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Author post-print (accepted) deposited by Coventry University's Repository

Original citation & hyperlink:

Karakus, M, Toprak, M, Caliskan, O & Crawford, M 2024, 'Teachers' affective and physical well-being: emotional intelligence, emotional labour and implications for leadership', *International Journal of Educational Management*, vol. (In-Press), pp. (In-Press).

<https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-07-2023-0335>

DOI 10.1108/IJEM-07-2023-0335

ISSN 0951-354X

Publisher: Emerald

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Teachers' affective and physical wellbeing: emotional intelligence, emotional labour and implications for leadership

Citation: Karakus, M., Toprak, M., Caliskan, O., Crawford, M. (2024). Teachers' affective and physical wellbeing: emotional intelligence, emotional labour and implications for leadership. *International Journal of Educational Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-07-2023-0335>

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Abstract

Purpose

This study aims to examine the role of teachers' emotional intelligence (EI) and emotional labour (EL) strategies in their affective and physical wellbeing.

Design/methodology/approach

The quantitative data was collected from 436 primary school teachers. Likert-type scales were used to measure the variables. Confirmatory factor analyses were performed for the construct validity of the scales, and path analysis was used to test the hypothesised model.

Findings

The final structural equation model suggests that teachers' EI levels and display of appropriate EL strategies significantly reduce their stress, anxiety, burnout, and psychosomatic complaints (PSCs). The final model shows that the deep acting strategy, which includes more adaptive emotion regulation strategies, improves teachers' affective and physical wellbeing, while the surface acting strategy has a detrimental effect on their wellbeing.

Originality

To the best of the authors' knowledge, this study is the first in the literature to highlight the importance of school teachers' emotional intelligence and emotional labor strategies in managing stress, anxiety, burnout (affective wellbeing), and alleviating psychosomatic complaints (physical wellbeing) within a single structural equation model. The findings have implications for educational leaders in fostering teachers' emotional competencies and resources.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, emotional labour, deep acting, surface acting, affective wellbeing, stress, anxiety, burnout, psychosomatic complaints.

Introduction

Teaching has become more physically and emotionally demanding, particularly with the introduction of accountability schemes that oblige teachers to do more with limited resources and support. The current context of schools produces various stressors that affect teachers' health and weaken their affective wellbeing. Stress and anxiety caused by stressful work environments (Jaradat et al., 2016) and negative work-related psychosocial factors (e.g., high demands, low control) (Elovainio et al., 2015) result in various consequences such as discontent and attrition (Harmsen et al., 2018), negative affect, burnout, depression, and absenteeism (Hascher & Waber, 2021), and physical fragility (Bauer et al., 2006; Howard et al., 2017; Takata, 2001). In particular, chronic and poorly managed stress, particularly, exposes teachers to numerous psychosomatic complaints (PSCs). These complaints emerge when "psychological stresses adversely affect physiological (somatic) functioning to the

point of distress" (Satsangi & Brugnoli, 2018, p.75). Heart disease, back pain, headaches, gastrointestinal disturbances (*physical*), loss of concentration, and poor decision-making (*psychological*) (Health and Safety Executive, 2007) are just a few examples of PSCs. These ailments are significant indicators of ill health and compromised wellbeing among teachers. Furthermore, PSCs significantly influence teachers' personal and professional lives and adversely affect their wellbeing and performance, making PSCs and strategies to prevent them a significant area of study in school leadership and management. Effective emotion management is a sustainable shield that can protect teachers from the negative effects of stress and physical ailments. Educational leaders can enable teachers to use their emotional and cognitive resources to combat stress, meaning they must constructively manage emotions by accurately perceiving, identifying, and evaluating emotional states.

Stress, anxiety, and even burnout, negative dimensions of wellbeing, have become commonplace in teachers' life, and educational environments with these negative characteristics may be detrimental to well-being, which is defined as "feelings of happiness, satisfaction, competence and enacted purpose" (Acton & Glasgow, 2015, p. 101). The resulting psychological and physiological ill-health could make teachers more fragile and restrict the allocation and effective use of their time to create a conducive environment for teaching and learning. Effective management and regulation of negative emotions could protect against prolonged stress and the resulting impairments (Ramesar et al., 2009).

Transforming school environments into collegial environments characterised by "positivity, emotion and engaging with others in ways that enliven a sense of belonging, appreciation, and meaningfulness at work" (Cherkowski et al., 2021, pp.166-167) is one of the paths for educational leaders to foster and preserve teacher wellbeing, serves as a buffer against stress, anxiety, and burnout, and prevents the development of PSCs. The other more sustainable path is to enhance teachers' emotion management capacities and ensure that teachers are self-

sufficient emotion regulators (Toprak & Savas, 2020, p.13). Since emotion management is viewed as a behaviour management tool (Toprak & Karakuş, 2020, p.179), fostering emotional capacities will ensure conscious and constructive reactions to distressing situations at schools.

