed sense of purpose, fulfilment, and confidence in their teaching methods.

### **Suzuki’s Holistic Philosophy**

Half of the participants embraced Suzuki’s holistic philosophy, viewing music education as a medium for personal growth. Some of them focused on technique, discipline, and perseverance, seeing the holistic value in Suzuki’s methodical process. Others emphasised emotional well-being and character development. Both distinct approaches reflected their commitment to nurturing the students as a whole, developing personal and musical growth.

Furthermore, there were enhancements to pre-existing values while also adopting new traits and shifting in value inspired by Suzuki principles. For instance, some shifted from focusing solely on

performance outcomes to emphasizing holistic, student-centered teaching, noting, "Now I teach them in more ways" (Participant 2). This varied response suggested that Suzuki Method reinforces existing values and inspires new approaches in teaching. Suzuki's philosophy had also successfully prepared a positive environment as a learning platform for the students. From the interviews, although all participants recognised the importance of fostering a positive environment, they displayed different approaches with some prioritising character development, while others focused on positive reinforcement through the parents. Both varied approaches employed flexible problem-solving, influenced by Suzuki's belief, "Every child can learn" (Suzuki, 1969/1983), creating a non-judgmental space where students could "learn at their own pace" (Participant 1). These varied approaches redefined their teaching identities while staying unified in their commitment to student growth.

Although mentioned less frequently, listening and repetition were adopted in distinct ways. One participant perceived listening and repetition as essential to character building, incorporating elements such as a "warm speaking tone" (Participant 1). In contrast, some participants emphasised repetition for technical mastery. This variation allowed versatility, serving both as technical and character-building instruments in their teaching practices.

### **Community and Collective Identity**

An interesting linguistic pattern revealed that participants used "we" and "I" interchangeably when describing their roles, reflecting a blended individual and collective identity. For example, participants expressed, "We try to give a lot of positive environments" (Participant 1) and "We never give up" (Participant 2), indicating a shared sense of belonging to a broader Suzuki teaching community. This collective identity strengthens participants' commitment to Suzuki's and supports their teaching approaches.

### **RQ3: How does Suzuki Violin Method Influence Teachers' Perception of Self-efficacy, Commitment, Agency and Musician-Teacher Comprehension?**

#### *Self-efficacy*

The Suzuki Violin Method notably enhanced the confidence of all participants in their teaching abilities, especially when working with young beginners. The method's structured yet adaptable framework provided them with tools to address prior limitations in areas such as classroom management and teaching young children.

#### **The Change by Implementing Suzuki's Method**

The participants express a redefined sense of agency shaped by Suzuki's pragmatic and clear direction for teacher roles, revealing a variety of goals, values, and focus areas centred on students' well-being and holistic growth. Before adopting the Suzuki Method, participants expressed self-doubt and challenges, particularly in teaching younger students. Due to limited strategies for breaking down complex skills for young children and beginners, many also struggled to sustain student engagement, and often felt "frustrated and stagnant" (Participant 3) due to slow progress. These challenges, combined with limited techniques for problem-solving, negatively impacted their self-efficacy and teaching confidence.

After adapting Suzuki, all participants reported heightened self-efficacy, particularly with young beginners. Participants reported a "calmer and less critical" mindset towards themselves and others (Participant 3) and were inspired to "provide opportunities" for students and their families (Participant 1), in hopes of helping the community "grow together" (Participant 5), highlighting Suzuki's role in fostering an altruistic mindset. The majority of participants approached these goals, emphasizing technical development, instilling discipline, and fostering awareness and mindfulness in practice. Participants found deeper meaning in their roles

as educators, describing their students' increased eagerness and awareness as a rewarding experience. This contributed to their sense of purpose as educators, reflecting the method's holistic approach to teaching.

Some participants also highlighted the Suzuki Method as a source of valuable new teaching tools. Techniques like visual aids, interactive games, and individualized lesson plans helped participants better engage with students and manage the classroom effectively, sustained by a newfound patience in identifying and addressing challenges in smaller, manageable steps, which contributed to a more positive learning environment. One participant shared that using "stickers on the bow, hands, and fingerboard" (Participant 5) facilitated targeted corrections while maintaining a positive learning atmosphere. This newfound competence empowered participants to teach confidently with diverse student age groups and abilities.

### *Co-evolving Identities*

From another perspective, some participants viewed their musician and teacher identities as co-evolving, where teaching experiences enhanced their musicianship and vice versa. Participants observed improved musical expression and emotional sensitivity, which enriched their teaching practices, creating a more engaging and effective learning environment. This relationship reflected how both identities mutually influence and strengthen each other, rather than being viewed as separate or isolated aspects.

Suzuki allows participants to redefine and deepen their sense of purpose and fulfilment with their profession. The method's emphasis on musicianship skills and social responsibility significantly impacts both identities, contributing to a more profound professional identity and purpose among Suzuki teachers.

### **The Making and Evolving Self-identity of a Suzuki Teacher**

In the 21st century, where diverse

cultural and educational settings demand flexibility, this framework remains highly relevant (Akutsu, 2019). The Suzuki philosophy's flexibility enables teachers to emphasize character building while prioritizing technique, reflecting their evolving identities and teaching contexts.

This study found that adopting Suzuki principles led to a shift in teachers' approaches, mindsets, and goals, aligning with Ivanova and Skara-Mincăne's (2016) view of professional identity as shaped by self-awareness and ambition. Consistent with prior research (Manasia et al., 2020; Tsang & Jiang, 2018), Suzuki teachers' identities evolved through deeper engagement with the method, moving from exam-driven aims to a holistic focus on character development and technical mastery. Influenced by Suzuki's philosophy of nurturing 'beautiful citizens' (Suzuki, 1969/1983; Thibeault, 2018; Holy, 2022), teachers came to see themselves as 'holistic mentors' prioritising student well-being—a shift also echoed in Tsang and Jiang's (2018) findings on Hong Kong educators' emphasis on holistic education.

