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Emotional Intelligence, Work Engagement, And Creativity: A Case Study At University Level In Pakistan

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Abstract

The link between teachers' emotional intelligence, work engagement, and teaching for creativity at the higher education level was examined in this study. The study was correlational and descriptive. All teaching faculty at public universities in Punjab, Pakistan, were included in the population. Data were gathered from seven public universities in the Punjab area, with a sample size of 405 university professors. Data were gathered using three research instruments. Inferential statistical methods, such as Pearson r and regression analysis, were used to evaluate the data. The study indicated that emotional intelligence was positively and significantly associated with work engagement and creativity teaching. The results also showed that emotional intelligence strongly impacted teachers' work engagement and teaching for creativity. Teachers, principals, head teachers, parents, and other members of the social setup will all benefit from this study. It will raise teachers' knowledge of the importance of emotional intelligence in boosting work engagement and encouraging creative thinking in the classroom.

Introduction

Subjectively significant events in a person's life trigger complex psycho-physiological processes called emotions (Eisma & Stroebe, 2021). Psychologists have studied them for almost a century (Berridge, 2018). Several scholars argue that to be great teachers, inspire students, and create a conducive learning environment, teachers must regulate, analyze, and manage their emotions (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). Since the middle of the 1990s, there has been a noticeable increase in the study of teachers' emotions, which has led educators to put greater emphasis on how to employ emotional intelligence (EI) in the workplace (Maamari & Majdalani, 2019; Yin, 2012).

Emotional intelligence (EI) is described by Salovey and Mayer (1990) as the ability to recognize, manage, and transmit one's feelings and those of others. Today, EI comprises two academic concepts: ability EI and trait EI. Emotional intelligence (EI) is a sort of cognitive skill that needs the processing and recognition of emotional signals and information, according to the first paradigm, whereas the second paradigm regards EI as a personality attribute associated with proper behavior (Bar-On & Parker, 2000; Lu et al., 2016).

A high EI is associated with positive life outcomes, including forming relationships with others, understanding others' emotional states, responding to others' points of view, improving communication, and controlling behavior, according to extensive studies on EI (Miao et al., 2017). Moreover, low levels of EI are associated with a propensity for self-destructive and deviant behaviors, getting

expelled from school, and depression (Brackett et al., 2004; Curci et al., 2014; Davis & Nichols, 2016; Davis & Humphrey, 2014). The scientific literature on education also links EI and effective outcomes. Palomera et al. (2008), for instance, found that instructors with high levels of EI significantly impact instruction.

Researchers have focused on the emotional aspects and personality qualities and how they affect teacher engagement since it is thought that teachers' work engagement (WE) is a crucial problem in educational environments. A motivating notion known as "teacher work engagement" refers to instructors' voluntary allocation of their physical, cognitive, and emotional resources to various activities required by the teaching profession (Christian et al., 2011). It is a productive, long-lasting mentality (Schaufeli et al., 2002). According to Klassen et al. (2013), the three areas of teacher job involvement are cognitive-physical, emotional, and social. On occasion, each of these three domains is combined into a single higher-order interaction construct, allowing for a simultaneous or holistic experience of each (Klassen et al., 2013).

Creativity has emerged as one of the critical characteristics of today's talent in the knowledge industry (Sawyer, 2006), making curriculum and instructional innovations essential. Teaching for creativity (TfC) is a style of instruction designed to encourage pupils to think creatively or act creatively (Jeffrey & Craft, 2004; NACCCE, 1999). How to actualize TfC has become a current emphasis in research on teacher education (Beghetto et al., 2014; Starko, 2017). In addition to the apparent links between creativity and learning, several research has discovered links between creative abilities and teachers' professional growth, self-efficacy, and well-being (Chan & Yuen, 2014; Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009; Sternberg, 2010).

