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Emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, basic psychological needs satisfaction and their role in job satisfaction and work involvement in teachers

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Abstract

This study explores the relationships among emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and the satisfaction of basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, and relatedness) in shaping job satisfaction and work involvement among teachers. The research is grounded in the context of a social-emotional skills development program implemented by UNICEF under the SEE-Norway Grants 2014–2021 framework. A total of 97 teachers participated in this cross-sectional study, completing validated instruments to measure the constructs of interest. Results indicate that emotional intelligence directly predicts job satisfaction, while self-efficacy is significantly associated with work involvement. Autonomy satisfaction mediates the relationship between self-efficacy and job satisfaction, whereas relatedness satisfaction is associated with both outcomes. However, competence satisfaction showed no significant mediation effects. The findings underscore the critical role of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy in enhancing teachers' professional well-being and engagement, suggesting the need for targeted training programs to develop these competencies. These insights contribute to fostering more positive educational environments by promoting teacher retention, satisfaction, and involvement.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, basic psychological needs, job satisfaction, work involvement, teachers, socio-emotional competencies, professional well-being, educational environment, psychological mediation.

Introduction

The development of socio-emotional abilities in teachers is increasingly recognized as essential for creating positive and effective learning environments. Socio-emotional competencies, such as emotional regulation, empathy, interpersonal communication, and self-awareness, enable teachers to manage classroom dynamics, build constructive relationships, and respond effectively to students' needs. Research indicates that teachers with strong socio-emotional skills foster a more supportive learning atmosphere, contribute to students' academic and emotional development, and experience lower levels of stress and burnout (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Roeser et al., 2012).

Socio-emotional abilities are crucial for teachers in establishing a positive classroom climate, which directly affects student engagement and behavior. Teachers who can manage their own emotions and model self-regulation help create a calm, respectful classroom environment. By demonstrating empathy and understanding, teachers can build stronger connections with students, which has been shown to reduce disciplinary issues and increase cooperation (Garner, 2010). Positive teacher-student relationships are linked to improved academic performance and lower rates of disruptive behavior, as students feel supported and valued (Hamre & Pianta, 2006).

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Empirical studies have shown that teachers with higher levels of emotional intelligence tend to have better classroom management skills. For example, Brackett et al. (2010) found that teachers with well-developed emotional regulation skills were more effective at handling classroom conflicts and maintaining student engagement. Teachers with strong socio-emotional skills are better equipped to recognize and address the unique needs of students, contributing to a more inclusive and adaptive learning environment.

Developing socio-emotional skills also has significant benefits for teachers' well-being. Teaching is a profession that often involves high emotional demands, and teachers who lack socio-emotional competencies are more susceptible to stress, burnout, and emotional exhaustion (Schutz & Zembylas, 2009). The ability to manage stress, practice self-compassion, and seek social support allows teachers to cope with the emotional challenges of their roles. According to Jennings and Greenberg (2009), teachers with strong socio-emotional skills report higher job satisfaction and lower burnout rates, contributing to long-term career sustainability.

Teachers' socio-emotional abilities have been linked to their resilience and commitment to the profession. A longitudinal study by Aloe et al. (2014) demonstrated that teachers with higher emotional regulation and stress management skills had lower turnover rates, underscoring the importance of socio-emotional competencies in reducing teacher attrition. Programs designed to enhance teachers' socio-emotional skills, such as mindfulness and social-emotional learning (SEL) training, have been shown to improve teachers' emotional well-being and reduce workplace stress (Jennings et al., 2013).

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationships among emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, basic psychological needs satisfaction on the one hand, and job satisfaction and work involvement, on the other hand, in teachers. In particular, the teachers participating in the present study benefited from a social-emotional skills development program carried out under the auspices of UNICEF , "Romania for every child. Making social inclusion real # breaking the cycle of exclusion for the most vulnerable children in Romania", a SEE-Norway Grants 2014-2021 funded project, awarded to UNICEF as Promoter. The project took place between January and December 2023.

This research could provide insights into how various psychological factors influence teachers' work attitudes and engagement, which may inform additional interventions to enhance teachers' professional well-being and effectiveness. The findings may inform training programs that focus on enhancing socio-emotional skills, such as self-efficacy and emotional intelligence, alongside supporting teachers' basic psychological needs. This could lead to improvements in teachers' satisfaction and work involvement, ultimately contributing to a more positive educational environment.

Emotional intelligence, job satisfaction and work involvement

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a critical factor influencing teachers' job satisfaction and work involvement, shaping how they navigate professional challenges and find fulfillment in their roles. Defined as the ability to perceive, use, understand, and regulate emotions, EI helps teachers manage the social and emotional complexities of their profession, significantly impacting both their satisfaction and engagement at work (Goleman, 1995; Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

Job satisfaction, or the sense of fulfillment individuals derive from their work, is strongly linked to emotional intelligence. Teachers with high EI demonstrate better interpersonal skills, resolve conflicts effectively, and foster positive relationships, which contribute to a supportive classroom

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environment and overall job satisfaction (Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2006). These teachers are also more adept at handling stress and adapting to changes within their school environment, allowing them to maintain a positive outlook and greater fulfillment in their roles (Wong & Law, 2002). Research by Brackett et al. (2010) has shown that emotionally intelligent teachers experience higher job satisfaction, as their skills enable them to manage their emotional needs and those of their students, reducing burnout and sustaining well-being. Similarly, Wong and Law (2002) identified a positive correlation between EI and job satisfaction across various professions, demonstrating the universal value of EI in enhancing professional fulfillment.

