

# The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Occupational Stress among Secondary School Heads in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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This study examined the association between emotional intelligence and occupational stress among secondary school principals in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The study population comprised of male and female heads from all secondary schools located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A total sample of 402 participants comprising 260 male heads and 142 female heads was chosen by a multistage sampling method. The current study was quantitative and correlational and two standardised instruments – “*Emotional Intelligence Scale*” and “*Occupational Stress Index*” were used for ascertaining the responses from the participants. Data was statistically analysed employing the statistical tools of mean, standard deviation, Pearson’s product-moment correlation, and multiple linear regression. The findings reported a moderate negative relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational stress. Furthermore, there was a substantial moderate negative correlation between all the sub-domains of emotional intelligence and overall occupational stress. In these sub-domains of emotional intelligence, six sub-domains were found significant predictors and have negative impacts on occupational stress (managing relations, empathy, integrity, commitment, self-development, and altruistic behaviour). Based on the findings, the research recommends focusing on those activities that contribute to strengthening and stimulating emotional intelligence among secondary school heads. The Education Department and



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polymakers should frame effective and comprehensive strategies for reducing stress with the aim to ensure organisational productivity and individuals' prosperity.

**Keywords:** *Emotional Intelligence, Occupational Stress, Secondary School Heads.*

## INTRODUCTION

Nearly two decades back emotional intelligence entered the scenario of psychological investigation and since then it has progressively picked up a position in scientific society (Fiori et al., 2014). Emotional intelligence was initially conceptualised by Salovey and Mayer (1990) as the capability to observe precisely, evaluate and demonstrate feelings; the aptitude to get to or create emotions, the ability to appreciate feelings and emotional learning; and the capability to control feelings to boost emotional and intellectual development. Recently, the term emotional intelligence progressively has been outspreading, particularly in its application in education, individual life, work, and business (Pellitteri, 2002). Emotional intelligence, as indicated by Goleman (2002), is the capability to perceive and deal with one's feelings and the feelings of others. Goleman further added that people, groups, and associations having high emotional intelligence strive to be more equipped for using emotions to adjust and benefit from environmental demands. George (2000) viewed that an individual having high emotional intelligence possesses the capability to recognise and comprehend the feelings of others and deal with their temperaments in the social environment effectively.

Emotional intelligence has gained importance in recent years for its contribution in different areas like leadership, the workplace, and individuals' relationships (Sosik & Megerian, 1999). Recently, the idea of emotional intelligence has been given extensive and wide-ranging consideration, which can be accredited to the renowned and famous book "Emotional Intelligence" written by Goleman (1995), in which he explains that emotional intelligence contributes to people's work accomplishment and success by up to 80 percent. Even though there is not an agreement among the researchers with regard to the degree to which emotional intelligence envisages one's success and achievement, research studies have revealed that emotional intelligence is a powerful predictor, substantially more significant than IQ, in determining the achievement and performance of an individual (Ashkanasy et al., 2002; Goleman, 1998). Workforces under the headship of emotionally intelligent leaders are more inclined to give shared support to each other. Their interest is apparent in an exchange of thoughts, exchange of information, and assuming liability for making and completing joint tasks. Emotionally intelligent leaders will have the ability to spontaneously create and develop emotionally intelligent teams because of the social multifaceted quality of today's organisations (Goleman, 2002).

Emotional intelligence has significant effects on the success of employment and leadership roles (Nelson & Low, 2011). Research studies reveal that a high degree of emotional quotient



distinguishes higher performers from average, which may be important in leadership positions. Emotional intelligence connects the cognitive abilities of leaders with their emotional and psychological conditions, which proves to be effective in accomplishing organisational goals (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Emotional intelligence is the essence of and vibrant factor for a successful life (Jorfi et al., 2012). Leaders with high emotional intelligence might be better equipped for getting more outcomes from fewer individuals and for perceiving the nuances of dynamic circumstances while making positive results (Dearborn, 2002).

More recently, Bar-On and others carried out a study to discover the effects of emotional intelligence on job accomplishment and found that the ability of emotional intelligence to recognise working potential records for about four times (25%) more fluctuation than IQ (6%), when compared with Wagner's broad meta-analysis of emotional intelligence (Bar-On, 2006). Most organisations recognise emotional intelligence as an amalgamation of emotional proficiencies allowing individuals to utilise emotions to encourage desired outcomes such as leadership potential, positive work attitudes and job satisfaction (Higgs & Aitken, 2003). Individuals with high emotional intelligence will fabricate real social texture inside organisations and between an organisation and its employees, while those low in emotional intelligence may have a tendency to make issues for the organisation or institution through their individual practices (Mayer & Caruso, 2002). Frye, Bennet and Caldwell (2006) have shown evidence that emotional intelligence demonstrates positive and noteworthy relationships with the team process. Average team emotional intelligence anticipates team performance. A team with high emotional intelligence worked at a large level of performance. Other researchers found a positive association between the team leader's capability to recognise emotions and the team's customer service accomplishment (Feyerherm & Rice, 2002).