The relationship between perceived work stress and PSCs has been investigated in the context of security officers (Chueh et al., 2011) and health personnel (Jaradat et al., 2016). However, little is known about the interplay between teachers' emotional intelligence (EI), emotional labour (EL), affective wellbeing, and PSCs. This study, therefore, aims to investigate the effect of teachers' EI on affective wellbeing (stress, anxiety, and burnout), and PSCs. The study also intends to examine how teachers' EL strategies mediate these effects. EI and EL strategies are essential psychological resources to help teachers manage unpleasant emotions and mitigate PSCs. The relationship between EI and intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence (Perry & Ball, 2005) and the quality of interactions is well-known (Friedman, 2014). Therefore, we argue that teachers with the ability to regulate negative emotions are more resilient and, as a result, happier and more productive. They will devote more time and cognitive and emotional resources to developing rich learning environments, fostering positive relationships with students, and managing the classroom environment (Sutton et al., 2009).

Emotional intelligence and emotional labour

Emotions are central to our relationships and affect how we see the world and how we act. Crawford (2007, p. 521) argues that emotions are the language of relationships and explains that "it is through the language and experience of emotion that we contextualise our individuality and our sense of belonging in a group." EI is a powerful language for improving our world and interactions with others. It is the capacity to understand and interpret one's and

others' emotions, transfer emotional energy to real life, and respond appropriately. It includes self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and relationship management (Goleman, 1995).

EL as a behavioural coping strategy (Yin et al., 2020) is defined as "the act of displaying the appropriate emotion" (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993, p.90). Hochschild's (1983) concept of surface acting (SA) is part of EL because it involves the suppression of emotions and denotes a mismatch between public expressions and inner feelings (Grandey, 2000). People engage in SA when their facial expressions or body posture feels "put on" (Hochschild, 1983, p. 36) and when they do not change their inner feelings but fake affective displays in SA. Because SA is a suppression of emotions, it can increase perceived stress (Grandey, 2000; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993) and negative emotions (Lee et al., 2015) and cause health risks such as depression, exhaustion, and mental distress (Indregard et al., 2018).

On the other hand, deep acting (DA) involves a cognitive change in an actual emotional arousal state in response to a negative situation, altering feelings through having good thoughts, self-talk, or reappraisal of the situation (Grandey, 2000). When we change our physical expressions and inner feelings, we engage in DA (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). Individuals use various EL strategies such as reappraisal, distraction, and self-persuasion during emotional encounters (Moè & Katz, 2021; Yin et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2016), and effective use of these emotion regulation strategies affect teachers' and students' wellbeing (Moè & Katz, 2021).

Research on the role of EI on EL is mixed. Some research outside the educational context (Lee & Woo, 2017) established EI as a positive predictor of SA and a negative predictor of DA. Pervaiz et al.'s (2018) research on teachers found positive empirical links between EI and SA. Other researchers, such as Yin et al. (2020), have found that EI is a positive predictor of teachers' DA and an insignificant predictor of their SA. Strong EI helps teachers process

emotions more effectively and provides greater emotional awareness. Teachers with these capacities are more able to adjust their inner emotionality to the demands of the context. We, therefore, have developed the following hypothesis:

H1: Teachers' EI negatively predicts their SA and positively predicts their DA strategies.

Emotional intelligence, emotional labour and affective wellbeing (stress, anxiety, burnout)

Affective wellbeing is defined as the intensity and frequency of negative and positive mood states and emotions and influences individuals' competencies to use psychological resources (Luhmann et al., 2012). Job-related affective wellbeing was conceptualised by Warr et al. (2014) on two dimensions: positive affect (enthusiasm and comfort) and negative affect (stress, anxiety, burnout, and depression). Our study measured teachers' stress, anxiety, and burnout to understand their affective wellbeing. Teachers who lack rich psychological resources and feel distressed under emotional demands are more likely to develop burnout (Klusmann et al., 2008). Teachers with the required emotional competencies and who can use appropriate strategies to adapt to the emotional demands of work are less likely to experience burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). This highlights the role of EI in improving or worsening affective wellbeing. We have therefore developed the following hypothesis:

H2: EI negatively affects stress, anxiety, and burnout through the mediation effects of SA and DA.

Emotional intelligence, emotional labour, and psychosomatic complaints

The interplay between EI, EL, and PSCs in the context of teachers is uncharted territory in the context of education in particular. There is empirical evidence for adolescents suggesting no direct link between emotional awareness and somatic complaints (van der Veek et al., 2012). Andrei and Petrides (2013) underscore the protective role of the EI trait in mental and

physical health, as EI has a positive relationship with positive affect and a negative association with somatic complaints. Recent research by Soto-Rubio et al. (2020) indicates how the EI of health professionals protects them from PSCs by reducing psychosocial risks such as burnout and work stress. Given that stress, anxiety, depression, and negative affect are the leading causes of PSCs (Humaida, 2012; Smith et al., 2020), teachers with high EI could suffer less from PSCs, and teachers' EL and improved wellbeing will help alleviate PSCs. We have therefore developed the following hypothesis:

H3: EI negatively predicts PSCs through the mediation effects of EL and wellbeing.