For instance, Collie et al. (2011), Bereczki and Kárpáti (2018), Rubenstein et al. (2018), and Collie et al. (2018) investigated the internal personal factors relating to teachers as some of the factors that influence creative teaching. They also examined teachers' involvement in educational decision-making (Chan & Yuen, 2014; Huang et al., 2021). Nevertheless, much research has not been done to examine how instructors' emotional intelligence affects their ability to educate for creativity. The results of individual investigations on the connection between teachers' emotional intelligence and creativity have produced inconsistent findings (Awwad, 2022; Ebrahimi et al., 2018; Pirkhaefi & Rafieyan, 2012). Researchers in the realm of teacher education have found that EI improves instructional efficacy. According to Yin et al. (2019), teachers are classified as emotional workers whose emotions impact their self-efficacy, teaching effectiveness, burnout, and job satisfaction (Lavy & Eshet, 2018). EI of teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) has a considerable influence on teachers' health and students' educational outcomes (Chang, 2013; Kang, 2022), especially on the diversity of teaching pedagogies and creativity of EFL instructors (Shen, 2022). As a result, it seems reasonable to believe that teachers' EI influences creative instruction.

Research Objectives

Following were objectives of the study to:

1. Investigate relationship among teachers' emotional intelligence, work engagement and teaching for creativity at higher education level.
2. Examine the effect of teachers' emotional intelligence on work engagement and teaching for creativity at higher education level.

Relationship between emotional intelligence and Teachers' Engagement

According to studies, factors such as engagement (Perera et al., 2018; Chan et al., 2020), job satisfaction (Perera et al., 2018), work attitudes, behaviour (Carmeli, 2003), and self-esteem are associated to EI. (Lavy & Naama-Ghanayim, 2020). According to Puertas Molero et al. (2019), there is potential for EI to

predict workplace engagement because of its close association with a number of psychological well-being factors. A component of emotional intelligence called awareness and control is crucial for sustaining happy emotions (Herman, 2012). According to Dewaele et al. (2018), EI is positively correlated with significant work experiences and people's emotional commitment to their present occupations and positions. Inceoglu and Warr (2011) also discovered a correlation between engagement and emotional security, social engagement, and goal orientation. Engagement and EI were two of the six organizational energy drivers identified by Lamberti's (2010) research. The link between students' EI and academic engagement has been the subject of certain research. Martn et al. (2021) discovered a strong connection between three aspects of engagement vigor, devotion, and absorption and students' EI and self-esteem in secondary school. In addition, they discovered that the relationship between EI and engagement is moderated by self-esteem. They claimed that students' EI fosters optimism for the educational and learning environments. They said that students who can effectively manage their emotions have the drive to participate enthusiastically in academic settings. Zhoc et al. (2020) assessed EI and various types of participation in university students. According to their findings, EI is strongly linked to learners' social, emotional, and cognitive engagement. EI enhances student participation by strengthening both academic and social functioning. In their study on learner engagement, Maguire et al. (2016) controlled for demographic characteristics such as gender and age. They observed that EI is strongly linked to cognitive and emotional involvement in students.

Merida-Lopez et al. (2017) examined the relationship between EI and stress in relation to teachers' WE. They made the case that increasing EI can lessen the strain brought on by confusing information in learning contexts, which in turn improves teachers' WE. They said that while dealing with stress brought on by ambiguous duties, obligations, and tasks, instructors frequently use their emotional processing skills. The substantial association between teachers' WE and EI was confirmed by Abiodullah et al. (2020). D'Amico et al. (2020) observed that EI positively relates to WE and work satisfaction among Italian teachers. They said that emotionally effective teachers are enthusiastic and devoted to their work even when confronted with several hurdles. In their study, Sudibjo and Sutarji (2020) revealed that job satisfaction, health, and EI positively relate to educators' WE. They maintained that a joyful, emotionally intelligent, and well-adjusted employee is more productive and engaged at work.

Job satisfaction was shown to be crucial in the association between teachers' EI and WE by Butakor et al. in 2021. They argued that teachers with high EI are more likely to be happy in their careers, and this happiness is reflected in teachers' involvement in academic contexts. According to Mérida-López et al. (2019), instructors' EI can strengthen the link between self-reported stress and WE. Although EI serves as a personal resource for teachers, helping them manage the negative consequences that self-assessed stress has on their motivation at work, they claimed that it did not lessen the effects of affective demands on teachers. In a similar line, Pena et al. (2012) discovered a connection between the EI, WE, perceived stress, and life satisfaction of elementary and primary teachers. They argued that emotionally intelligent instructors experience less stress, enhancing WE and their pupils' well-being.

