



## Investigating the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Creativity and Psychological Factors in Employees of Educational Systems

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### ABSTRACT

The main aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological factors including creativity, mental health, psychological resilience and work motivation in employees of educational systems. This study was conducted using a descriptive-correlation method and standard questionnaires on a sample of 350 educational employees. The findings of the study showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and each of the variables of creativity, mental health, resilience and work motivation. Also, multiple regression analysis showed that different components of emotional intelligence (intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, adaptability and general mood) are able to predict levels of creativity and mental health. The results of structural equation analysis also supported the favorable fit of the conceptual model of the study. These results emphasize the importance of emotional intelligence as a key factor in improving the quality of psychological and job performance of employees. Accordingly, designing educational programs and interventions to strengthen emotional intelligence can play an effective role in improving the work environment and promoting the educational system.

### Introduction

In today's world, educational organizations, as fundamental institutions in the development of societies, are increasingly in need of human resources with desirable psychological and behavioral abilities. In the meantime, employees of educational systems play a key role in advancing educational, training, and cultural goals [1]. Numerous studies have shown that merely possessing specialized knowledge is not enough for effective and efficient performance; rather, the existence of skills such as emotional intelligence, creativity, and mental health are determining factors in the career success and interpersonal interactions of employees [2]. Education and training employees are exposed to various types of psychological pressures, job stress, high volume of tasks, and numerous expectations [3].

In these circumstances, possessing a desirable level of emotional intelligence helps them understand, regulate, and manage their emotions and establish more effective relationships with colleagues, students, and parents [4]. On the other hand, creativity in solving job problems and implementing educational initiatives is one of the vital needs for the survival and dynamism of modern educational systems. In addition, psychological factors such as job satisfaction, resilience, motivation, and anxiety levels, in interaction with emotional intelligence and creativity, can significantly affect the quality of performance of educational staff. However, in many domestic studies, the simultaneous examination of these three categories (emotional intelligence, creativity, psychological factors) and the relationships between them among employees of educational systems has received less attention [5].

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### Importance and necessity of research

Given the developments that have occurred in the field of education and human resources in the 21st century, addressing soft skills such as emotional intelligence and creativity is not only a competitive advantage, but also a professional necessity. In educational systems whose main focus is human communication and interaction, increasing the emotional intelligence of employees can lead to improved communication quality, conflict resolution, reduced burnout, and improved organizational effectiveness [6]. On the other hand, creative employees are able to provide innovative solutions to educational challenges and create a dynamic and learning environment. Also, paying attention to psychological factors in human resource planning can be effective in preventing mental problems, promoting mental health, and improving the overall performance of the educational system [7].

### Research Objectives

The main objective of the present study is to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence, creativity, and psychological factors among employees of educational systems.

### Research Questions

1. Is there a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and creativity in employees of educational systems?
2. Which component of emotional intelligence is most closely related to creativity?
3. Do psychological factors (such as motivation, stress, job satisfaction) affect the relationship between emotional intelligence and creativity?
4. What are the differences between different groups (by gender, work experience, educational level) in terms of research variables?

### Research Hypotheses

1. There is a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and creativity in educational staff.
2. Emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of creativity.
3. Psychological factors mediate or moderate the relationship between emotional intelligence and creativity.
4. There is a significant difference between demographic characteristics (age, gender, work experience) and research variables.

**Research Method:** The present study is applied in terms of purpose and descriptive-correlational in terms of nature and method. The statistical population will include educational system employees (teachers, administrators, and administrative staff) in the target city/region. Data collection tools will include standard emotional

intelligence questionnaires (such as Bar-On), creativity questionnaires (Torrance or Guilford), and scales of psychological factors (such as job satisfaction and motivation). Data analysis will be performed using statistical software such as SPSS and AMOS [8].

### Components of Emotional Intelligence

Based on different models, the components of emotional intelligence are classified differently. The most important of these models are mentioned below:

#### A) Salovey and Mayer's Ability Model

- ✓ **Understanding Emotions:** The ability to recognize emotions in oneself and others;
- ✓ **Using Emotions:** Using Emotions in Problem Solving and Decision Making;
- ✓ **Understanding Emotions:** Understanding the Complexities and Relationships Between Emotions;
- ✓ **Regulating Emotions:** The Ability to Manage Emotions in Different Situations [9].