Figure 1 below shows our hypothesised path model.

[Insert Figure 1 here]

Methodology

Participants

Data were collected from 436 primary school teachers in a medium-sized city in southeastern Anatolia. Using the cluster sampling approach, 18 urban primary schools were randomly selected, and the surveys were conducted among all 516 teachers working in those schools. 436 of them agreed to take the survey, with a response rate of 84.5%. Of the participants, 243 were male (55.7%), 193 were female (44.3%), and their mean age was 32.12 years. Ethical approval was obtained from the research ethics committee of the first author's university.

Instruments

EI was measured using the Wong and Law EI Scale (WLEIS), with four dimensions and four items in each dimension: self-emotional appraisal (SEA), others' emotional appraisal (OEA), the use of emotions (UOE), and the regulation of emotions (ROE) (Wong & Law, 2002).

Sample items include: "I really understand what I feel (SEA)", "I am a good observer of others' emotions (OEA)", "I am a self-motivated person (UOE)", and "I have good control of

my own emotions (ROE)". In their study, Wong and Law (2002) reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .86, .85, .79, and .82 for the four dimensions: SEA, UOE, ROE, and OEA.

EL was measured using Grandey's Emotional Labor Questionnaire (2003), inspired by Brotheridge and Lee (2002). There were eight items in total, five of which measured SA and three measured DA. Sample items include "I just pretend to have the emotions I need to display for my job (SA)" and "I try to actually experience the emotions that I must show (DA)". Grandey (2003) documented Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .89 and .78 for the SA and DA scales, respectively.

The four-item stress scale was developed by Karakus (2013) to measure teachers' work-related stress. Karakus (2013) recorded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .707 for the stress scale. Sample items include "I feel more relaxed after leaving school every day" and "When the holiday starts, I feel as if I am relieved of a huge burden".

The five-item anxiety scale was developed by Goldberg et al. (2006). Sample items include "I often worry about things that turn out to be unimportant" and "I get upset by unpleasant thoughts that come into my mind". Goldberg et al. (2006) documented a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .85 for the anxiety scale.

Teachers' burnout was measured using Çam's (1992) seven-item scale, drawn on the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Karakus (2013) revalidated the scale as a single-factor measure of teacher burnout with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .84. Sample items include "I feel like my work has let me down" and "I feel tired of my work".

Teachers' PSCs, as a proxy measure of physical wellbeing, were measured by a ten-point index we developed based on the most common types of psychosomatic complaints reported in the relevant literature (e.g., headaches, stomach aches, sleep problems, pain in muscles,

excessive sweating, issues in the digestive system, stomachlessness, tachycardia, powerlessness, and itchiness). 5-point Likert scales (1 = never, 5 = always) were used to measure all of these constructs (see Appendix for all the items of the instruments used in this study).

Data Analysis

A path analysis was preferred to test the hypothesised model in this study (Schumacker & Lomax, 1996). Path analysis is a powerful data analysis approach to examining the probability of causal associations among three or more variables and allows researchers to frame a theory about the probable causes of certain phenomena (Kline, 2011). The required assumption checks were done for missing data, normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity, and the data satisfied the requirements. A rigorous approach was undertaken to adhere to key assumptions of path analysis. Missing data were handled through the maximum likelihood method. The normality of variables was assessed using tests like the Shapiro-Wilk, and when violated, transformations or alternative methods were applied to ensure the appropriateness of the model. Linearity assumptions were evaluated through visual inspections and statistical tests, such as the Durbin-Watson test, ensuring the linear relationships in the path model. Homoscedasticity and multicollinearity were examined using relevant diagnostics, and adjustments were made as necessary to meet the assumptions of path analysis. Sensitivity analyses were conducted to ascertain the robustness of the model under varying conditions, contributing to the reliability and validity of the path analysis results.

Confirmatory factor analysis and reliability analysis were reported for each construct used in the study. Besides, Harman's (1967) single-factor test was performed to check if there is a common method bias issue with this cross-sectional survey. In this test, it is regarded as

an indication of a common method bias if one factor contributes to more than 50% of the total variance. The result showed that the first factor in the analysis accounts for just 18% of the total variance, meaning that common method bias did not seem to be a serious problem. The confirmatory factor analyses and path analysis results were evaluated based on the cut-off values suggested for the goodness of fit indices in the literature (Table 1).

[Insert Table 1 here]

Results

Validity and reliability of the instruments

The second-order Confirmatory Factor Analysis [CFA] results for the *EI* scale revealed an acceptable model fit to the data: $\chi^2 = 233.706$, $df = 89$, $P\text{-value} = 0.00$, Comparative Fit Index [CFI] = 0.95, Goodness of Fit Index [GFI] = 0.95, Normed Fit Index [NFI] = 0.92, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation [RMSEA] = 0.06, Standardized Root Mean Square Residual [SRMR] = 0.05, Cronbach's Alpha = .72.

