

## The Role of Emotional Intelligence on Job Satisfaction among School Teachers

<sup>1</sup>Syed Sofian Syed Salim, <sup>2</sup>Rohany Nasir, <sup>1</sup>Mohammad Aziz Shah Mohamed Arip and  
<sup>1</sup>Muhammad Bazlan Mustafa

<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychology and Counseling, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris,  
Tanjong Malim, Perak, Malaysia

<sup>2</sup>School of Psychology and Human Development, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities,  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

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**Abstract:** Without Emotional Intelligence (EI), a person can have the best training, an analytical mind and endless supply of ideas but will not make a great leader. Since, the teaching profession involves teaching, nurturing and leading, it may be assumed that EI is very important in ensuring teachers' effectiveness and job satisfaction. A total of 1200 primary and secondary school teachers from 60 schools in Malaysia participated in this research. The objective of this research was to ascertain the role of Emotional Intelligence (EI) on job satisfaction and the effect of gender on the relationship between EI and job satisfaction. A set of questionnaires containing Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI) for measuring EI and Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS) for measuring job satisfaction was used. Results of this study showed a significant positive relationship between EI and job satisfaction and no effect of gender on the relationship between the two variables.

**Key words:** Emotional Intelligence (EI), job satisfaction, emotional competence inventory, job diagnostic survey, effectiveness, Malaysia

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### INTRODUCTION

The teaching profession is extremely challenging and continuously changing. This situation forces teachers into a very hectic and busy schedule often feeling stressed out, unhappy and dissatisfied. In addition, teachers are forced to undertake certain tasks which are not intended for them. Students' performance and development are usually related to teachers' ability to teach and function effectively. Thus teachers' well being and their ability to effectively manage stress and faced challenges would ensure positive effects on students' learning and performance.

Intellectual intelligence (IQ) does not guarantee well being. In fact without Emotional Intelligence (EI), a person can have the best training, an analytical mind and endless supply of ideas but will not make a great leader (Goleman, 2001). Since, the teaching profession involves among other things, teaching, nurturing and leading, it may be assumed that EI is very important in ensuring teachers' effectiveness and job satisfaction.

Zeidner *et al.* (2004) asserted that the most widely accepted scientific definition of EI is Salovey and Mayer (1990)'s the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions to discriminate among them and to use the

information to guide one's thinking and actions. Further, Mayer and Salovey (1997) suggested that EI describes people's ability to perceive and express emotion, assimilate emotion in thought, understand and reason with emotion and regulate emotion in self and others. Everyone has different capabilities of handling and managing his emotions (Mayer and Salovey, 1993; Mayer and Geher, 1996; Mayer *et al.*, 1999, 2000; Salovey and Mayer, 1990). This capability will be the factor that determines one's level of intellectual maturity, emotional well-being and personal growth.

Therefore, individuals who are capable of using the emotional dimensions within himself and who are concern for others and is capable of controlling self-satisfaction is regarded as possessing EI. Job satisfaction is a positive attitude, an individual has toward his job (Smith *et al.*, 1969; Furnham, 1997; Mitchell and Kalb, 1982; Churchill *et al.*, 1974).

Working environment (Moriarty *et al.*, 2001) and headmaster relationships with teachers (Menon and Christou, 2002) are significant sources of job satisfaction for teachers. Other factors that are just as important contributors are relations with colleagues and students, opportunities to participate in decision making, work condition, school culture, responsibility, communication,

feedback from others and the nature of the work itself (Scott and Dinham, 2003; Chaplin, 1995). Looking at all the factors mentioned, it would seem that all the four dimensions of EI would fit in very nicely with some of those factors. Studies in Malaysia by Tan and Mohd Azhar showed a relationship between EI with job satisfaction. Elsewhere, results from a study conducted by Bar-On (1997) also showed a positive relationship between a combination of the dimensions of EI, intrapersonal relationship, interpersonal relationship, self-adaptability, stress management and overall feeling with job satisfaction. A negative relationship between EI and burnout and positive relationship between EI and job satisfaction was found by Platsidou (2010). Teachers with high EI is likely to experience greater job satisfaction (Wong *et al.*, 2010). EI was significantly and positively related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Guleryuz *et al.*, 2008). Kafetsios and Zampetakis (2008) indicated that positive and negative affect and research substantially mediate the relationship between EI and job satisfaction with positive effect exerting a stronger influence.