Work involvement, which refers to the degree to which individuals identify with and actively participate in their jobs, is also closely tied to emotional intelligence. Teachers with high EI are more effective in managing the stress and emotional demands of their work, which helps them stay motivated and engaged. They are better equipped to handle challenges, build meaningful relationships with colleagues and students, and maintain a strong sense of purpose in their roles (Pena et al., 2012). Studies indicate that emotionally intelligent teachers are more likely to report higher levels of work involvement, as their ability to regulate their emotions allows them to process professional experiences constructively and align with their goals (Brackett et al., 2010). EI also fosters positive environments and supportive relationships, which further strengthens teachers' commitment and dedication to their work (Carmeli, 2003). Research by Pena and colleagues (2012) highlights that teachers with strong emotional regulation skills are better equipped to handle classroom challenges, sustaining their engagement over time.

The mechanisms through which emotional intelligence enhances job satisfaction and work involvement are multifaceted. Teachers with high EI are better at regulating their emotions, which helps them manage stress and reduce the risk of burnout, ensuring sustained engagement and satisfaction (Carmeli, 2003). They also excel in building meaningful interpersonal connections, enhancing their sense of belonging and professional fulfillment (Brackett et al., 2010). Additionally, EI enhances teachers' adaptability and resilience, enabling them to thrive in dynamic educational settings and maintain their dedication (Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2006). Furthermore, emotionally intelligent teachers exhibit greater self-confidence and a positive self-perception, empowering them to handle work-related challenges effectively and remain engaged in their roles (Pena et al., 2012).

Emotional intelligence is a key predictor of both job satisfaction and work involvement among teachers. By fostering emotional regulation, interpersonal skills, adaptability, and resilience, EI supports teachers in maintaining fulfillment and engagement in their roles. Schools and policymakers can enhance teacher well-being and commitment by prioritizing EI development, creating a more resilient, satisfied, and dedicated teaching workforce.

Considering the above, we intend to test the relationships between emotional intelligence on one hand and job satisfaction and work involvement on the other hand and formulate the following hypotheses:

H1. Emotional intelligence is positively associated with job satisfaction in teachers.

H2. Emotional intelligence is positively associated with work involvement in teachers.

Self-efficacy, job satisfaction and work involvement

The relationship between self-efficacy, job satisfaction, and work involvement is central to understanding teachers' motivation, well-being, and effectiveness. Self-efficacy, or the belief in one's ability to achieve desired outcomes, is a significant predictor of work-related attitudes and

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behaviors (Bandura, 1997). In teaching, self-efficacy is known to influence not only teachers' instructional practices but also their engagement, commitment, and overall satisfaction with their roles. Job satisfaction and work involvement, two critical components of a teacher's professional experience, are heavily influenced by self-efficacy beliefs (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Job satisfaction is a key component of teachers' professional well-being. It reflects how positively teachers feel about their work environment, role expectations, and achievements. Self-efficacy plays a substantial role in determining job satisfaction, as teachers who feel competent and effective are more likely to derive satisfaction from their work (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). Self-efficacious teachers are better able to manage classroom stressors and engage in adaptive coping strategies, which contributes to a more satisfying work experience (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010).

Several studies have established a positive link between self-efficacy and job satisfaction in teachers. For example, Klassen and Chiu (2010) found that teachers with higher self-efficacy reported greater satisfaction, largely because they felt more equipped to handle the demands of teaching. The study also suggested that self-efficacious teachers tend to experience lower levels of burnout, further contributing to job satisfaction. Additionally, when teachers perceive themselves as successful in their instructional roles, they are more likely to experience positive emotions, which enhances their satisfaction with their work environment.

Work involvement refers to the extent to which individuals are cognitively and emotionally engaged in their work. Teachers with high work involvement tend to view teaching as a central aspect of their identity, which is linked to higher levels of energy and motivation (Kanungo, 1982). Research has shown that self-efficacy is strongly associated with work involvement, as teachers who believe in their teaching abilities are more likely to engage deeply in their work and invest in their professional roles (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014).

In a study by Caprara et al. (2006), teachers with higher self-efficacy showed greater work involvement, as they felt more capable of handling classroom challenges and meeting educational goals. This relationship suggests that teachers who feel effective are more likely to experience their job as meaningful, which, in turn, encourages a strong commitment to their professional responsibilities. Furthermore, teachers who perceive themselves as capable of making a difference in their students' lives are more motivated to engage in continuous improvement and professional development, which fosters work involvement.

Considering the above, we intend to test the relationships between self-efficacy on one hand and job satisfaction and work involvement on the other hand and formulate the following hypotheses:

H3. Self-efficacy is positively associated with job satisfaction in teachers.

H4. Self-efficacy is positively associated with work involvement in teachers.

The satisfaction of basic psychological needs

The satisfaction of basic psychological needs, as outlined by Self-Determination Theory (SDT), plays a pivotal role in shaping teachers' work involvement and job satisfaction. SDT identifies three core psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—that, when fulfilled, enhance motivation, engagement, and well-being. Meeting these needs in educational contexts has a profound impact on teachers' attitudes and behaviors, promoting higher involvement and satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Van den Broeck et al., 2010). Research

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highlights that satisfying these basic needs fosters positive work experiences, aiding teachers in sustaining their professional commitment (Klassen et al., 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011).