The SA and DA strategies of EL were taken as separate variables in this study. The CFA results of the SA scale, consisting of five items, presented a good fit to the data: $\chi^2 = .69$, $df = 4$, $P\text{-value} = 0.95$, CFI = 1.00, GFI = 1.00, NFI = 1.00, RMSEA = 0.00, SRMR = 0.007, Cronbach's Alpha = .74. The CFA results of the DA scale, consisting of three items, yielded good fit indices: $\chi^2 = 4.46$, $df = 4$, $P\text{-value} = 0.35$, CFI = 1.00, GFI = 1.00, NFI = 0.99, RMSEA = 0.02, SRMR = 0.019, Cronbach's Alpha = .79.

The single factor stress scale, consisting of four items, showed a good fit to the data: $\chi^2 = 0.18$, $df = 1$, $P\text{-value} = 0.67$, CFI = 1.00, GFI = 1.00, NFI = 1.00, RMSEA = 0.000, SRMR = 0.003, Cronbach's Alpha = .72. The single factor anxiety scale with five items presented a good fit to the data: $\chi^2 = 4.53$, $df = 2$, $P\text{-value} = 0.10$, CFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.99, NFI = 0.99,

RMSEA = 0.05, SRMR = 0.021, Cronbach's Alpha = .83. The single factor burnout scale with seven items yielded good fit indices: $\chi^2 = 41.96$, $df = 8$, $P\text{-value} = 0.00$, $CFI = 0.98$, $GFI = 0.97$, $NFI = 0.98$, $RMSEA = 0.10$, $SRMR = 0.027$, $Cronbach's\ Alpha = .91$. The single factor PSCs index with ten items demonstrated a good fit to the data: $\chi^2 = 81.39$, $df = 27$, $P\text{-value} = 0.00$, $CFI = 0.97$, $GFI = 0.96$, $NFI = 0.96$, $RMSEA = 0.07$, $SRMR = 0.04$. $Cronbach's\ Alpha = .88$. The fit indices of the CFA results and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients above show that all scales are satisfactorily valid and reliable to use in the path analysis.

Correlation matrix and descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics and correlations are displayed in Table 2. The correlation matrix shows that the constructs have significant relationships with each other in the expected directions. The means of the constructs reveal that most teachers have high self-reported EI and prefer to use DA rather than SA strategy. In addition, most teachers reported low levels of stress, anxiety, burnout, and PSCs.

[Insert Table 2 here]

Path analyses

Figure 1 demonstrates that EI is treated as an exogenous variable while the rest of the variables are regarded as endogenous variables. The saturated model was tested with 2,000 bootstrapped samples and a 95% confidence interval. The path analysis results revealed that the saturated model demonstrated a good fit to the data $\chi^2(16) = 50,846$, $p < 0.05$, $\chi^2/df = 3.18$, $CFI = .96$, $GFI = .98$, $RMSEA = .07$ (90% CI = 0.050-0.094, $p_{close} = 0.050$), $NFI = .95$, and $SRMR = .04$.

Table 3 shows the direct, indirect and total effects for the proposed model. Although most indirect and direct paths were significant, some were insignificant. To enhance the covariance structure of the data, all the insignificant paths on the saturated model were trimmed consecutively (Kline, 2011). The trimmed model with standardised estimates is presented in Figure 2, and the direct, indirect, and total effects are displayed in Table 4. Upon the removal of insignificant paths, the trimmed model revealed an acceptable fit to the data ($\chi^2 (25) = 65,941$, $p < 0.05$, χ^2/df value = 2.64, CFI = .95, GFI = .97, RMSEA = .06 (90% CI = 0.050-0.094, $p_{close} = 0.050$), NFI = .93, and SRMR = .05).

The squared multiple correlations for the proposed and trimmed models are presented in Table 5. There are slight changes in the squared multiple correlations of only some variables when the proposed and trimmed models are compared. In the final trimmed model, EI accounted for 9 percent of the variance in SA and 10 percent in DA. EI and SA explained 5 percent of the variance in stress. EI, SA, and stress accounted for 9 percent of the variance in anxiety. EI, SA, stress, and anxiety explained 41 percent of the variance in burnout. Finally, EI, SA, DA, stress, anxiety, and burnout explained 37 percent of the variance in PSCs.

The results supported Hypothesis 1, indicating that teachers' EI negatively predicts their SA and positively predicts their DA strategies. Hypothesis 2 was partially supported. The direct paths between EI → anxiety, EI → burnout, DA → stress, DA → anxiety, SA → anxiety, and SA → burnout were insignificant. EI has a negative effect on stress both directly and through the mediation effect of SA. EI negatively predicts anxiety, through the full mediation effects of SA and stress. EI negatively predicts burnout through the full mediation effects of SA, DA, stress, and anxiety. Finally, the results confirm Hypothesis 3, suggesting that EI negatively predicts PSCs through the full mediation effects of SA, DA, stress, anxiety, and burnout. The direct paths between EI → PSCs and SA → PSCs were insignificant.

