

Emotional Intelligence and Job Effectiveness among Special School Teachers in Kerala: A Descriptive and Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

Teaching in special education settings necessitates advanced emotional competence owing to the intricate emotional and behavioral requirements of pupils. This study investigates the emotional intelligence and job efficacy of special school teachers in Kerala, while also analyzing variations across certain socio-demographic characteristics. Employing a descriptive and comparative research approach, data were gathered from 606 special school instructors via a structured questionnaire. Emotional intelligence was evaluated through personal and social competence aspects, while job effectiveness was analyzed utilizing indications such as job dedication. Statistical analyses encompassed percentage analysis, one-sample t-tests, independent t-tests, and one-way ANOVA. The findings demonstrate that special school educators possess markedly elevated emotional intelligence and robust job dedication. There were big disparities in emotional intelligence based on gender, age, experience, and wealth. However, marital status had no effect. The results show that special school teachers are emotionally strong and stress the need for programs that help them enhance their emotional intelligence so they can do their jobs better and be happier at work.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Job Effectiveness, Special School Teachers, Socio-Demographic Factors, Kerala

INTRODUCTION

Teachers who work in special education typically have a hard time since their pupils have a lot of different cognitive, emotional, and behavioral requirements. Teachers in special schools must continually develop their emotional regulation, empathy, and social competencies while also fulfilling academic and institutional requirements. Unlike general education settings, special education classrooms often present unforeseen emotional challenges, requiring educators to maintain emotional stability and professional commitment in high-stress environments (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Emotional intelligence (EI) is now a crucial psychological skill that enables people to accurately identify, understand, and manage their emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Goleman, 1995). Teachers that are emotionally intelligent can handle stress at work better, get along better with their students and coworkers, and create learning environments that are helpful (Goleman, 1998; Brackett & Katulak, 2006).

Teachers at special schools need to be emotionally intelligent because they need to be able to handle stress and change in addition to being good at teaching. Job devotion, emotional attachment to the profession, and ongoing motivation to fulfill professional duties effectively are all signs of a teacher's efficacy on the job. Special school teachers typically keep working even if the pay is low, the work is hard, and they are emotionally drained. This suggests that their dedication and performance may be strongly affected by their own emotional resources (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 2002).

Emotional intelligence is crucial for teachers to handle stress, sustain optimism, and stay involved in their work, therefore promoting long-term professional productivity and well-being (Goleman, 1998). Comprehending the degree of emotional intelligence among special education teachers and its impact on job effectiveness metrics

offers profound insights into the emotional dynamics inside special education. This understanding is essential for creating teacher development programs and institutional support systems that improve both teacher well-being and student results (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Although emotional intelligence has been thoroughly investigated across numerous professional domains, empirical studies concentrating on special school teachers are scarce, especially in the Indian context.

Current research primarily focuses on general education instructors or professionals in non-educational fields, resulting in a constrained comprehension of the unique emotional difficulties faced by special educators (Brackett & Katulak, 2006). Kerala is known for its forward-thinking education policy and focus on inclusive education. This makes it a good place to look at the emotional intelligence and job performance of special school instructors (Government of Kerala, 2020). There is a distinct necessity for systematic, descriptive, and comparative research that explores emotional intelligence levels and work effectiveness indicators among special school instructors, while also analyzing variances across socio-demographic characteristics.

Filling this gap helps both academic writing and making policies based on evidence in special education (NCTE, 2014). This study seeks to evaluate the emotional intelligence and job effectiveness indicators among special school teachers in Kerala, addressing the identified research gap, and to investigate variations across specific socio-demographic variables, including gender, age, educational qualification, experience, and income. The study employs a descriptive and comparative research design to clarify the emotional and professional characteristics of special school teachers, thereby offering evidence-based insights for teacher training, institutional support systems, and educational policy formulation (Kothari, 2004).