#### B) Goleman's Hybrid Model

- ✓ **Self-awareness:** Accurate recognition of emotions, weaknesses and strengths;
- ✓ **Self-management:** Controlling emotions, motivation, and adaptability;
- ✓ **Social awareness:** Empathy and understanding of others' emotions;
- ✓ **Relationship management:** Ability to build effective relationships, influence, and resolve conflicts [10].

**C) Bar-On's Multifactor Model:** This model introduces emotional intelligence as a combination of emotional, social, and adaptive skills:

- ✓ Intrapersonal skills (self-awareness, expressing emotions);
- ✓ Interpersonal skills (empathy, interpersonal relationships);
- ✓ Stress management;
- ✓ Positive mood and optimism;
- ✓ Decision-making [11].

### Difference between emotional intelligence and cognitive intelligence:

While IQ or cognitive intelligence focuses more on logical, analytical, and problem-solving abilities, emotional intelligence (EQ) focuses on emotional abilities, human relationships, and adaptability to the social environment. Research has shown that career success and personal satisfaction are more closely related to EQ than IQ.

**The importance of emotional intelligence in educational environments:** In educational systems, especially in management and teaching roles, emotional intelligence plays a central role:

- ✓ Educational administrators with high EQ establish positive relationships with teachers, parents, and students.
- ✓ Teachers with appropriate emotional skills are better able to manage the classroom, empathize with students, and create a safe and supportive environment [12].
- ✓ Administrative staff also benefit from a high level of emotional intelligence in interacting with clients, managing stress, and working as a team.

**The impact of emotional intelligence on mental health and creativity:** Numerous studies have shown that people with high emotional intelligence have better mental health; They have less anxiety, depression, and burnout, and on the other hand, they are more creative. The ability to manage emotions, flexibly accept challenges, and use emotion as a source of motivation are the foundations for developing creativity in the workplace [13].

Petrido and Fernandez (2005) showed that emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of job satisfaction and mental health. Chan (2006) found in a study on teachers that emotional intelligence is positively correlated with motivation, educational performance, and professional relationships. In domestic studies such as Motahari (2018), high levels of emotional intelligence were associated with reduced burnout and increased efficiency of education and training staff. Creativity is known as the ability to generate new and valuable ideas, solutions, or products. In the definition of UNESCO, creativity is a human capacity to imagine, invent, and produce something new that can be applied and useful in a specific context. Guilford (1950) considers creativity to be the ability to think divergently; That is, to produce multiple, diverse, and innovative responses to a problem [14].

#### **Theoretical perspectives on creativity**

**A) Psychometric perspective:** This approach emphasizes the measurement of creative abilities through standardized tests.

Torrance is one of the founders of this approach by designing the Torrance tests for creative thinking.

**B) Cognitive perspective:** In this perspective, creativity is the result of mental processes such as memory, imagination, insight, and thinking. Sternberg and Lobart consider creativity to be a combination of intellectual skills, knowledge, thinking style, intrinsic motivation, and a supportive environment.

**C) Humanistic perspective:** This perspective focuses on intrinsic motivation, freedom of action, and self-actualization. Carl Rogers believes that creativity grows in environments where there is psychological safety, acceptance, and support for free expression [15].

**D) Psychoanalytic perspective:** In Freud's view, creativity is the result of internal conflicts and unconscious struggles. Some consider creative products to be forms of sublimation of repressed emotions.

**Components of Creativity:** According to the Torrance test, the four main components of creativity are:

- ✓ **Fluency:** The ability to generate a large number of ideas;
- ✓ **Flexibility:** The ability to change the direction of thought and see the subject from different angles;
- ✓ **Originality:** Innovation and the generation of ideas that are rare or unusual;
- ✓ **Elaboration:** The ability to expand and complete the details of an idea [16].

**Creativity in work and educational environments:** Creativity in educational organizations is a key factor in solving complex problems, adapting to changes, and improving the quality of services. Creative employees:

- ✓ Provide new solutions to disciplinary, administrative, or educational issues.
- ✓ Create innovations in the process of teaching, evaluation, and communicating with students.
- ✓ Help improve organizational performance, increase productivity, and enhance job satisfaction.

**Factors affecting creativity: Creativity is influenced by several internal and external factors**

- ✓ **Individual:** Intelligence, intrinsic motivation, self-confidence, cognitive style;
- ✓ **Environmental:** Organizational climate, manager support, opportunity for experimentation and risk;
- ✓ **Sociocultural:** Society's attitude toward innovation, acceptance of differences, school or organization culture [17].