Occupational stress has been defined consistently in different ways. The US National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety describes in its publication entitled "Stress at work", issued in 1999, that occupational stress is the hazardous emotional and physical reactions occurring when the demands and necessities of the job do not contest the capabilities, necessities and resources of the employees (Nakasis & Ouzouni, 2008; Reddy & Poornima, 2012). Based on this definition, occupational stress is unending conditions brought about by circumstances in the working environment that tangle adverse influence in an individual's employment progress and their general prosperity (Yahaya et al., 2009). Workplace stress is the unpleasantness and disagreeableness in the work. It may be the physiological and psychological consequences that occur in employees due to their powerlessness and the employee's incapacity to manage the demands of the organisation (Miller, 2005). Occupational stress is the result of an unspecified job description, excessive work or working hours, job role ambiguity, an unsupportive work environment, and strict deadlines in target achievement. The mentioned factors lead to social and psychological stress (Wadesango et al., 2015).

Several research studies have investigated various reasons for occupational stress in various organisations; work over-burden, clashes amongst labourers and administration, role ambiguity, troublesome interpersonal relationships, client contact, social support, job independence, and locus of control were referred to as the main reasons of stress. Sutherland and Cooper (2000) made five groupings of possible wellsprings of psychosocial and occupational stress. Numerous potential stressors contained five situations that may contribute to stress: home-grown, family and needs, marital issues, conflicts among employees and family necessities. Stressors always recognised in the literature are: time pressure and workload, investigation, educational change, administration styles, reformation and insufficient sources (Winefield et al., 2003). Willis (2005) lists stressors as egotism, hate, anxiety, guilt feelings, jealousy, over sensitivity, distress, anger, terror, disappointment, longing for endorsement, death of a life partner, divorce, personal injury or sickness, marriage, pregnancy, sex challenges, the gain of a new family member, budgetary commitments, issues with in-laws, issues with supervisor, change in working conditions, change in schools and minor infringement of the law.

Numerous research studies have been conducted on the relationship of emotional intelligence and occupational stress in different contexts like educational, medical, engineering, commerce, etcetera (Belias et al., 2013; Darvish & Nasrollahi, 2011; El-Sayed et al., 2014; Indoo & Ajeya, 2012; Jude, 2011; Kauts & Saroj 2010; Punia et al., 2016), which show an outstanding and substantial connection between emotional intelligence and occupational stress. Darvish and Nasrollahi (2011) inferred that there was a substantial converse relationship between occupational stress and emotional intelligence that is associated with employee performance. Similarly, Khaniyan, Foroughan and Hosseini (2013) found that there exists a negative correlation between occupational stress and emotional intelligence. Additionally, they found that there exists a substantial negative relationship between the subdimensions of emotional intelligence including self-awareness, social skills, empathy and overall occupational stress. In the same way, Sharma and Sharma (2014) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational stress and concluded that there is a negative relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational stress. Habibzadeh and Nia (2015) also found that there is a significant relationship between the general level and subscales of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management) and occupational stress among managers. Confirming this relationship, Chhabra and Chhabra (2013) also found a negative correlation between occupational stress and emotional intelligence. Anjum and Swathi (2017) concluded that highly emotionally intelligent teachers perceive less occupational stress and teachers having low emotional intelligence will face more occupational stress. Furthermore, they claimed that emotionally intelligent teachers can perform their duties more effectively than teachers having low emotional intelligence. Likewise, Khaniyan, Foroughan, and Hosseini (2013) found that people having an extraordinary level of emotional intelligence may experience less occupational stress. Rani and Yadapadithaya (2018) affirmed that the emotional intelligence quotient can be utilised to

control stressful situations in the workplace effectively. It unquestionably goes a long way in improving individual and interpersonal efficiency. In this specific situation, efficient and effective appraisal of emotional intelligence will be a prerequisite to overcome occupational stress through managing self as well as other people. Yamani, Shahabi and Haghani (2014) and Delima and Luckmizankari (2017) also found that emotional intelligence has an inverse relationship with occupational stress. Therefore, an organisation needs to maintain their employees' level of emotional intelligence to reduce their occupational stress.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational stress among secondary school principals in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

**Hypothesis 1.** *There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational stress.*

**Hypothesis 2.** *There is a significant relationship between the subdimensions of emotional intelligence and occupational stress.*

**Hypothesis 3.** *Subscales of emotional intelligence have a significant contribution in predicting occupational stress.*

