



The influence of emotional quotient (EQ) towards novice teachers' work stress and organizational commitment

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Abstract

Literature review showed that 33% novice teachers tend to leave the teachers' profession at a very early stage of their employment. Moreover, local studies only focused on the effectiveness of the Post Graduate Teaching Program in terms of the teachers' quality and readiness in the classroom. Issues such as EQ, work stress and organizational commitment among novice teachers are not being studied although it is proven that these issues impacted them highly. Thus, this study aimed to examine the influence of EQ on stress and organizational commitment among novice teachers in the northern part of Malaysia. 3 study instruments were used such as Emotional Evaluation Scale, Teachers' Stress Inventory and Organization Commitment questionnaires. The survey was done through stratified random sampling and simple sampling where the sample study comprised of 325 novice teachers who have served between 1 to 3 years. Various data analysis techniques were used such as mean test, correlation analysis and Structural Equation Model (SEM) for this study. Consequently, EQ and stress showed 18% change in variants related to novice teachers' commitment. The analysis also showed there is influence of EQ towards commitment and work stress and influence of stress on organizational commitment through SEM analysis. Work stress also proved to be the mediator in the relationship between EQ and organizational commitment. (91%). Overall, this study showed that it is important for novice teachers to strengthen and enhance their EQ. They also have to be good in managing their work stress so as to increase their commitment towards the teaching profession. This type of strength will boost teacher human capital and able to handle the dynamic change in education.

Keywords: emotional quotient (EQ), stress, commitment, novice teachers, structural equation model

1. Introduction

The nation education policy have placed the construction of teacher quality as a priority by producing teachers who have the heart of educators and who always work towards achieving the national education target (MOE, 2013). These teachers are capable and skilled in teaching their niche areas, able to manage co-curriculum vested upon them and follow teaching profession ethics (Teacher Training Division, 2007). Consequently, these teachers strive to become more creative, innovative, pro-active and able to create a difference that would benefit the students (Alimudin, 2010).

1.1 Problem Statement

The strong relationship between human capital development and teachers' role has been the core in the MOE's effort to increase the quality and produce dedicated teachers with the heart to educate. This is because quality teachers can raise the quality of education to world standards (Malaysian Teacher Training Institute Strategic Plan 2011-2015 (2011). Hence, to achieve this aim, teachers need to equip themselves with knowledge, show sincerity and high commitment in implementing the responsibility to improve the quality of students that will be generated (Tajulashikin, Fazura & Mohd Burhan, 2013) [38]. This action is deemed necessary to ensure that only qualified teachers will serve in schools.

However, the credibility and ability of the novice teachers are always questioned. They are said to be emotionally weak, passive, no commitment, failed to stimulate student learning and are unable to adapt the knowledge and skills in the classroom effectively (Yusof, 2008). The problem has become more complicated with the limitations found in the teacher training program such as compressed curriculum and short duration of the training period for post-graduate courses. As a result, the novice teachers produced lack readiness to teach and still need comprehensive guidance (Tan, 2005) [39].

Therefore, this study aimed to identify, explain and address the influence of EQ towards teachers' work stress and organizational commitment among novice teachers where focus will be on the demographic aspects such as gender, experience, academic qualification, school location and age. This was to explore novice teachers' perspectives by understanding the problems and challenges they face in the first year of their teaching, especially, when initial experience is said to have great influence on their attitudes and practices throughout their working career (Muhyidin, 2014) [29].

1.2 Study Objectives

This study is conducted based on the following objectives:

1. To identify the effect of EQ on teachers' work stress and organizational commitment.

2. To identify the effect of teachers' work stress on organizational commitment.
3. To identify whether teachers' work stress act as the mediator in the relationship between EQ and organizational commitment.

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the objectives outlined by the researchers, this study aimed to address the following questions:

1. Is there any significant effect of EQ on teachers' work stress and organizational commitment among novice teachers?
2. Is there any significant effect of teachers' work stress on organizational commitment among novice teachers?
3. Does teachers' work stress act as the mediator in the relationship between EQ and organizational commitment?

1.4 Study Hypotheses

Based on the research questions, the following are the hypotheses:

Ho1: EQ has no significant effect on organizational commitment.

Ho2: EQ has no significant effect on teachers' work stress.

Ho3: Teachers' work stress has no significant effect on organizational commitment.

Ho4: Teachers' work stress does not act as the mediator in the relationship between EQ and organizational commitment.

