

Teachers' Emotional Intelligence and Work Engagement: A Correlational Study

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and work engagement (WE) of secondary school teachers in Punjab, Pakistan. The study was descriptive-correlational and quantitative in nature directing the positivistic paradigm. Multi-stage random sampling technique was used to select the individuals as sample. The sample was consisted of 300 male and female teachers from secondary schools. Two closed-ended questionnaires were adopted for data collection. A pilot study was conducted to ensure validity and reliability of the research instruments. Data were analyzed by using inferential statistics such as Pearson r, independent sample t-test, linear regression and one-way ANOVA. The study's outcomes revealed that teachers' emotional intelligence was positively correlated with work engagement. Male and female teachers were having difference in mean scores of emotional intelligence and work engagement. The study's results indicated that teachers had no difference in mean scores of emotional intelligence and work engagement based on teaching experience. The results also revealed that teachers' emotional intelligence had a strong significant effect on their work engagement at the secondary level. Based on the study's results, it is recommended that teachers should be emotionally intelligent to enhance their level of work engagement.

KEYWORDS

Emotional Intelligence, Work Engagement, Secondary Level

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last few years, emotional intelligence (EI) made unparalleled prominence in psychology, education, and management (Hodzic et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2019). Teachers are people who work with their emotions (Yin, 2015). The ability to notice, analyze, control, and assess emotions is referred to as emotional intelligence (EI) (Fernández-Abascal & Martín-Díaz, 2015; Vesely et al., 2013). It is basically capability to detect the thinking, emotions and feeling of others, differentiate them, and utilize the knowledge to give the direction in a specific way (Gong et al., 2019; Serrat, 2017). Pekaar et al. (2017) consider it knowledge of emotional procedures and the aptitude to utilize that information to societal and expressive behavior regulation.

EI levels among teachers are crucial personal characteristics associated with an organization's performance and productivity (Karimi et al., 2020). EI can be characterized in this context to notice and examine emotions, to interpret emotions, and then to use emotional information to guide thought and adapt behavior to the milieu (Furnham & Taylor, 2020; Robinson et al., 2020). Concerning teachers' work and personal spheres, the EI construct has attracted considerable attention (Mérida-López et al., 2019; Vesely-Maillefer & Saklofske, 2018).

Work engagement (WE) possess continuing emotional affective status marked by vigor, devotion, and absorption in the workplace (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Employee dedication to the job in versatile dimensions for person and organizational outcomes is referred to as work engagement (Khan, 2016). As a result, WE is defined as an energy, attention, and commitment (Iyer, 2016; Schaufeli & Demerouti, 2007; Turgut, 2011a, 2011b). Vigor refers to a strong desire to put forth a lot of effort and persevere in the face of adversity. Dedication implies being intensely engaged with work and encountering a feeling of eagerness, motivation, pride, challenge and which means. Finally, absorption entails being completely focused on and happily absorbed in work to the point when time flies swiftly and stopping work causes dissatisfaction.

WE is becoming a more critical job-related motivational component in educational settings as it connects to various relevant outcomes (Granziera et al., 2021; Taris et al., 2017). Like, WE is linked to job satisfaction, which affects students' development and educational achievements as well (Perera et al., 2018). Additionally, teacher engagement is connected with healthiness and financial benefits such as lower absenteeism and higher worth (Bakker et al., 2014; Bakker & Bal, 2010; Taris et al., 2017). Because job engagement impacts educators' personally and professionally comfort (Perera et al., 2018; Upadaya et al., 2016). In this regard, engaged teachers will experience a positive emotional state, which can promote a more positive emotional response to their work. On the other hand, one may anticipate that instructors with low degrees of WE could experience in decreased work-associated well-being.