## **METHODS AND MATERIALS**

### **Participants**

All male and female heads of the public secondary schools of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa constituted the population of the study. Education Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa publishes its statistical report annually. According to this report, there are 2108 government secondary schools in which there are 1386 for boys and 722 for girls. Therefore, the total number of secondary school principals was 2108 including 1386 male heads and 722 female heads (EMIS, 2015). The multi-stage sampling technique is commonly employed, especially in the field of education. It is extensively practiced for the scattered population. In multistage sampling, the researchers can use different sampling techniques at each stage regarding the nature of the population, such as simple random sampling and stratified sampling technique, etcetera (Chauvet, 2015). In this study, the population was widely scattered, therefore the researchers adopted the multistage sampling technique. If the population size is almost inappropriate, a sample size of 400 will be sufficient (Gay, 1996). Moreover, Gay and Diehl (1992) suggested that in descriptive researches, ten percent of the population is sufficient, while in the case of small populations, twenty percent may be taken as a sample. In correlational research studies,

at least thirty subjects must be needed to establish correlation. However, in this study, sufficient sample size was taken for ensuring valid results. Therefore, at the first stage, 10 (40%) out of 25 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa – Karak, Kohat, Peshawar, Hangu, Bannu, Abbottabad, Nowshera, Charssada, Lakki Marwat, and Malakand – were chosen randomly. At the second stage, 60 percent boys’ and 60 percent girls’ secondary schools were selected through a stratified sampling technique. At the third stage, 75 percent male and 75 percent female heads were selected randomly. Thus, a total sample size of 402 heads was taken including 260 male heads and 142 female heads (see table 1).

**Table 1. Study population and sample**

Districts	No. of Schools				No. of Heads			
	Total		Sample		Total		Sample	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Peshawar	85	55	51	33	51	33	38	25
Kohat	47	27	28	16	28	16	21	12
Bannu	59	40	35	24	35	24	26	18
Karak	56	26	37	16	37	16	28	12
Nowshera	66	29	40	17	40	17	30	13
Abbottabad	69	45	41	27	41	27	31	20
Lakki Marwat	56	21	34	13	34	13	26	10
Hangu	26	09	16	05	16	05	12	04
Malakand	45	29	27	17	27	17	20	13
Charssadda	61	33	37	20	37	20	28	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>142</b>

## Research Design

The current research study was quantitative and correlational. A quantitative research method deals with the numbers and anything that is quantifiable systematically through investigating a phenomenon as well as its connection. It is employed to provide the answer to the questions on the relationship within the quantifiable variables with an expectation to clarify, control and anticipate a phenomenon (Leedy, 1993). On the other hand, a correlational research method is a kind of research method that is involved in gathering information about two or more variables for each subject in the sample and also for calculating a correlation coefficient between the variables. It is very useful and worthwhile for studying problems in education. The purpose of such a study is to explore relationships among the variables through the application of correlational statistics (Gall et al., 2007). In order to gather the required information from the participants, a survey design was adopted as the population was extensively scattered and it was not possible to collect information through other research tools. The survey is generally used to gather measurable information from the participants to measure, observe, evaluate and

generalise the research outcomes, and is recognised as a systematic and precise way of gathering information quantitatively (Zikmund, 2003).