1.5 Significance of Study

This study was expected to determine the effect that existed between the variables. The findings would provide information to MOE, especially Teacher Training Institute in planning programs to enhance and strengthen future teachers' EQ.

16 Limitation of Study

This study conducted was limited to novice teachers who are serving between 1 and 3 years in the Northern part of Malaysia. Focus was given to aspects such as emotions, work stress and organizational commitment; and the effects between the three variables.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Novice Teachers

The findings in a general study by MOE (2006) about the readiness of novice teachers' in the teaching profession in the country has exposed various challenges faced by the novice teachers such as (a) problems related to curriculum specification (b) readiness and teaching resources, classroom management and teaching (c) interpersonal relationship (d) students' assessment (e) curriculum activities and (f) actions by the administration. In addition, the findings also discovered problems such as the teacher training program, besides being irrelevant, lacked preparation course; teachers became exhausted due to workload, time consumption in teaching planning and preparation; boredom and complication in applying theories learnt.

Teachers also faced complications in carrying out their duties because there exists big difference between working when they were doing their training in school and when they are working as real teachers in the real 4working environment. Zuraidah (2001) ^[48] claimed that novice teachers always feel anxious when there is supervision by teachers and school inspectors. This is because they are not coached or guided and it was also found that 12.4% teachers who were being studied claimed that they will leave the profession in five years' time which is after their contract with the government is over.

2.2 Emotional Quotient (EQ)

EQ is the ability to identify, evaluate and control self-emotions and also people's emotions. Intellectual Quotient (IQ) test by Thorndike and Stein (1937) ^[40] has categorised it into three aspects that is social intellect, concrete intellect and abstract intellect. They explained social intellect as an ability to be with people. Weehsler (1940) also claimed affective component in EQ as important aspect to be achieved in life, whereas Maslow (1950) ^[26] stated that human can build strength in their emotions and achievement in terms of health problems and happiness in life.

Consequently, Howard Gardner (1975) ^[9] has introduced the multiple intelligences concept especially in the interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects. In addition, Mayer and Salovey (1990) defined EQ as part of social intelligence which comprises of the ability to control emotions and feelings of one self and others ability to differentiate between the two and use these information as the guideline to think and act.

2.3 Teacher Work Stress

Jon, Randy and De Simone (2009) ^[18] defined stress as a situation which affects an individual to feel pressured in one's daily life, whereas Moss (2008) ^[28] defined stress as one situation or a change in working environment which could result in disaster, full of threats, challenges or frustrations which would change the life of the individual. Stress also exists in school environment (Kiveshnie, *et al.*, 2013) caused by change and additional responsibility to the teachers (Deventer & Kruger, 2009) ^[8].

2.4 Organizational Commitment

Studies related to organizational commitment have been conducted in various fields and professions (Allen & Mayer, 1990) ^[3], in fact issues which focused on organizational commitment among teachers have also obtained the attention of many scholars (Cetin, *et al.*, 2011) ^[6]. Organizational commitment is individual's inner strength to interpret oneself towards the organization which comprises of values to achieve the organization's aims and readiness to maintain one's own membership in the organization (Porter & Mowday in Miner, 1992) ^[27] and also as a connection between the workers and their organizations (Mc Mahon, 2007). Greenberg and Baron (1993) ^[12] in their study found that workers who have high organizational commitment are

more competent and productive, that eventually benefit the organization.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study aimed to explain how far EQ and teachers' work stress affect the organizational commitment of novice teachers' who are serving in the northern zone of Malaysia. It was descriptive- correlation in nature to seek the relationship between variables that existed naturally (Wiersma & Jors, 2009; Gay, *et al.*, 2009) ^[43]. This study used the quantitative method since it involved a big number of respondents (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007).

3.2 Population and Sample of study

The research population was 2100 novice teachers posted in primary schools in the northern part of Malaysia since 2009 until 2011. Total sample of study was 325 novice teachers out of the total population at the confidence level of 95% (Cohen, *et al.*, 2007). Selection of sample was done based on the table by Krejcie dan Morgan (1970) ^[23] where the sample required is determined.

3.3 Research Instrument

This study used questionnaire as the research instrument where according to Gray (2009) can be modified, can use existing instruments or combination of instruments used in previous studies. The instruments used in this study were Assessing Emotional Scale (Schutte *et a.*, 1998) ^[36], Teachers Stress Instrument (Boyle, *et al.* 1995) ^[5] and Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Allen & Mayer, 1990) ^[3].