The Suzuki principles also enhanced Wagoner's (2012) definition of music teacher's identity. Repetition and listening created an individualized and natural learning process (Saleh, 2023; Suzuki, 1969/1983), empowering teachers' self-efficacy. Additionally, the emphasis on parental involvement challenges teachers (Howard-Hannock, 2024) to cultivate new skills and a sense of purpose, reinforcing their identity as holistic educators.

### **Musician's Identity and Influence on Teaching**

Teachers in this study described varied relationships between their musician and teaching identities—some viewed their musician identity as directly informing their teaching, while others saw both identities as co-evolving. This aligns with Bernard's (2004) view that music-making deepens professional identity, as well as with Draves' (2010) and Johnson's (2014) findings on the reciprocal influence of te-



aching and musicianship. Johnson's study on conducting students further showed that individual interpretations of dual identities are shaped by personal teaching experiences and past relationships with music teachers.

These findings also raise critical questions about the interplay between pre-existing traits and those developed through the Suzuki Method. Suzuki teachers' evolving goals reflect their commitment to lifelong learning and adaptability. Their belief in the method's effectiveness, grounded in its core values, enhances self-efficacy (Barni et al., 2019) and supports their dual identities as musicians and educators.

### **In Search for a Suzuki Community**

The alternation between "I" and "we" in teachers' discourse reflects a dual identity—personal and collective—rooted in the Suzuki community. This mirrors Ige's (2010) findings, where Zulu male students used "we" to express solidarity and cultural belonging, framing their individual identity through group affiliation. The use of "we" implies an alignment with a broader pedagogical philosophy and a mutual sense of purpose, suggesting that their identity is co-constructed through communal belonging rather than solely individual experience. This is also consistent with past research showing that collective pedagogical discourse fosters a sense of belonging (Natale-Abramo, 2014; Manasia, 2020; Wagoner, 2012). Similarly, Suzuki teachers' use of "we" suggests a shared pedagogical commitment, revealing a collective self-shaped by community values rather than isolated experience. Natale-Abramo (2014) explained that such pedagogical discourse through the interview helps teachers "feel at one," reassuring them that they are not alone in facing challenges, and this reflects the teachers' shared commitment and the demand for a supportive community. Throughout the interview, teachers became more reflective and confident in articulating their emotions. This progression highlighted the limited research and dialogue surrounding

the emotional awareness of music teachers in Malaysia, emphasizing the need for greater support and a collaborative network.

### **Necessary changes to Suzuki**

Despite unanimous positive feedback on the Suzuki method, some teachers adapted their practices to accommodate parental demands, incorporating examination materials to align with societal expectations. These adaptations may be seen to foster positive relationships with parents, customising approaches to align with parents' interests. However, this reinforced Malaysia's deeply ingrained exam culture, as displayed through opposing voices raising societal concerns regarding the abolishment of national academic exams, such as UPSR and PT3 (FMT Reporters, 2024).

These adjustments demonstrated the method's fluidity in addressing cultural contexts of different demographics, as observed in Japan, where Suzuki has evolved to emphasize technique and a more serious learning environment (Akutsu, 2019). Nonetheless, Suzuki philosophy encourages teachers to approach pedagogy as a multifaceted assessment tool, integrating exams as one of several measures to assess progress and make meaningful adjustments to enhance students' learning. Teachers in this study found that while such adaptations may potentially diverge from Suzuki's core philosophy, they fostered positive parent-teacher relationships and validated their self-efficacy.

### **Emotional Wellness**

The Suzuki philosophy acts as a valuable job resource, fostering emotional stability and well-being (Manasia et al., 2020). Teachers applied its principles beyond the classroom, supporting both personal growth and societal contribution. Its structured yet flexible nature helped them navigate challenges—balancing pedagogy with parental expectations—while maintaining resilience and purpose. Even amid slow progress or unsupportive parents, they remained driven by hope and optimism. Suzuki's emphasis on emotio-

nal regulation offered a therapeutic buffer during difficult moments, enhancing overall well-being (Kovarovic, 2012).

The clear sense of agency fostered by Suzuki's philosophy inspires teachers to pursue altruistic goals, empowering them to spread positivity both within and beyond their classroom. Research supported the idea that teachers derive satisfaction from making a difference in students' lives (Hagenauer et al., 2015; Tsang & Jiang, 2018). For Suzuki teachers, this responsibility extends to parents and the wider community, as their teaching identity is deeply intertwined with their personal identity.

## CONCLUSIONS

By adopting Suzuki's values and positive teaching experiences, teachers develop a strong emotional connection to their work. Positive interactions with students, parents and peers further validate their efforts and reinforce their sense of purpose. This cycle of encouragement fosters resilience, fulfilment and professional efficacy. Ultimately, the integration of Suzuki's principles, altruistic goals and meaningful relationships enhances teachers' emotional wellness, enabling them to thrive in their roles while leaving a lasting impact on their communities.

The findings of this research may not be generalized to all Suzuki-trained teachers in Malaysia, as only violin teachers were studied. Additionally, the findings might differ from a larger sample size of Suzuki-trained teachers or teachers using different pedagogical methods. The demographic of my study is limited to urban areas of Malaysia; therefore, it may not represent the emotional wellness of Malaysian teachers in general. Furthermore, additional studies could investigate the parent-teacher-student dynamic relationship within Suzuki's framework and explore various approaches to the "Suzuki triangle" to foster stronger collaborative relationships, ultimately enhancing the music educational system in Malaysia.

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