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RESEARCH GAP

Researches set the trends for the new horizons find the coordinated deficit in the context of emotional intelligence and work engagement. Various researches have been conducted in nursing students (Zhu et al., 2015), in higher education (Valente, 2019), in organization (Taris et al., 2017) and in special education (Robinson et al., 2020). So, it is the need of hour to conduct the research on secondary school teachers regarding emotional intelligence and work engagement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teachers' EI is acknowledged as a foundation of their behaviors headed for the examinees and the ability to establish a stable and healthful classroom climate (Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014). Educators recognized the relevance of EI in the classroom and how it may become critical component of learning experience, consequential in students' overall knowledge and improvement. Emotional intelligent teachers have a greater understanding of their pupils' behavioral and emotional comfort and are better at motivating them (Becker et al., 2014; Maamari & Majdalani, 2019; Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014; Pugazhenthii & Srinivasan, 2018).

It was not enough for educators to have merely academic knowledge; emotional understanding is also required. Emotional intelligence (EI) provides the cornerstone for great connections and good school performance, according to studies examining teachers' EI (Hargraves, 2018; Maamari & Majdalani, 2019). Specifically, the advantages in regards to professional performance (Seligman, 2005), teaching-learning process (Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014), the realization of the students in school (Becker et al., 2014), decreasing fatigue and stress (Subalakshmi et al., 2019), in addition to the importance of interpersonal ties in an educational setting (Zembylas, 2005).

According to a study of beginning teachers, those who are heavily active put in more effort to achieve their job goals and, as a result, increase performance than those who are less engaged (Bakker & Bal, 2010). Teachers who are energetic and committed to their jobs are satisfied with their jobs and experience positive feelings, resulting in positive assessments of their whole lives (Granziera et al., 2021; Li et al., 2017; Upadaya et al., 2016). Such type of conclusion are especially pertinent because teaching is a profession with a high risk of psychological distress (Harmsen et al., 2018; Taris et al., 2017).

The influence of EI talents on teaching has been the subject of increasing investigation (Vesely et al., 2013). EI is often viewed in the scientific literature as either an "ability" similar to cognitive ability in that it involves cognitive abilities of emotional data or a "disability" comparable to cognitive intelligence including information functioning of emotional processing (Matešić, 2015) or a "persistent trait" connecting a collection of individual self at bottom of temperament structures (Petrides et al., 2016). Much research has been done on the link between EI abilities and personal and occupational comfort domains like job satisfaction (Miao et al., 2017; Sánchez-Álvarez et al., 2016).

Lestari and Sawitri (2017) stated the positive association between EI and work engagement among special needs school instructors in Indonesia. According to the study, Turner and Stough (2020) explained that emotional intelligence (EI) acting a momentous responsibility in the effectiveness of educators and has been revealed to manipulate the attitude of the student, rendezvous, and educational concert, as well as have positive impact on teacher comfort, job satisfaction, friendly relationship, and a lower risk of suffer exhaustion (Mayer & Van Zyl, 2013). Simons and Buitendach (2013) and Kuntz et al. (2017) discovered that EI and WE have a strong relationship.

Various researches have shown that EI and WE have a positive and statistically significant link (Mérida-López et al., 2019); Thor (2012); Zhu et al. (2015); Yan et al. (2018). Others have demonstrated a direct effect of EI on employee engagement levels (Yan et al., 2018; Zhu et al., 2015). Even the individual elements of EI, such as energy, devotion, and absorption, are positively connected with each of the three engagement dimensions (Pérez-Fuentes et al., 2018).

A wide literature supports the potential utility of this construct such as EI for both people and businesses on the correlates of job engagement (Bakker et al., 2014; Knight et al., 2017). Existing research in education suggests that work engagement unbuckled important results like effectiveness of teachers, contentment, and comfort (Granziera et al., 2021).

Teachers' EI is influenced by gender, teaching experience, and academic preparation, and studies have indicated that women score higher on EI tests than males (Gill & Sankulkar, 2017; Valente, 2019). Only a few types of research have looked at the link between EI and WE in a school setting. These studies reveal that EI is closely linked to all three measures of work engagement (Mérida-López et al., 2019; Pena et al., 2012). EI is also found to interact with job variables (such as role ambiguity) to predict teachers' degrees of WE (Mérida-López et al., 2019).