3.4 Validity and Reliability

To determine the validity of questionnaire items for EQ, teachers' work stress and organizational commitment, evaluation of the items in terms of content, language and objectives to be measured was done by expertise comprised of a senior lecturer with PhD in assessment and evaluation, two lecturers from Language Department and three senior lecturers from Sultan Abdul Halim Teacher Training. Meanwhile, cronbach alpha method was used to measure consistency whereby each item was considered as equivalent and the correlation between the items were the same. If the r value > 0.6, it means that the reliability level of the items is high (Noraini, *et al.*, 2010) ^[30]. However, if the coefficient is less than 0.6, it means the instruments used have a low level of reliability and thus the items need to be improved or eliminated from the questionnaire.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data analysis was done based on descriptive statistics related to demographic profile of respondents. This analysis described the respondents' background and other demographic aspects such as gender, teaching experience, academic qualification, school location and age among novice teachers. Consequently, inferential data analysis for this study used SPSS and multivariate analysis approach the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) backed up by the Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) software version 21.0. SEM is an analysis approach whereby it combines factor analysis aspects and multiple regressions to help researchers examine the dependent relationships between the indicator variables and latent variables simultaneously; and also the relationship among the latent variables (Hair, *et al.*, 2010; Ullman & Bentler, 2004).

4. Study Findings

4.1 Respondents' Profile

325 respondents were involved where there were more female novice teachers compared to males that are 223 females (68.6%) and 102 males (31.4%). Their ages were between 24 to 38 years. Teachers between the ages of 24 and 28 dominated the study by showing the highest percentage (49.6%) whereas teachers of ages between 29 and 33 (41.8%) and 8.6% went to those between ages 34 and 38. In terms of academic qualification, 115 novice teachers obtained Bachelor of Education (35.4%) and 210 obtained a Diploma in Education (64.6%) after completing their first degree in other field. The number of teachers with less than a year of teaching experience and also between one to two years is 93 each, 28.6% and 28.6% consecutively whereas 139 teachers have two to three years in the teaching profession which makes up 42.8%. Finally, in terms of school location, 112 teachers (34.5%) were located in the urban area while 213 (65.5%) were posted in the rural area of the northern part of Malaysia.

4.2 Direct Hypothesis Testing

Table 4.1 below shows the effect of EQ on teachers' work stress and organizational commitment, and the effect of teachers' work stress towards organizational commitment using the SEM analysis. The effect of EQ on teachers' work stress and organizational commitment is -.05 and -.48 at the significant level of .001 consecutively, whereas the effect of teacher work stress on organizational commitment is .07.

Table 4.1: The effect of exogenous variables on the endogenous variables

Endogenous Variables	Standard Exogenous Variables	Weighted regression (Estimate)	Expected Value (SE)	Critical Std Error (C.R)	Ratio
Teachers' work stress	← EQ	-.05	-.078	.105	-.744
Organizational Commitment	← EQs	-.48	-.680	.118	-5.753
Organizational Commitment Work Stress	← Teachers	.07	.058	.055	1.053

Based on the table above, the result for hypotheses (1), (2) and (3) was determined and addressed the specified research questions.

Ho (1) EQ has no significant effect on organizational commitment – rejected ($\beta = -.481, p = .000$). The analysis showed that the coefficient value is $-.48$ with p value of $.000$ which means that there is empirical proof to reject hypothesis 1 whereby EQ has no significant effect on novice teachers’ organizational commitment. The value indicated that EQ variables negatively affect organizational commitment.

Ho (2) EQ has no significant effect on teachers’ work stress – failed to reject ($\beta = -.05, p = .457$). The analysis showed that the coefficient value is $-.05$ with p value of $.457$. This shows that there is empirical proof to accept hypothesis 2 whereby EQ has no significant effect on teachers’ work stress among novice teachers in the northern part of Malaysia.

Ho (3) Teachers’ work stress has no significant effect on organizational commitment – failed to reject ($\beta = .068, p = .292$). The analysis showed that the coefficient value is $.07$ with un-significant p value = $.292$. This shows that there is empirical proof to accept hypothesis 3 where teachers’ work stress has no significant effect on organizational commitment among novice teachers. The findings can be seen in Fig 4.1 below.