The path analysis results show that teachers with high EI are more likely to use DA and less likely to use SA. Higher EI contributes to improved affective (less stress, anxiety, and burnout) and physical (fewer PSCs) wellbeing in teachers through the use of more adaptive EL strategies (higher DA and lower SA).

[Insert Table 3 here]

[Insert Table 4 here]

[Insert Table 5 here]

[Insert Figure 2 here]

Discussion

Teaching is a relatively more emotionally loaded profession (Johnson et al., 2005), and the physical, social, and psychological challenges teachers face make them vulnerable to ill health and loss of wellbeing. This makes emotional competence highly important for teachers as this competence can help them manage these challenges and become happy and productive. Teachers' emotions, emotional display, and emotion regulation strategies are critical to their job satisfaction and wellbeing (Kinman et al., 2011). Teachers who can manage their emotions and appropriately regulate their emotional displays can more effectively cope with the setbacks at school, such as discipline problems and student misbehaviours (Becker et al., 2015; Chang, 2013).

Our results show that emotionally intelligent teachers tend to choose DA, a more adaptive emotion regulation and display strategy that would improve their affective and physical wellbeing. Emotionally intelligent teachers who use the appropriate strategies to modify their emotions at school have lower levels of stress, anxiety, burnout, and PSCs. In this context, EI can play a protective role in the wellbeing of teachers by reducing their tendency to exhibit the "SA strategy" and by adopting the "DA strategy", which would reduce their emotional

discomfort. Our results are consistent with Carmeli's (2003) finding that individuals with high EI are more skilled in managing negative feelings and using them in adaptive ways to mitigate their negative consequences.

SA appears to have a negative association with teachers' affective wellbeing, thus increasing their likelihood of developing PSCs. Teachers adopting SA, by merely changing their expressed emotions and "faking in bad faith" (Grandey, 2003, p. 87), tend to feel more emotional discomfort (emotive dissonance) and, thus, experience negative affect at work (Lavy & Eshet, 2018; Lee et al., 2016). The current results confirm previous research suggesting that SA, as a less adaptive EL strategy, can decrease teachers' sense of self-efficacy (Yin et al., 2017) and job satisfaction (Kinman et al., 2011; Yin et al., 2013) and increase their stress, anxiety and burnout levels (Kinman et al., 2011; Näring et al., 2006).

Our study also suggests that teachers who use the DA strategy experience burnout and PSCs less frequently. However, DA involves more adaptive cognitive techniques that lead to desired emotional displays (Yin et al., 2013). The results of our study corroborate the previous research suggesting that teachers' adoption of DA is associated with increased self-efficacy (Yin et al., 2017) and reduced burnout (Chang, 2013). Similarly, Chang (2013) and Becker et al. (2015) demonstrated that teachers' adaptive ways of cognitive reappraisals alleviate the draining impact of students' misbehaviours and discipline problems and, thus, reduce their burnout levels.

The conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll & Shirom, 2000) suggests that stress occurs when the psychological resources to cope with the job demands are depleted. Anxiety and burnout are experienced simultaneously through active and direct attempts at coping with stress (Hobfoll & Shirom, 2000). The current model confirms that work-related stress can increase teachers' anxiety and burnout. Emotional competencies and the corresponding EL

strategies help to preserve psychological resources in this model. Our results support the COR theory by confirming that EI (Karakus, 2013) and DA (Park et al., 2014) would help teachers conserve their psychological resources. Our study also shows that SA can deplete psychological resources (Park et al., 2014) teachers need to maintain their wellbeing.

Our study indicates an association between strong EI and a decrease in PSCs, where the mediation effects of EL and wellbeing may play a role. Put another way, EI helps teachers more effectively regulate their emotions and more effectively manage stress, anxiety, and burnout, making them less vulnerable to and less likely to experience PSCs. This finding supports the protective role of EI in physical health demonstrated by Andrei and Petrides (2013). Teachers' regulation of emotions by reinterpreting the transformation of public and private emotionality through positive self-talk appears to work well for affective and physical wellbeing. The evidence in our research also indicates that teachers' ability to regulate their inner feelings and produce more accurate emotional displays can protect them from such complaints. This finding is not surprising given that primary contributors to PSCs include stress, anxiety, depression, and negative affect (Humaida, 2012; Smith et al., 2020) and that EI coupled with EL and improved wellbeing can create better individual capacity that restricts these complaints from development.

SA acts as the mediator in the relationship between EI and stress and anxiety, while in the association between EI and burnout, both SA and DA serve as mediators. Our research confirms that the suppression of actual emotions in SA may result in stress (Grandey, 2000), negative emotions (Lee et al., 2015) and health risks (Indregard et al., 2018). This evidence also suggests how EI may boost teacher wellbeing by enhancing teachers' regulation of negative emotions and mitigating stress, anxiety, and burnout.