According to Ravichandran et al. (2011), emotionally intelligent of the teachers have a more favorable attitude about work and career According to the study's results, they exhibit devotion, passion, and absorption, all of which indicate that they are invested in their task. As a result, it was advised that managers should center on building emotional intelligence abilities and understanding factors such as inspiration that manipulate their subordinates' work engagement attitude. According to Zhu et al. (2015), that EI is reasonably connected with WE.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study aimed to achieve the following objectives to:

1. Investigate the relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence and work engagement.
2. Compare the difference in teachers' emotional intelligence and work engagement regarding their gender and

teaching experience.

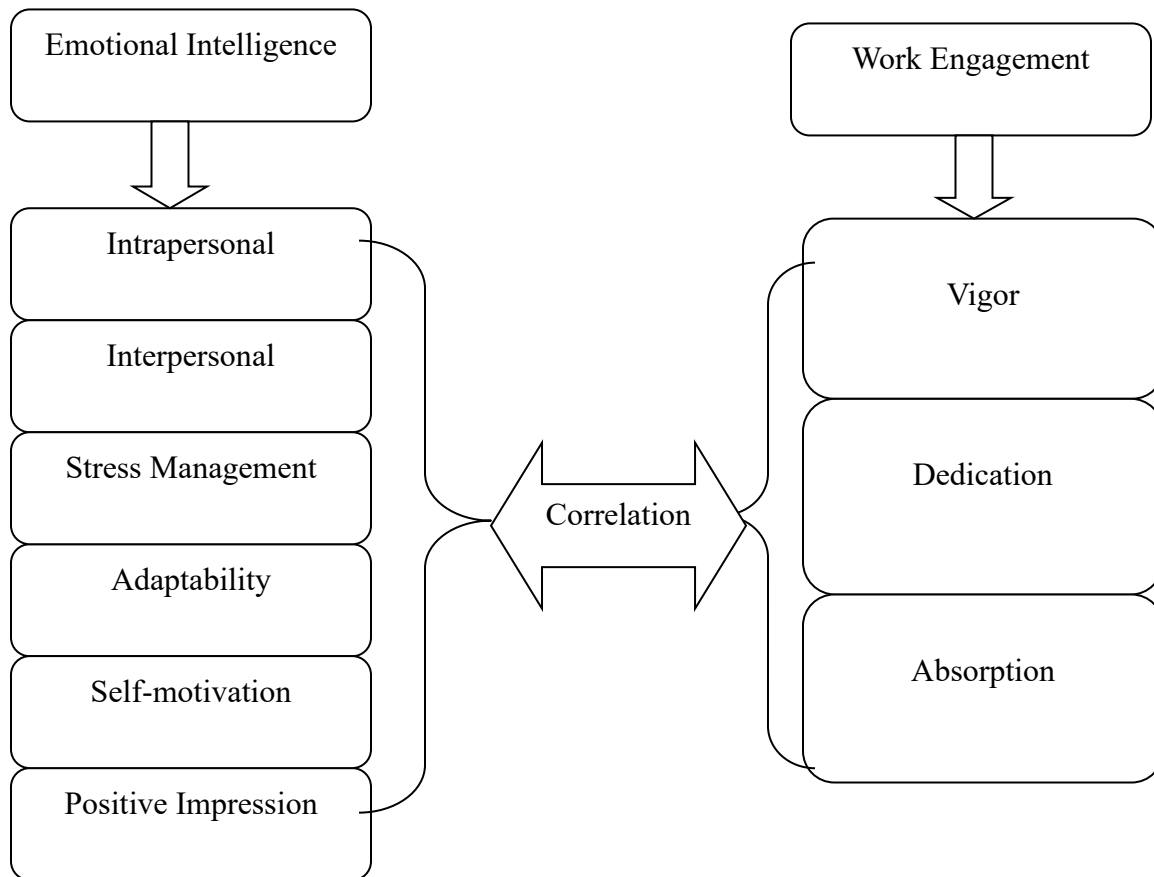
3. Find out the effect of teachers' emotional intelligence on work engagement.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study's research questions were as follows:

1. Is there a relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence and work engagement?
2. What is a difference in teachers' emotional intelligence and work engagement by gender and teaching experience?
3. What is the effect of teachers' emotional intelligence on work engagement?

CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF THE STUDY



RESEARCH DESIGN

The current study used a positivist paradigm and was quantitative, descriptive, and correlational. A cross-sectional survey was conducted.

POPULATION AND SAMPLING METHODS

Total number of individuals/ elements in group, in which sample is selected is called population (Ali et al., 2021; Siddique et al., 2021). The targeted population was all the teachers working at secondary school level in Punjab province. The study was delimited to the Lahore division. There are subjects/ individuals selected from the population which represent the population is called sample (Ali et al., 2021; Siddique et al., 2021). Technique used to select the sample was multi-stage random sampling. There were four districts in the Lahore division. In the 1st stage, two districts were selected from out of 4 districts randomly. In the 2nd stage 30 boys and 30 girls' secondary school were selected randomly. In the 3rd and last stage, the census technique was used to select the study's sample. Therefore, 300 teachers working in the sampled schools were the sample of the study.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Two self-report measures were used for data collection from selected respondents. Both research instruments were adopted that were used in the Pakistani context. Firstly, (Bar-On, 2002) "Emotional Quotient Inventory Short form" was used

in measuring teachers' EI level. It was a 5 point Likert type scale. It has consisted of six factors: "intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, adaptability, self-motivation, and positive impression". The Cronbach alpha value was .92. Secondly, the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed by (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) was used to explore teachers' WE level. It was a 5 point Likert type scale. It includes three sub-variables such as vigor, dedication and absorption. The alpha value of the UWES was 0.87. Data were gathered through postal correspondence and face-to-face visits to schools by the researcher. Inferential statistical analysis techniques (Pearson r , independent sample t-test, one-way ANOVA and regression analysis) were applied to analyze the data.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Table 1. *Relationship of Teachers' Emotional Intelligence and Work Engagement*

Variables	n	r -value	Sig.
Emotional Intelligence and Work Engagement	300	.848**	.001

** $p < .001$ (2-tailed)

Table 1 revealed the correlation between teachers' EI and WE. It was concluded that teachers' EI was having strong relation with WE, $r = .848^{**}$, $n = 300$, $p < .001$.

Table 2. *Relationship of Teachers' EI and WE*

Sub-scales of EI and WE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Intrapersonal	1	.822**	.291**	.813**	.777**	.712**	.744**
Interpersonal		1	.281**	.815**	.792**	.730**	.797**
Stress Management			1	.355**	.303**	.288**	.306**
Adaptability				1	.757**	.716**	.815**
Self-motivation					1	.778**	.782**
Positive Impression						1	.739**
Work Engagement							1

** $p < .001$ (2-tailed), $n = 300$

Table 2 indicated that relationship between EI and WE of secondary school teachers. The sub-variables of teachers' EI such as: Intrapersonal ($r = .744^{**}$), Interpersonal ($r = .797^{**}$), Stress Management ($r = .306^{**}$), Adaptability ($r = .815^{**}$), Self-motivation ($r = .782^{**}$) and Positive Impression ($r = .739^{**}$) were having positive significant relationship with work engagement. It was inferred that all sub-variables of EI had positive and significant correlation with teachers' WE.

