Advances in Consumer Research
ISSN (Print): 0098-9258
ISSN(Online): 3079-1766

Vol. 2, Issue 4 (2025) https://acr-journal.com/

Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Teachers Psychological Well-Being: An Integration of Self-Determination Theory

Dr. J.Josephine Lalitha[1], Mrs. A.Anu Amalorpava Mary[2]

[1]Associate Professor, Department of Management, PSG College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore

[2]Research scholar, Department of Management, PSG College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore

Cite this paper as: Dr. J.Josephine Lalitha, Mrs. A.Anu Amalorpava Mary, (2025) Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Teachers Psychological Well-Being: An Integration of Self-Determination Theory. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 2 (4), 1388-1397

KEYWORDS

Emotional Intelligence, Psychological Well-Being, Self-Determination Theory, Teacher Motivation, Autonomy

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study investigates the influence of Emotional Intelligence (EI) on teachers' Psychological Well-Being (TPW), with a particular focus on the mediating role of the three basic psychological needs outlined in Self-Determination Theory (SDT): perceived autonomy, perceived competence, and perceived relatedness. The research aims to offer a deeper understanding of how specific emotional competencies contribute to teacher well-being in the context of educational institutions in the Coimbatore district of India.

Methods: A structured survey was administered to a sample of 401 school teachers using validated measurement scales for EI, SDT constructs, and psychological well-being. The five dimensions of EI—Self-Awareness (SA), Self-Regulation (SR), Motivation (M), Empathy (E), and Social Skills (SS)—were analyzed. Data were subjected to Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test direct and mediated relationships among constructs.

Findings: The results revealed that all five EI components significantly influenced SDT variables, which in turn had strong positive effects on teachers' psychological well-being. Moreover, certain EI components such as self-awareness and motivation also exhibited direct effects on well-being. Among the SDT constructs, perceived autonomy emerged as the strongest mediator. Self-regulation, while significant in predicting relatedness and autonomy, did not directly influence well-being, suggesting an indirect pathway.

Implications: The study advances the theoretical integration of EI and SDT in the field of teacher psychology and highlights the critical role of emotional and motivational competencies in fostering workplace well-being. Practically, the findings underscore the need for EI-based training programs and autonomy-supportive school environments to enhance teachers' mental health and job satisfaction.

Originality/Value: This research fills a notable gap in the literature by contextualizing the EI–SDT–well-being framework within the Indian education system. It offers both theoretical depth and actionable insights for policymakers, school leaders, and teacher education institutions aiming to improve the emotional climate and psychological resilience of educators.

1. INTRODUCTION

The teaching profession is widely acknowledged as one of the most emotionally demanding occupations, requiring constant emotional regulation, empathy, and social interaction. As teachers navigate academic responsibilities, administrative pressures, and student-related challenges, their psychological well-being becomes a crucial factor for both professional performance and personal health (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Among the numerous psychological constructs influencing well-being, Emotional Intelligence (EI) has emerged as a key determinant of how individuals manage stress, build relationships, and sustain motivation in high-demand environments such as education (Goleman, 1995; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004).

Emotional Intelligence, originally conceptualized by Salovey and Mayer (1990), and later popularized by Goleman (1995), refers to the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and utilize emotions effectively. Goleman's model of EI comprises five core dimensions: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. For teachers, these emotional competencies are integral not only in classroom management and student engagement but also in maintaining their own emotional balance and mental health (Brackett et al., 2010). Higher levels of EI have been consistently associated with better coping mechanisms, reduced burnout, and enhanced psychological well-being (Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2006; Vesely, Saklofske, & Nordstokke, 2014).

To further understand the pathway through which EI influences well-being, this study integrates the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) proposed by Deci and Ryan (1985). SDT posits that psychological well-being is fundamentally rooted in the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Teachers who feel autonomous in their instructional choices, competent in their professional roles, and connected to colleagues and students are more likely to experience intrinsic motivation and greater psychological fulfillment (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Emotional intelligence facilitates the satisfaction of these needs; for instance, empathy and social skills enhance relatedness, while self-regulation and motivation contribute to perceived competence and autonomy (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Petrides et al., 2007).

This conceptual framework proposes that the five components of emotional intelligence positively influence teachers' perceived autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which in turn enhance their psychological well-being. Additionally, EI may exert a direct effect on psychological well-being, suggesting both mediating and direct pathways. Understanding these relationships can inform teacher training and professional development programs aimed at promoting emotional skills to enhance teacher satisfaction and mental health outcomes.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the influence of emotional intelligence on teachers' psychological well-being, mediated through the constructs of Self-Determination Theory. By bridging these theoretical perspectives, the study provides a holistic view of how internal emotional capacities and psychological needs interact to shape well-being in educational settings.

2. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

Emotional Intelligence (EI) refers to an individual's ability to identify, understand, manage, and utilize emotions effectively in both intrapersonal and interpersonal contexts (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Goleman (1995) expanded this framework into five core components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Self-awareness enables teachers to recognize their own emotional states, which is crucial in managing classroom dynamics and responding appropriately to student needs (Brackett et al., 2006). Self-regulation refers to the ability to control impulses and adapt to changing circumstances—essential traits for maintaining professional conduct under stress (Goleman, 1995). Motivation, in the emotional intelligence context, reflects a teacher's internal drive to achieve and sustain goal-directed behavior, which influences job satisfaction and performance (Petrides et al., 2007). Empathy, the ability to understand others' emotions, fosters stronger relationships with students and colleagues (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Social skills help in managing conflict, coordinating efforts, and building a supportive work environment (Vesely et al., 2014). Teachers who demonstrate high EI are better equipped to handle emotional labor, mitigate job-related stress, and maintain their psychological equilibrium (Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2006).

H_1: Emotional Intelligence (Self-awareness, Self-regulation, Motivation, Empathy, Social skills) of teacher is significantly related to Perceived Autonomy

H_2: Emotional Intelligence (Self-awareness, Self-regulation, Motivation, Empathy, Social skills) of teacher is significantly related to Perceived Competence

H_3: Emotional Intelligence (Self-awareness, Self-regulation, Motivation, Empathy, Social skills) of teacher is significantly related to Perceived Relatedness

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), proposed by Deci and Ryan (1985), posits that optimal functioning and psychological well-being depend on the satisfaction of three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy refers to the need to experience one's actions as self-endorsed. Teachers who feel they have control over their teaching practices tend to report higher satisfaction and lower burnout (Reeve, 2006). Competence is the need to feel effective and capable in one's activities. EI can boost a teacher's self-efficacy and sense of mastery, reinforcing perceptions of competence (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Relatedness reflects the need to feel connected to others. Teachers with strong emotional and social skills are more likely to experience fulfilling interactions with students and colleagues, which enhances their sense of relatedness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Research has shown that individuals with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to experience satisfaction of these three needs, leading to enhanced psychological well-being (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005; Sheldon et al., 2001).

H_4: Self-Determination Theory (Perceived Autonomy, Perceived Competence, Perceived Relatedness) is significantly related to Psychological Well-being of teachers.

Several studies have investigated how emotional intelligence enhances psychological outcomes through the satisfaction of basic psychological needs. For example, Palomera et al. (2008) found that emotionally intelligent teachers are more adept at

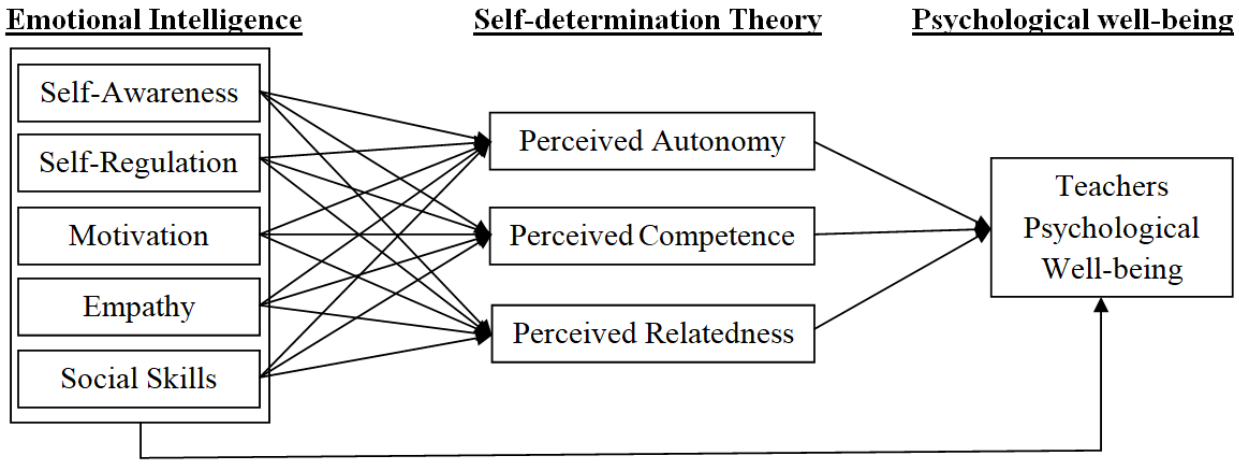
creating autonomy-supportive classrooms, which in turn boosts their own feelings of autonomy and satisfaction. Mérida-López and Extremera (2017) demonstrated that teachers with high emotional clarity and emotional repair reported significantly higher levels of job engagement and psychological well-being, mediated by intrinsic motivation and need satisfaction. In another study, Li, Yin, and Liu (2021) found that emotional intelligence in teachers positively predicted the satisfaction of competence and relatedness needs, leading to lower burnout and better mental health outcomes. The model proposed in the present study aligns with these findings, arguing that emotional intelligence acts as a foundational skill set that promotes the fulfillment of SDT-based needs, which in turn mediates its effect on teachers' psychological well-being.