Limitations

Some limitations regarding the data analysis and the design of this study must be noted. *First*, data were collected through a cross-sectional survey. The cross-sectional design of this study makes it impossible to establish causal relationships between the selected variables. Other researchers can use longitudinal designs to clarify the causal relationships between the variables. *Second*, this study used self-reported quantitative tools to measure the constructs. Although Harman's single factor test indicated that the findings were not undermined by a common method variance problem, other researchers could triangulate their findings by using mixed-method design and multiple data collection tools. *Third*, the sample of the current study may not be representative, and the results may have been affected by the unique characteristics of this local group of teachers. To enhance the generalizability of the findings, we recommend that researchers collect data from a more representative sample. The proposed model can also be tested on educators working at other levels of education (i.e., preschool, secondary, and higher education).

Implications and conclusion

This research shows that emotionally competent teachers who are adept at using appropriate emotion regulation and display strategies are less vulnerable to the negative consequences of stressful events at school and, thus, have higher levels of affective and physical wellbeing. Previous research indicates that enhancement of emotion management can increase teachers' work performance (Chen, 2019) and that teachers can be trained to become more emotionally intelligent and regulate their emotions using more adaptive emotional labour strategies (Burić & Mornar, 2022; Savina et al., 2021). Therefore, to mitigate teachers' emotional discomfort and address wellbeing issues at school, it would be helpful for educational leaders to nurture teachers' emotional resources and train teachers to utilise the appropriate emotion regulation and display strategies. We argue that educational leaders are professionally and morally obligated to enhance teachers' EI competencies and abilities, which enable them to use more

adaptive EL strategies that can alleviate negative feelings and improve their well-being. We also advise that educational leaders pay special attention to strengthening teachers' emotional abilities and resources, which are critical to the effective functioning of schools. Given that teacher well-being is linked to instructional effectiveness, one of the significant ingredients of positive student outcomes, future research should focus on further understanding work conditions and specific leadership practices that emotionally empower teachers to cope with and manage demands at school.

Disclosure statement: The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

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Tables

Table 1

The cut-off values for the goodness of fit Indices

	The goodness of Fit Indices					
	X ² /df	CFI	GFI	RMSEA	NFI	SRMR
Cut-off values	< 3.0 ^a	> .90 ^b	> .95 ^c	< .06 ^b	> .90 ^c	< .08 ^b

Note. ^aKline (2011); ^bBentler and Bonett (1980); ^cSchumacker and Lomax (1996)

Table 2

Correlation matrix and descriptive statistics

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	M	SD
1. Emotional intelligence	-	-0.28**	0.43**	-0.22**	-0.19**	-0.26**	-0.16**	3.80	.52
2. Surface acting		-	-0.34**	0.14**	0.08	0.16**	0.01	3.27	.68
3. Deep acting			-	-0.04	-0.05	-0.28**	-0.19**	4.00	.61
4. Stress				-	0.30**	0.53**	0.33**	2.97	.81
5. Anxiety					-	0.39**	0.46**	2.68	.82
6. Burnout						-	0.53**	2.44	.91
7. Psychosomatic complaints							-	1.78	.72

Notes: *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01

Table 3.

Standardized direct, indirect and total effects for the proposed model

	Emotional intelligence	Surface acting	Deep acting	Stress	Anxiety	Burnout
<i>Surface acting</i>						
Direct	-0.32 **	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-
Indirect	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-0.32**	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Deep acting</i>						
Direct	0.33**	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-
Indirect	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	0.33**	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Stress</i>						
Direct	-0.17***	0.12*	0.06	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-
Indirect	-0.02	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-0.19**	0.12*	0.06	-	-	-
<i>Anxiety</i>						
Direct	-0.05	0.07	-	0.28**	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-
Indirect	-0.08*	0.03*	0.01	-	-	-
Total	-0.13**	0.10*	0.01	0.28**	-	-
<i>Burnout</i>						
Direct	0.00	0.01	-0.25**	0.44**	0.25**	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-
Indirect	-0.20**	0.08*	0.03	0.07**	-	-
Total	-0.20**	0.09	-0.22**	0.51**	0.25**	-
<i>Psychosomatic complaints</i>						
Direct	0.03	-0.07	-0.16**	0.08	0.32**	0.33**
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-
Indirect	-0.15**	0.07*	-0.06	0.26**	0.08**	-
Total	-0.12**	0.00	-0.22**	0.34**	0.40**	0.33**

Notes: *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01

Table 4.

Standardized direct, indirect and total effects for the trimmed model

	Emotional intelligence	Surface acting	Deep acting	Stress	Anxiety	Burnout
<i>Surface acting</i>						
Direct	-0.30**	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-
Indirect	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-0.30**	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Deep acting</i>						
Direct	0.31**	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-
Indirect	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	0.31**	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Stress</i>						
Direct	-0.16**	0.11*	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-
Indirect	-0.03	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-0.19**	0.11*	-	-	-	-
<i>Anxiety</i>						
Direct	-	-	-	0.30**	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-
Indirect	-0.06***	0.03	-	-	-	-
Total	-0.06***	0.03	-	0.30**	-	-
<i>Burnout</i>						
Direct	-	-	-0.25**	0.44**	0.24**	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-
Indirect	-0.18**	0.06	-	0.07**	-	-
Total	-0.18**	0.06	-0.25**	0.52**	0.24**	-
<i>Psychosomatic complaints</i>						
Direct	-	-	-0.12**	-	0.32**	0.36**
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-
Indirect	-0.12**	0.03	-0.09**	0.28**	0.09**	-
Total	-0.12**	0.03	-0.21**	0.28**	0.41**	0.36**

Notes: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table 5.

