

Predictive Power of Emotional and Spiritual Intelligence on Work-Related Burnout

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ABSTRACT

The manufacturing industry is crucial in lifting the provision of goods and services to upshoot employment and profitability, which entails economic development. However, in the repercussions of the business complexity, this industry confronts many business challenges, encompassing socio-political and economic instability, technological disruptions, and scarcity of competent labour, all of which have pushed companies to limit performance and long-term survival. Despite many other resource issues, human resources are critical for the better functioning of workplaces and come under the direct responsibility of human resource managers. They are overwhelmed with business and resource issues, and to some extent, they face work-related burnout in the manufacturing industry, which needs to be continually supported and addressed. This study examines the function of emotional and spiritual intelligence in mitigating work-related burnout. An online survey of 311 human resource managers in ISO 9001 manufacturing companies helps identify variable relationships in the study. The results suggest that both emotional and spiritual intelligence significantly impact work-related burnout. The study benefits stakeholders in the manufacturing industry by helping them understand the continuous efforts of human resource managers as business partners in managing human capital swiftly daily while mitigating work-related burnout through the positive emotional impact. This study is a basis for evaluating a company's procedures, making necessary reforms, improving workplace culture, and providing better support for the workforce, including functional-level managers who sometimes receive marginal attention.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence; spiritual intelligence; work-related burnout

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) has officially accepted burnout as a recognized phenomenon associated with any type and level of employment (World Health Organization, 2023). Workplace stress that is not effectively measured, monitored and strategically reduced over time leads to burnout associated with employment. Prolonged stress may result in a variety of emotional problems, including persistent anxiety, psychosomatic illness, and other conditions. A burnout employee would experience feelings of drive depletion or extreme fatigue, increased emotional impartiality from the employee's professional responsibilities, or the emergence of pessimism or cynicism in connection with one's occupation, along with diminished professional effectiveness (World Health Organization, 2023). Physical and emotional

exhaustion burnout can negatively impact an employee's ability to perform effectively. It is worth noting, according to the American Institute of Stress (2020), the most significant contributor to work-related burnout is the presence of high job expectations and imbalances in the allocation of tasks. Workers often report feeling overwhelmed by the duties they are responsible for on the job, leading to increased stress levels and eventually contributing to work-related burnout.

A survey found that more than fifty per cent of Malaysian workers reported having experienced work-related burnout (The Star, 2022). Several economic and industrial turmoils, including the COVID-19 epidemic, caused a significant change in the way that workers saw the significance of their jobs and mental health. As a result, workers began to contemplate switching to various fields of employment or investigating alternative methods of going about their work with the newly expanded modern technology and work settings (Free Malaysia Today, 2022, The Malaysian Reserve, 2022). Being unemployed is unrealistic due to tight economic growth and personal financial limits. Forcing oneself to pursue jobs that have little match and liking for the sake of survival has pushed many to a different kind of mental health. There was a persistent increase in mental health issues in the workplace (New Straits Times, 2019) that probably count on work-related burnout, including but not limited to increased job expectations, excessive workloads, strict time limits, and prolonged working hours (Hassan & Samy, 2022; Teoh & Kee, 2022). This would unavoidably result in a rise in lesser productivity, workplace effectiveness, and efficiencies and further absenteeism, discipline issues, employee turnover rates, and an increased likelihood of experiencing inconsistencies in attitude, behaviour and emotion in reaching business missions (Khalid et al., 2020; Tulili et al., 2022, The Wellness at Work Report 2022).

Over 2 million employees in the manufacturing industry of Malaysia (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2023) contribute to the country's growth. Nevertheless, the recent business complexities have challenged the workforce in many ways, causing industrial labour shortages, productivity and performance drops, and measurable profitability declines (The Edge Markets, 2022; The Malaysian Reserve, 2021; The Star, 2022). Challenges are unavoidable and may persist in different forms as time passes. Still, endless trust, commitment, adaptability, and resilience to a new world of work help sustain the required performance standard in manufacturing industries with some acceptable business profit. Together with functional managers, human resource managers are vital in balancing labour issues, which are positive or negative. Today, the human resource paradigm acclaims human resource managers as business partners not only to handle employees but also to work to improve business performance. Multifacet roles shouldered by human resource managers; some are explicit, and others are transparent, which may endanger them when facing work-related burnout. The research used human resource managers' perspective on work-related burnout limited, so the associated factors inducing the situation were also limited. Ensuring human resource managers' well-being encourages positive vibes among employees, and therefore, evaluating work-related burnout consistently among human resource managers and its potential predictors helps develop mitigating strategies. Work-related burnout in the manufacturing industry is critical for a study seeking a dearth of research focusing on human resource managers as respondents (Andreychik 2019; Haar, 2023)