While mediation through SDT constructs is well-supported, there is also empirical evidence suggesting that EI has a direct impact on well-being. For instance, Schutte et al. (2007) found that individuals with high EI experience less depression and anxiety, regardless of environmental factors. Similarly, Brackett and Mayer (2003) reported that teachers with higher EI demonstrate stronger resilience, better coping strategies, and higher overall life satisfaction. Thus, both direct and indirect pathways should be considered in models examining the role of emotional intelligence in psychological health.

H_5: Emotional Intelligence (Self-awareness, Self-regulation, Motivation, Empathy, Social skills) is directly related to Psychological Well-being

Despite growing interest in the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in enhancing teacher well-being, research integrating EI with Self-Determination Theory (SDT) remains limited. While studies have shown that EI can positively influence well-being, few have explored how this relationship is mediated through the satisfaction of basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Moreover, teacher-specific studies, especially in the Indian context, are underrepresented. Existing literature also lacks clarity on which EI subcomponents most impact psychological need satisfaction. This study addresses these gaps by examining how EI influences teachers' psychological well-being through SDT constructs in a culturally relevant educational setting.

Figure: 1 Conceptual model



Source: Goleman (1995); Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005 & Li, Yin, and Liu (2021)

3. METHODS AND MEASURES

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the influence of emotional intelligence on teachers' psychological well-being, with the mediating role of self-determination theory constructs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The research was situated in Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu, which hosted a broad spectrum of public and private educational institutions, making it an appropriate site for educational and psychological research in the Indian context (Govindaraju & Venkatesan, 2011). The study population consisted of secondary and higher secondary school teachers from both government and private institutions. A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure adequate representation across school types, and a minimum sample size of 338 teachers was targeted to satisfy the sample adequacy requirements for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), as recommended by Kline (2016). Data was collected using a structured questionnaire composed of validated scales. Emotional Intelligence was assessed using the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS), which measured self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills (Wong & Law, 2002). The constructs of Self-Determination Theory—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—were measured using items adapted from the Basic Psychological Needs Scale (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which demonstrated robust reliability and cross-cultural validity. Teachers' psychological well-being was measured using Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scale, a widely used instrument that captured six dimensions of positive mental health (Ryff, 1989). All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), allowing for the quantification of attitudes and perceptions (Likert, 1932). Data collection was conducted through a combination of in-person distribution and online forms,

ensuring flexibility and broader outreach. Prior permissions were obtained from school administrators and the District Educational Office, and ethical clearance was secured from an institutional review board. Informed consent was taken from all participants, assuring confidentiality and the voluntary nature of participation. For data analysis, descriptive statistics were first used to summarize the demographic variables. This research explores possible solutions to this problem, including hybrid models that combines demographic data with behavioral pattern (Akhilesh Admane, R et al., 2025). The reliability and validity of each construct were tested through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The hypothesized model was tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which enabled the examination of both direct and indirect (mediated) relationships among variables (Hair et al., 2010).

4. RESULTS

This section presents various statistical tests conducted to evaluate the conceptual model and assess the validity and reliability of the measures used. To establish the validity and reliability of the concepts, we employed Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). According to Anderson and Gerbing (1988), CFA provides essential information regarding the convergent validity of the scales. This process involves verifying that the observed variables appropriately load onto their corresponding latent constructs (Kline, 2010). To establish discriminant validity, we applied the approach proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981). A comprehensive structural equation modeling (SEM) approach was utilized, employing AMOS (Version 26) to validate the proposed model.