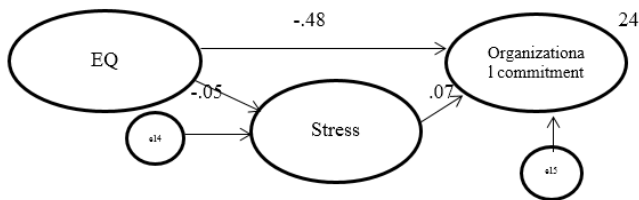


Fig 4.1: Summary of SEM

4.3 Mediation Effect Hypothesis Testing

According to Preacher and Hayes (2004), mediation effect happens when the confident interval value 95% indirect effect from bootstrap procedure does not include the value zero. The guidelines below are adopted to determine whether there exists mediation effect in the study:

- a) If the indirect effect $>.05$, it shows there is no existence of mediation effect.
- b) If the indirect effect $<.05$ and the direct effect $>.05$, it shows there exist mediation effect.
- c) If the direct effect and the indirect effect $<.05$, it shows partial mediation effect.

Referring to the Bootstrap analysis, research question 3 is addressed based on the hypothesis below:

Ho (4) Teachers’ work stress is the mediator to the relationship between EQ and organizational commitment. The mediation effect finding based on the Bootstrap analysis on 1000 samples used AMOS 21.0 software showed 95% confidence interval. The indirect effect bias corrected for teachers’ work stress as intermediate variable does not contain the value zero (value zero does not exist between lower bound and upper bound) ($\beta = .339, BC\ 95\% CI [1.177, .479], p = .001$). Subsequently, the analysis shows that the direct effect of EQ on

organizational commitment is at $.34$, the indirect effect of EQ on teachers’ work stress is $.17$ and teachers’ work stress on organizational commitment is $.20$. The Total effect is $.374$. Therefore, the value $.374$ which exceeds the value $.34$ shows that teachers’ work stress plays the role of mediator between EQ and teachers’ work stress. This can be proven through Variance Accumulated Formula (VAF) to determine the size of indirect effect compared to the overall effect based on the calculation below:

VAF =	Direct Effect	=	0.34	
	=	x 100
	Total Effect	=	0.374	
		=	91%	

The value 91% is the EQ effect on organizational commitment and is explained through teachers’ work stress as mediator. Since $VAF > 80\% =$ Full Mediation, $20\% < VAF < 80\% =$ Partial Mediation, $VAF < 20\% =$ No Mediation, this situation is said to be full mediation (Hair, Hult & Sarstedt, 2013) [15]. Therefore, it can be summarised that the hypotheses are accepted where EQ is indirectly influential towards organizational commitment through teachers’ work stress.

5. Discussion and Summary

5.1 The Effect of EQ on Organizational Commitment among Novice Teachers

The analysis result shows that the value of EQ, which is the predictor to organizational commitment, is negative and significant ($\beta = -.481, p = .000$). The weak average value shows that EQ is not the main determining factor in the level of organizational commitment among novice teachers. However, the study finding is found to be in concordance with the study by Yahzanon Tahir and Yusof Boon (2011) [46] about the level of EQ and organizational commitment of Year Six core subject teachers in the state of Johor. Besides, these study findings are also similar to the findings by Ronald E Cichy, *et al.* (2009) which found that there is negative influence between EQ and organizational commitment in terms of constant commitment which means that if EQ increases it will decrease the organizational commitment of the workers. Their findings also showed that the affective and normative commitment dimension correlated at a weak value. However, Wong and Law (2002) [44] insisted that EQ does not relate to organizational commitment. Guleryuz, Guneu and Asan (2008) [13] also opined that EQ has no direct close relationship to organizational commitment.

Based on the findings mentioned, it shows that low EQ will not produce high organizational commitment among novice teachers. This proved that there are other factors that need consideration in the effort to increase organizational commitment such as attitude, teachers’ health, culture in the organization and the role of the school administrator. Previous researches conducted by Tracie Shephard (2009), Zakieh Shooshtarian, Fatemah Amali and Mahmud Aminilani (2013) and Goleman (1995) found that there is no significant relationship between EQ and organizational commitment. They claimed that workers who have high EQ have wider

opportunities and they can choose or grab better and comfortable work offer.

5.2 The Effect of EQ on Novice Teachers' Work Stress

In the study findings, the value ($\beta = .05$, $p = .457$) is not significant. This shows that EQ has no direct effect and becomes the predictor to teachers' work stress among primary schools' novice teachers in the northern part of Malaysia. The justification is that the teachers involved in this study have high EQ and are able to manage and overcome stress well, are satisfied with work besides being fully committed in the teaching profession (Syed Sofian & Rohany, 2010) [37].