Autonomy, defined as the need to feel control over one's actions and choices, significantly influences work involvement. Teachers who experience autonomy are more engaged and motivated, as they perceive that their decisions in the classroom can meaningfully impact student outcomes (Pearce & Sims, 2002). Studies show that autonomy enhances work involvement by enabling teachers to align their practices with personal goals and values. For example, teachers who are empowered to tailor their teaching strategies or adapt curricula to meet students' needs report greater engagement and intrinsic motivation (Klassen et al., 2012). This autonomy fosters a deeper identification with their role, amplifying their emotional and cognitive commitment to their work (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Research by Collie et al. (2015) confirms that teachers who experience higher levels of autonomy demonstrate sustained work involvement. Autonomy fosters a sense of ownership over teaching practices, which strengthens alignment with personal values and professional goals. This alignment not only increases commitment but also enhances overall job satisfaction.

Competence, or the need to feel effective in achieving desired outcomes, is another critical factor in job satisfaction. Teachers who perceive themselves as competent are more likely to find satisfaction in their accomplishments and maintain a strong drive to improve their skills. Competence satisfaction correlates with positive emotions and pride, reinforcing their sense of efficacy in their roles (Bandura, 1997; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014). For instance, teachers who believe they successfully facilitate student learning report higher satisfaction, as their competence affirms their professional value.

Klassen and Chiu (2010) found that teachers who felt competent in their roles experienced higher levels of job satisfaction and were less prone to burnout. This sense of accomplishment fosters a positive outlook, encouraging teachers to invest further in their responsibilities.

Relatedness, the need for meaningful connections, also contributes significantly to job satisfaction by nurturing a sense of community and support. Teachers who feel connected to colleagues, students, and the broader school environment experience a stronger sense of well-being. Positive relationships provide emotional support, mitigate isolation, and bolster resilience against stress (Hakanen et al., 2006; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011).

Yin et al. (2016) demonstrated that relational ties with colleagues and students positively influence job satisfaction by fostering emotional support and a sense of purpose. Teachers who experience relatedness are more likely to feel valued and find their professional environment fulfilling, enhancing their satisfaction.

Fulfillment of autonomy, competence, and relatedness forms a robust foundation for sustained work involvement and job satisfaction. Teachers whose basic psychological needs are met are more intrinsically motivated, reducing stress and burnout while reinforcing their professional dedication (Van den Broeck et al., 2010; Collie et al., 2015). This fulfillment cultivates a positive work identity, making teaching a more meaningful and rewarding endeavor (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2014).

Considering the above, we intend to test the relationships between basic psychological needs satisfaction on one hand and job satisfaction and work involvement on the other hand and formulate the following hypotheses:

H5. Basic psychological needs satisfaction is positively associated to job satisfaction in teachers.

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H6. Basic psychological needs satisfaction is positively associated to work involvement in teachers.

The mediating role of basic psychological needs

Research based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT) highlights the mediating role of basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—in the relationship between self-efficacy and outcomes such as work involvement and job satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to feel competent and autonomous in their professional roles, which enhances their involvement and satisfaction at work (Klassen et al., 2012). The perception of control over teaching practices and the belief in their ability to effect meaningful change strengthen teachers' sense of competence and commitment to their profession. Self-efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in their ability to successfully perform tasks, is a critical predictor of competence and autonomy satisfaction. Teachers with high self-efficacy feel confident in addressing classroom challenges and facilitating student learning, which reinforces their sense of competence (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Additionally, self-efficacious teachers tend to approach challenges as opportunities for growth rather than threats, which supports their sense of autonomy and proactive engagement (Bandura, 1997).

Empirical evidence confirms a positive association between teacher self-efficacy and the fulfillment of basic psychological needs. Klassen and Chiu (2010) demonstrated that teachers with higher self-efficacy experience greater satisfaction of competence and autonomy needs, which in turn boosts their motivation and commitment. Furthermore, these teachers are more inclined to establish meaningful goals and employ self-regulation strategies, fostering a sense of control over their professional practices (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010).

Emotional intelligence (EI) also plays a significant role in satisfying basic psychological needs. Defined as the ability to recognize, understand, and regulate emotions in oneself and others, EI is crucial for teachers who navigate complex interpersonal and emotional demands daily (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). High emotional intelligence supports autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which are essential for motivation and job satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Emotional intelligence enhances autonomy by fostering self-awareness and self-regulation, enabling teachers to make intentional, goal-oriented decisions. Teachers with high EI can better manage interpersonal conflicts and work-related challenges, maintaining a sense of control over their roles (Mérida-López & Extremera, 2017). For instance, emotionally intelligent teachers can set personal boundaries and align their teaching practices with personal values, which reinforces their autonomy and intrinsic motivation (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Brackett & Katulak, 2007).

Emotional intelligence supports competence satisfaction by equipping teachers with the skills to handle stress, build resilience, and adapt to classroom dynamics. Teachers with high EI are better at recognizing and managing their emotional states, which bolsters their confidence in handling professional challenges (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Additionally, EI enhances teachers' capacity to tailor their strategies to diverse learning needs, reinforcing their sense of competence (Pena et al., 2012).