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND WORK-RELATED BURNOUT

The capacity of humans to detect and manage their feelings, as well as the talent to accurately sense the emotions of others while prioritizing the absorption of information in a flexible way to guide their decision-making processes, is a well-defined definition of emotional intelligence (Mayer et al., 2016). As pointed out by Goleman (2021; 2020) and Sharma and Tiwari (2023), a person who holds a high degree of emotional intelligence would exhibit the capacity to grasp and effectively regulate their own emotions, as well as the aptitude to comprehend and navigate the feelings of others. Emotional intelligence has consistently affected burnout across various professions and settings. Studies have shown that emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in mitigating burnout among healthcare professionals (Năstasă & Fărcăș, 2015), high school

teachers (Ismail et al., 2020), college students (Ibrahim, 2023), clinical nurses (Yu, 2023), and medical students (Abdulrahman et al., 2022). Besides, the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout has been explored in different contexts, such as among architecture students (Erbil, 2016), general hospital administrative staff (Han et al., 2022), and special school teachers (Deng et al., 2021).

Research indicates that emotional intelligence acts as a protective factor against burnout by influencing dimensions such as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment (Năstasă & Fărcăș, 2015). Furthermore, emotional intelligence was found to buffer negative emotions' effects on burnout (Yu, 2023; Szczygieł & Mikolajczak, 2018). Studies have also highlighted the mediating role of emotional intelligence in the relationship between job stress, emotional labour, and burnout (Han et al., 2022; Hong & Lee, 2016). Emotional intelligence has been associated with lower levels of burnout and higher job satisfaction (Kiziloğlu & Şahin, 2022). It has been suggested that individuals with high emotional intelligence are less likely to experience burnout than those with lower emotional intelligence (Kiziloğlu & Şahin, 2022). In conclusion, the existing literature supports a strong relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout across various professions, emphasizing the importance of emotional intelligence in protecting individuals from the negative consequences of burnout. Thus, it hypothesized that H1: there is a negative relationship between emotional intelligence and work-related burnout.

SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE AND WORK-RELATED BURNOUT

Spiritual intelligence enables individuals to comprehend their actions and lives more comprehensively (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). According to Vasconcelos (2020), spiritual intelligence provides people with the inner strength, resilience, and hope necessary to deal with the stress and hardship they face in their profession. Individuals with a high spiritual intelligence would also better control their emotions, have a more positive outlook, and deal with stress with religious or non-religious practices. Those who have a sense of fulfilment and happiness in their job could trust the values and beliefs they hold for their work (Thakadipuram, 2023; Yadollahpour et al., 2023). In her study, Skrzypińska (2021) found that individuals with high spiritual intelligence exhibited pleasant emotions consistently. In addition, previous research has shown that social intelligence is positively associated with emotional well-being (Ogunsola et al., 2020a; 2020b; Pishghadam et al., 2022).

The relationship between spiritual intelligence and work-related burnout has been a subject of interest in various studies. Research has shown that spiritual intelligence significantly predicts and influences burnout among professional groups. Studies have highlighted the impact of spiritual intelligence on burnout among high school teachers (Ismail et al., 2020), nurses (Aliabadi et al., 2021), and healthcare workers (Cao et al., 2022). Spiritual intelligence has been found to outperform emotional intelligence in predicting burnout and caring behaviour (Aliabadi et al., 2021). Furthermore, workplace spirituality has been identified as a crucial factor in reducing burnout and mediating the effect of other variables in the workplace (Corso et al., 2020). The findings suggest that spiritual intelligence can help prevent or reduce employee burnout (Jalaei & Tabarsa, 2017). Studies have also indicated that increased spiritual intelligence levels can lead to a higher rate of burnout (Yaghoubi & Mousavi, 2022). Workplace spirituality has been associated with higher levels of commitment, well-being, and coping with job burnout (Kumar, 2018). Additionally, workplace spirituality has been linked to increased job satisfaction (Fernandes & Priyadarshini, 2022).