Table 3. *Teachers' Gender Differences in EI and WE*

Variables	Gender	N	M	SD	t	df	p
Emotional Intelligence	Male	149	135.78	18.06	1.669	284.86	.001
	Female	151	131.82	22.77			
Work Engagement	Male	149	70.66	10.17	2.610	290.34	.001
	Female	151	67.28	12.14			

Table 3 indicated the comparison in mean scores of teachers' emotional intelligence and work engagement concerning their gender. It was concluded that teachers' EI and WE had a significant difference at $p = .05$.

Table 4. *Teachers' Gender Differences in Sub-variables of EI and WE*

Factors of Emotional Intelligence and Work Engagement	Gender	N	M	SD	t	df	P
Intrapersonal	Male	149	24.97	3.45	1.343	275.916	.001
	Female	151	24.34	4.72			
Interpersonal	Male	149	28.93	4.69	2.087	296.258	.029
	Female	151	27.75	5.14			
Stress Management	Male	149	17.29	3.73	.665	298	.699
	Female	151	17.00	3.95			
Adaptability	Male	149	20.25	3.29	3.043	279.415	.000
	Female	151	18.89	4.35			

Self-motivation	Male	149	24.41	3.94	.746	291.761	.006
	Female	151	24.04	4.63			
Positive Impression	Male	149	19.93	3.44	.261	293.132	.020
	Female	151	19.82	3.96			
Vigor	Male	149	24.75	3.48	1.982	285.644	.001
	Female	151	23.84	4.37			
Dedication	Male	149	20.82	3.05	2.255	280.159	.001
	Female	151	19.89	3.99			
Absorption	Male	149	25.09	5.25	2.695	298	.129
	Female	151	23.55	4.66			

Table 4 revealed the differences in mean scores of emotional intelligence and work engagement concerning their teachers' gender. It was concluded that only five sub-variables of emotional intelligence, such as intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, self-motivation, and positive impression, significantly differed from six factors. The results also indicated that two factors of work engagement, such as vigour and dedication, out of three factors had a significant difference based on their gender at $p = .05$.

Table 5. *Teachers' Comparisons in Emotional Intelligence and Work Engagement Concerning Teaching Experience*

Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Emotional Intelligence	Between Groups	3705.08	5	741.02	1.764	.120
	Within Groups	123533.26	294	420.18		
	Total	127238.35	299			
Work Engagement	Between Groups	1373.82	5	274.76	2.189	.055
	Within Groups	36901.71	294	125.52		
	Total	38275.52	299			

One-way ANOVA was performed to compare mean scores of EI and WE concerning teachers' teaching experiences in table 5. It was concluded that teachers were not having difference in mean scores of emotional intelligence and work engagement based on their teaching experience.

Table 6. *Teachers' Comparisons in Sub-variables of Emotional Intelligence and Work Engagement Concerning Teaching Experience*

Sub-variables of Emotional Intelligence and Work Engagement		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Intrapersonal	Between Groups	219.56	5	43.92	2.614	.025
	Within Groups	4938.69	294	16.79		
	Total	5158.25	299			
Interpersonal	Between Groups	255.98	5	51.19	2.132	.062
	Within Groups	7061.02	294	24.02		
	Total	7316.99	299			
Stress Management	Between Groups	35.79	5	7.16	.481	.790
	Within Groups	4371.75	294	14.87		
	Total	4407.55	299			
Adaptability	Between Groups	109.76	5	21.95	1.444	.208
	Within Groups	4469.91	294	15.21		
	Total	4579.67	299			
Self-motivation	Between Groups	191.62	5	38.33	2.118	.063
	Within Groups	5319.31	294	18.09		
	Total	5510.92	299			
Positive Impression	Between Groups	86.31	5	17.26	1.262	.280

Vigor	Within Groups	4021.63	294	13.68		
	Total	4107.93	299			
	Between Groups	121.46	5	24.293	1.553	.174
	Within Groups	4600.31	294	15.647		
	Total	4721.770	299			
Dedication	Between Groups	131.57	5	26.32	2.088	.067
	Within Groups	3704.981	294	12.61		
	Total	3836.55	299			
Absorption	Between Groups	270.84	5	54.17	2.198	.055
	Within Groups	7244.07	294	24.640		
	Total	7514.92	299			

Table 6 revealed the results of a one-way ANOVA regarding the factors of teachers' emotional intelligence and work engagement concerning their teaching experience. It was concluded that only one factor, intrapersonal, had a significant difference out of six emotional intelligence factors. The results also indicated no difference in mean scores of sub-variables of teachers' work engagement based on their experience in years.

