

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINCIPAL'S EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND TEACHER'S ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

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ABSTRACT: *The rapid transformation in the educational process in the State of Kuwait necessitates a comprehensive analysis of variables that influence it, which is the focus of this study. This study investigated the correlation between a principal's emotional intelligence (PEI) and a teacher's organizational commitment (TOC). The study was conducted using a cross-sectional correlational research design. The research sample comprises 514 teachers employed in public elementary schools in the State of Kuwait. The data collection tool consists of the ECI 2.0 scale for assessing PEI, and the Meyer and Allen (1997) scale for assessing TOC. The internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. Preliminary data screening and linear regression assumption tests were performed before the main analyses. The level of PEI and TOC was estimated using descriptive statistics. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed to assess the causal relationship between PEI and TOC. The results indicate that PEI and TOC levels were high, and the correlation between PEI and TOC is significant. Based on the results, it is important to enhance PEI, due to its positive influence on TOC in Kuwait elementary schools. Further research within the same field is necessary to back up the findings of this study, and more investigation is required regarding the same relationship in middle and high schools to obtain more comprehensive insights.*

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Organizational commitment, Elementary schools

1. INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of education is to provide individuals with the skills necessary to fulfill the increasing societal demands and contribute to national advancement [1]. So, the current teaching environment is characterized by a series of ongoing and enduring government policy reforms that have altered the parameters and requirements of teachers' jobs [2, 3]. Consequently, there has been an increasing demand for effective educational leadership in schools [4]. Teachers have a vital role in improving school performance by acting as catalysts for delivering education of the highest standard [5]. Several scholars suggest that a committed teacher serves as a reliable measure of successful educational institutions [6, 7, 8]. Teachers who demonstrate commitment to their job develop strong connections with students, which in turn contribute to the creation of a favorable environment for learning [9]. While teachers play a crucial role in establishing a conducive educational atmosphere, the school's principal is the key figure accountable for making this happen [10]. The school principal exerts a direct and multidimensional influence on teachers, consistently engaging with them to offer direction and assure the delivery of high-quality education [11]. Emotional intelligence is considered a crucial attribute for leaders since it plays a significant role in influencing their subordinates [12, 13]. According to the social exchange theory, an exchange occurs through a process of reciprocity, where one party reciprocates the positive or negative actions of another party [14]. Consequently, it is anticipated that the acts of emotionally intelligent school principals will boost teachers' ability to exhibit more organizational commitment. In this context, this study aimed to explore the impact of school principals' emotional intelligence (PEI) on teachers' organizational commitment (TOC) by addressing the following research questions:

What are the levels of TOC and PEI in Kuwaiti elementary public schools?

What is the relationship between PEI and TOC in Kuwaiti elementary public schools?

Given that this study's questions rely on investigating relationships between variables, it necessitated the formulation of the following hypothesis:

H1: There is a significant influence of PEI on TOC in Kuwaiti elementary public schools.

Principal's Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence refers to the ability to recognize and understand both our own emotions and the emotions of others [15]. It is the ability to interact in cognitive processes while understanding and effectively utilizing one's emotions [16]. From childhood to adulthood, emotional intelligence is often regarded as a crucial factor for personal achievement and influence in society [17]. Emotional intelligence regulates negative emotions that impede advanced cognitive functions related to planning, creative thinking, and interpersonal connections [18]. Previous studies have shown a significant association between Emotional Intelligence and leadership effectiveness [19, 20]. Emotional intelligence is responsible for variations in leadership efficacy that cannot be attributed to personality or IQ [21]. Even more, emotional intelligence is a talent that can be acquired through learning [22]. Coaching and training have been shown to improve emotional intelligence [23, 24, 25, 26]. Therefore, it should be considered a valuable instrument for leaders' personal and professional development [27]. Giving that emotional intelligence can be measured for the purpose of enhancing and refining [28]. It is divided into four clusters and consists of eighteen competencies. The assessment validity is enhanced by the fact that it is a multi-rater assessment, allowing for the identification of character defects that individuals may be biased about [29,30].