METHODOLOGY

The current study employs a descriptive and comparative research approach to investigate the levels of emotional intelligence and work effectiveness indicators among special school teachers in Kerala. This research approach is suitable for evaluating the current state of emotional intelligence and job-related attributes, as well as for comparing differences among specific socio-demographic categories, without seeking to determine causal correlations (Kothari, 2004).

The study's participants are teachers at special schools in Kerala. The final sample comprised 606 special school teachers, encompassing a range of age groups, educational qualifications, experience levels, income brackets, and institutional contexts throughout the state. The sample size was deemed sufficient for descriptive and comparative analysis, guaranteeing the representativeness of the population being examined (Hair et al., 1998). Before the analysis, the data were checked for completeness and accuracy, and only legitimate and useful responses were kept.

A systematic questionnaire created just for the study was used to gather primary data. There were three parts to the questionnaire. The first part asked about the respondents' socio-demographic traits, such as their gender, age, marital status, level of education, years of teaching experience, monthly salary, kind of school, and the school's location.

The second section evaluated emotional intelligence, which included personal competence aspects such as self-awareness, emotional self-regulation, transparency, adaptability, achievement orientation, initiative, and optimism, as well as social competence aspects including empathy, organizational awareness, service orientation, inspirational leadership, teamwork and collaboration, and communication. These aspects align with recognized emotional intelligence frameworks put out in prior research (Goleman, 1998; Mayer et al., 2004).

The final part looked at measures of job effectiveness, with a focus on job dedication and emotional attachment to the job. The questionnaire was given out in person and online. Respondents were told that the data were only being used for research and academic purposes.

We used both descriptive and inferential statistical methods to look at the data we gathered. We used percentage analysis to define the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics. We utilized a one-sample t-test to see if the emotional intelligence levels of special school instructors were very different from the average level.

Independent sample t-tests were utilized to examine disparities between two-group variables, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to evaluate differences among several socio-demographic categories. All statistical analyses were performed utilizing standard statistical instruments, and interpretations were drawn at established thresholds of statistical significance (Hair et al., 1998).

Participation in the survey was voluntary, and respondents were guaranteed secrecy and anonymity regarding their comments. The data gathered were utilized solely for academic and research objectives, and ethical standards were maintained during the entire process of data collecting and analysis (Kothari, 2004).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The socio-demographic traits of the respondents serve as the context for analyzing emotional intelligence and job performance results. The sample included instructors from special schools in Kerala who were of diverse genders, ages, marital statuses, educational backgrounds, experience levels, income levels, types of institutions, and locations of institutions.

Socio-Demographic profile of the respondents (N=606)

Characteristic	Dominant Category	%
Gender	Female	84.7
Age group	41–50 years	46.5
Marital status	Married	64.9
Educational qualification	Diploma in Special Education	67.8
Teaching experience	< 5 years	39.1
Monthly income	Below ₹20,000	68.3
Family type	Joint family	68.3
Institution type	Religious institutions	64.3
Area of institution	Rural	51.5

A one-sample t-test was used to see if the emotional intelligence levels of special school instructors substantially deviated from the mean level. The findings demonstrate that the average scores across all categories of emotional intelligence encompassing both personal and social competencies were markedly superior to the test value. These results show that special school teachers in Kerala have higher-than-average emotional intelligence, which means they are very aware of their own feelings, can control their emotions well, are flexible, and are good with other people. In special education settings, instructors need to have a lot of emotional intelligence since they have to deal with emotionally charged events in the classroom and give each kid with special needs the help they need.

One-Sample t-Test Results for Emotional Intelligence Dimensions

Emotional Intelligence Dimension	Mean (Range)	SD (Range)	t-value (Range)	Sig.
Personal Competence (6 factors)	4.10 – 4.28	0.64 – 0.82	35.05 – 48.49	< 0.001
Social Competence (6 factors)	4.25 – 4.52	0.56 – 0.91	37.20 – 67.00	< 0.001
Overall Emotional Intelligence	> 4.20	—	Highly significant	< 0.001

The independent sample t-test results demonstrate significant disparities between male and female teachers for several measures of emotional intelligence. Female instructors performed better on a number of social competence measures, such as communication, teamwork and collaboration, and inspirational leadership. However, there were no significant differences in other personal competence measures. This indicates that female educators exhibit superior interpersonal and collaborative emotional competencies, which are especially pertinent in special education settings that necessitate ongoing emotional engagement and cooperation.