Table 1 CFA model fit indices

Fit indices	Value	Accepted value	Result
Cmin/df	2.176	Less than 3	Supported
GFI	.987	Value greater than .90	Supported
CFI	.932	Value greater than .90	Supported
IFI	.988	Value greater than .90	Supported
RMSEA	.067	Value less than .08	Supported

Source: Kline, (2010)

Table 1 presents the model fit indices obtained from the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) conducted to validate the measurement model for the study constructs—emotional intelligence, self-determination theory dimensions, and psychological well-being. The results indicate a good fit between the hypothesized model and the observed data. The Chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (Cmin/df) is 2.176, which is below the recommended threshold of 3.0, indicating an acceptable level of model fit (Kline, 2010). The Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) is 0.987, which exceeds the acceptable benchmark of 0.90, suggesting that a high proportion of the variance in the sample covariance matrix is accounted for by the model (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Furthermore, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) value of 0.932 and the Incremental Fit Index (IFI) of 0.988 both surpass the recommended cut-off value of 0.90, demonstrating that the proposed model provides a better fit than a null or independence model (Byrne, 2010). Lastly, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) value is 0.067, which is below the upper limit of 0.08, indicating a close fit of the model in relation to the degrees of freedom (Browne & Cudeck, 1993).

Overall, these indices collectively support the construct validity and goodness-of-fit of the measurement model, confirming that the selected indicators adequately represent the underlying latent constructs.

Table 2 SEM model fit indices

Fit indices	Value	Accepted value	Result
Cmin/df	2.875	Less than 3	Supported
GFI	.976	Value greater than .90	Supported
CFI	.921	Value greater than .90	Supported
IFI	.977	Value greater than .90	Supported
RMSEA	.071	Value less than .08	Supported

Source: Primary Data

Table 2 presents the fit indices derived from the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis, conducted to evaluate the overall fit of the proposed structural model that examines the relationship between emotional intelligence, self-determination theory constructs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness), and psychological well-being among teachers. The Chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (Cmin/df) is 2.875, which is within the acceptable threshold of less than 3, suggesting an adequate fit between the hypothesized model and the observed data (Kline, 2010). The Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) is 0.976, exceeding the minimum recommended value of 0.90. This indicates a high level of model fit, reflecting the proportion of variance accounted for by the estimated population covariance (Byrne, 2010). Similarly, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Incremental Fit Index (IFI) are reported as 0.921 and 0.977 respectively, both surpassing the commonly accepted threshold of 0.90 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). These values demonstrate that the proposed model improves substantially over a baseline model in explaining the data. Additionally, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is 0.071, which falls below the upper limit of 0.08. This indicates a reasonable error of approximation in the population and supports the model's close fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). Taken together, these indices confirm that the structural model fits the data well, supporting the theoretical relationships proposed in the study. The results validate the mediating role of self-determination theory in the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being, justifying further analysis and interpretation of path coefficients.