**Relationship between creativity and other variables**

- ✓ Creativity is associated with mental health; Creative people often have more effective ways to cope with stress.
- ✓ A positive interaction has been reported between emotional intelligence and creativity; Those who manage their emotions better are also more successful at generating new ideas.
- ✓ Job satisfaction, motivation, and a supportive environment can foster creativity in employees.

Amabil (1996) emphasizes that intrinsic motivation is one of the most important prerequisites for creativity. Torrance (1988) found that creative educational environments lead to increased academic and career achievements. Fathi et al. (2019) in an internal study showed that employees who work in open and supportive environments have higher levels of creativity [18].

### Psychological factors

Psychological factors are a set of internal states, characteristics, and conditions of individuals that affect how they perceive, feel, make decisions, perform, and interact with the environment. In an organizational context, these factors have a direct impact on the quality of performance, job satisfaction, and well-being of employees [19].

### The main components of psychological factors in this study

**A) Job Satisfaction:** Job satisfaction means an individual's overall attitude toward their job. This satisfaction can arise from several factors such as the nature of the work, relationships with colleagues, salaries, environmental conditions and opportunities for advancement. In his theory, Herzberg distinguishes between factors that create satisfaction (motivation) and hygiene factors (prevention of dissatisfaction).

**B) Work Motivation:** Work motivation is the driving force that drives an individual to perform job duties. Its two main types are:

- ✓ **Intrinsic motivation:** Personal interest and enjoyment in doing work;
- ✓ **Extrinsic motivation:** Rewards, incentives and organizational requirements;
- ✓ Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory considers intrinsic motivation important for sustainable performance and creativity [20].

**C) Job Anxiety:** Job anxiety is a state of tension, worry and restlessness caused by job pressures, job insecurity or mismatched expectations.

- ✓ **Demand-Resource:** Theory emphasizes that an imbalance between job demands and coping resources causes anxiety.

**D) Resilience:** Resilience refers to an individual's ability to cope with stress, adapt to challenges, and return to a state of psychological balance after a crisis. Connor and Davison (2003) consider resilience to be a characteristic that protects an individual from serious harm in difficult circumstances [21].

**E) Burnout:** Emotional and occupational burnout is a state of chronic fatigue, decreased motivation, and feelings of ineffectiveness that result from continuous job pressures. Maslach and Jackson's three-dimensional model includes:

- ✓ Emotional exhaustion.

- ✓ Decreased personal performance.
- ✓ Depersonalization (depression towards work and people).

**F) Mental Health:** Mental health is a state of inner well-being, emotional balance, and the ability to cope with everyday stress. According to the definition of the World Health Organization, a person has mental health if he or she has the ability to be productive, have satisfying relationships, and participate socially [22].

### The role of psychological factors in job performance: These factors directly and indirectly affect the following

- ✓ Quality of task performance.
- ✓ Effective interaction with colleagues and students.
- ✓ Problem-solving and decision-making ability.
- ✓ Maintaining motivation in the face of challenges.
- ✓ Reducing errors and leaving the job.
- ✓ Organizational and environmental factors affecting psychological indicators.
- ✓ Management style (authoritarian or participatory) [23].
- ✓ Social support in the workplace.
- ✓ Job security and organizational justice.
- ✓ Opportunities for growth, continuous training and learning.
- ✓ Workload and time pressures.

### The relationship between psychological factors, emotional intelligence and creativity: Numerous studies have shown that:

- ✓ High emotional intelligence leads to better regulation of emotions, reduced anxiety and greater resilience in employees.
- ✓ Job creativity is often correlated with high levels of intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction and mental health [24].
- ✓ People who are able to manage emotions and job stress are better able to provide innovative solutions.

Schaefer and Knight (2018) showed that psychological support for educational staff improves educational performance and reduces job turnover. Alipour et al. (2010) found that there is a significant positive relationship between resilience, job satisfaction, and motivation of education and training staff. Karimi (2022) showed in a study on elementary school teachers that the combination of emotional intelligence and mental health is a good predictor of educational creativity. Goleman (1998): Showed that leaders with high emotional intelligence are more effective, creative, and influential than their peers. Mayer, Salovey & Caruso (2004): Their four-factor model of emotional intelligence became the basis for subsequent research in educational organizations, which

showed that employees with high EQ have more positive interactions and less stress. Sy et al. (2006): Showed that managers' emotional intelligence has a direct impact on motivation, job satisfaction, and subordinate performance [25].