Moreover, the mediating role of workplace spirituality has been highlighted in the relationship between workplace bullying and burnout (Fan et al., 2022; Fan et al., 2023). Workplace spirituality has been proposed to cope with stress and prevent turnover (Raamkumar, 2023). It has also been shown to mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and change readiness (Sumagpao & Tudy, 2022). In conclusion, the literature suggests that spiritual intelligence influences work-related burnout. These factors predict burnout and mediate the impact of other variables in the workplace, contributing to overall well-

being and job satisfaction. Following this, we hypothesize that H2: there is a negative relationship between spiritual intelligence and work-related burnout.

METHODOLOGY

This study’s complete online survey items are from the following sources: 1. Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (7 items) by Kristensen et al. (2005), 2. Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (16 items) by Wong and Law (2002), and 3. The Spiritual Intelligence Self Report Inventory (24 items) by King and DeCicco (2009). A five-point Likert Scale was used to score the items varying from (1) “Strongly Disagree” to (5) “Strongly Agree”. The survey items extracted from the previously established sources are valid and proven reliable, with reliability scores above the 0.70 statistical threshold value. Three hundred eleven valid survey responses were collected using self-administered questionnaires delivered through the online survey form. The target respondents were the human resource managers in the manufacturing industry with ISO9001 Standard in Malaysia. The study used Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test the hypotheses.

FINDINGS

Before performing the test of the measurement model, the collinearity test was executed, and the result showed that the value of the variance inflation factor was 1.333 and was within the acceptable threshold value of less than 5.0. Indeed, it indicates that the Common Method Bias is absent, and the data is adequate for further statistical analysis. Internal consistency reliability (CR), convergent validity (outer loading), and AVE were assessed based on the rules of thumb suggested by Hair et al. (2017). The measurement model test showed that Cronbach’s alpha, composite reliability, and factor loadings (Figure 2) were higher than 0.708. The average variance extracted (AVE) for convergent validity also showed values higher than 0.50 (refer to Table 1). Thus, the measurement reached convergent reliability. Similarly, the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) showed less than 0.90 (Figure 1), indicating that discriminant validity was achieved. The measurement model met all the criteria for a good fit and is apposite for hypothesis testing.

Table 1: Reliability and Validity Scores

Construct	Cronbach’s Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
EmotionalQ	0.837	0.841	0.891	0.670
SpiritualQ	0.897	0.904	0.928	0.763
WBurnout	0.927	0.927	0.942	0.699