Squared multiple correlations for the proposed and trimmed models

	Surface acting	Deep acting	Stress	Anxiety	Burnout	Psychosomatic complaints
<i>Proposed model</i> <i>R²</i>	.10	.11	.05	.10	.40	.37
<i>Trimmed model</i> <i>R²</i>	.09	.10	.05	.09	.41	.37

Figures

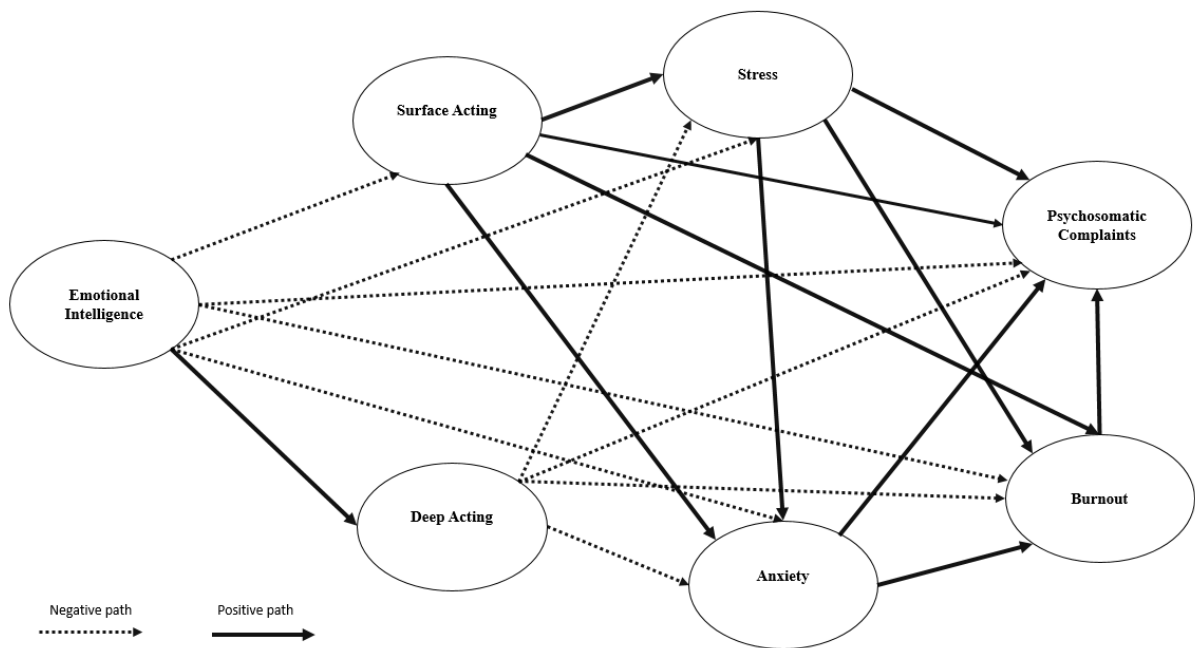


Figure 1. Hypothesized path model

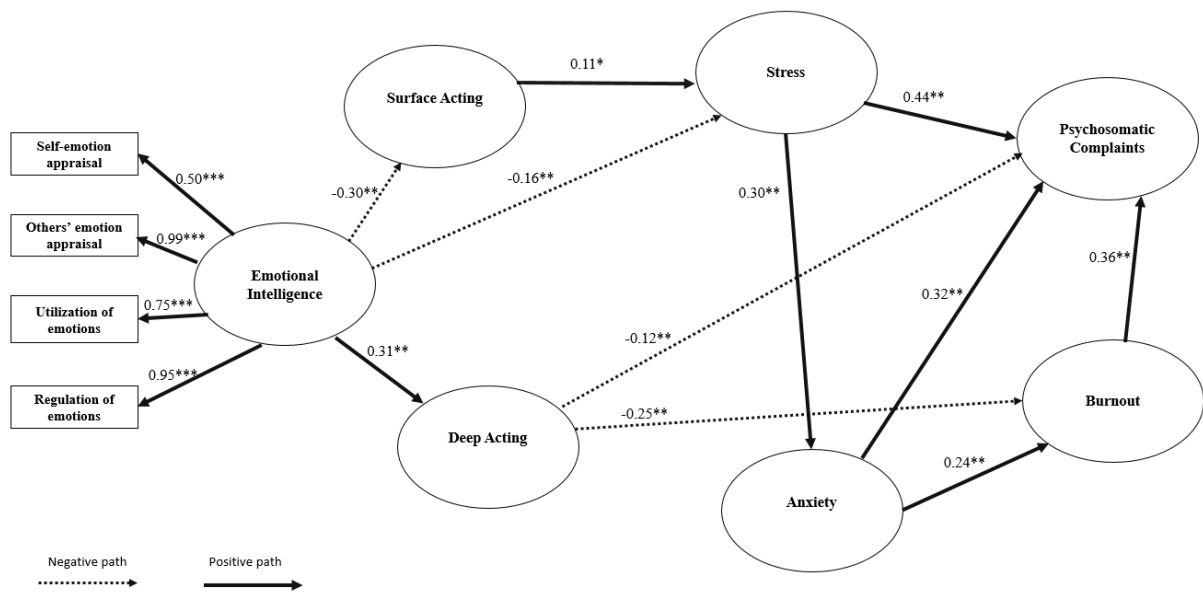


Figure 2. Standardized estimates of significant paths in the final trimmed model

Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$

APPENDIX

Descriptive Statistics of Scales and Items (Source: Authors' own work)

Dimensions	Emotional intelligence (EI)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Self-emotional appraisal (SEA)	1. I know very well the underlying causes of the emotions I feel.	4.12	.43
	2. I understand my own feelings very well.	4.23	.64
	3. I really understand what I feel.	4.25	.62
	4. I always know if I am happy or not.	4.29	.47
Others' emotional appraisal (OEA)	5. I always understand my friends' feelings from their behaviours.	3.68	.58
	6. I am a good observer of others' emotions.	3.65	.55
	7. I am very sensitive to the feelings of others.	3.75	.47
	8. I understand the feelings of people around me very well.	3.70	.51
Use of emotions (UOE)	9. I always set goals for myself and do my best to achieve them.	3.82	.40
	10. I always instil in myself that I am an adequate and capable person.	3.66	.54
	11. I am a self-motivated person.	3.86	.49
	12. I always encourage myself to do my best.	4.00	.44
Regulation of emotions (ROE)	13. I can control my anger and deal with difficulties in a rational way.	3.55	.62
	14. I have good control of my own emotions.	3.52	.58
	15. I can easily calm myself down even when I am very angry.	3.14	.48
	16. I regulate my emotions very well.	3.46	.56

Dimensions	Emotional labour (EL)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Surface acting (SA)	1. I act friendly and approachable even when I feel bad.	3.08	.56
	2. I just pretend to have the emotions I need to display for my job.	3.16	.73
	3. When dealing with students, I try not to show that I am overwhelmed.	3.73	.85
	4. I pretend in order to deal with students appropriately.	3.11	.58
Deep acting (DA)	5. I make a lot of effort to feel the emotions I have to show to others.	3.89	.64