### Step-by-Step Multistage Sampling Technique

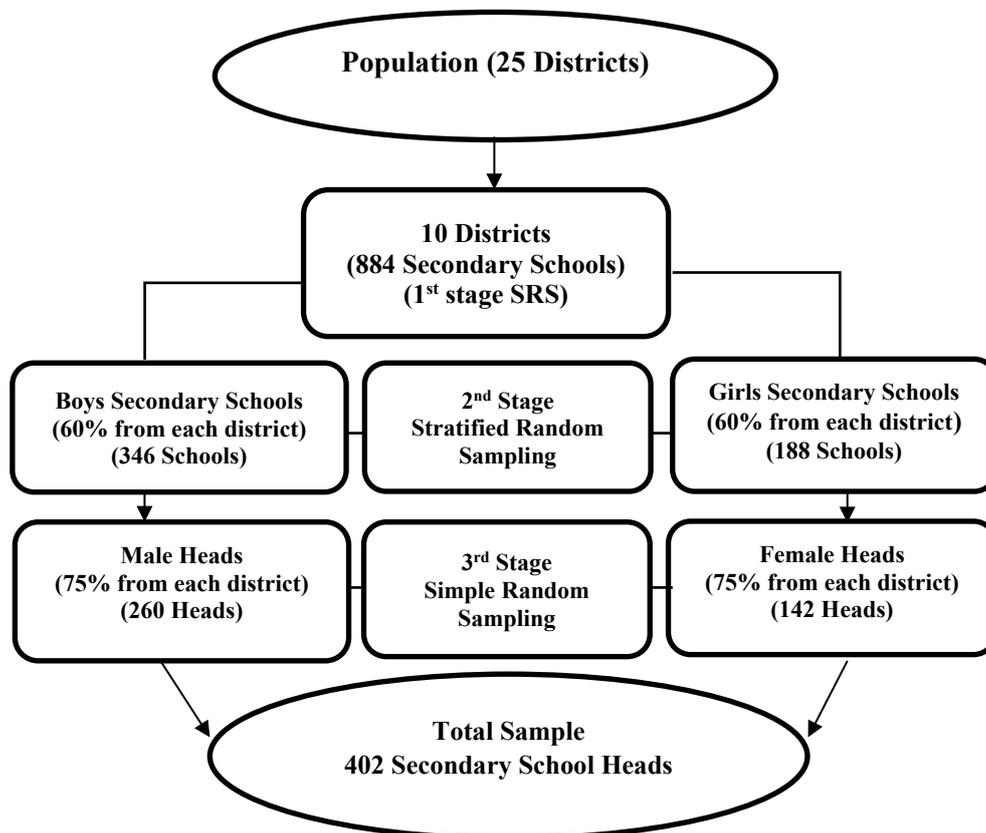


Figure 1. Multi-stage sampling technique

### Measurements

In order to assess and correlate emotional intelligence and occupational stress among secondary school principals, two standardised tools, the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) and Occupational Stress Index (OSI) were used as research tools (after taking formal permission from the authors) for measuring emotional intelligence and occupational stress of secondary school principals, respectively.

**Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS).** The Emotional Intelligence Scale is extensively used for measuring individuals' emotional intelligence. In the beginning, Hyde, Pethe and Dhar (2005) developed a scale having 106 items, but after the statistical treatment by them, 34 items were found to be very significant and the rest of the items were excluded. The reliability of the emotional intelligence scale was confirmed through a sample of 200 participants by calculating the split-half reliability coefficient and was found to be 0.88. The content validity of the scale was found to be 0.93. The validation of the scale was performed on Indian executives, but it

may also be adopted for other occupations. The scale was administered among the participants and data was collected. Factor analysis was done on the scores and ten factors were identified which constitute the sub-dimensions of the emotional intelligence scale. The ten sub-dimensions of emotional intelligence are self-awareness, emotional stability, empathy, managing relations, integrity, self-motivation, commitment, self-development, value orientation and altruistic behaviour. This scale has been designed on five-point Likert scale with Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree, and was rated as 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1, respectively (Jhaa & Singh, 2012).

**Occupational Stress Index (OSI).** The Occupational Stress Index is a widely accepted scale for measuring job stress. A number of psychologists have used it in their research studies. The scale is specially designed to measure the level of stress which is perceived by employees from numerous conditions of their job position. The scale may be used to assess the stress of the workforces employed in the context of industries or other non-production departments such as education, medical, etcetera. The scale consists of twelve dimensions: role overload, role conflict, role ambiguity, unreasonable group and political pressure, under participation, responsibility for persons, powerlessness, intrinsic impoverishment, peer group relations, low status, strenuous working conditions and unprofitability. The scale comprises 46 items designed on a five-point Likert scale. Among these items, 28 were true keyed and 18 were false keyed items. The true keyed items were rated as 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for undecided, 2 for disagree, and 1 for strongly disagree, while the false keyed items were rated as reversed. The reliability coefficient calculated through Split Half (odd-even) strategy and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for the scales were found to be 0.937 and 0.90, respectively.

### **Data Collection and Statistical Analysis**

The process of data collection was initiated in Sept 2016 and accomplished in Feb 2017. The process of printing questionnaires; writing school addresses on the envelopes of the participants and packing questionnaires for gathering information etcetera, was completed by 15 October 2016. The researcher started data collection formally from 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2016. In some districts, data was collected through personal visits due to the accessibility for the researcher. However, data was also collected through the mail in the case of remote areas where access for the researcher was not possible. Based on the inaccessibility of the researcher to the participants, questionnaires were mailed to participants at their school addresses in six districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa – Peshawar, Malakand, Charssadda, Nowshera, Bannu and Abbottabad. Participants were provided with a cover letter that explained the purpose of the study. In the covering letter, the participants were told that completion of the questionnaire would be considered to be their consent to participate in the study. They were also informed that their responses would be kept confidential and would be used only for research purposes. Furthermore, they were assured that their responses would be destroyed immediately after analysing the data. In addition to the cover letter, a self-addressed envelope was enclosed with each mailing as registered letter for returning the questionnaires after completion. To get a

maximum response rate, a follow-up study was done. Due to the follow-up study and the efforts of the researcher to contact the participants, 100 percent responses were received. Raw data was organised, classified and tabulated. Descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation and inferential statistics such as Pearson's product-moment correlation ( $r$ ) and multiple linear regression were employed for analysing data through SPSS version 20.