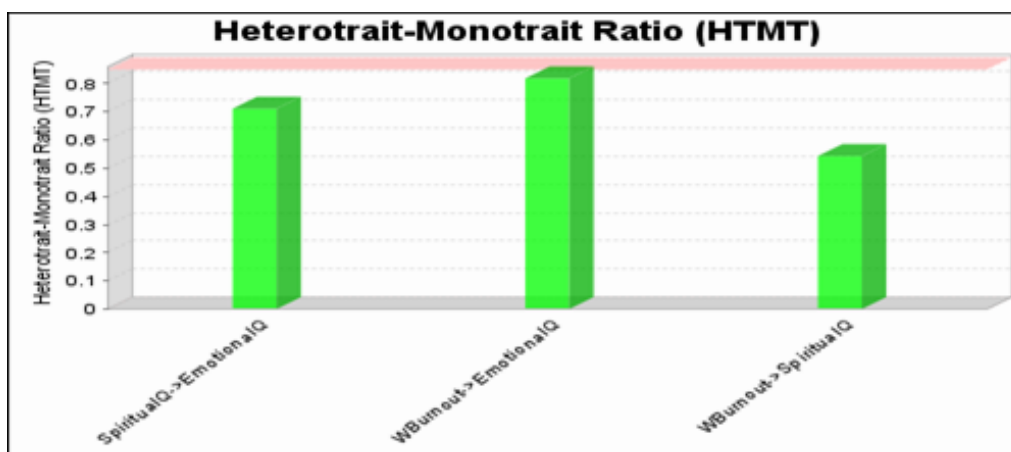


Figure 1: HTMT test for Discriminant Validity

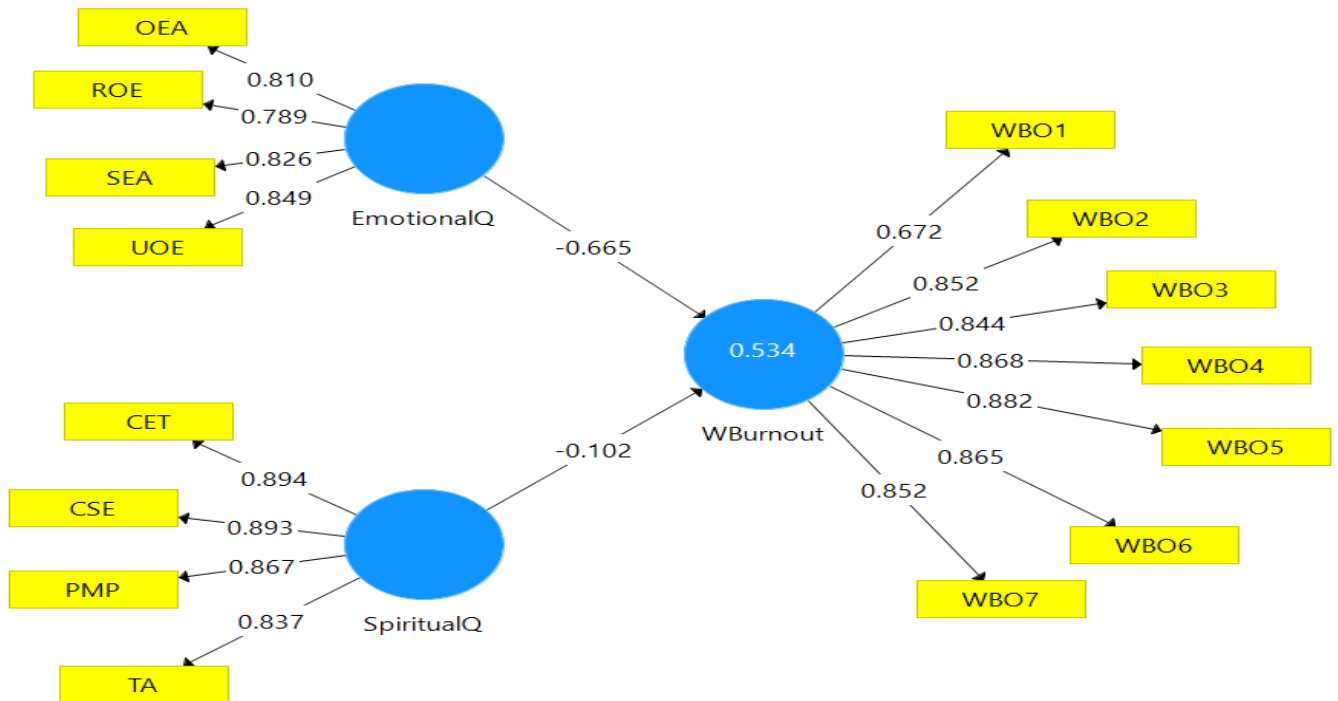


Figure 2: Measurement Model

Path coefficients among the latent variables, emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence and work-related burnout of the structural models in Table 2 lead to decisions for the study’s hypotheses. Both the direct effects, emotional intelligence (EmotionalQ) ($\beta = -0.665$, $t = 16.029$, $p < 0.001$) and spiritual intelligence ($\beta = -0.102$, $t = 2.152$, $p=0.016$) on work-related burnout were significant.

Table 2: Path coefficients

Path/ Hypothesis	Beta	T-value	P-value	2.50%	97.50%	Decision
EmotionalQ -> WBurnout	-0.665	16.029	0.000	-0.727	-0.589	Accept
SpiritualQ -> WBurnout	-0.102	2.152	0.016	-0.181	-0.025	Accept

Table 3 shows that emotional and spiritual intelligence explains a 53.4 % variance in work-related burnout. The percentage concerning Cohen (1988) suggested that an R square value of 0.534 is enormous for endogenous latent variables. The f-square value is 0.601 for EmotionalQ -> Wburnout and 0.014 for SpiritualQ -> WBurnout. This signifies that emotional intelligence affects innovative work behaviour on a large scale compared to spiritual intelligence on a small scale. The judgment follows the effect size (≥ 0.02 is small; ≥ 0.15 is medium; ≥ 0.35 is large) by Cohen (1988). The blindfolding procedure is used to get the Q Square value. The two constructs were more extensive than 0, indicating the models’ predictive relevance is large. Figure 3 shows the structure model of the study.