Another research was carried out in Pakistan; the study found that work engagement and instructors' emotional intelligence were positively associated. The findings also showed that teachers' work engagement at the secondary level was significantly impacted by their emotional intelligence. According to the study's findings, instructors should have the emotional intelligence to increase their degree of job engagement (Siddique & Rana, 2021).

Relationship between emotional intelligence and teaching for creativity

EI, the ability to recognize feelings and emotions in oneself and others, is characterized by self-control, tenacity, excitement, and the potential to motivate oneself (Goleman, 1995; Salovey & Mayer, 1997). EI has been connected to improved job performance in a number of different job roles (Lavy & Eshet, 2018; Silva & Coelho, 2019). A growing body of study has focused on the link between TfC and EI as two crucial traits in the twenty-first century. EI and creativity have been found to have a significant link in the past (Tu et al., 2020; Xu et al., 2019) in a range of populations, including students (Tu et al., 2020), salespeople (Lassk & Shepherd, 2013), eldercare nurses, and workers of software and service firms (Toyama & Mauno, 2017).

Furthermore, those with high EI have more positive emotions, mindfulness, and intrinsic drive at work, which enhances creative self-efficacy and behavior (Oldham, 2003; Schaufeli et al., 2009; Zheng et al., 2022). Yang et al. (2021) also conducted a correlation meta-analysis on 15,340 total sample characteristics in a qualitative study to illustrate the general link between EI and creativity. Those with high EI are more likely to experience positive emotions and have the ability to shift negative feelings into change-oriented mental processes, whereas persons with low EI are less able to deal with unexpected events and are more likely to experience negative emotions. Good emotions increase our ability to think and reply rapidly. Those that are joyful are more open to new experiences, more flexible and integrated in their thinking, and more creative (Fredrickson, 1998). Despite the fact that emotional intelligence has been shown to improve performance and well-being in a variety of jobs, there has been little study on teachers' emotional intelligence and teaching for creativity.

Individual investigations on teachers' EI and creativity have produced conflicting results in the realm of teacher education research. According to Pirkhaefi and Rafieyan (2012), educators with great EI and mental health are better equipped to promote their students' creativity. Ebrahimi et al. (2018) researched the association between instructors' EI, emotions, and creativity but came up short. EI is essential for the welfare of teachers. Teachers who are more adept at controlling their emotions report more work satisfaction, having a positive influence, and being less likely to burn out (Latif et al., 2017; Turner & Stough, 2020).

According to previous research, a number of teaching-related factors, including enjoyment in the classroom, beliefs about teacher efficacy (Uzuntiryaki-Kondakci et al., 2022), the relationship between teachers and students (Becker et al., 2014), burnout, and engagement, are all significantly and favorably correlated with teachers' EI (Garrido & Pacheco, 2012; Yin et al., 2019). A teacher's EI significantly impacts the teaching and learning process, and it has been demonstrated that teacher EI affects students' engagement (Corcoran & Tormey, 2013). The success and performance of students are significantly impacted by the emotions of teachers (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2019; Shen, 2022; Wang et al., 2021). More people are becoming aware of the importance of instructors' emotions and their capacity to control their emotions for teaching.

Prior study has found a substantial link between instructors' EI and pupils' learning. Teachers with high EI may immediately establish a pleasant learning environment in the classroom, making the course more engaging and entertaining (Miri & Pishghadam, 2021). This is a prerequisite for the development of TfC. Additionally, educators' emotions when teaching, as well as their emotional interactions with students, colleagues, managers, and others, directly impact the innovativeness of their teaching strategies, which influences how well their students express themselves and accomplish. Huang et al. (2021) employed a quantitative study to show that teaching for creativity benefits from the enthusiasm of the instructor, an important intrinsic component.