Figure: 1 Hypothesis model

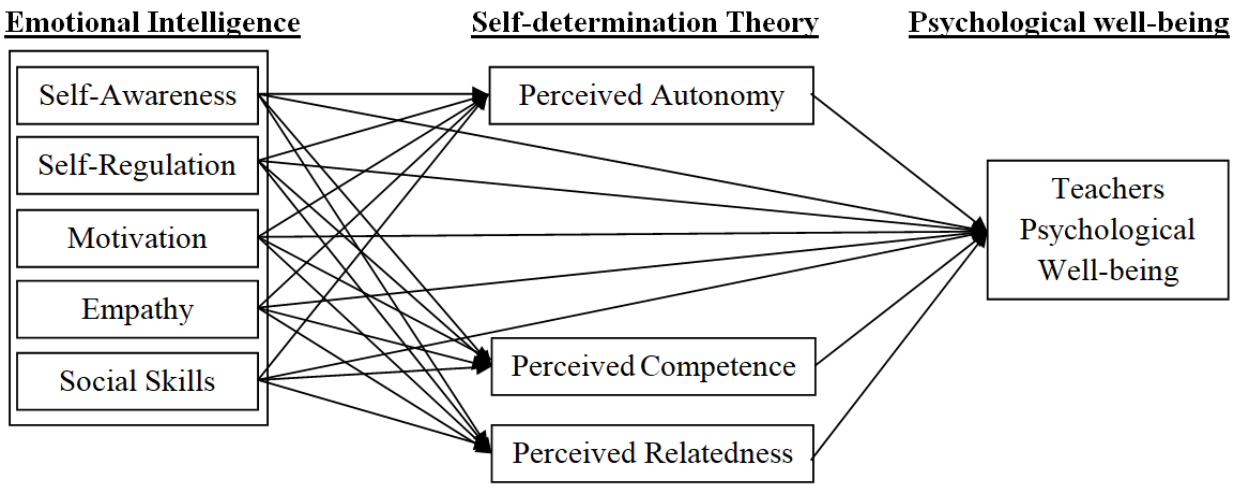


Table 3 This table represents hypothesis and relationships between variables

Hypothesis	Path	Estimates β	P value	Supported
H1	SA → PA	0.311	.000	Yes
	SR → PA	0.106	.034	Yes
	M → PA	0.235	.000	Yes
	E → PA	0.287	.000	Yes
	SS → PA	0.266	.000	Yes
H2	SA → PC	0.333	.000	Yes
	SR → PC	0.08	.073	Y
	M → PC	0.224	.000	Yes
	E → PC	0.231	.000	Yes
	SS → PC	0.283	.000	Yes
H3	SA → PR	0.401	.000	Yes
	SR → PR	0.203	.000	Yes

	M → PR	0.222	.000	Yes
	E → PR	0.271	.000	Yes
	SS → PR	0.253	.000	Yes
H4	PA → TPW	0.532	.000	Yes
	PC → TPW	0.291	.000	Yes
	PR → TPW	0.458	.000	Yes
H5	SA → TPW	0.267	.000	Yes
	SR → TPW	0.072	.103	No
	M → TPW	0.191	.000	Yes
	E → TPW	0.102	.021	Yes
	SS → TPW	0.145	.003	Yes

Figure 1 and table 3 represented the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to evaluate the direct and indirect relationships between dimensions of Emotional Intelligence—Self-awareness (SA), Self-regulation (SR), Motivation (M), Empathy (E), and Social Skills (SS)—and three basic psychological needs based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT): Autonomy (PA), Competence (PC), and Relatedness (PR), which in turn influence Teachers' Psychological Well-being (TPW). The results are summarized in Table 3 and indicate strong empirical support for most of the hypothesized relationships. Under Hypothesis 1 (H1), all emotional intelligence dimensions showed significant positive effects on Autonomy (PA). Specifically, Self-awareness ($\beta = 0.311$, $p < .001$), Motivation ($\beta = 0.235$, $p < .001$), Empathy ($\beta = 0.287$, $p < .001$), and Social Skills ($\beta = 0.266$, $p < .001$) emerged as strong predictors. Self-regulation, though comparatively weaker ($\beta = 0.106$, $p = .034$), was still statistically significant. These findings align with prior literature, suggesting that emotionally intelligent individuals are better equipped to assert personal goals and values autonomously (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

In Hypothesis 2 (H2), most EI components significantly predicted Competence (PC), including SA ($\beta = 0.333$), M ($\beta = 0.224$), E ($\beta = 0.231$), and SS ($\beta = 0.283$), all with $p < .001$. Interestingly, Self-regulation (SR) had a marginally non-significant effect on competence ($\beta = 0.08$, $p = .073$), suggesting that the influence of SR may be more indirect or mediated through other factors. The results reinforce existing research which posits that emotional intelligence enhances an individual's sense of efficacy and problem-solving abilities (Bandura, 1997; Goleman, 1998).

Hypothesis 3 (H3), which examines predictors of Relatedness (PR), was strongly supported. SA ($\beta = 0.401$), SR ($\beta = 0.203$), M ($\beta = 0.222$), E ($\beta = 0.271$), and SS ($\beta = 0.253$) all demonstrated significant positive effects on PR ($p < .001$), indicating that emotionally intelligent teachers are more likely to form satisfying interpersonal relationships, fostering a sense of connectedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004).

Hypothesis 4 (H4) established the mediating role of SDT variables in influencing Teachers' Psychological Well-being (TPW). All three needs—Autonomy ($\beta = 0.532$), Competence ($\beta = 0.291$), and Relatedness ($\beta = 0.458$)—significantly and positively impacted TPW ($p < .001$). These findings are consistent with SDT literature, which argues that satisfaction of psychological needs directly contributes to well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Vansteenkiste & Ryan, 2013).