In schools, emotional intelligence plays a significant role as data is exchanged through social interactions between school principals and teachers [31]. The emotions and social connections of principals have a positive impact on the commitment of teachers [32]. Prior studies have verified that PEI contributes to establishing a more favorable educational environment [33, 34, 35, 36]. This is unsurprising as teachers place their trust in the emotional aspect of the principal [37]. Principals who encounter genuine difficulty, simply having excellent ideas is insufficient [36, 38]. The possession of

Emotional Intelligence makes them competent leaders capable of facing crises and effectively managing schools [35]. They exhibit strong leadership skills [39] and significantly contribute to the smooth functioning of the school [40]. Their behavior has an impact on employees' tendency to either withdraw from work or fully commit themselves to it [41]. Having Emotional Intelligence skills will facilitate their function in enabling and supporting employees while increasing their organizational commitment [32, 42]. In times of change, enhancing the emotional intelligence of school principals has been found to enhance teachers' willingness to change [36], improve their teaching methodologies [43], strengthen the collective belief in their effectiveness as educators [44], and boost their overall job satisfaction [45].

Teachers' Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment refers to an employee's desire to remain a part of the organization by demonstrating loyalty and exerting significant effort [46]. The notion is multi-dimensional and consists of three distinct mindsets: desire, perceived obligation, and perceived cost of quitting [47]. Commitment was categorized into three main components: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment, which are based on the individual's attitude towards the organization [48]. Affective commitment refers to the emotional bond an individual has with an organization [49]. Affective commitment is considered the fundamental aspect of commitment [49, 50]. Continuance commitment refers to the employee's recognition of the costs associated with leaving the organization [48]. It is the attachment individuals have towards their organizations due to a lack of alternative options [51]. Continuance commitment is a crucial factor, as employees who are deeply committed to their personal goals will exert significant effort towards projects that they consider advantageous [52]. Continuance commitment is either neutral or negatively associated with attendance, performance, organizational citizenship behavior, and the health and well-being of employees, yet it has a negative relationship with employees' intention to quit [49, 53]. Normative commitment refers to the sense of duty and moral obligation that employees feel towards working in an organization [48]. It also refers to the emotional and ethical connection that individuals have with their employers [54]. Normative commitment is primarily influenced by the personal backgrounds of people rather than their goals. Therefore, employees who work in an organization where its goals align with their cultural values have a higher level of normative commitment [55]. Normative commitment is formed in individuals when they realize that their organization assists them in a manner that they are unable to reciprocate [48,56]. Nevertheless, it was found that an employee simultaneously exhibits all components of commitment [48]. Committed teachers can significantly enhance schools' achievements. Prior research has confirmed that commitment decreases teachers' turnover intentions [57], reduces absenteeism [58], positively predicts psychological well-being in school [59], generates an effective education [60], produces successful teaching [61], and increases teachers' efficacy [62]. Teachers' optimal performance is contingent upon their commitment, despite possessing the necessary physical and mental capabilities to do their duties [63]. Their commitment

is considered a crucial asset for enhancing the performance of schools [64]. Furthermore, to achieve educational reformation goals, the commitment of teachers is a requirement [65]. Individuals within educational organizations find their work significantly easier when they fully commit to it [66].

Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Commitment

The attributes of a leader, such as support, consideration, communication, and engagement, have been found to boost employees' commitment [67, 68, 69, 70]. These attributes are applicable to a leader who possesses emotional intelligence [71]. Furthermore, emotional intelligence combines characteristics of both ethical leadership and transformative leadership [72]. This demonstrates that emotional intelligence is an essential need for achieving success in all forms of leadership [73]. The practices of an emotionally supportive leader have a significant impact on teachers' commitment [74]. The commitment of teachers is contingent upon the establishment of these positive relationships [75]. Consequently, when principals possess emotional intelligence, they demonstrate greater empathy, support, openness, and awareness towards the needs and well-being of teachers. This, in turn, leads to increased and sustained levels of teachers' commitment [76, 77]. The presence of emotionally intelligent principals, who exhibit supportive behaviors such as fostering mutual trust, engaging in two-way communication, and demonstrating concern for teachers' well-being, frequently motivates teachers to respond with a high level of commitment [78, 79]. Previous research has proven a robust and positive correlation between the four aspects of leaders' emotional intelligence and the overall components of subordinates' organizational commitment [80, 81, 82]. Another research findings showed a notable correlation only between the emotional intelligence of leaders and the affective commitment of employees [83]. The lack of study for such a relationship in a significant organization such as schools emphasizes the importance of this investigation.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

Research Model: This study employs a correlational research design to ascertain the relationship between the independent variable PEI and the dependent variable TOC. A cross-sectional survey methodology was used, involving the distribution of a questionnaire consisting of two independent sections. The first section assesses PEI, and the second measures TOC. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was used due to its capability to estimate cause-and-effect connections in path models containing latent variables.