Emotional Intelligence, Teachers' Engagement and Teaching for Creativity

Experts from several domains have shown a link between EI and WE. WE, as defined by Schufeli et al. (2002) is a positive motivating framework for work that includes absorption, commitment, and energy. This is a critical topic in positive psychology (Mills et al., 2013). WE and personal assets have a good relationship (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). EI has been found as a distinct personal resource that predicts WE (Pena et al., 2012; Mérida-López & Extremera, 2020; Zhu et al., 2015). According to a recent study, persons with high EI may detect the emotions of others around them and develop coping methods to regulate their own and others' emotions. Consequently, they maintain a positive outlook and foster a positive work environment, increasing work vigor, resolve, and dedication (Extremera et al., 2012; Bakker et al., 2014; Fu et al., 2021). EI is one of the most important job-related characteristics for teachers' occupational health, well-being, and WE, according to Hakanen et al. (2006) and Mérida-López et al. (2013). The EI of instructors influences students' academic performance and engagement (Carmona-Halty et al., 2021). Because to the strong emotional demands of their employment, teachers' EI directly affects their WE (Bakker & Bal, 2010).

Second, studies in various disciplines have focused on the function of WE as a mediator in the interaction between EI and creativity in various groups, including employees and nurses who care for the elderly (Carmeli et al., 2014). They performed a study of three organizations' workers. High levels of EI are associated with high levels of generosity, and generosity at work generates energy, which promotes a person's creativity. Moreover, Toyama and Mauno (2017) discovered that EI could increase nurses' WE, which in turn promotes creativity. The idea that creativity is affected by emotions and EI is backed by studies and ideas from a range of domains.

Finally, while research on teacher education has not paid much attention to the influence of teachers' WE on TfC, it is possible to establish a clear link between the two based on research on this issue in other domains and the concept of teachers' good mood. According to research from several fields, a pleasant working attitude marked by vigor, concentration, and devotion might increase creativity (Schaufeli et al., 2009). For example, they noticed that employees who are more engaged in their jobs give inventive solutions and are more sensitive to a problem (Asif et al., 2019). Positive emotions encourage individuals to be open to learning and trying new things, which raises cognitive frontiers and, in turn, enhances WE, both of which can improve creativity (De Dreu et al., 2008; Friedman & Förster, 2010). In the sphere of education, there is a dearth of research on the connection between EI and creative instruction, and the conclusions of different studies vary greatly. Also, it is unclear how WE and teaching for creativity connect to instructors' EI. The lack of research on EI and creativity, as highlighted by Furnham (2016), makes this study vital.

Methodology

Research Design

To perform the study, the researcher used the positivist paradigm. The research was quantitative, correlational, and non-experimental in character (Sajjad et al., 2022; Siddique, 2020; Siddique et al., 2022(Shahzad & Lodhi, 2023). The association between EI, WE, and TfC of university professors was investigated using the descriptive research approach.

Population, Sample and Sampling

The total number of elements from which sample were selected are called population, this is basically group of the person which used the specific group for the purpose of data collection (Siddique et al., 2021; Siddique et al., 2023; Siddique et al., 2021). On the other hand side, a sample was a sub-group of the population and is a specific set of subjects that is selected through specially prescribed designed

techniques (Akhter et al., 2021; Akhter et al., 2021; Ali et al., 2021; Azeem et al., 2021; Faiz et al., 2021; Jabeen et al., 2022; Kanwal et al., 2022; Lakhan et al., 2020; Mah Jabeen et al., 2021; Munir et al., 2021; Saeed et al., 2021). Data were gathered using a survey method. All teaching faculty at public universities in Punjab, Pakistan, were included in the population. Punjab had 13 general public universities. A two-stage random sampling method was used. Half of the public universities were initially picked from a pool of 13 institutions. In this method, seven public institutions were chosen. There are 5050 teaching staff members in public universities. In the second phase, 480 university lecturers were chosen randomly from the first. Frankle and Wallen (2012) suggested increasing the sample size in research investigations. If the population exceeds 5,000, a final sample of 400 or more may be acquired in terms of time and money (Gay et al., 2011). The researcher personally visited institutions in Lahore, whereas data from other universities were collected through various methods of contact, such as online. The instrument response rate was 84% (n =405).