Hypothesis 5 (H5) tested the direct effects of EI on TPW. SA ($\beta = 0.267$), M ($\beta = 0.191$), E ($\beta = 0.102$), and SS ($\beta = 0.145$) had significant positive influences on TPW (all $p < .05$), confirming that aspects of emotional intelligence can independently predict well-being. However, SR ($\beta = 0.072$, $p = .103$) was not a significant direct predictor of TPW. This suggests that self-regulation may exert its impact indirectly, perhaps through its influence on relatedness or autonomy. These findings echo previous work that identifies emotional competencies as foundational to occupational well-being in educators (Brackett et al., 2010; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

Overall, the hypothesized model confirms the critical mediating role of basic psychological needs in linking emotional intelligence to psychological well-being. It also highlights the partial direct effects of emotional intelligence dimensions on TPW, consistent with Self-Determination Theory and emotional intelligence literature.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study offer robust empirical support for the hypothesized relationships between emotional intelligence (EI), basic psychological needs as outlined in Self-Determination Theory (SDT), and teachers' psychological well-being

(TPW). Structural Equation Modeling results confirm that all five components of EI—Self-awareness (SA), Self-regulation (SR), Motivation (M), Empathy (E), and Social Skills (SS)—are significantly associated with at least one of the three SDT variables: Perceived Autonomy (PA), Perceived Competence (PC), and Perceived Relatedness (PR). This aligns with foundational work by Deci and Ryan (2000) and Goleman (1995), which suggests that emotionally intelligent individuals are more adept at satisfying intrinsic psychological needs that foster optimal functioning and well-being.

EI and Psychological Needs Satisfaction

The significant relationship between SA, M, E, and SS with PA (H1) indicates that emotionally competent teachers are more likely to perceive greater autonomy in their professional roles. This supports findings by Reeve (2006), who noted that autonomy-supportive teaching environments are often cultivated by educators who are emotionally attuned and intrinsically motivated. SR, while still significant, showed a weaker path coefficient ($\beta = 0.106$), suggesting that the regulatory component of EI may be less directly tied to perceived autonomy and more context-dependent.

For H2, SA, M, E, and SS were also strong predictors of PC, reflecting prior studies asserting that EI enhances self-efficacy and perceived capability (Bandura, 1997; Petrides et al., 2007). The near-significant result for SR ($p = .073$) suggests a potentially indirect or mediated effect of self-regulation on competence, a hypothesis consistent with Goleman's (1998) suggestion that self-regulation underpins long-term performance and resilience more than immediate competence perceptions.

In H3, all EI dimensions significantly predicted PR, emphasizing the interpersonal strength of emotionally intelligent individuals. SA ($\beta = 0.401$) and E ($\beta = 0.271$) were particularly influential, echoing Mayer et al. (2004) and Jennings & Greenberg (2009), who emphasized the centrality of empathy and emotional clarity in establishing meaningful relationships in educational settings.

SDT and Psychological Well-being

Hypothesis 4 (H4) confirmed that PA, PC, and PR significantly contribute to TPW, aligning with Self-Determination Theory's core premise (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000). PA ($\beta = 0.532$) was the most influential predictor, indicating that teachers who perceive higher autonomy experience greater psychological well-being. This supports Vansteenkiste and Ryan's (2013) argument that autonomy is a cornerstone of intrinsic motivation and well-being, especially in high-stress professions like teaching.

Direct Effects of EI on TPW

Hypothesis 5 (H5) addressed the possibility of a direct relationship between EI components and TPW. SA ($\beta = 0.267$), M ($\beta = 0.191$), E ($\beta = 0.102$), and SS ($\beta = 0.145$) had significant direct effects on TPW, underscoring that emotional competencies can independently enhance well-being, beyond their mediation through SDT constructs. This is consistent with findings by Brackett and Mayer (2003) and Schutte et al. (2007), who found that individuals with high EI exhibit greater resilience, life satisfaction, and emotional stability. Interestingly, SR did not significantly predict TPW directly ($p = .103$), suggesting that its effects may be fully mediated through SDT variables or only manifest in combination with other traits or contextual supports.

6. IMPLICATION

Theoretical Implications

This study offers significant theoretical contributions by integrating Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT) in the context of teacher well-being. First, it supports the growing body of research that emphasizes the multidimensionality of EI and its influence on critical psychological constructs such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004; Goleman, 1995). The findings demonstrate that distinct components of EI—particularly self-awareness, motivation, empathy, and social skills—serve as predictors of basic psychological needs, thus offering nuanced insights into how emotional competencies contribute to teachers' intrinsic functioning.

Second, the study extends SDT's explanatory power by illustrating how EI contributes to the satisfaction of the three psychological needs proposed by Deci and Ryan (1985), thereby offering a mediated pathway to psychological well-being. This theoretical linkage provides empirical validation to the proposition that EI is not only a personal trait but also a critical mechanism that fosters internal motivational states (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Vansteenkiste & Ryan, 2013).