Relatedness, the need for meaningful connections with others, is particularly influenced by emotional intelligence. Teachers with high EI are more adept at fostering positive relationships with students, colleagues, and administrators, which enhances their sense of belonging and well-being (Carmeli, 2003). Studies demonstrate that emotionally intelligent teachers experience

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fulfilling social interactions and stronger classroom dynamics, which satisfy their need for relatedness and enhance job satisfaction (Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2006).

The combined influence of self-efficacy and emotional intelligence on basic psychological needs satisfaction underscores the importance of both cognitive and emotional traits in supporting teachers' well-being. Self-efficacious and emotionally intelligent teachers feel more competent and autonomous in their roles while maintaining positive professional relationships. This combination fosters a balanced sense of purpose and engagement, reducing stress and burnout while promoting satisfaction and motivation (Yin et al., 2019).

Teachers who exhibit high levels of both traits are more likely to engage deeply in their work, addressing student needs effectively while fostering supportive relationships. This dynamic interaction supports the satisfaction of all three basic psychological needs, enhancing professional well-being and commitment.

In summary, emotional intelligence plays a predictive role in satisfying the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness among teachers. High EI supports teachers' ability to navigate the emotional and social demands of their work, leading to greater autonomy, competence, and relatedness satisfaction. By investing in the development of EI in teachers, schools can enhance teacher motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction, ultimately benefiting the educational environment as a whole.

Considering the above, we intend to test the mediating role of basic psychological needs in the relationships between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy on the one hand and job satisfaction and work involvement on the other hand and formulate the following hypotheses:

H7. Basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, relatedness) mediate the relationships between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction.

H8. Basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, relatedness) mediate the relationships between self-efficacy and job satisfaction.

Participants and procedure

A number of 97 teachers aged between 20 and 63 participated in the present study, M = 41.63, SD = 10.10, of whom 88 were women (91%) and nine were men (9%), 10 coming from rural areas (10%), and 87 coming from urban areas (90%). According to experience, five teachers have less than one year experience (5%), 19 have 1-5 years experience (19%), 12 have 6-10 years experience (12%), 11 have 11 – 15 years experience (11%), 16 have 16 – 20 years experience (16%), and 34 have more than 21 years experience (37%). As for the didactic degree, for five of them does not apply (5%), 14 are beginners (14%), 20 have definitivate (20%), 14 have the didactic degree 2 (14%), and 44 have the didactic degree 1 (47%). The teachers participating in the present study benefited from a social-emotional skills development program carried out under the auspices of UNICEF, "Romania for every child. Making social inclusion real # breaking the cycle of exclusion for the most vulnerable children in Romania", a SEE-Norway Grants 2014-2021 funded project, awarded to UNICEF as Promoter. The project took place between January and December 2023. They were informed about the purpose of the study and invited to participate. Out of a total of 140 participants, only 97 agreed to complete the questionnaires (69%). Completing the questionnaires took place online, via google forms. All egulations of confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were respected. They signed the informed consent, the participation agreement and the GDPR agreement. The tests took about 30 minutes to complete. The testing took place in July 2023, immediately after the completion of the training modules.

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Data were organized and analyzed using the Jamovi statistical analysis program and the medmod GLM module (the Jamovi project, 2022). The study design is cross-sectional.

Instruments

Sociodemographic data were collected through a set of questions regarding gender, age, background, teaching degree, level of experience.

Emotional intelligence was measured with the Mini Emotional Intelligence Test (Ghyst & Associates and Brent Darnell International, 2012). The instrument includes 48 items, and the scores are given on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 – strongly disagree and 5 – strongly agree. Examples of items: "I easily express my feelings", "Others feel comfortable confiding in me". Although the instrument measures 16 dimensions of emotional intelligence, in the present study we used the global score. Scores can range from 48 to 240, with higher scores indicating a higher level of emotional intelligence.

Self-efficacy was measured with the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). The instrument includes 10 items, and the scores are given on a four-point Likert scale, where 1 – not at all true and 4 – completely true. Examples of items: "It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals", "I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events". Scores can range from 10 to 40, with higher scores indicating an increased level of self-efficacy.

Basic psychological needs satisfaction was measured with the Work-related Basic Need Satisfaction Scale (Broeck et al., 2010). The instrument includes 18 items, six for each of the three basic psychological needs, autonomy, competence and relatedness. The answers are given on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 – strongly disagree and 5 – strongly agree. Examples of items: "I have the feeling that I can even accomplish the most difficult tasks at work", "I feel like I can be myself at my job". Scores can range from 6 to 30, with higher scores indicating a higher level of satisfaction of that need.

Job satisfaction was measured with The Generic Job Satisfaction Scale (Macdonald & Maclntyre, 1997). The instrument contains 10 items, and scores are given on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 – strongly disagree and 5 – strongly agree. Examples of items: "My wages are good", "All my talents and skills are used at work". Scores can be between 10 and 50, with high scores indicating a high level of job satisfaction.

Work involvement was measured with The Job Involvement Questionnaire (Kanungo, 1982). The instrument includes 10 items, and the scores are given on a five-point Likert scale, where 1 – strongly disagree and 5 – strongly agree. Examples of items: "I am very involved in my work", "I think my job is central to my life". Scores can range from 10 to 50, with higher scores indicating a higher level of work involvement.