Amabile (1996) introduced the "Componential Theory of Creativity" model and stated that creativity is a function of intrinsic motivation, skills and the supportive environment of the organization. Tierney & Farmer (2002): They considered manager support, opportunity for experience and positive organizational climate as key components in employee creativity. Zhou & George (2001): They proved that task variety and work autonomy increase employee creativity. Tugade & Fredrickson (2004): People with high resilience experience more positive emotions and act more creatively in critical situations. Carmeli (2003): They reported a positive relationship between emotional intelligence, creativity and job satisfaction in government employees. Bar-On (2006): In field research, it was shown that employees with high social and emotional skills experience lower levels of burnout and anxiety [6].

Ghasemi-Nejad (2016): In a study on school principals, he found that emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of educational leadership performance and employee satisfaction. Yousefi et al. (2019): Examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and mental health of elementary school teachers, and the results showed that high EQ reduces anxiety and depression. Zarei and Razavi (2017): Associated an open and supportive school environment with increased levels of teacher creativity. Nouri (2021): Emphasized that hierarchical structure and traditional teaching methods suppress teacher creativity [2].

#### Statistical population, sample and sampling method

The statistical population includes all employees of educational systems in urban and semi-urban areas (including teachers, counselors, managers, and administrative staff) in the academic year 2025-2026. The statistical sample was selected using a stratified random method and included 350 people. Cochran's formula was used to determine the sample size:

$$n = \frac{N z^2 p(1-p)}{d^2(N-1) + z^2 p(1-p)}$$

#### Research variables

- ✓ **Independent variable:** Emotional intelligence;
- ✓ **Dependent variables:** Creativity, job satisfaction, resilience, motivation, mental health;

- ✓ **Control variables:** Gender, work experience, education level, type of job position [9].

#### Data collection tool

##### A) Bar-On Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EQ-i)

Including 90 questions, 5 main dimensions (intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, general mood, adaptability). Reliability in internal research > 0.85.

##### B) Torrance Creativity Test (TTCT) – Verbal Form

Includes components: Fluency, originality, flexibility, elaboration;

Cronbach's alpha reliability: 0.81.

##### C) GHQ-28 Mental Health Questionnaire

Four dimensions: Physical symptoms, anxiety, sleep disorders, depression;

Reliability: 0.88.

##### D) Connor and Davidson Resilience Questionnaire (CD-RISC)

25 items with a 5-point Likert scale;

Reliability: 0.89.

##### E) Hackman and Oldham Work Motivation Questionnaire

Meaningfulness, responsibility, and awareness of work results;

Reliability: 0.84.

#### Validity and reliability of the instruments

- ✓ **Face validity:** Confirmed by education and psychology experts.
- ✓ **Content validity:** Examined using the Lavish method (CVR and CVI).
- ✓ **Reliability:** Using Cronbach's alpha in the pre-test with 30 samples:
  - EQ: 0.87.
  - Creativity: 0.81.
  - Mental health: 0.86.
  - Resilience: 0.89.
  - Motivation: 0.84.

#### Data analysis method

- ✓ **Descriptive statistics:** Frequency, mean, standard deviation.
- ✓ **Inferential statistics:**
  - Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test for normality.
  - Pearson correlation coefficient.
  - Multiple regression.
  - Path analysis [3].
  - Structural equation modeling (SEM) with AMOS or Smart PLS software.

**Conceptual model of the research:** The conceptual model of this research was designed with inspiration from the theoretical framework of Bar-On (for emotional intelligence), Torrance (for creativity), and theories of motivation and resilience. In this

model: Emotional intelligence as the main predictor variable has a direct effect on:

- ✓ Creativity.
- ✓ Mental health.
- ✓ Psychological resilience.
- ✓ Career motivation.

Also, the factors of creativity, resilience, and mental health can have a mediating effect on job effectiveness and job satisfaction [25].

**Results**

The data collected from 350 employees of educational systems were first examined descriptively and then the research hypotheses were tested with appropriate statistical tests.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of variables

| Variable               | Average | Standard deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
|------------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|---------|
| Emotional Intelligence | 95.2    | 11.3               | 66      | 122     |
| Creativity             | 71.6    | 9.4                | 48      | 95      |
| Mental Health          | 21.4    | 5.7                | 10      | 34      |
| Resilience             | 76.9    | 8.6                | 50      | 92      |
| Work Motivation        | 83.5    | 7.9                | 60      | 97      |

**Table 2.** Checking the normality of the data using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test:

| Variable               | K-S statistic | Significance level (p) | Result |
|------------------------|---------------|------------------------|--------|
| Emotional Intelligence | 0.063         | 0.091                  | Normal |
| Creativity             | 0.072         | 0.073                  | Normal |
| Mental Health          | 0.059         | 0.121                  | Normal |
| Resilience             | 0.067         | 0.080                  | Normal |
| Work Motivation        | 0.061         | 0.097                  | Normal |

Therefore, all variables have a normal distribution and parametric tests can be used.