Finally, this research addresses a gap in culturally contextualized educational research, particularly in the Indian context, where few studies have empirically examined the interplay between EI and SDT among educators (Saklofske et al., 2012). It provides evidence that the interrelationship between EI and SDT-based needs holds across cultural boundaries, supporting the universality of these theoretical models.

Practical Implications

The study also presents meaningful practical implications for educational institutions, policy-makers, and teacher development programs:

Professional Development and Training: The findings suggest that emotional intelligence training should be integrated into teacher education and professional development programs. By enhancing self-awareness, empathy, and social skills, such programs can directly influence teachers' perceptions of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, thereby promoting well-being (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Brackett et al., 2010).

Mental Health and Retention Policies: Given that psychological well-being is a strong predictor of job satisfaction and teacher retention, schools and institutions can design interventions targeting the emotional needs of teachers. Workshops on emotion regulation and peer support groups could help teachers build coping mechanisms, especially in emotionally demanding environments (Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2006; Mérida-López & Extremera, 2017).

Organizational Climate and Autonomy Support: Educational leaders should foster autonomy-supportive environments by involving teachers in decision-making and providing flexibility in instructional methods. Such autonomy not only reinforces motivation but also aligns with EI competencies that support self-directed behavior (Reeve, 2006; Palomera et al., 2008).

Well-being as a Performance Metric: Institutions can use psychological well-being as a key performance indicator (KPI) for teacher effectiveness and satisfaction. Incorporating well-being metrics into performance reviews and feedback systems can help identify emotional barriers to teaching efficacy and offer timely support (Schutte et al., 2007; Li, Yin, & Liu, 2021).

7. CONCLUSION

This study provides compelling evidence for the pivotal role of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in promoting the psychological well-being of teachers through the mediating constructs of Self-Determination Theory (SDT)—namely perceived autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The results reveal that EI components such as self-awareness, motivation, empathy, and social skills significantly influence the satisfaction of psychological needs, which in turn enhance teachers' mental health and professional resilience. These findings align with prior research indicating that emotionally intelligent individuals are more adept at managing stress, building positive relationships, and maintaining job satisfaction (Brackett et al., 2010; Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2006).

The study also demonstrates that EI not only has indirect effects through SDT constructs but also exerts direct influence on psychological well-being, particularly through self-awareness and motivation. This dual pathway underscores the complementary nature of EI and SDT, validating theoretical models that emphasize both emotional competencies and intrinsic motivation as core determinants of well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Vansteenkiste & Ryan, 2013).

Furthermore, the model's applicability within an Indian educational context enriches the cross-cultural relevance of EI and SDT, bridging a significant gap in the existing literature. Given the rising challenges in the teaching profession—including emotional labor, burnout, and attrition—fostering EI and supporting psychological needs are not only beneficial but necessary for sustaining teacher engagement and performance (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Li et al., 2021).

In conclusion, the integration of Emotional Intelligence and Self-Determination Theory offers a robust framework for enhancing teacher well-being. Future interventions and educational policies should prioritize the development of emotional competencies and create autonomy-supportive environments to ensure sustainable, meaningful, and psychologically healthy teaching careers.

REFERENCES

[1] Akhilesh Admane, R., Sarma, P. H., Sakthi Bharathi, S., Menaka, S. R., Al Said, N., & Todmal, A. D. (2025). Transforming Marketing Campaign Effectiveness With AI-Based Consumer Behavior Analytics. In P. Rai, T. Ahmad, & B. Pandey (Eds.), *Embracing the Cloud as a Business Essential* (pp. 477-490). IGI Global Scientific Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-9581-3.ch024

[2] Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. Freeman.

[3] Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin, 117*(3), 497–529.

[4] Brackett, M. A., & Mayer, J. D. (2003). Convergent, discriminant, and incremental validity of competing measures of emotional intelligence. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 29*(9), 1147–1158.

[5] Brackett, M. A., Palomera, R., Mojsa-Kaja, J., Reyes, M. R., & Salovey, P. (2010). Emotion-regulation ability, burnout, and job satisfaction among British secondary-school teachers. *Psychology in the Schools, 47*(4), 406–417.

[6] Browne, M. W., & Cudeck, R. (1993). Alternative ways of assessing model fit. In K. A. Bollen & J. S. Long (Eds.), *Testing Structural Equation Models* (pp. 136–162). Sage.

[7] Byrne, B. M. (2010). *Structural Equation Modeling with AMOS: Basic Concepts, Applications, and Programming* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

[8] Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York: Plenum.

[9] Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227–268. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01.