Results

Descriptive statistics

Means, standard deviation, Cronbach Alpha coefficients, and correlations among variables are presented in Table 1.

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Table 1

Means, standard deviation, Cronbach Alpha coefficients, and correlations among variables

	M	SD	α	SE	IE	AUT	COM	REL	JOSA	WOIN
SE	34.78	4.68	.92	1						
IE	200.94	16.62	.91	.55**	1					
AUT	22.65	4.46	.79	.40**	.26*	1				
COM	26.98	3.23	.66	.53**	.38**	.45**	1			
REL	22.79	4.15	.67	.29**	.30**	.38**	.28**	1		
JOSA	41.11	5.93	.86	.44**	.44**	.53**	.28**	.59**	1	.
WOIN	34.19	6.26	.83	.29**	.28**	.06	.08	.26*	.38**	1

Note: **. p < .01, *. p < .05.

SE – self-efficacy, IE – emotional intelligence, AUT – autonomy need, COM – competence need, REL – relatedness need, JOSA – job satisfaction, WOIN – work involvement

The results showed that the teachers reported high scores for all the measured constructs. For self-efficacy, M = 34.78, SD = 4.68, for emotional intelligence, M = 200.94, SD = 16.62, for autonomy satisfaction, M = 22.65, SD = 4.46, for competence satisfaction, M = 26.98, SD = 3.93, for relatedness satisfaction, M = 22.79, SD = 4.15, for job satisfaction, M = 41.11, SD = 5.93, and for work involvement, M = 34.19, SD = 6.96.

At the same time, there are significant positive correlations among majority of the analyzed variables. Self-efficacy is positively associated to emotional intelligence, r = .55, p < .01, to autonomy satisfaction, r = .40, p < .01, to competence satisfaction, r = .53, p < .01, to relatedness satisfaction, r = .29, p < .01, to job satisfaction, r = .44, p < .01, and to a smaller extent to work involvement, r = .29, p < .01. Emotional intelligence is positively associated to autonomy satisfaction, r = .26, p < .05, to competence satisfaction, r = .38, p < .01, to relatedness satisfaction, r = .30, p < .01, to job satisfaction, r = .44, p < .01 and in a smaller extent to work involvement, r = .28, p < .05. Autonomy satisfaction is positively associated to job satisfaction, r = .53, p < .01, but not to work involvement, r = .06, p > .01. Competence satisfaction is positively associated with job satisfaction, r = .28, p < .01, but not to work involvement, r = .08, p > .01. Relatedness satisfaction is positively associated to job satisfaction, r = .59, p < .01 and also with work involvement, r = .26, p < .05. Job satisfaction is positively associated with work involvement, r = .38, p < .01.

Skewness ranged between (-1.03, .18) and kurtosis ranged between (-.75, 1.47), showing a normal data distribution.

Hypotheses testing

H1. *Emotional intelligence is positively associated with job satisfaction in teachers.*

H2. *Emotional intelligence is positively associated with work involvement in teachers*.

H3. *Self-efficacy is positively associated with job satisfaction in teachers.*

H4. *Self-efficacy is positively associated with work involvement in teachers*.

H5. *Basic psychological needs satisfaction is positively associated with job satisfaction in teachers.*

H6. *Basic psychological needs satisfaction is positively associated with work involvement in teachers*.

H7. *Basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, relatedness) mediate the relationships between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction.*

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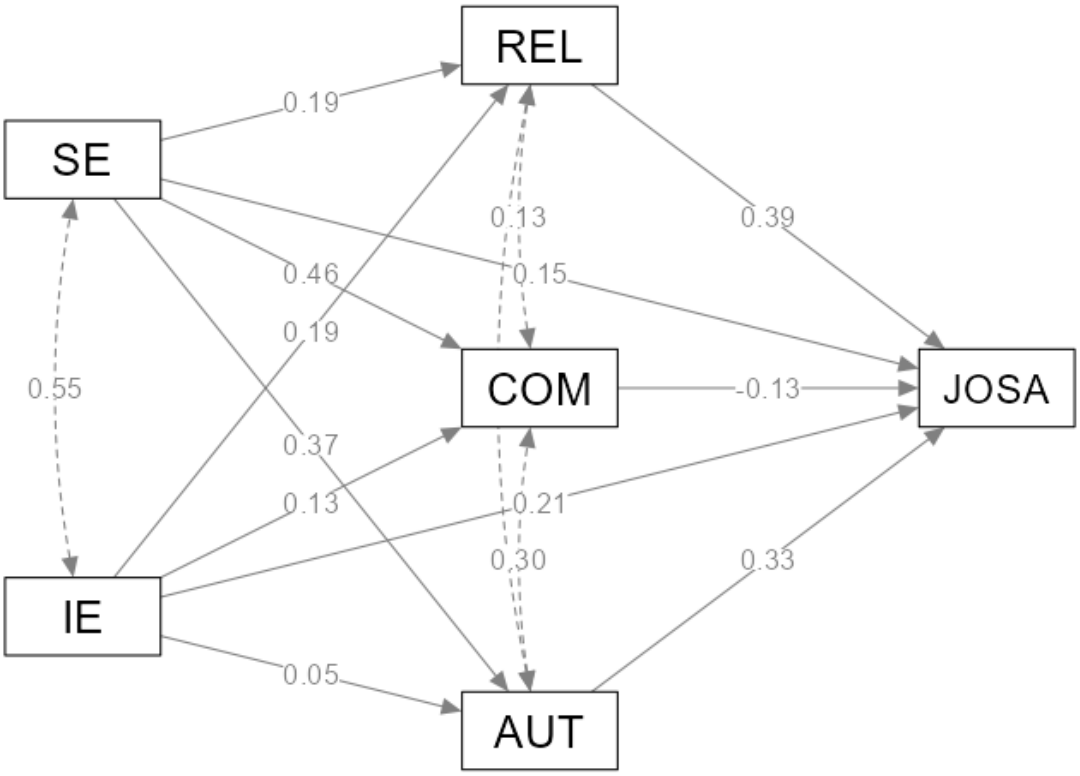
H8. *Basic psychological needs (autonomy, competence, relatedness) mediate the relationships between self-efficacy and job satisfaction.*