Population and sample

The population consisted of 27,027 teachers, distributed across every elementary school in Kuwait. The sample size was calculated by applying power analysis. G*Power software utilizes power analysis to calculate the proper sample size, considering many criteria such as effect size, power (1- β), significance level (α), and the type of statistical analysis being performed [85, 86]. The power analysis for sample size yielded an appropriate sample size of 485. A cluster random sampling technique was employed, with schools being treated as clusters. A total of 579 teachers participated in the questionnaire. Data collection was conducted in the second

semester of the academic year 2021-2022. After scanning the collected data, a total of 514 replies were obtained, which will be used for the final analysis.

Data Collection Tools

The data-collection instrument consisted of two sections. The first section consisted of the "PEI Scale," while the second section comprised the "TOC Scale".

Principals' Emotional Intelligence Scale: The independent variable, PEI, is adopted from ECI 2.0 scale [87]. The ECI 2.0 scale measures eighteen competencies arrayed in four clusters with 51 items distributed across these competencies. Teachers were asked to rate the emotional intelligence of their school principal by responding to the statements using a 5-point Likert scale.

Teachers' Organizational Commitment Scale: The dependent variable, TOC, is adapted from the three-component model questionnaire [88]. The questionnaire measures affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Consisting of eighteen statements that are distributed equally among the three components. The scale was ranked using the 5-point Likert scale.

The internal consistency of the measures was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients. The coefficients were as follows: 0.989 for PEI, 0.935 for self-awareness, 0.971 for self-management, 0.932 for social awareness, 0.982 for relationship management, 0.805 for affective commitment, 0.768 for normative commitment, and 0.819 for continuance commitment.

3. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis was conducted in two phases: initial analysis and main analysis. Data screening and the assumption of linear regression tests are initially conducted using IBM SPSS and SmartPLS software. The initial analysis was conducted on a total of 579 replies. The process of data screening was conducted in three distinct steps. First, to check straight lining, all statements were subject to variation detection; the higher the variation score, the less straight line the response [89]. As a result, 56 cases were discarded since they had variances close to 0. Second, the maximum number of missing data points per item is 8 of 519 (1.5%). The analysis was carried out utilizing the mean value replacement of missing data because the number of missing values is relatively low [90]. Third, screening for univariate and multivariate outliers. Three cases were recognized as univariate outliers and eliminated as their standardized scores exceeded 3.29 [91]. The data was analyzed for multivariate outliers using the robust variant of the Mahalanobis distance, with $p < .001$ being the threshold for outliers [91]. As a result, 2 cases were identified as outliers and then eliminated; therefore, 514 cases remained.

Subsequently, linear regression assumption tests were carried out to check the accuracy of the findings derived from the model. The skewness and kurtosis coefficients were assessed for two scales: the PEI scale (skewness: -0.543; kurtosis: -0.155) and the TOC scale (skewness: 0.141; kurtosis: 0.574). These results show that both scales follow a normal distribution [91]. The probability-probability plot (p-p plot) shows that the scatters of the data basically fall straight on the normal distribution line, indicating a normal distribution of the data on the PEI and TOC scales. Additionally, the ANOVA

test conducted on the PEI and TOC scales confirmed that the assumption of linearity was satisfied. The test revealed that linearity is statistically significant, whereas deviation from linearity is not. The homoscedasticity test was conducted by extracting the TOC-scale scatterplot of residuals when predicted by the PEI scale. The scatterplot of residuals exhibits an even variance. Therefore, the homoscedasticity assumption is fulfilled. Next, common method bias was tested by generating variance inflation factors (VIFs) for all latent variables in the model. The model was free of common method bias since the VIF obtained from the comprehensive collinearity test was 2.467, which is less than 3.3 [92].

To answer this study's first question, the study utilizes descriptive statistics, specifically the mean and standard deviation. That is, to offer a detailed depiction of the fundamental attributes of the data, employing Microsoft Excel. The inferential statistics of the data were performed to test the hypotheses and provide answers to the study's second question. To address this question, a hypothesis has been formulated and subsequently examined. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed to estimate inferential statistics. PLS-SEM is a technique employed to estimate causal relationships in path models that involve latent variables [84], such as this study. The software SmartPLS was utilized to conduct PLS-SEM due to its built-in ability to execute such computations [93]. Furthermore, the structural model was assessed with PLSpredict Q^2 calculations to examine the model's predictive power [91].