## RESULTS

### Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Intelligence

Table 2 presents the descriptive analysis of the emotional intelligence among secondary school heads. The overall mean score of emotional intelligence as reported by secondary school heads was 3.35 with standard deviation score of 0.464 which clearly shows that secondary school heads were emotionally intelligent. Furthermore, the results show that the most rated dimension of emotional intelligence was altruistic behaviour ( $mean=3.67, SD=0.797$ ) followed by self-awareness ( $mean=3.58, SD=0.682$ ) and self-motivation ( $mean=3.57, SD=0.616$ ). The other subscales of emotional intelligence were rated as integrity ( $mean=3.54, SD=0.771$ ), self-development ( $mean=3.53, SD=0.818$ ), value orientation ( $mean=3.48, SD=0.942$ ), managing relations ( $mean=3.47, SD=0.689$ ), commitment ( $mean=3.40, SD=0.464$ ) and empathy ( $mean=3.06, SD=0.681$ ). This plainly reveals that the secondary school principals were emotionally intelligent with respect to these dimensions. On the other hand, it was found that secondary school heads were not emotionally intelligent with respect to emotional stability ( $mean=2.46, SD=0.629$ ).

**Table 2. Emotional intelligence among secondary school heads**

Variables	Min	Max	Mean $\pm$ SD	SE	Skewness		Kurtosis	
					Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE
Emotional Intelligence	2.15	4.91	3.35 $\pm$ 0.464	0.023	0.451	0.122	-0.029	0.243
Self-Awareness	1.50	5.00	3.58 $\pm$ 0.682	0.034	-0.096	0.122	-0.241	0.243
Empathy	1.40	5.00	3.06 $\pm$ 0.681	0.034	-0.145	0.122	-0.229	0.243
Self-Motivation	1.67	5.00	3.57 $\pm$ 0.616	0.031	-0.067	0.122	0.067	0.243
Emotional Stability	1.00	5.00	2.46 $\pm$ 0.629	0.031	0.389	0.122	0.354	0.243
Managing Relations	1.50	5.00	3.47 $\pm$ 0.689	0.034	-0.137	0.122	-0.168	0.243
Integrity	1.33	5.00	3.54 $\pm$ 0.771	0.038	-0.347	0.122	-0.141	0.243
Self-Development	1.00	5.00	3.53 $\pm$ 0.818	0.041	-0.243	0.122	-0.473	0.243
Value Orientation	1.00	5.00	3.48 $\pm$ 0.942	0.047	-0.201	0.122	-0.575	0.243
Commitment	2.31	4.78	3.40 $\pm$ 0.464	0.023	-0.146	0.122	-0.129	0.243
Altruistic Behaviour	1.50	5.00	3.67 $\pm$ 0.797	0.040	-0.326	0.122	-0.319	0.243

### Descriptive Statistics of Occupational Stress

Table 3 indicates the descriptive statistics of occupational stress among secondary school heads. The overall mean score of occupational stress as reported by secondary school heads was 3.08 with standard deviation score of 0.443 which plainly reveals that secondary school heads were occupationally stressed. Additionally, the results indicate that the most rated

domain of occupational stress was role overload ( $mean=3.55$ ,  $SD=0.675$ ) followed by unprofitability, having a mean score of 3.53 and standard deviation of 0.900. The other domains were rated as unreasonable group and political pressure ( $mean=3.52$ ,  $SD=0.721$ ), strenuous working conditions ( $mean=3.48$ ,  $SD=0.748$ ), powerlessness ( $mean=3.41$ ,  $SD=0.954$ ), role conflict ( $mean=3.39$ ,  $SD=0.803$ ) and under participation ( $mean=3.33$ ,  $SD=0.834$ ). This undoubtedly reveals that secondary school heads were occupationally stressed within these domains of occupational stress. Alternatively, it was also reported that heads of secondary schools were not stressed with respect to responsibility ( $mean=2.94$ ,  $SD=0.999$ ), peer group relations ( $mean=2.46$ ,  $SD=0.711$ ), role ambiguity ( $mean=2.42$ ,  $SD=0.661$ ), low status ( $mean=2.63$ ,  $SD=0.703$ ) or intrinsic impoverishment ( $mean=2.40$ ,  $SD=0.618$ ).