	6. I try to actually experience the emotions that I must show.	4.24	.57
	7. I force myself to feel the emotions expected of me.	3.86	.63

Stress	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. I usually feel tense.	2.58	.91
2. I don't want to hear a single problem from anyone when I come home.	2.61	.73
3. When the holiday starts, I feel as if I am relieved of a huge burden.	3.38	.76
4. I feel more relaxed after leaving school every day.	3.36	.84

Anxiety	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. I often worry about things that turn out to be unimportant.	2.60	.74
2. I am afraid that things will get worse.	2.39	.78
3. I get upset by unpleasant thoughts that come into my mind.	2.42	.97

4. I worry that I will face bigger problems.	2.35	.85
5. I am quite relaxed and don't worry too much.	3.65	.77

Burnout	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. I feel emotionally detached from my work.	2.16	.91
2. I feel exhausted at the end of the working day.	3.02	1.09
3. I feel tired when I wake up in the morning and have to face a new working day.	2.60	.83
4. I feel that I am tired of dealing with some of my students.	2.75	.84
5. I feel tired of my work.	2.15	.95
6. I feel distressed because this job has hardened me emotionally.	2.25	.83
7. I feel like my work has let me down.	2.14	.92

Psychosomatic complaints (PSCs)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. In the cardiovascular system, I have complaints of high blood pressure, palpitations, chest tightness, etc.	1.68	.71
2. In the muscular system, I suffer from tension, muscle contraction, aches, fatigue, etc.	2.28	.62
3. In the gastrointestinal system, I have nausea, vomiting, indigestion, gas, heartburn, ulcers, etc.	2.01	.75
4. On my skin, I have complaints of itching, burning, eczema, etc.	1.45	.68
5. I have complaints of sweating, difficulty in breathing, etc.	1.55	.73
6. I have complaints of not sleeping well.	1.96	.73
7. I have complaints of dissatisfaction with my work, lack of energy, demoralization, depression, etc.	2.09	.75
8. I suffer from headaches.	2.13	.81
9. I feel that I am going to die with intense fear and discomfort.	1.39	.78
10. I suffer from sweating, tics, spasms, etc. in my hands.	1.25	.66