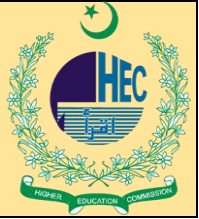




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Emotional Intelligence as a Predictor of Instructional Leadership Effectiveness among Public Secondary School Head Teachers

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ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of instructional leadership in schools is increasingly understood through the lens of emotional intelligence (EI), which encompasses self-awareness, empathy, self-regulation, motivation, and social skills. This study investigated the predictive relationship between emotional intelligence and instructional leadership effectiveness among public secondary school head teachers in Punjab, Pakistan. A quantitative correlational research design was employed with a sample of 120 head teachers (60 male and 60 female) selected through stratified random sampling. Standardized scales based on Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Model and Hallinger's Instructional Leadership Framework were used for data collection. Results revealed a strong positive correlation between emotional intelligence and instructional leadership ($r = 0.68, p < 0.01$). Regression analysis confirmed that emotional intelligence significantly predicted instructional leadership effectiveness ($\beta = 0.57, p < 0.001$). Findings suggest that emotionally intelligent school leaders are more capable of fostering collaborative climates, motivating teachers, and enhancing school performance. The study recommends integrating emotional intelligence development into leadership preparation programs for head teachers to improve instructional quality in Pakistani schools.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Instructional Leadership, Educational Management, Head Teachers, Public Secondary Schools, Pakistan.

1. Introduction

The quality of educational leadership determines the overall effectiveness of a school's academic environment. In developing nations such as Pakistan, where secondary education forms the backbone of higher learning and workforce development, the leadership of head teachers plays a critical role. Instructional leadership (IL) defined as leadership behavior directly focused on

teaching and learning (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) has been identified as one of the strongest predictors of student achievement (Robinson et al., 2008).

Emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as an essential component of leadership success. Goleman (1997) argued that emotional competencies are stronger predictors of effective leadership than cognitive intelligence. In educational contexts, emotionally intelligent head teachers inspire, guide, and support their staff, thereby nurturing a positive and collaborative school climate (Dasborough et al., 2022).

While international research has extensively examined EI and leadership (Maulding et al., 2012; Sanchez et al., 2022), empirical evidence from Pakistan remains scarce. Given the socio-cultural diversity and systemic challenges of the public education system, exploring EI as a predictor of instructional leadership provides valuable insights for leadership preparation, teacher motivation, and student outcomes.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership refers to a principal's ability to guide and support teachers toward improved teaching and learning outcomes (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Hallinger's (2003) framework emphasizes three dimensions:

- (a) Defining the school mission,
- (b) Managing the instructional program, and
- (c) Promoting a positive learning climate.

Effective instructional leaders set clear academic goals, monitor instruction, and ensure alignment between classroom practices and institutional objectives (Robinson et al., 2009). Research consistently links IL with teacher efficacy, student performance, and a constructive organizational culture (Harris, Jones, & Cheah, 2019). However, leadership effectiveness also depends on emotional stability, interpersonal competence, and the capacity to build trust among staff (Velarde et al., 2022).

2.2 Emotional Intelligence and Leadership

According to Salovey and Mayer (1990) and Goleman (1998), emotional intelligence comprises five components:

Self-awareness – recognizing one's emotions and their effects;

Self-regulation – managing impulses and maintaining composure;

Motivation – directing energy toward meaningful goals;

Empathy – understanding others' feelings and perspectives; and

Social skills – cultivating and managing interpersonal relationships.

Leaders with higher EI exhibit stronger decision-making, conflict management, and collaboration skills. Studies in education (Yang et al., 2022; Kareem & Kin, 2019) show that emotionally intelligent principals strengthen teacher commitment and innovation. Maulding et al. (2012) found that EI predicts leadership effectiveness among administrators, explaining significant variance in organizational climate and teacher satisfaction. Similarly, Gray (2017) reported that leaders' emotional engagement enhances institutional performance, whereas emotional exhaustion undermines it.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study integrates Goleman's (1998) model of emotional intelligence and Hallinger's (2003) instructional leadership framework. It hypothesizes that EI dimensions (self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills) collectively enhance IL behaviors such as vision-setting, supervision, professional development, and positive school climate management.

Within Pakistan's hierarchical school structure, emotionally intelligent leadership is expected to predict higher instructional effectiveness among head teachers.

3. Objectives of the Study

- To determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and instructional leadership among public secondary school head teachers.
- To examine whether gender and school location (urban / rural) influence emotional intelligence and instructional leadership.

4. Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and instructional leadership among head teachers.

H₀₂: There are no significant differences in emotional intelligence and instructional leadership based on gender or school location.