[10] Extremera, N., & Fernández-Berrocal, P. (2006). Emotional intelligence as predictor of mental, social, and physical health in university students. *The Spanish Journal of Psychology, 9*(1), 45–51.

[11] Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. New York: Bantam Books.

[12] Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with emotional intelligence*. Bantam Books.

[13] Govindaraju, R., & Venkatesan, S. (2011). A study on stress and coping strategies among school teachers in Tamil Nadu. *Indian Journal of Applied Psychology*, 48(2), 22–30.

[14] Greenberg, M. T., Weissberg, R. P., O'Brien, M. U., Zins, J. E., Fredericks, L., Resnik, H., & Elias, M. J. (2003). Enhancing school-based prevention and youth development through coordinated social, emotional, and academic learning. *American Psychologist, 58*(6–7), 466–474.

[15] Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate Data Analysis* (7th ed.). Pearson.

[16] Hu, L., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling*, 6(1), 1–55. https://doi.org/10.1080/10705519909540118

[17] Jennings, P. A., & Greenberg, M. T. (2009). The prosocial classroom: Teacher social and emotional competence in relation to student and classroom outcomes. *Review of Educational Research, 79*(1), 491–525.

[18] Kline, R. B. (2010). *Principles and Practice of Structural Equation Modeling* (3rd ed.). Guilford Press.

[19] Kline, R. B. (2016). *Principles and Practice of Structural Equation Modeling* (4th ed.). Guilford Press.

[20] Li, Y., Yin, H., & Liu, L. (2021). Teacher emotional intelligence and job satisfaction: The mediating roles of psychological empowerment and work engagement. *Current Psychology, 40*(3), 1262–1270.

[21] Likert, R. (1932). A technique for the measurement of attitudes. *Archives of Psychology*, 22(140), 1–55.

[22] Lomas, T., Medina, J. C., Ivtzan, I., Rupprecht, S., Hart, R., & Eiroa-Orosa, F. J. (2017). The impact of mindfulness on well-being and performance in the workplace: An inclusive systematic review of the empirical literature. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 26*(4), 492–513.

[23] Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. R. (2004). Emotional intelligence: Theory, findings, and implications. *Psychological Inquiry, 15*(3), 197–215.

[24] Mérida-López, S., & Extremera, N. (2017). Emotional intelligence and teacher burnout: A systematic review. *International Journal of Educational Research, 85*, 121–130.

[25] Mikulincer, M., & Shaver, P. R. (2005). Attachment theory and emotions in close relationships: Exploring the attachment-related dynamics of emotional reactions to relational events. *Personal Relationships, 12*(2), 149–168.

[26] Palomera, R., Fernández-Berrocal, P., & Brackett, M. A. (2008). Emotional intelligence as a basic competency in pre-service teacher training: Some evidence. *Electronic Journal of Research in Educational Psychology, 6*(2), 437–454.

[27] Petrides, K. V., Frederickson, N., & Furnham, A. (2007). The role of trait emotional intelligence in academic performance and deviant behavior in adolescents. *Personality and Individual Differences, 42*(7), 1353–1361.

[28] Reeve, J. (2006). Teachers as facilitators: What autonomy-supportive teachers do and why their students benefit. *The Elementary School Journal, 106*(3), 225–236.

[29] Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist, 55*(1), 68–78.

[30] Ryff, C. D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57(6), 1069–1081. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.57.6.1069.

[31] Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 9(3), 185–211.

[32] Schutte, N. S., Malouff, J. M., Thorsteinsson, E. B., Bhullar, N., & Rooke, S. E. (2007). A meta-analytic investigation of the relationship between emotional intelligence and health. *Personality and Individual Differences, 42*(6), 921–933.

[33] Sheldon, K. M., Ryan, R. M., Deci, E. L., & Kasser, T. (2001). The independent effects of goal contents and

motives on well-being: It's both what you pursue and why you pursue it. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 27*(4), 475–486.

[34] Vansteenkiste, M., & Ryan, R. M. (2013). On psychological growth and vulnerability: Basic psychological need satisfaction and need frustration as a unifying principle. *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration*, 23(3), 263–280. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032359

[35] Vesely, A. K., Saklofske, D. H., & Nordstokke, D. W. (2014). EI in the classroom: The social-emotional learning of teachers. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology, 29*(2), 181–196.

[36] Wong, C. S., & Law, K. S. (2002). The effects of leader and follower emotional intelligence on performance and attitude: An exploratory study. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 13(3), 243–274. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(02)00099-1.

fffff