On the contrary by Donaldson-Feilder and Bond (2004) on 290 workers in the United Kingdom suggests that neither EI nor acceptance is associated with job satisfaction. These contrasting findings casts a little doubt on the relationship between EI and job satisfaction. Taking this point into consideration, the objective of this study was to ascertain the role of EI and the contribution of the dimensions of EI namely self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social skills on job satisfaction among the primary and secondary school teachers in Malaysia. Further, this study aimed to find out if gender had an effect on the relationship between EI and job satisfaction.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Participants and procedures:** A total of 1200 respondents were randomly selected from 60 schools (30 primary and 30 secondary schools) in three states in Malaysia, Melaka, Perak and Penang each state representing the South, middle and North zones, respectively.

**Assessment measures:** A set of questionnaires consisting of three parts was used in this study. Part one contained the demographic questionnaire for background information of the subjects which includes age, gender, academic background, ethnicity, family income and place of residence. Part two contained Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI) developed by Boyatzis *et al.* (1999) for the measurement of EI. Finally, part three contained Job

Diagnostic Survey (JDS) developed by Hackman and Oldham (1980) used to measure job satisfaction. The ECI had a reliability of  $\alpha = 0.97$ . The reliability index for each dimension was; emotional self-identify  $\alpha = 0.84$ , emotional management  $\alpha = 0.86$ , social competence,  $\alpha = 0.86$  and social skills  $\alpha = 0.93$ . Meanwhile, the JDS had a reliability for job characteristics; job control  $\alpha = 0.45$ , the importance of work  $\alpha = 0.59$  and the coefficient skills diversity  $\alpha = 0.62$ . Accordingly the reliability value of job satisfaction and social relations as a whole was  $\alpha = 0.66$ .

**Analysis:** The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, multiple regression and two-way ANOVA.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The mean, median, mode, standard deviation and minimum and maximum scores for EI and job satisfaction are shown in Table 1. The analysis reveals that the data obtained is close to the normal distribution. Table 2 shows the frequencies and percentages of the level of EI by gender.

A majority of participants or 53.4% had a moderate level, 46.3% had a high level while only 0.3% had a low level of EI. In terms of gender 55.2% of male teachers compared to 40.8% female teachers had a high level of EI. A majority of female teachers or 59.2% had a moderate level of EI while none of the female teachers were at the lowest level of EI. As for the male teachers, 44.1% had a moderate level of EI while 0.7% was at the lowest level of EI. Table 3 shows a distribution of frequencies and percentages of job satisfaction based on gender. Job satisfaction was divided into three categories, low (a score of 17-39), moderate (a score of 40-62) and high (a score of 63-85). Table 3 shows that a majority of teachers or 95.1% were at a moderate level of job satisfaction.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for EI and job satisfaction

Variables	M	Median	Mode	SD	Minimum	Maximum
EI	401.50	400	383	48.48	235	544
Job satisfaction	54.03	54	54	4.98	39	76

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution level of EI by gender

Level of EI	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male and female (%)
High	254 (55.2)	302 (40.8)	556 (46.3)
Moderate	203 (44.1)	438 (59.2)	641 (53.4)
Low	3 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	3 (0.3)

Table 3: Frequency and percentage distribution of the level of job satisfaction by gender

Job satisfaction level	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male and female (%)
High	29 (6.3)	29 (3.9)	58 (4.8)
Moderate	431 (93.7)	710 (96.0)	1141 (95.1)
Low	0 (0.0)	1 (0.1)	1 (0.1)

Table 4: Relationship between EI and job satisfaction

Variables	r
EI	-
Job satisfaction	0.328*

\*p<0.01

Table 5: A summary of multiple regression analysis of the four dimensions of EI with job satisfaction

Dimension of EI	Job satisfaction	
	$\beta$	t
Self-emotion	0.246	3.658***
Self-management	0.136	1.900
Social awareness	-0.058	-0.923
Social skills	0.027	0.346
R	0.341	
F	39.353***	

\*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01; \*\*\*p<0.001

Meanwhile, 4.8% were at the highest level of job satisfaction and only 0.1% or one teacher was at the lowest level of job satisfaction. Female teachers or 96% compared to male teachers or 93.7% were at a moderate level of job satisfaction. Relationship between EI and job satisfaction is shown in Table 4.