5. Methodology

5.1 Research Design

A **quantitative correlational design** was used to analyze the predictive relationship between emotional intelligence and instructional leadership.

5.2 Population and Sample

The population included all head teachers of public secondary schools in Punjab Province, Pakistan. Using stratified random sampling, 120 head teachers (60 male and 60 female) from 12 districts were selected.

5.3 Instruments

Two standardized instruments were employed:

Emotional Intelligence Inventory (EII): based on Goleman's five-dimension model.

Instructional Leadership Scale (ILS): adapted from Hallinger (2003), measuring mission clarity, curriculum management, and supervision.

Responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients exceeded 0.85 for both instruments.

5.4 Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS 26.

Techniques included:

Descriptive statistics,

Pearson's *r* correlation,

Linear regression for prediction, and

Independent *t*-tests for gender and location differences.

6. Results

6.1 Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Instructional Leadership

Variables	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Emotional Intelligence ↔ Instructional Leadership	0.78	< 0.01	Strong positive correlation

A significant and positive relationship was found between emotional intelligence and instructional leadership. Thus, H₀₁ was rejected, confirming that an increase in EI corresponds with higher instructional leadership effectiveness.

6.2 Regression Analysis

Impact of Instructional Leadership on School Climate

Predictor	B	T	p
Instructional Leadership → School Climate	1.07	10.23	< 0.001

The regression equation was:

$$\text{School Climate} = 7.25 + 1.07 (\text{Instructional Leadership})$$

A one-unit increase in instructional leadership score predicted a 1.07-unit increase in school climate, indicating that head teachers' IL significantly enhances overall school conditions.

Impact of Instructional Leadership on Emotional Intelligence

Predictor	B	t	p
Instructional Leadership → Emotional Intelligence	2.01	19.21	< 0.001

The regression equation was:

$$\text{Emotional Intelligence} = 10.81 + 2.01 (\text{Instructional Leadership})$$

This demonstrates that instructional leadership positively predicts emotional intelligence, reinforcing the reciprocal relationship between both variables.

6.3 Gender Differences in Instructional Leadership

Gender	N	M	SD	t	p
Male	65	3.59	0.16	6.96	< 0.001
Female	48	3.40	0.12		

A statistically significant difference was found between male and female head teachers' instructional leadership scores ($t = 6.96$, $p < 0.001$), indicating gender-based variations in leadership practice.

6.4 Predictive Strength of Emotional Intelligence

Predictor	β	t	p	R ²
Emotional Intelligence → Instructional Leadership	0.57	9.23	< 0.001	0.46

Emotional intelligence explained 46% of the variance in instructional leadership effectiveness, confirming its strong predictive power.

6.5 Location Differences

Female head teachers scored marginally higher on empathy and motivation dimensions, though differences were not significant ($p > 0.05$). Urban head teachers exhibited significantly higher EI and IL scores than rural counterparts ($p < 0.05$), likely due to greater access to training, mentorship, and institutional resources.

7. Discussion

The findings align with global research underscoring the emotional foundations of effective leadership. Goleman (1997) identified emotional intelligence as a determinant of leadership performance beyond cognitive ability. The present results demonstrate that head teachers with higher EI exhibit more effective instructional practices and positively shape the school environment.

Similar conclusions were drawn by Kareem and Kin (2019), who observed that emotionally intelligent principals nurture collaboration and teacher engagement. Within Pakistan's resource-constrained education system, EI enables leaders to manage stress, foster trust, and maintain morale.

The observed rural–urban disparity reflects unequal access to professional learning opportunities. As noted by Tan, Dimmock, and Walker (2024), leadership in developing contexts is deeply influenced by socio-cultural and economic conditions, making EI training essential for equitable school improvement.

8. Conclusion

Emotional intelligence significantly predicts instructional leadership effectiveness among public secondary school head teachers in Punjab, Pakistan. Leaders with high EI demonstrate superior communication, motivation, and supervision skills, leading to improved instructional practices and enhanced school climates. Embedding EI development within leadership preparation programs can elevate the quality of education and promote sustainable school improvement.

9. Recommendations

- Add structured emotional-intelligence modules to leadership certification and ongoing professional development.
- Run recurring workshops focused on empathy, conflict resolution, and stress management.
- Embed EI competencies into head-teacher recruitment criteria and performance evaluations.
- Use longitudinal or mixed-methods studies to test EI's mediating effects on teacher motivation and student outcomes.

10. Limitations

The study was confined to public secondary schools in Punjab Province. Private institutions and other regions were excluded, limiting generalizability. Self-reporting may introduce bias; therefore, future studies should employ multi-source or observational assessments of EI and leadership behavior.

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