**Table 3. Occupational stress among secondary school heads**

Variables	Min	Max	Mean $\pm$ SD	SE	Skewness		Kurtosis	
					Statistic	SE	Statistic	SE
Occupational Stress	1.68	4.44	3.08 $\pm$ 0.443	0.022	0.106	0.122	0.513	0.243
Role Overload	1.50	5.00	3.55 $\pm$ 0.675	0.034	- 0.147	0.122	0.261	0.243
Role Ambiguity	1.00	4.50	2.42 $\pm$ 0.661	0.033	0.391	0.122	- 0.169	0.243
Role Conflict	1.20	5.00	3.39 $\pm$ 0.803	0.040	- 0.032	0.122	- 0.432	0.243
Unreasonable Group & Political Pressure	1.25	5.00	3.52 $\pm$ 0.721	0.036	- 0.119	0.122	- 0.012	0.243
Responsibility	1.00	5.00	2.94 $\pm$ 0.999	0.050	- 0.103	0.122	- 0.994	0.243
Under Participation	1.00	5.00	3.33 $\pm$ 0.834	0.042	- 0.183	0.122	- 0.189	0.243
Powerlessness	1.00	5.00	3.41 $\pm$ 0.954	0.048	- 0.216	0.122	- 0.619	0.243
Peer Group Relation	1.00	5.00	2.46 $\pm$ 0.711	0.035	0.417	0.122	0.009	0.243
Intrinsic Impoverishment	1.00	4.50	2.40 $\pm$ 0.618	0.031	0.649	0.122	0.652	0.243
Low Status	1.00	5.00	2.63 $\pm$ 0.703	0.035	0.332	0.122	- 0.335	0.243
Strenuous Working Conditions	1.25	5.00	3.48 $\pm$ 0.748	0.037	- 0.206	0.122	- 0.194	0.243
Unprofitability	1.00	5.00	3.53 $\pm$ 0.900	0.045	- 0.146	0.122	- 0.521	0.243

## Inferential Analysis/Hypotheses Testing

### Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Analysis

**Hypothesis 1. There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational stress.**

As presented in table 4, the value of  $r$  was found to be -0.584 ( $p<0.01$ ), which clearly indicates that there is a moderate negative correlation between emotional intelligence and occupational stress. It shows that the higher the emotional intelligence of secondary school principals the lower will be their occupational stress and so on.

**Table 4. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation between emotional intelligence and occupational stress**

Variables	Emotional Intelligence	Occupational Stress
Emotional Intelligence	1	- 0.584**
Occupational Stress	- 0.584**	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation Strength:**  $r \geq 0.70$ =Strong;  $0.30 \leq r \leq 0.69$ =Moderate;  $0.01 \leq r \leq 0.29$ =Weak

**Hypothesis 2. There is a significant relationship between the subdimensions of emotional intelligence and occupational stress.**

With respect to subdimensions of emotional intelligence, table 5 also reveals that there is a significant moderate negative correlation between nine out of ten subscales of emotional intelligence and overall occupational stress with self-awareness ( $r = -0.398, p < 0.01$ ), empathy ( $r = -0.408, p < 0.01$ ), self-motivation ( $r = -0.436, p < 0.01$ ), managing relation ( $r = -0.402, p < 0.01$ ), integrity ( $r = -0.467, p < 0.01$ ), self-development ( $r = -0.332, p < 0.01$ ), value orientation ( $r = -0.370, p < 0.01$ ), commitment ( $r = -0.418, p < 0.01$ ) and altruistic behaviour ( $r = -0.402, p < 0.01$ ). Conversely, a weak negative correlation was found between emotional stability ( $r = -0.121, p < 0.01$ ) and occupational stress. Hence, the hypothesis, "There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational stress" was accepted. It clearly indicates that with the increasing level of the dimensions of emotional intelligence, occupational stress decreases, and so on.

**Table 5. Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation between subdimensions of emotional intelligence and occupational stress**

Variables	SA	E	SM	ES	MR	I	SD	VO	C	AB	OS
SA	1										
E	.391**	1									
SM	.552**	.452**	1								
ES	.031	.115**	.099**	1							
MR	.381**	.477**	.447**	-.008	1						
I	.592**	.398**	.663**	.125*	.364**	1					
SD	.283**	.336**	.442**	.147**	.323**	.325**	1				
VO	.420**	.420**	.406**	-.037	.507**	.378**	.260**	1			
C	.411**	.436**	.409**	.040	.389**	.432**	.239**	.448**	1		
AB	.368**	.321**	.421**	.058	.406**	.368**	.190**	.446**	.350**	1	
OS	-.397**	-.408**	-.436**	-.105*	-.402**	-.466**	-.322**	-.370**	-.398**	-.401**	1

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation Strength:**  $r \geq 0.70$ =Strong;  $0.30 \leq r \leq 0.69$ =Moderate;  $0.01 \leq r \leq 0.29$ =Weak