To test the hypotheses, two multiple mediations analyzes were performed with emotional intelligence and self-efficacy as predictors, the three basic psychological needs satisfaction as mediating variables, respectively autonomy, competence, and relatedness, and as dependent variables, alternatively, job satisfaction and work involvement.

Figure 1

Mediation model for basic psychological needs satisfaction in the relationship between emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and job satisfaction



Note: SE – self-efficacy, IE – emotional intelligence, AUT – autonomy need, COM – competence need, REL – relatedness needs, JOSA – job satisfaction

Table 2

Direct and indirect effects of emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and basic psychological needs satisfaction on job satisfaction

				95% C.I.				
Type	**Effect**	**Estimate**	**SE**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**β**	**z**	**p**
Indirect	IE ⇒ AUT ⇒ JOSA	.01	.01	-.02	.03	.02	.49	.63
	IE ⇒ COM ⇒ JOSA	-.01	.01	-.02	.01	-.02	-.99	.32
	IE ⇒ REL ⇒ JOSA	.03	.02	-.01	.06	.08	1.61	.11
	SE ⇒ AUT ⇒ JOSA	.15	.06	.03	.27	.12	2.53	.01
	SE ⇒ COM ⇒ JOSA	-.08	.05	-.18	.03	-.06	-1.46	.15
	SE ⇒ REL ⇒ JOSA	.09	.06	-.02	.21	.07	1.55	.12

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				95% C.I.				
Type	**Effect**	**Estimate**	**SE**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**β**	**z**	**p**
Component	IE ⇒ AUT	.01	.03	-.04	.07	.05	.49	.62
	AUT ⇒ JOSA	.43	.11	.22	.65	.33	3.93	< .001
	IE ⇒ COM	.03	.02	-.01	.06	.13	1.29	.20
	COM ⇒ JOSA	-.25	.16	-.56	.07	-.13	-1.54	.12
	IE ⇒ REL	.05	.03	-.01	.10	.19	1.70	.09
	REL ⇒ JOSA	.56	.11	.35	.78	.39	5.08	< .001
	SE ⇒ AUT	.35	.11	.14	.56	.37	3.30	< .001
	SE ⇒ COM	.32	.07	.18	.45	.46	4.49	< .001
	SE ⇒ REL	.16	.10	-.03	.36	.19	1.62	.10
Direct	IE ⇒ JOSA	.08	.03	.02	.14	.21	2.48	.01
	SE ⇒ JOSA	.19	.12	-.04	.42	.15	1.60	.11
Total	IE ⇒ JOSA	.10	.04	.03	.18	.29	2.73	.01
	SE ⇒ JOSA	.36	.13	.09	.62	.28	2.67	.01

Note: SE – self-efficacy, IE – emotional intelligence, AUT – autonomy need, COM – competence need, REL – relatedness need, JOSA – job satisfaction

Indirect effects

The three basic psychological needs satisfaction did not mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction or self-efficacy and job satisfaction, excepting autonomy. Autonomy mediates this relationship, b = .15, CI95%(.03, .27), β = .12, Z = 2.53, p < .05.

Direct effects

Emotional intelligence is positively associated with job satisfaction, , b = .08, CI95%(.02, .14), β = .21, Z = 2.48, p < .05. Self-efficacy is positive but insignificantly associated to job satisfaction, , b = .19, CI95%(-.04, .42), β = .15, Z = 1.60, p = .11.

Emotional intelligence is not significantly associated with either of the three basic psychological needs satisfaction. Self-efficacy is not associated with relatedness, but is positively and significantly associated to autonomy satisfaction, b = .35, CI95%(.14, .56), β = .37, Z = 3.30, p < .01 and also to competence satisfaction, b = .32, CI95%(.18, .45), β = .46, Z = 4.49, p < .01.

Autonomy satisfaction is positively associated with job satisfaction, b = .43, CI95%(.22, .65), β = .33, Z = 3.93, p < .01. Competence satisfaction is not significantly associated with job satisfaction. Relatedness satisfaction is positively associated to job satisfaction, b = .56, CI95%(.35, .78), β = .39, Z = 5.08, p < .01.

Total effects

The total effect of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction is significant, b = .10, CI95%(.03, .18), β = .29, Z = 2.73, p < .05 and total effect of self-efficacy on job satisfaction is also significant, b = .36, CI95%(.09, .62), β = .28, Z = 2.67, p < .05.

