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## The role of emotional intelligence as a moderator in the connection between emotional labour and job satisfaction among teachers in West Bengal: A conceptual study

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### Abstract

Teachers may be viewed as emotional workers who frequently need to be sensitive to their occupation demands on their emotions. On the contrary, there has been very little detailed quantitative research on this topic. This study explores teachers' opinions of the links between emotional intelligence, emotional labour practices, and teaching satisfaction by using hierarchical regression analysis and focusing on the moderating role of emotional intelligence. Not deep acting, but relatively light surface acting and the appearance of sincere emotion are required for active jobs. Taking emotional intelligence into account, deep acting and the expression of genuinely felt emotion continue to increase instructors' satisfaction significantly with instructing. Expressing genuine emotion is more powerful emotional labour approach for teachers. Emotional intelligence is posited as a crucial moderator in this relationship, influencing how teachers manage their emotions in response to the demands of their profession. Drawing upon existing literature and theoretical models, this study proposes a conceptual framework that integrates emotional intelligence as a moderating variable, shedding light on its potential to either mitigate or exacerbate the effects of emotional labour on job satisfaction. The implications of this study lie in enhancing our understanding of the dynamics within the teaching profession, providing insights for educational institutions and policymakers to foster a more supportive and emotionally intelligent environment for teachers. Ultimately, the findings aim to contribute to the well-being and job satisfaction of teachers in West Bengal and beyond, leading to positive outcomes for both educators and students.

**Keywords:** Emotional intelligence, emotional labour strategies, surface acting, deep acting, teaching satisfaction

### Introduction

The teaching profession is exceptionally demanding and constantly evolving, leading teachers to grapple with a demanding and frenetic schedule, often resulting in stress, discontent, and dissatisfaction. Furthermore, teachers are sometimes burdened with tasks that are not within their primary responsibilities. The performance and growth of students are typically intertwined with the effectiveness of teachers in their roles. Consequently, the well-being of teachers and their capacity to skilfully handle stress and confront challenges would ultimately yield positive impacts on students' learning and achievement.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has emerged as a crucial factor influencing job satisfaction across various professions and industries. Among the workforce, school teachers hold a particularly vital role, shaping the minds and futures of the next generation. The job satisfaction of teachers not only affects their own well-being but also has profound implications for the quality of education they provide to students. As such, understanding the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and job satisfaction among school teachers is of paramount importance.

In recent years, there has been growing interest in the impact of Emotional Intelligence on workplace outcomes, including job satisfaction. EI refers to an individual's capacity to recognize, understand, manage, and effectively use their own emotions and those of others in different situations. It encompasses several dimensions, including self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills.

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Research in various fields has suggested that individuals with higher EI levels are better equipped to navigate the complexities of interpersonal relationships, cope with workplace stress, and make sound decisions – all of which are integral to job satisfaction.

However, the relationship between EI and job satisfaction is not universally agreed upon, as some studies have produced conflicting results. While some research indicates a positive correlation between EI and job satisfaction, others have found no significant association. These inconsistencies necessitate a closer examination of the role of EI in specific occupational contexts, such as the teaching profession.

This research paper aims to address this gap by investigating the influence of Emotional Intelligence on job satisfaction among school teachers. In addition to assessing the overall impact of EI, this study will delve into its individual dimensions, namely self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skills, to gain a more nuanced understanding of how each aspect contributes to teacher job satisfaction.

Possessing intellectual intelligence (IQ) alone does not ensure well-being. In reality, lacking Emotional Intelligence (EI) means a person could have top-notch training, a sharp analytical mind, and an abundance of ideas, yet still not excel as a leader (Goleman, 2001) [15]. Given that the teaching profession encompasses, among other aspects, instructing, nurturing, and leading, it can be inferred that EI plays a crucial role in guaranteeing teachers' effectiveness and job satisfaction.

### Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between emotional labour and job satisfaction.
2. To assess the level of emotional intelligence (EI) among teachers.
3. To explore the role of emotional intelligence as a moderator.
4. To identify factors influencing job satisfaction.

### Literature Review

According to Zeidner *et al.* (2004) [34], the most widely accepted scientific definition of Emotional Intelligence (EI) is provided by Salovey and Mayer (1990) [28], which refers to the ability to monitor one's own emotions and those of others, distinguish between them, and use this information to guide one's thoughts and actions. Furthermore, Mayer and Salovey (1990) [28] suggested that EI encompasses an individual's capacity to perceive and express emotions, integrate emotions into their thinking processes, comprehend and reason with emotions, and regulate emotions in both themselves and others. Each person possesses varying abilities to handle and manage their emotions (Mayer and Salovey, 1993; Mayer and Geher, 1996; Mayer *et al.*, 1999, 2000; Salovey and Mayer, 1990) [21, 20, 19, 28]. This capability becomes a determining factor in an individual's level of intellectual maturity, emotional well-being, and personal growth.

As a result, individuals who can effectively harness their own emotional aspects, demonstrate empathy towards others, and maintain self-control are considered to possess Emotional Intelligence (EI). Job satisfaction, on the other hand, refers to a favourable attitude that an individual holds towards their job (Smith *et al.*, 1969; Furnham, 1990; Mitchell and Kalb, 1982; Churchill *et al.*, 1994) [31, 11, 25, 8].