Results of Pearson correlation analysis showed a positive and significant correlation between EI and job satisfaction among the primary and secondary school teachers,  $r = 0.328$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . Multiple regression analysis was used to ascertain the relationship and contribution of the four dimensions of EI; self emotion, self-management, social awareness and social skills on job satisfaction. The result of the analysis is shown in Table 5, the value of correlation coefficient of the four dimensions of EI on job satisfaction ( $R = 0.341$ ) is positive and significant. These findings showed that teachers in this research who were generally at the high and moderate levels of EI were satisfied with their jobs. The regression analysis of the four dimensions of EI with job satisfaction indicates that the derived regression equation is significant ( $F = 39.353$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Hence, the four dimensions of EI predict job satisfaction. Based from the beta weight for each dimension, self-emotion has a significant predictive power with job satisfaction ( $t = 3.658$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). On the contrary, the results showed no significant predictive power of the other three dimensions with job satisfaction.

Results for the interaction effect between EI and gender on job satisfaction is reflected in Table 6. The results of the two way ANOVA showed no significant interaction effect of EI with gender on job satisfaction [ $F(1,1195) = 0.997$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ]. Simultaneously, the result of two-way ANOVA analysis indicated a significant main effect between the level of EI on job satisfaction [ $F(2,1195) = 40.123$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ]. This finding shows that there are significant differences in job satisfaction between the subjects with high and moderate level of EI. However when viewed from the perspective of gender, the

Table 6: Effect of gender of EI and job satisfaction

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F
EI	2029.977	2	1014.989	40.123***
Gender	8.558	1	8.558	0.338
Interaction of EI x gender	25.214	1	25.214	0.997
Error	30229.509	1195	25.297	
Total	3543680.000	1200		

\*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01; \*\*\*p<0.001

results showed that there was no significant effect between male and female teachers on job satisfaction in the teaching profession [ $F(1,1195) = 0.338$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ].

The result shows that there was a positive significant relationship between EI and job satisfaction among the teachers in this study. This means that the higher the level of EI, the higher the job satisfaction and vice versa. This finding supports previous studies by Bar-On (1997), Guleryuz *et al.* (2008), Kafetsios and Zampetakis (2008) and Platsidou (2010). In the present study, most of the teachers or >90% had moderate and high levels of EI. EI is said to be able to influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures, clearly an important set of behaviours to harness under stressful work conditions (Bar-On, 1997). It is no wonder that the teachers in this study experience job satisfaction despite the challenges and demands of their jobs.

According to Goleman (1998a, b), individuals who have high EI are able to know and feel their own and others' emotions. These individuals are able to make better, accurate and rational decisions, produce a more realistic assessment and have high confidence in themselves. The abilities are no doubt very important in the teaching profession whereby teachers are constantly expected to make decisions based on their understanding of their students behaviors, emotions and cognitions. In addition, the ability to understand and appreciate the emotions of others in an organization is also an important aspect of EI in order to create harmony within an organization. In this contexts, one could say that this ability would help teachers in their ability to create harmony within the school.

The ability to adapt to the mood of other individuals or to empathize is also one of the characteristics of a person with high EI (Goleman, 1998a). Adaptibility and empathy will make it easier for a teacher to interact well and effectively with both teachers and students. This indicates that individuals with high EI are also those with good social skills. They can easily adapt to the working environment and find satisfaction in their research. The individuals with high EI will create a good, harmonious and conducive environment which will inturn give them satisfaction in careers that they pursue (Cherniss, 2001). The findings indicate that gender does not affect the

interaction between EI and job satisfaction. This shows that gender can not act as a moderator variable in the relationship between EI and job satisfaction. This result is consistent with the findings from studies conducted by Collins and Harpes (1974), Gilligan (1989), Brody and Hall (1993), Block (1995), Schutte *et al.* (1998) and Sutarso (1999) which showed no interaction between gender and the variables studied.

The study by Mohd Azhar is also consistent with this finding in that his study showed that the gender factor did not affect the interaction between EI with job satisfaction. Similarly, a research by Goleman (1998b) that found more similarities than differences in the EI of men and women was also in line with the present study. The results of this study also support Borg *et al.* (1991) studies. Similarly, the study by Bar-On (1997) found no difference between male and female respondents.

### CONCLUSION

The findings of the present study indicate that EI is important in terms of its relationship with job satisfaction and presumably also in influencing human behavior especially pertaining to job and careers. As such, the issue of EI and job satisfaction should be addressed in order to produce better quality teachers and students. Besides EI, there are other factors that contribute to job satisfaction such as the physical, social and spiritual working environment. A conducive working environment will make work more interesting and attractive to teachers and in turn will benefit not only teachers but also students. This will enable the teachers to be in a better position to face the daily pressures and challenges.

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