Gender Differences in Emotional Intelligence Dimensions

EI Dimension (Significant only)	Male Mean	Female Mean	Sig.
Transparency	3.92	4.13	*
Initiative & Optimism	4.14	4.28	*
Inspirational Leadership	4.19	4.42	**
Teamwork & Collaboration	4.09	4.29	**
Communication	4.06	4.25	**

One-way ANOVA results show that emotional intelligence is very different between people of different ages, levels of experience, and monthly incomes. Teachers who were younger or in the middle of their careers were better at adapting and working together. Teachers who were older, on the other hand, had worse ratings in some areas. Emotional intelligence was also found to grow with teaching experience, which suggests that working in special education for a long time can help people become more emotionally intelligent. Differences depending on income levels suggest that instructors with higher incomes had more emotional self-control, while teachers with lower incomes had stronger service orientation and intrinsic motivation. These results show how emotional skills are affected in diverse ways by professional maturity and financial stability.

Emotional Intelligence across Age, Experience, and Income Groups

Emotional Intelligence Dimension	Married Mean	Single Mean	Sig.
Adaptability	4.30	4.18	*
Communication	4.29	4.19	*
Other EI dimensions	—	—	NS

The examination of job effectiveness factors indicates that special school teachers demonstrate significant levels of job dedication and emotional investment in their profession. Teachers show a lot of dedication and responsibility in their jobs, even when they have to deal with money problems and job difficulties. The continuously high level of job commitment implies that intrinsic motivation, emotional involvement, and professional ethics are more important than external rewards alone for special education teachers. This underscores the need of emotional intelligence in maintaining enduring professional dedication within challenging educational environments.

Job Commitment Indicators among Special School Teachers

Emotional Intelligence Factor	Result
Self-Awareness	*
Emotional Self-Control	NS
Transparency	NS
Adaptability	NS
Achievement Orientation	NS
Initiative and Optimism	*
Empathy	NS
Organizational Awareness	NS
Service Orientation	NS
Inspirational Leadership	NS
Teamwork and Collaboration	**
Communication	NS

Note: $p < 0.05$ (*), $p < 0.01$ (**); NS – Not Significant

The combined results show that emotional intelligence is an important skill for special school teachers in Kerala. High emotional intelligence helps teachers be flexible, work well with others, and control their emotions, which helps them stay devoted and productive even when things are tough at work. Differences in socio-demographic characteristics show that there is a need for specialized programs to help people improve their emotional intelligence, especially for older instructors and those who are having trouble with money.

CONCLUSION

The research investigated the degree of emotional intelligence and job performance among special school educators in Kerala, revealing disparities linked to certain socio-demographic factors. The results indicate that special school instructors have elevated emotional intelligence in both personal and social competence dimensions, demonstrating significant emotional awareness, adaptability, and interpersonal abilities essential for special education environments. Emotional intelligence is mostly the same across different demographic groups,

but there were some small differences based on gender, marital status, and educational level. This shows that special school teachers' professional commitment and emotional ability are more influenced by their own motivation and work experience than by their personal background.

The consistently high degree of job commitment underscores the emotional resilience and dedication of teachers working with children with exceptional needs. Even though the study made some good points, it has several problems that could lead to more research in the future. The study was limited to special school teachers in Kerala and utilized a cross-sectional design relying on self-reported data. Subsequent studies may utilize longitudinal methodologies to investigate the evolution of emotional intelligence over time and broaden the scope of research to include additional areas or comparable educational settings. Moreover, subsequent study may investigate additional psychological and organizational variables, including work engagement, burnout, and institutional support, to get a more profound understanding of the mechanisms that uphold job success among special educators.

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