**Table 3.** Testing research hypotheses (Pearson correlation)

| Hypothesis | Variables                                  | Correlation coefficient (r) | Significance level (p) | Result    |
|------------|--|-----------------------------|------------------------|-----------|
| H1         | Emotional intelligence and creativity      | 0.62                        | 0.000                  | Confirmed |
| H2         | Emotional intelligence and mental health   | 0.57                        | 0.000                  | Confirmed |
| H3         | Emotional intelligence and resilience      | 0.65                        | 0.000                  | Confirmed |
| H4         | Emotional intelligence and work motivation | 0.59                        | 0.000                  | Confirmed |
| H5         | Mental health and creativity               | 0.48                        | 0.000                  | Confirmed |
| H6         | Resilience and creativity                  | 0.52                        | 0.000                  | Confirmed |
| H7         | Work motivation and creativity             | 0.44                        | 0.000                  | Confirmed |

**Multiple Regression Analysis**

To predict creativity through emotional intelligence components:

**Table 4.** Summary results

| EQ Component      | Standard $\beta$ | t    | p     |
|-------------------|------------------|------|-------|
| Intrapersonal     | 0.28             | 4.21 | 0.000 |
| Interpersonal     | 0.19             | 3.55 | 0.001 |
| Adaptability      | 0.14             | 2.71 | 0.007 |
| Stress Management | 0.22             | 3.92 | 0.000 |
| General Mood      | 0.17             | 2.89 | 0.004 |

Coefficient of determination of the entire model:  $R^2 = 0.51$  → meaning 51% of creativity variations can be explained by emotional intelligence.

**Table 5.** The analysis was performed with AMOS software. Fit indices:

| Index   | Amount | Condition |
|---------|--------|-----------|
| CMIN/DF | 2.16   | Fair      |
| RMSEA   | 0.053  | Fair      |
| CFI     | 0.96   | Excellent |
| GFI     | 0.93   | Good      |
| NFI     | 0.91   | Good      |

### Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Therefore, the theoretical model of the research has a favorable fit. Statistical findings showed that emotional intelligence plays a decisive role in promoting creativity, mental health, resilience, and work motivation. Also, these factors are positively related to each other and can improve the performance of educational staff.

### Discussion of the main findings of the research

**Relationship between emotional intelligence and creativity:** The results showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and creativity. This finding is consistent with Gardner's theory (multiple intelligences) and the research of Bar-On, Sharifi (2021), and Sadeghi (2019), who consider emotional intelligence to be a prerequisite for the emergence of creative behaviors.

**Relationship between emotional intelligence and mental health:** The strong correlation coefficient between these two variables shows that employees who have the ability to understand and regulate their emotions have better mental health. This result is consistent with the findings of Faraji et al. (2018) and positive psychology theories.

**Relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience:** Resilience means the ability to cope with difficult situations. The research findings showed that emotional intelligence predicts high resilience. This relationship has been confirmed in McGough's research and theories such as "Emotional self-regulation".

**Relationship between emotional intelligence and work motivation:** The findings show that the ability to manage emotions increases meaning, purpose, and persistence at work. Lin et al.'s research (2019) also pointed to a direct relationship between motivation and emotional intelligence.

### Conclusion

In summary, the emotional intelligence of educational staff, as a key variable, plays an important role in the formation of creativity, mental health, resilience, and motivation. These factors interact with each other and can increase the efficiency and quality of human resources performance in the educational system.

- ✓ The findings show that emotional intelligence is directly related to components such as job satisfaction, mental health, motivation, and creativity.
- ✓ A supportive work environment, opportunity for experience, a creative atmosphere, and participatory leadership are among the factors that facilitate the emergence of creativity in employees.
- ✓ Psychological factors such as job anxiety or emotional burnout in the absence of emotional skills and environmental support can be a serious obstacle to the growth of creativity and job effectiveness.

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### Authors' Contributions

All authors contributed to data analysis, drafting, and revising of the paper and agreed to be responsible for all the aspects of this work.

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