Table 7. *Effect of Teachers' Emotional Intelligence on Work Engagement*

Variables	β	t-value	Sig.	Model R Square
Emotional Intelligence and Work Engagement	.848	27.630	.001	.719

Table 7 explained that the linear regression result, the R^2 value (0.719), explains the variance of the dependent variable due to the independent variable. In this case, the variance in work engagement is (71.9%) due to teachers' emotional intelligence. It explained that the beta value (.848) was significant with $p = .001$. The results indicated a strong significant effect of teachers' EI on WE with β value 0.848 at $p = .001$.

DISCUSSION

The study explored the relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement of secondary school teachers. The study's results concluded that teachers' EI was positively correlated with WE. The sub-scales of EI and WE were positively correlated. The current study's results were supported by empirical studies' results of (Granziera & Perera, 2019; Lestari & Sawitri, 2017; Li et al., 2017; Mérida-López et al., 2019; Thor, 2012; Turner & Stough, 2020; Zhu et al., 2015); (Yan et al., 2018). The result of the present research study also aligned with the research study of Butakor et al. (2021) and Topchyan and Woehler (2021) Emotionally intelligent teachers were having a high WE level at the secondary school level. In this regard, results showed that male teachers had more emotional intelligence skills than female teachers. The results were inconsistent with studies conducted by (Gill & Sankulkar, 2017; Valente, 2019). Both male and female teachers had a significant difference in mean scores of different subscales of emotional intelligence such as intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, self-motivation and positive impression. The study's findings also indicated that teachers had a significant difference in mean scores in different factors of WE, such as vigour and dedication concerning their gender. The study's results indicated that teachers had no significant difference in mean scores of EI and WE concerning their teaching experience. The results also revealed that teachers' EI positively affected their WE at the secondary school level. The results were consistent with studies' results conducted by (Kuntz et al., 2017; Simons & Buitendach, 2013); (Yan et al., 2018), and Zhu et al. (2015).

CONCLUSION

The main aim of the study was to assess the relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement among secondary school teachers in Punjab Province. The study was delimited to the Lahore division. It was correlational and descriptive study. The data were collected by survey method. The study's population was secondary school teachers. Two 5 point Likert type self-report measures were adopted for data collection. The results revealed that teachers' EI had a strong and positive significant correlation with WE. Teachers' were having a significant difference in emotional intelligence and work engagement concerning their gender. Female teachers were highly emotionally intelligent and engaged in their work than male

teachers. The study's outcomes indicated that teachers had no significant difference concerning their teaching experience. The study's results also indicated that the effect of teachers' EI on their WE at secondary school level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Keeping in mind the results of the present study, it is recommended that emotional intelligence should be included in the selection and recruiting standards for teachers in Pakistan at all levels. In this way, we may get teachers of higher emotional intelligence levels, resultantly with higher engagement to their teaching organization and the teaching profession. As emotional intelligence demonstrates effects up to reasonable extent, to enhance the work engagement of prospective and in-service teachers, emotional intelligence may be taught to them, as it will definitely contribute to a conducive environment in teaching organizations.

CREDIT AUTHOR STATEMENT

Ahsaan Siddique: Conceptualization, Methodology, Software, Data curation, Writing- Original draft preparation, Visualization, Investigation, **Dr Rizwan Akram Rana:** Supervision, Reviewing.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS:

It is declare that all authors don't have any conflict of interest. Furthermore, informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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