Research Instruments

Data was collected from selected respondents using three self-report measures, which were research tools used in the Pakistani setting (Bibi, 2021; Siddique, 2020; Siddique, 2020; Siddique, 2021; Siddique, 2022). The first test was the "Emotional Quotient Inventory Short form" by (Bar-On, 2002), which used a 5-point Likert scale to assess teachers' EI levels. It consisted of six factors: intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, adaptability, self-motivation, and positive impression, and had a Cronbach alpha value of.92. The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), developed by Schaufeli and Bakker in 2004, was the second tool used to evaluate teachers' levels of WE. The UWES contained three sub-variables: vigor, dedication, and absorption, as well as an alpha value of.87. Last but not least, the researchers used a 9-item measure developed by Huang and colleagues to gauge instructors' views about encouraging creativity in their classrooms (Huang & Lee, 2015; Huang, 2021). The two dimensions of this scale were product-oriented and process-oriented. Data was gathered through mail communication and in-person visits to universities. Inferential statistical analysis techniques such as Pearson r and linear regression were used to evaluate the acquired data.

Data Analysis

Table 1 Correlation between Teachers' EI and WE

Variables	n	r-value	Sig.
Emotional Intelligence & Work Engagement	405	.845**	.000

** p < .001 (2-tailed)

Table 1 demonstrated a substantial association between EI and teachers' WE (r =.845**, n = 405, p.001). The link between total teachers' EI and WE was shown to be favorable and statistically significant.

Table 2 Correlation between Teachers' EI and TfC

Variables	n	r-value	Sig.
Emotional Intelligence & Teaching for Creativity	405	.876**	.000

** p < .001 (2-tailed)

Table 2 demonstrated a substantial association between teachers' EI and TfC (r =.876**, n = 405, p.001). It was discovered that there was a favorable and statistically significant association between overall teachers' EI and TfC.

Table 3 Correlation between Teachers' WE and TfC

Variables	n	r-value	Sig.
Work Engagement & Teaching for Creativity	405	.889**	.000

** p < .001 (2-tailed)

Table 3 showed a significant link between teachers' WE and TfC (r =.889**, n = 405, p .001). It was shown that there was a high and favorable association between WE and TfC.

Table 4 Effect of EI on WE

Variables	B	t-value	Sig.	Model R Square
Emotional Intelligence & Work Engagement	.845	31.699	.001	.713

The R^2 value (.713) of the linear regression findings described the variation in the dependent variable attributable to the independent variable in Table 4. In this scenario, EI accounts for 71.3 percent of the variation in teachers' WE. With a p-value of.001, the beta value (.845) was significant. The findings revealed that EI in university professors substantially impacted WE, with a **β** value of.845 at p =.001.

Table 5 Effect of Teachers' EI and TfC

Variables	B	t-value	Sig.	Model R Square
Emotional Intelligence & Teaching for Creativity	.876	36.400	.001	.766

The R^2 value (.766) of the linear regression findings described the variation in the dependent variable attributable to the independent variable in table 5. In this situation, EI accounts for 76.6 percent of the variation in TfC. With a p-value of .001, the beta value (.876) was significant. The findings revealed that EI of university professors had a substantial impact on TfC, with a **β** value of.876 at p =.001.

Table 6 Effect of Teachers' WE on TfC

Variables	B	t-value	Sig.	Model R Square
Work Engagement & Teaching for Creativity	.889	38.957	.001	.790

The R^2 value (.790) of the linear regression findings described the variation in the dependent variable attributable to the independent variable in Table 6. The variance in TfC, in this case, is (79.0%) attributed to EI. With a p-value of.001, the beta value (.889) was significant. The findings revealed that the EI of

university professors had a substantial impact on TfC, with a **β** value of.889 at p =.001.

Discussion and Conclusion

It has been established that EI, WE, and TfC are all positively connected. The results of this study support previous findings (Butakor et al., 2021; Constandin & Brate, 2015; Fu et al., 2021; Kabar & Gunes, 2017; Mérida-López & Extremera, 2020; Sezen-Gultekin et al., 2021) that EI positively predicts WE. In the study, we discovered a positive correlation between the EI of the teachers and their support of creativity. According to some studies, having a high EI makes sustaining a high degree of pleasure easier, exploring new ideas over time and boosting creativity. First, the results demonstrate a positive association between EI and WE, which supports previous findings. Since it creates a satisfying affective and emotional sense of accomplishment, WE are a crucial positive experience for teachers' work. From the standpoint of their own emotional processes, we claimed that EI, or the capacity to manage one's own and other people's emotions, aids teachers in developing a positive affective-emotional sense (Mayer et al., 2008). As a result, teachers can sustain higher levels of positive affect (PA), characterized as a feeling of boundless energy, complete focus, and joyful involvement. We believe that emotionally intelligent individuals, both students, and employees, are better equipped to gauge and comprehend the emotions of others (Carmona-Halty et al., 2021; Huang et al., 2021). High EI allows instructors to demonstrate devotion, compassion, and other behaviors in suitable situations to establish interpersonal relationships and vitality, supporting WE.