**Key:** SA=Self-awareness; E=Empathy; SM=Self-Motivation; ES=Emotional Stability; MR=Managing Relations; I=Integrity; SD=Self-Development; VO=Value Orientation; C=Commitment; AB=Altruistic Behaviour; OS=Occupational Stress

## Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

### ***Hypothesis 3. Subdimensions of emotional intelligence have a significant contribution in predicting occupational stress.***

To investigate the effect of each independent variable in predicting the dependent variable, multiple regression analysis was carried out (see table 6). The value of ANOVA was 21.484, which is statistically significant ( $p=0.000$ ) and also reported that the whole model is significant. Moreover, the  $R^2$  value is 0.355, which indicates that the independent variables represented 36 percent of the variance in occupational stress. The outcomes of regression analysis found that among the subscales of emotional intelligence, six subscales were found as significant predictors and have a significant negative effect on occupational stress. Among these predictors, integrity was found to be the strongest predictor with a regression coefficient value of 0.194 followed by altruistic behaviour ( $\beta=-0.157$ ), empathy ( $\beta=-0.109$ ), commitment ( $\beta=-0.107$ ), managing relations ( $\beta=-0.101$ ) and self-development ( $\beta=-0.100$ ) in defining occupational stress negatively. On the other hand, self-awareness ( $\beta=-0.049$ ), self-motivation ( $\beta=-0.015$ ), emotional stability ( $\beta=-0.040$ ) and value orientation ( $\beta=-0.030$ ) have no significant effect on occupational stress. This undoubtedly shows that integrity, altruistic behaviour, empathy, commitment, managing relations, and self-development predict occupational stress negatively among secondary school principals. Therefore, the hypothesis “Sub-dimensions of emotional intelligence have a significant contribution in predicting occupational stress” was partially accepted.

**Table 6. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis**

Model	Occupational Stress (Dependent Variable)							
	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	$R^2$	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$					
(Constant)	5.048	0.164		30.785	0.000			
SA	- 0.032	0.035	- 0.049	- 0.907	0.365			
E	- 0.071	0.033	- 0.109*	- 2.125	0.034			
SM	- 0.011	0.044	- 0.015	- 0.251	0.802			
ES	- 0.028	0.029	- 0.040	- 0.947	0.344			
MR	- 0.065	0.034	- 0.101*	- 1.930	0.054	0.355	21.484	0.000
I	- 0.112	0.034	- 0.194*	- 3.268	0.001			
SD	- 0.054	0.025	-0.100*	- 2.136	0.033			
VO	- 0.014	0.025	- 0.030	- 0.570	0.569			
C	- 0.102	0.048	- 0.107*	- 2.138	0.033			
AB	- 0.087	0.027	- 0.157*	- 3.233	0.001			

\* Significant Predictors

**Dependent Variable:** Occupational Stress

**Independent Variables:** SA=Self-awareness; E=Empathy; SM=Self-Motivation; ES=Emotional Stability; MR=Managing Relations; I=Integrity; SD=Self-Development; VO=Value Orientation; C=Commitment; AB=Altruistic Behaviour

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## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational stress among secondary school heads in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Recently, emotional intelligence has increased in its importance for its encouraging role in a few fields like leadership, workplace and work performance. Goleman (1995) expressed that emotional intelligence contributes to individuals' success and work performance. Research reveals that emotional intelligence is a more powerful predictor than IQ in terms of one's accomplishment and success (Ashkanasy et al., 2002; Goleman, 1998). An individual having a high level of emotional insight can use and control their own feelings effectively, and they possess the social ability to oversee others and keep up interpersonal connections. Moreover, workers possessing a high degree of emotional intelligence are normally mindful, manage their feelings and hold a positive mental state, creating an environment that contributes to enhanced accomplishment (Carmeli, 2003). Similarly, according to Sahar, Hanaa and Adeyemo (2014), emotional intelligence is quite beneficial in the reduction of occupational stress in workforces. Jung and Yoon (2016) expressed that emotional intelligence is intended to encourage stress management. Under stressful conditions, the individual must be able to control the circumstances he/she faces. Because of emotional intelligence, he/she understands how to respond and how to reduce the potentially stressful conditions.