4. RESULTS

Within the scope of the levels of PEI and TOC, the variables mean (\bar{x}), and standard deviation (SD) were examined. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Variables Descriptive Statistics

Variable	\bar{x}	SD
PEI	4.22	0.79
Self-Awareness	4.32	0.76
Self-Management	4.13	0.83
Social Awareness	4.26	0.76
Relationship Management	4.19	0.81
TOC	3.88	0.99
Affective TOC	4.15	0.85
Normative TOC	3.97	0.98
Continuance TOC	3.52	1.16

Based on the given data, (PEI: \bar{x} = 4.22, SD= 0.79) and (TOC: \bar{x} = 3.88, SD= 0.99), PEI and TOC are considered high [95]. That indicate that elementary school teachers in Kuwait exhibit a strong commitment and have positive perceptions of principals' emotional intelligence. Following that, the model predictive power was calculated resulting Q^2 value = 0.381, that is a value between medium, and large predictive relevance of the model [96]. p-value was calculated via SmartPLS to test the hypothesis: H1. A P-value of 5% or less is typically regarded as statistically significant, therefore accepting alternative hypothesis [97].

Table 2: Hypothesis Testing

	β	SE	T value	P values	Hypothesis
PEI -> TOC	0.263	0.057	4.619	0*	Accepted

Note: *Significant at $p < 0.05$

Based on the table above, the correlation between PEI and TOC is significant ($\beta = 0.263$, $t = 4.619$, $p < 0.05$), which means the acceptance of H1. This result implies that when school principals behave emotionally intelligently toward them, teachers are more likely to commit.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

1. What is the level of TOC and PEI in Kuwait elementary public schools?

The average scores for PEI dimensions, as reported by teachers, were as follows: self-awareness (4.32), self-management (4.13), social awareness (4.26), and relationship management (4.19). Thus, teachers perceive a high level of emotional intelligence from their school principal. The elevated level of PEI aligns with prior studies that examined PEI levels from the perspective of teachers [98–103]. Nevertheless, another research finding revealed that the emotional intelligence of school principals was generally high, except for the self-management dimension, which obtained a moderate level of scores [104]. Notably, the self-management dimension obtained a high score in this study; however, it had the lowest mean compared to the other dimensions of PEI. The elevated level of emotional intelligence exhibited by school principals in Kuwait can be attributed to the ongoing educational change movement since 2017. Given the educational transformation, it is imperative to have leaders in educational institutions who possess the ability to adapt and stay aware of such a transformation. The school principals' high emotional intelligence suggests that they have successfully adjusted and kept up with the educational transformation, hence enhancing the likelihood of achieving sustainable educational objectives.

The mean of the TOC was high, with an overall score of 3.88. The respective scores for each component were as follows: affective commitment 4.15, normative commitment 3.97, and continuance commitment 3.52. Continuance commitment exhibited the lowest mean value among the various components of commitment. Prior studies have also identified a high amount of TOC [105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111]. Some research confirmed the results of this study, indicating high levels of all TOC components and a relatively lower level of the continuance commitment component [112, 113]. This study emphasizes the fact that affective and normative commitment have a shared sensitivity, leading to a similar correlation with other variables [114, 115]. In contrast, continued commitment demonstrates an independent nature. The overall high level of continuance commitment is understandable due to the inherent risks associated with leaving the teaching profession to pursue alternative career paths. Specifically, for teachers who have graduated from education faculties in Kuwait, the teaching profession is the only possible profession for them [116].

2. What is the relationship between PEI and TOC in Kuwait elementary public schools?

This study demonstrated a favorable correlation between PEI and TOC. That was supported by previous studies [80, 81, 82]. However, additional findings demonstrated a significant correlation between PEI and affective commitment only [83]. Hence, the findings of this study, along with prior research, support the importance of the principal's attainment of emotional intelligence skills due to their significant impact on teachers' commitment.

6. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The limitations of this study relate to the constraints imposed by the research design, namely in terms of the methodology employed and the statistical analysis conducted. Additionally, the questionnaire may differ from the original one since it is translated from English to Arabic. Despite the implementation of many procedures to preserve the integrity of the questionnaire's meaning, it nonetheless differs from the original. Moreover, the results were conducted exclusively during the first semester of the academic year 2021-2022, making them specific to this period. This study suggests that to sustain high levels of TOC, it is important to prioritize and utilize emotional intelligence as an effective technique. Implementing training centers to boost the emotional intelligence of school principals is an unprecedented initiative in Kuwait. This attempt will ensure seamless advancement towards the sustainable development goals that Kuwait aims to accomplish.

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