Table 3: Outcome of the model fit test

Construct	R-square	f-square	Q-square
EmotionalQ -> WBurnout	0.534 (Moderate)	0.601 (large effect)	0.364
SpiritualQ -> WBurnout		0.014 (small effect)	

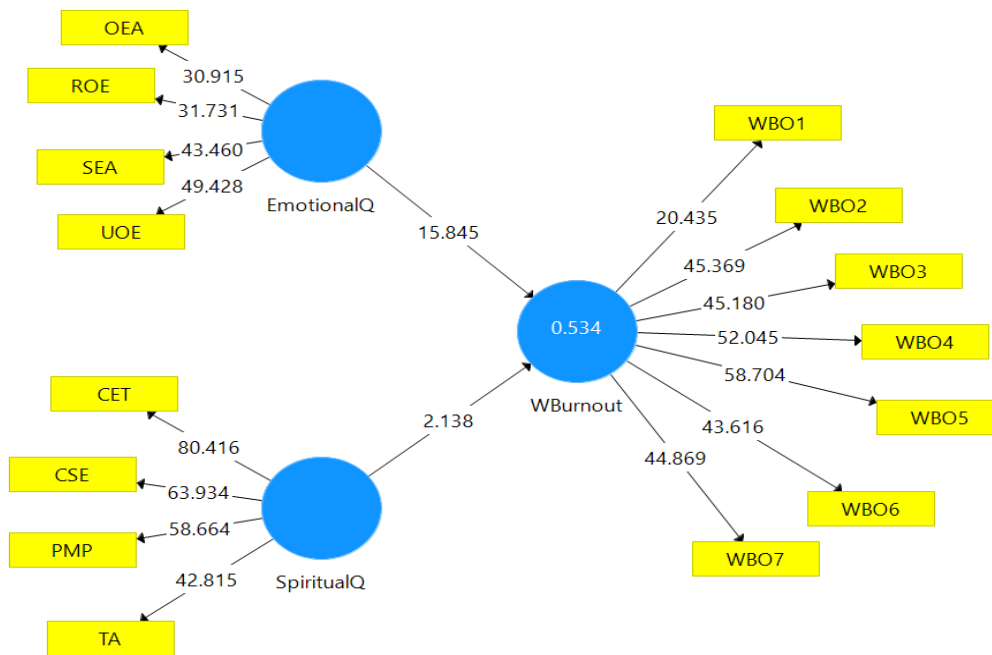


Figure 3: Structural model

CONCLUSION

In the beginning, the purpose of the research that led to the collection of this data was to understand work-related burnout among human resource managers in selected manufacturing firms in Malaysia. The two variables, emotional and spiritual intelligence, are functional in influencing work-related burnout effectively. Both the variables showed negative relationships as hypothesized and supported the prior studies. The respondents collectively indicated the strength of the antecedents of burnout in this study, leaving an impression that the human resource managers committed to enhancing emotional and spiritual intelligence. It is helpful in their daily work and can captivate emotions while balancing work-life and work burnout.

Intense practice of spiritual intelligence increases willpower, and even if everything goes astray, they have a method to remain calm, such as praying or meditating. Spiritual intelligence with a good blend of emotional intelligence helps employees to work while keeping inner balance throughout life's hardships to convey actual feelings and find pleasure and happiness implication. This attribute also needs further nurturing as it protects employees against unpleasant feelings about jobs, stress, and counterproductive work behaviour. Employees' work ethics can undoubtedly grow through emotional and spiritual intelligence development.

This analysis has shown that an empirical understanding of emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, and burnout could significantly contribute to the knowledge of work-related tasks that lead to managerial-level burnout. As burnout is a universal phenomenon across all work cultures, the specific context of human resource managers and the manufacturing industry led to a more exciting result. Predictors of work-related burnout are vast and may best be measured using positivism. Managing work-related burnout helps deliver professional human resource services while engaging in business partners' efforts. Human resource managers can sincerely provide care and compassion, which is central to human resource functions.

It is interesting to note that workplaces are more quickly affected by industrial revolutions in the manufacturing business. Additionally, human resource managers and other workers are more likely to experience burnout due to work circumstances and the presence of open systems and flexible cultural standards. Workplace treatments that focus on the individual level might assist in determining the elements

predisposing to burnout, which would lead to a reduction or prevention of work-related burnout in the future. Thus, for better generalization, future research is encouraged to study a wide range of subjects or in different settings, aforesaid in various industries. Furthermore, this study only used individual differences as antecedents of work-related burnout. Perhaps a longitudinal study can monitor the development of work-related burnout among human resource managers. A qualitative or mixed method could be an alternative to understanding work-related burnout from a specific psychological perspective.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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