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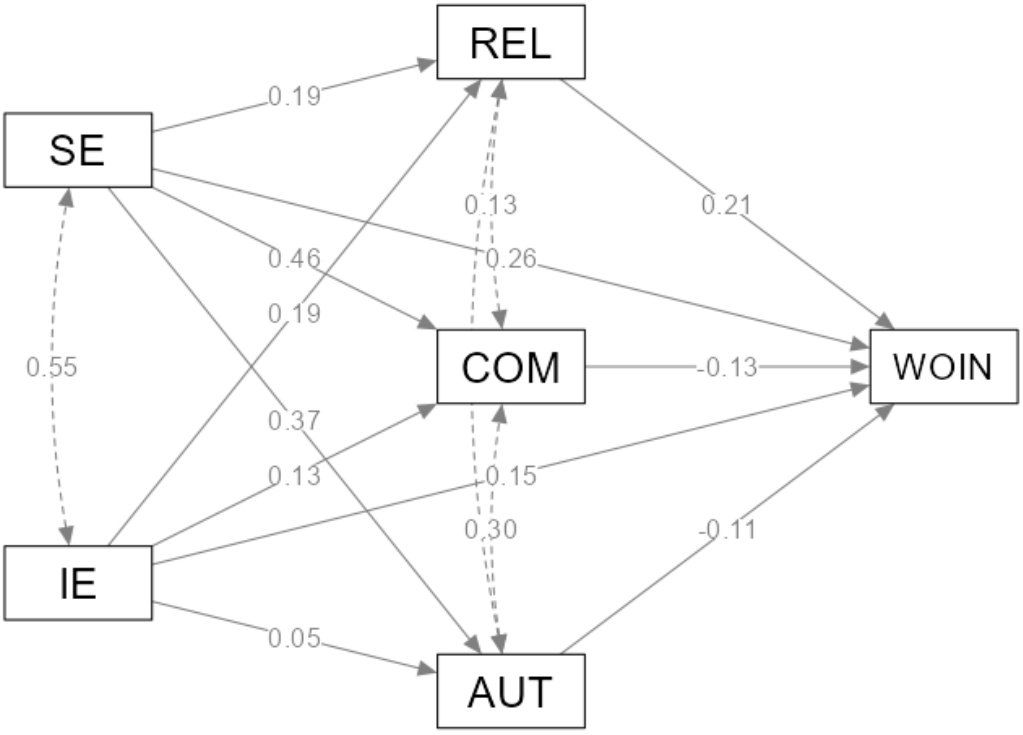
Figure 2

Mediation model for basic psychological needs satisfaction in the relationship between emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and work involvement



Note: SE – self-efficacy, IE – emotional intelligence, AUT – autonomy need, COM – competence need, REL – relatedness need, WOIN – work involvement

Table 3

Direct and indirect effects of emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and basic psychological needs satisfaction on work involvement

				95% C.I.				
Type	**Effect**	**Estimate**	**SE**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**β**	**z**	**p**
Indirect	IE ⇒ AUT ⇒ WOIN	-.00	.01	-.01	.01	-.01	-.44	.66
	IE ⇒ COM ⇒ WOIN	-.01	.01	-.02	.01	-.02	-.84	.40
	IE ⇒ REL ⇒ WOIN	.02	.01	-.01	.04	.04	1.31	.19
	SE ⇒ AUT ⇒ WOIN	-.05	.06	-.16	.06	-.04	-.92	.36
	SE ⇒ COM ⇒ WOIN	-.08	.07	-.22	.07	-.06	-1.07	.28
	SE ⇒ REL ⇒ WOIN	.05	.04	-.03	.13	.04	1.27	.20
Component	IE ⇒ AUT	.01	.03	-.04	.07	.05	.49	.62
	AUT ⇒ WOIN	-.15	.16	-.46	.16	-.11	-.96	.34
	IE ⇒ COM	.03	.02	-.01	.06	.13	1.29	.20
	COM ⇒ WOIN	-.25	.23	-.69	.19	-.13	-1.11	.27
	IE ⇒ REL	.05	.03	-.01	.10	.19	1.70	.09
	REL ⇒ WOIN	.32	.16	.01	.63	.21	2.04	.04

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				95% C.I.				
Type	**Effect**	**Estimate**	**SE**	**Lower**	**Upper**	**β**	**z**	**p**
	SE ⇒ AUT	.35	.11	.14	.56	.37	3.30	< .001
	SE ⇒ COM	.32	.07	.18	.45	.46	4.49	< .001
	SE ⇒ REL	.16	.10	-.03	.36	.19	1.62	.10
Direct	IE ⇒ WOIN	.06	.04	-.03	.14	.15	1.29	.20
	SE ⇒ WOIN	.34	.17	.02	.67	.26	2.06	.04
Total	IE ⇒ WOIN	.06	.04	-.02	.15	.17	1.44	.15
	SE ⇒ WOIN	.27	.15	-.04	.57	.20	1.72	.09

Note: SE – self-efficacy, IE – emotional intelligence, AUT – autonomy need, COM – competence need, REL – relatedness need, WOIN – work involvement

Indirect effects

The three basic psychological needs satisfaction did not mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and work involvement, neither did the relationship between self-efficacy and work involvement.

Direct effects

Emotional intelligence is positively but insignificantly associated to work involvement, but self-efficacy is significantly associated to work involvement, b = .34, CI95%(.02, .67), β = .26, Z = 2.06, p < .05.