Although several studies found that EQ has negative direct effect on work stress (Ahsan & Sumera, 2012; Ioannis, 2002) [17], this study is parallel with the study findings in Samaneh, Ali Reza and Abdul rahim (2011) [35] who conducted a study on 234 respondents from public organizations in Iran. Their finding also showed that EQ has no direct effect on the dependent variable, negative effect on work stress and also direct positive effect towards work satisfaction and organizational commitment.

5.3 The Effect of Teachers' Work Stress on Novice Teachers' Organizational Commitment

The study findings showed the value ($\beta = .068$, $p = .292$) is not significant. This shows that teachers' work stress does not affect and becomes predictor to organizational commitment among novice teachers in the northern part of Malaysia. This is due to the fact that the teachers involved in the study are still new to the career and they prioritise comfort in building a family and life (Yusof, 2008) [45]. In addition, majority of the respondents are already graduates but in other fields and pursued diploma in teaching as the last resort in getting a job while the rest are fresh graduates who are interested in the teaching profession.

The duration between 1 and 3 years of teaching are considered as respondents being bonded with the MOE whereby they cannot disobey any directives. Therefore the issue of EQ, work stress and organizational commitment; including other factors are not the prioritised aspects to them. Furthermore, as novice teachers they will be guided and monitored by their mentor under the mentoring program set by the school and the MOE.

The findings of this study are in line with previous researches such as Hung and Jia-Yi (2012) [16] who found that there is no effect between work stress and organizational commitment among transit drivers in Taiwan; Noura El-Gharib, Sanaa, Harisa and Hoda Wadie (2010) who found that there is no influence between work stress and organizational commitment among nurses in Iran; Jui-Chen Chen, Colin Silverthorne and Jung Yao Hung (2005) who proved that there is no relationship between work stress and organizational commitment among accountants in Taiwan and the United States of America. The same can be said about the finding of the study by A Khatibi, H. Asadi and M. Hamidi (2009) [1] who found that there is influence of work stress on organizational commitment among workers in Iran.

5.4 Teachers' Work Stress as Mediator between EQ and Organizational Commitment among Novice Teachers.

This section addresses the Research Question 5 which is to see whether teachers' work stress is the mediator in the relationship between EQ and organizational commitment. Study finding shows that teachers' work stress is fully the mediator and significant ($\beta = .339$, BC 95%, CI [.177, .479]) in the relationship between EQ and organizational commitment. This finding is similar to the finding by Rabenhorst (2012) [33] who found that there is effect of teachers' work stress in the relationship between mentoring function (career and psychological support and role of modelling) and attitude towards work (work satisfaction and organizational commitment) among teachers in the USA.

Therefore, the role of quality and sufficient EQ is vital to help novice teachers develop their commitment in the organization. The role of stress among novice teachers at this stage is also important in their career because it affects their commitment whether to further stay on in the profession or not. The finding of this study does not agree with Samaneh Aghdasi, Ali Reza and Abdel Rahim Naveh (2011) [35] who conducted their study in Iran, that EQ has direct or indirect effect on work stress, work satisfaction and organizational commitment. This shows that teachers' work stress still plays a major role between these two variables indirectly, and supports the previous findings that teachers' work stress directly and significantly affects their organizational commitment.

6. Suggestions for Future Research

Since this study has its own limitation and the data was collected among novice teachers only, future research is commendable. Among the suggested ideas are: The study should spread wider to novice teachers in primary and secondary schools including religious-based schools where comparison can be done. Secondly, in this exploratory study, the data was collected through a questionnaire. Further study using the experimental method should be conducted whereby the relationship between EQ, teachers' work stress and organizational commitment by novice teachers and senior teachers can really be observed and remedied if necessary. It is proven, from this study, that these three components are important and needed to be addressed since they are related to the teaching and learning and also the quality of teachers.

Thirdly, the role of EQ has direct and indirect relationship with organizational commitment. Further in-depth study can be conducted by adding other variables such as school climate, role of administrators, leadership and factors that relate to students. Thus, the findings can be more meaningful and rich with information.

7. Summary

This study has discussed the significant findings, their relations to previous researches and theoretical aspects where success and excellent performance of the novice teachers depend on their affordance and ability to manage stress in their organizations or work places. EQ is the

catalyst towards success and its effectiveness will develop quality teachers in the profession as educators.

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