Second, this research shows how instructors' EI affects TfC. TfC urges instructors to give students opportunities to engage in creative endeavors and to support them in finding innovative ways to incorporate learning into their daily lives. TfC also includes assisting students in developing their creative learning capacity. Some studies have discovered a relationship between emotions and learning (Mortiboys, 2005; Rogers, 1983; Salovey & Mayer, 1997). According to Guys Claxton, learning is essentially an emotional business (Claxton, 1999, p. 15). As a result, TfC and teacher professional development both urge for more EI. Teachers' EI, subject knowledge, and teaching tactics are all intertwined. They are also more willing to explore new teaching techniques, advance their professional skills, and learn more about their topic. Previous studies (Hao et al., 2016; Thorley, 2018) have shown that creative cognition and behavior constantly consider new ideas. This is especially valid for TfC, which emphasizes processes (Huang, 2021). When confronted with unanticipated events, someone with a high EI may also be more adaptive and flexible (Messmann & Mulder, 2015).

For instance, Higher EI teachers are more adaptable and open to changing their lesson plans in response to their pupils' many unexpected and different points of view. On the other hand, teachers with high EI are better able to recognize and manage the emotions of others, which makes it simpler for them to collaborate with school administrators and others to foster a creative atmosphere (Fu et al., 2021; Huang, 2021). According to Ylmaz & Ylmaz (2022), a strong sense of community enhances students' behavioral involvement in learning, which also aids in the realization of TfC. Therefore, EI and TfC are closely related, regardless of the resources or external factors teachers may possess. Emotional management and innovative teaching techniques may also be taught in teacher education programs in order to generate pre-service teachers with a creative spirit and positive emotions.

High-scoring educators are tremendously dedicated to their jobs. On the other hand, instructors who are enthusiastic, committed, and focused at work do better in terms of controlling their emotions at work. Emotion regulation and emotional facilitation are two aspects of EI that, in accordance with the theory guiding affective information processing, may both have a beneficial effect and motivate instructors to take an increased interest in their

line of work. Teachers skilled at controlling their emotions can better foster a culture of inspiration, fulfillment, and attention at work. When this happens, instructors with high EI are more adept at influencing their pupils' emotions, enhancing emotional engagement, pleasure, and motivation while encouraging innovative student learning (Ylmaz, 2022). Employees may use emotional facilitation to capitalize on this positive attitude in order to transform inventive ideas into innovative actions and promote workplace creativity (Parke et al., 2015). High WE increase instructors' enthusiasm for their jobs and devotion to educate pupils, who are encouraged to develop their own abilities and creative potential by utilizing not just the fundamentals of teaching but also cutting-edge approaches and subject matter (Fu et al., 2021). Prior research has shown that increased WE input enhances instructors' TfC considerably. Time for Change will benefit as instructors grow more devoted to their jobs, feeling proud of them and immersing themselves in them (Xiong et al., 2019).

Recommendations

As it was hard to get data from every segment of the population, there are certain restrictions on how research may be conducted. The Punjab province served as the focus of this study. The researcher employed the two-stage simple random sampling method to accomplish this investigation. Three adopted research instruments were employed to acquire the data. Several sampling procedures may be employed to obtain data depending on the type of research, demographic, sample, and environmental context. Other research studies, including qualitative studies, experimental studies, casual-comparative studies, comparative studies, and mix-method studies, might be done because this research study was evidently quantitative in nature. Further research studies may be undertaken at levels such primary, elementary, secondary, and college levels because this study was done at the university level. Also, the research study might make use of self-structured research tools.

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