Emotional intelligence is not significantly associated with neither of the three basic psychological needs satisfaction. Self-efficacy is not associated with relatedness, but is positively and significantly associated to autonomy satisfaction, b = .35, CI95%(.14, .56), β = .37, Z = 3.30, p < .01 and also to competence satisfaction, b = .32, CI95%(.18, .45), β = .46, Z = 4.49, p < .01.

Autonomy and competence satisfaction are not significantly associated with work involvement, but relatedness is significantly associated to work involvement, b = .32, CI95%(.01, .63), β = .21, Z = 2.04, p < .05.

Total effects

The total effect of emotional intelligence on work involvement and of self-efficacy on work involvement are insignificant.

Discussions

The aim of this study was to analyze the mediating role of basic psychological needs satisfaction in the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy on the one hand and job satisfaction and work involvement on the other hand.

The results have shown that emotional intelligence is directly associated to job satisfaction, but not to work involvement and self-efficacy is directly associated to work involvement, but not with job satisfaction. These results can be attributed to the fact that teachers' emotional intelligence leads to a sense of fulfillment that facilitates the perception of their profession as satisfying. The ability to understand one's own and others' emotions, the ability to express emotions, and stress

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management help teachers enjoy their profession. In addition, all these skills build a pleasant working environment and harmonious relationships with colleagues and students, which facilitates job satisfaction. Self-efficacy in teachers may be associated to hardworking. Teachers with high levels of self-efficacy have a greater workload and more responsibilities. This fact can explain why self-efficacy is associated with work involvement, but not with job satisfaction.

Given the predictive role of emotional intelligence in enhancing job satisfaction it is essential for schools to support the development of EI in teachers. Professional development programs focused on emotional intelligence training can equip teachers with critical skills in emotion recognition, regulation, and interpersonal communication (Brackett & Katulak, 2007). By fostering EI competencies, schools can enhance teacher well-being, which not only benefits the teachers themselves but also positively impacts student learning outcomes and the broader school climate.

For instance, integrating emotional intelligence training into teacher preparation programs and ongoing professional development can help educators better manage classroom stress, build stronger relationships, and derive greater satisfaction from their work (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Schools that prioritize emotional intelligence training and provide a supportive, emotionally aware work environment are likely to see improvements in teacher retention, work involvement, and satisfaction (Brackett & Katulak, 2007).

Understanding the relationship between self-efficacy and work involvement is essential for supporting teacher retention and well-being. Given that teacher attrition is often linked to job dissatisfaction and lack of engagement (Ingersoll, 2001), fostering self-efficacy through professional development could be an effective strategy to promote positive work experiences. Training programs that build teaching efficacy and help teachers develop problem-solving and stress management skills may enhance both their work involvement and also job satisfaction, reducing turnover intentions (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011).

The relationship between emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, work involvement, and job satisfaction highlights the importance of psychological beliefs in shaping teachers' professional experiences. Teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to be involved in their jobs and teachers with high emotional intelligence are more satisfied with their roles, which contributes to a positive educational environment.

Basic psychological needs satisfaction is not a significant mediator, excepting autonomy satisfaction which mediates the relationship between self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Autonomy satisfaction is associated to job satisfaction, but not to work involvement. Competence satisfaction is not associated to job satisfaction, neither to work involvement. Relatedness satisfaction is associated with both job satisfaction and work involvement. These results underline to some extent the nature of the teaching profession. Teachers who experience fulfillment of autonomy and relatedness are more likely to be engaged, motivated, satisfied with their work, and also more involved in their activities.

By fostering self-efficacy and emotional intelligence in teachers, educational institutions can create a more supportive environment that meets teachers' psychological needs, promoting well-being, motivation, and retention. Teachers who experience higher needs satisfaction are not only more resilient but also more likely to create positive learning environments, benefiting both students and the broader school community.

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Conclusion

Teachers' socio-emotional abilities play a critical role in promoting students' own socio-emotional development, which is increasingly recognized as vital for success in both academic and personal realms. Teachers serve as role models, and their ability to demonstrate empathy, self-regulation, and resilience influences students' social and emotional growth. Research suggests that students exposed to teachers with high socio-emotional competencies exhibit better emotional regulation, interpersonal skills, and academic engagement (Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2016).

Socio-emotional learning (SEL) programs are effective in helping teachers impart these skills to students. For example, studies have shown that SEL programs led by teachers with well-developed socio-emotional skills result in students who are more empathetic, cooperative, and academically motivated (Durlak et al., 2011). Teachers' own socio-emotional skills thus enhance their ability to implement SEL curricula successfully, supporting students' emotional and social development within the school context.

Given the importance of socio-emotional competencies, there is a growing emphasis on incorporating socio-emotional skills training into teacher education and professional development programs. Research highlights the effectiveness of professional development programs that focus on mindfulness, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal skills training in improving teachers' socio-emotional competencies (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). Such training programs help teachers develop self-awareness, manage emotions more effectively, and build stronger relationships with students and colleagues.

Professional development in socio-emotional skills not only equips teachers with tools for classroom management but also enhances their ability to engage with students on a deeper level, improving academic and behavioral outcomes. Teachers who participate in socio-emotional skills training also report feeling more competent and confident in their roles, contributing to a more positive and resilient school culture (Jennings et al., 2017).

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