Based on Pearson's correlation analysis, a moderate negative correlation was found between overall emotional intelligence and occupational stress. In addition, the findings revealed that there was a moderate negative correlation between all the subscales of emotional intelligence and overall occupational stress: self-awareness, empathy, self-motivation, emotional stability, integrity, self-development, value orientation, managing relations, commitment and altruistic behaviour. After multiple regression analysis, it was reported that among all subscales of emotional intelligence, the following six were found as predictors that have a negative effect on occupational stress: empathy, managing relation, integrity, self-development, commitment and altruistic behaviour. These subscales predict occupational stress among secondary school principals negatively. On the other hand, self-awareness, self-motivation, emotional stability and value orientation have no significant effect on occupational stress. This clearly indicates that a secondary school principal who is emotionally intelligent can withstand a stressful situation in the workplace. According to Rahim (2008), emotional intelligence competence among employees has a significant effect on stress and other psychological correlates. Another research study by Slaski and Cartwright (2002) reported managers with high emotional intelligence as having a low level of subjective stress. They feel well, physically and psychologically. In the same way, Rakhshani et al (2018) found a relatively strong inverse relationship between emotional intelligence and job stress. Likewise, Leon and Tănăsescu (2018) also confirmed that emotional intelligence contributes positively to reduce the stress faced by workers. They added that individuals who have an outstanding level of emotional intelligence are less worried at the working place because they know well how to understand and control their own feelings and the feelings of others, they are more goal-oriented,

concentrate on what they are performing, and utilise their feelings constructively. The findings of the study are also in line with the findings of Naseem (2018), who noted that individuals with higher emotional intelligence will experience less stress and a higher level of cheerfulness. The findings of the study are also consistent with many research studies in which a significant negative correlation was found between emotional intelligence and occupational stress, indicating that the more an individual is occupationally stressed, the less the chances are that he/she will be emotionally intelligent (El-Sayed et al., 2014; Darvish & Nasrollahi, 2014; Ghaltash et al., 2009; Holeyannavar & Itagi, 2012; Jude, 2011; Kauts & Kumar, 2013; Kauts & Saroj, 2010; Punia et al., 2016; Singh & Singh, 2008). Conclusively, secondary school principals who have the ability to successfully manage their emotions and emotional information in the workplace may have the ability to maintain their psychological well-being, control stressful circumstances, promote good human relations and produce fruitful organisational outcomes. On the contrary, surprisingly, the findings of the study negate the findings of Krishnakumar and Lalitha (2014), who found that there was a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational stress. Furthermore, they noted that it may not be always expected that emotionally intelligent individuals will always be able to manage a stressful situation. They added that although workers possess high emotional intelligence, yet they have moderate and high stress. The main reasons for their stress were role overload and role conflict at the working place. Similarly, Kanellakis, Karakasidou, and Koutsoukis (2018) found that emotional intelligence and occupational stress are positively associated and that they both influence the work performance of an individual. At the same time, gender does not appear to influence the level of emotional intelligence or the perception of occupational stress.

In the end, limitations and shortcomings are part of every research and this provides a research gap for other researchers to work on in the future. The current study also has some limitations, like that the analysis was done on the data of 10 districts only and there is a possibility the results may vary if we collect data from all 25 districts. Therefore, data collection from all districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa may overcome this limitation. Data from all districts will provide a more comprehensive and broad presentation of the situation. Secondly, it was a quantitative study only and the results may vary in case of using a mixed-method research approach. Therefore, it is suggested for future researches to use a mixed-method research approach (quantitative and qualitative). Thirdly, the data collection was done through standardised research tools. Therefore, a slight possibility of difference in results may occur if the data would be collected through self-developed indigenous instruments.

## CONCLUSIONS

Emotional intelligence is highly linked with occupational stress, having an inverse relationship. The findings reveal that there is a moderate negative correlation between emotional intelligence and occupational stress among secondary school principals. Furthermore, there is a moderate negative correlation between all the sub-scales of emotional intelligence and overall occupational stress. Among the subscales of emotional intelligence, six subscales were found



to be significant predictors, having a substantial negative effect on occupational stress: empathy, managing relations, integrity, self-development, commitment and altruistic behaviour. This means that the higher the emotional intelligence of an individual the lower will be his or her occupational stress. Therefore, it was concluded that emotional intelligence is a crucial and fundamental variable that enables an individual to face stressful situations successfully, which in turn boosts and stimulates overall organisational productivity and individuals' wellbeing.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Emotional intelligence has been linked to workplace outcomes such as performance and job satisfaction. Therefore, it is recommended to focus on those activities that contribute to strengthening emotional intelligence among secondary school principals. In the recruitment process, preference should be given to those who are more emotionally intelligent. Workshops and seminars should be arranged for secondary school principals on emotional intelligence and occupational stress to equip them with skills and abilities to strengthen their emotional intelligence to reduce their occupational stress. Subjects on emotional intelligence and occupational stress should be included in the curriculum of educational administration and management to stimulate the abilities of secondary school principals to ensure a conducive environment for themselves, their subordinates and students. The Elementary and Secondary Education Department, in collaboration with policymakers, should formulate comprehensive and effective strategies for stress reduction with the aim of ensuring organisational productivity and individuals' prosperity. Additionally, seminars, training and workshops on stress reduction management should be arranged for secondary school principals, which will ultimately lead to an enhanced level of satisfaction.



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