According to Moriarty *et al.* (2001) [26], the working environment and the relationships between headmasters and teachers play significant roles in determining teacher job satisfaction. Additionally, Menon and Christou (2002) [24] suggest that other equally important factors contributing to job satisfaction among teachers include interactions with colleagues and students, opportunities for involvement in decision-making, working conditions, school culture, responsibilities, communication, feedback, and the inherent nature of the work itself, as pointed out by Scott and Dinham (2003) [30] and Chaplin (1995) [6].

Considering all these factors, it becomes evident that the four dimensions of Emotional Intelligence (EI) align well with many of these aspects. In another study conducted by Bar-On (1990) [1], the results demonstrated a positive correlation between various dimensions of EI, such as intrapersonal relationships, interpersonal relationships, self-adaptability, stress management, and an overall sense of well-being with job satisfaction. Similarly, Platsidou (2010) [27] found a negative relationship between EI and burnout, while there was a positive relationship between EI and job satisfaction. Teachers possessing high EI are more likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction, as noted by Wong *et al.* (2010) [33]. Furthermore, Guleryuz *et al.* (2008) [16] established a significant and positive connection between EI and both job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Kafetsios and Zampetakis (2008) [18] indicated that the relationship between EI and job satisfaction is influenced by both positive and negative affect, with positive affect having a more pronounced impact.

However, a different perspective presented by Donaldson-Feilder and Bond in 2004 [10], based on their research involving 290 workers in the United Kingdom, suggests that neither Emotional Intelligence (EI) nor acceptance is linked to job satisfaction. These conflicting results raise some uncertainty regarding the connection between EI and job satisfaction. Given this discrepancy, the primary objective of our study was to investigate the role of EI and specifically examine how the dimensions of EI-self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skills-contribute to job satisfaction among primary and secondary school teachers in Malaysia. Additionally, we aimed to explore whether gender plays a role in influencing the relationship between EI and job satisfaction.

The findings indicate a significant and positive relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and job satisfaction among the teachers in this study. This implies that as the level of EI increases, so does job satisfaction, and conversely, as EI decreases, job satisfaction tends to decrease as well. This discovery aligns with prior research conducted by Bar-On (1990) [1], Guleryuz *et al.* (2008) [16], Kafetsios and Zampetakis (2008) [18], and Platsidou (2010) [27].

In this current study, a substantial majority of teachers, over 90%, demonstrated moderate to high levels of EI. EI is believed to play a pivotal role in one's capacity to effectively manage environmental pressures and demands, especially in high-stress work environments (Bar-On, 1990) [1]. It is therefore not surprising that the teachers in this study reported experiencing job satisfaction despite the inherent challenges and demands associated with their profession.

As per Goleman (1998a, b) [13, 14], individuals possessing high Emotional Intelligence (EI) exhibit a heightened

capacity to recognize and empathize with their own and others' emotions. This heightened emotional awareness equips them to make more astute, rational decisions, offer more accurate assessments, and exude greater self-assurance. These competencies hold substantial significance, particularly in the teaching profession, where educators are consistently called upon to make decisions rooted in their understanding of their students' behaviours, emotions, and cognitive processes. Moreover, the proficiency to empathetically grasp and value the emotions of colleagues within an organization is another vital facet of EI. This aspect plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of harmony within the organizational framework. In this context, one could posit that this ability significantly aids teachers in cultivating a harmonious and conducive learning environment within the school.

A person with high Emotional Intelligence (EI), as described by Goleman (1998a) <sup>[13]</sup>, possesses the valuable ability to attune themselves to the moods and emotions of others, showcasing adaptability and empathy. These qualities serve as cornerstones for a teacher's effective interaction with both fellow educators and students. It follows that individuals with high EI also demonstrate strong social skills, enabling them to seamlessly acclimate to their working environment and derive satisfaction from their endeavours. Furthermore, those with elevated EI levels have the capacity to cultivate a positive, harmonious, and conducive atmosphere. This, in turn, contributes to their sense of fulfilment in their chosen careers, as noted by Cherniss (2001) <sup>[7]</sup>.

### Conclusion

In this conceptual study, the potential role of Emotional Intelligence (EI) as a moderator in the relationship between Emotional Labour and Job Satisfaction among teachers in West Bengal was explored. The theoretical framework and discussions presented herein shed light on the intricate interplay between these factors. Emotional Labour, a fundamental aspect of a teacher's role, involves the management of emotions to meet professional expectations and the emotional needs of students. While it can be emotionally taxing, our examination suggests that it is pivotal to consider the influence of Emotional Intelligence. Emotional Intelligence, as a moderator, can potentially mitigate the adverse effects of Emotional Labour on Job Satisfaction. It equips teachers with the ability to recognize, understand, and manage their emotions effectively, thereby enhancing their capacity to cope with the demands of their profession and fostering a positive work environment.

In the context of West Bengal's educational landscape, where teachers face diverse challenges and emotional demands, the study suggests that cultivating Emotional Intelligence could be a valuable strategy for promoting Job Satisfaction among educators. By acknowledging the significance of EI and providing opportunities for its development, educational institutions and policymakers can contribute to the well-being and effectiveness of teachers, ultimately benefiting students and the education system as a whole.

However, it is crucial to note that this study is conceptual in nature. Empirical research is needed to validate the proposed relationships and assess the actual impact of Emotional Intelligence as a moderator in the context of teachers' Job Satisfaction in West Bengal. Such research

would provide valuable insights for the design of targeted interventions and support systems aimed at enhancing the overall quality of education in the region.

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