

Influence of Emotional Intelligence on Work Engagement of Teachers in Greater Accra

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Abstract

The study examined the influence of emotional intelligence on work engagement among senior high school teachers in Greater Accra. The study employed a cross-sectional descriptive survey design using a quantitative approach, grounded in the post-positivist paradigm and addressed one research question and three hypotheses. It used a sample of 415 respondents with multistage sampling procedure. Data were collected with standardised instrument adapted for this study. Means and standard deviation were used to analysis the data regarding the research question and the hypotheses were tested using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results revealed that emotional intelligence positively predicted work engagement of teachers in second cycle schools. However, not all the dimensions strongly predict work engagement. The study recommends that educational frontiers in the world over should ensure emotional intelligence become a core component in its teacher training curricula in higher institutions.

KEYWORDS: Emotional intelligence, work engagement, teachers.

Introduction

The extent to which employees actively and genuinely engage in their work activities and processes is critical for the success of any work organisation. However, several studies show that there is widespread work disengagement among employees in many organisations (Clack, 2021; Hoole & Hotz, 2016; Musenze & Thomas, 2020). In the Total Reward Survey, it was observed that the proportion of workforces with high assignment was less than one-third of the universal employed populace, while 39% had intermediate labour appointments. In the meantime, the Gallup state of the Global Workplace report in 2023 also revealed that only 23% of the workforce were actively engaged, 59% were not engaged and 18% were actively disengaged globally (Gallup, 2023). These findings do give a clear picture of the nature of employee engagement in the workplace.

Active worker appointment is important for the performance and triumph of any work organisation and achievement of corporate objectives. Indeed, achievement of corporate objectives and high performance have always been the expectation of all stakeholders in every organisation, and work engagement has been

found to have direct influence on employees' job performance in every society (Addimando, 2019). In the educational sector, teachers' work engagement has been established to have a substantial correlation with the academic achievement of students (Tao et al., 2022; Wang, 2022). However, expectations of stakeholders regarding the performance of students in external examinations in Ghana appears not being met, in particular on how learners performed in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) (Moses, 2012). It is, therefore, vital that factors that could account for the improvement of work engagement of public senior high school teachers in Ghana be explored to inform a pragmatic intervention to mitigate the rate of work disengagement in education sector.

One of the factors that appears to predict work engagement has been found to be teachers' emotional intelligence. It is revealed that a substantial correlation between teachers' emotional intelligence and their pupils' high academic accomplishment (Hargraves, 2018; Maamari & Majdalani, 2019). Again, research has demonstrated the advantages of emotional intelligence for improving professional performance (Drago, 2004; Seligman, 2005; Shahzad et al., 2011); the teaching-learning process (Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014) students' realisation in the classroom (Al Jaber et al., 2024); lowering stress and fatigue (Valente, 2022) and the importance of interpersonal relationships in the classroom (Klinkosz et al., 2021).

Singh et al. (2022), explains emotional intelligence as the skill to notice feelings, to access and generate feelings so as to assist thought, to comprehend feelings and expressive knowledge, and to thoughtfully adjust feelings so as to promote expressive and knowledgeable progress. It is believed that emotional intelligence contributes to the work engagement of teachers in classroom since they provide services to learners who have emotions which need to be observed, understood and managed to improve instructional process (Abiodullah & Aslam, 2020; Maamari & Majdalani, 2019; Welmilla, 2020).

Statement of the problem

According to Gallup's 2023 State of the Global Workplace report, 23% of workers worldwide are vigorously involved, 59% are not, and 18% are energetically disconnected from work (Gallup, 2023). This indicates that a significant proportion of workers worldwide—roughly 77%—are disengaged with several businesses. The report continues to state that the small involvement costs the universal budget \$8.8 trillion, which accounts for 9% of universal Gross Domestic Product (GDP), more than the total GDP of sub-Saharan Africa's economic growth in 2022 at 3.6% (\$2,011.84 billion) (Egbe, 2023).

This report seems to suggest that around the globe, there is a higher disengagement of workers than engagement, of which Africa is no exception, and of course, Ghana is part of Africa. One must not lose sight of the fact that the report involved all fields of employment; therefore, educational institutions must plan ahead of time to mitigate this issue to safeguard against this anticipated global cancer and challenge. Greater Accra, comparatively is an enviable and well-resourced region, nevertheless, on the regional rankings of the top twenty best-performing schools in Ghana, most of her schools were found to be behind those in the Central Region, which is considered to be one of the poorest regions (Addae-Korankye, 2012; Anim-Addo, 2014; Ofori-Boateng, 2015). According to Butakor et al (2020), this poor performance of the schools in the region is attributed to the low engagement of teachers in the area.

Lastly, while majority of research on the connection between work engagement and emotional intelligence focused on Goleman's five dimensions of emotional intelligence qualitatively, this study was intended to use the four dimensions proposed by Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso quantitatively (Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007; Mohammad & Jais 2016; Odame et al., 2020; Shahzal et al., 2011). The study was conducted against

the backdrop of an increasing rate of work disengagement worldwide and in the Greater Accra Region, and the over-emphasised use of Goleman's dimensions qualitatively.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate the influence of emotional intelligence on work engagement among senior high school teachers in Greater Accra.

Research Question

1. What are the levels of a) work engagement, b) emotional intelligence of senior high school teachers in Greater Accra?

Hypothesis

1. Emotional intelligence will significantly predict work engagement.
2. Emotional intelligence will significantly predict the levels of work engagement.
3. All the dimensions of emotional intelligence will significantly predict levels of work engagement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study was anchored in a model of emotional intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1990) and work engagement theory (Kahn's Theory, 1990). The concepts of work engagement and its levels, emotional intelligence and its dimensions were reviewed in Ghanaian context.

Emotional intelligence

Mayer and Salovey are credited as the scholars who first introduced the term "emotional intelligence" in 1990. Since then, there has been ongoing research into the concept. Mayer and Salovey (1990) defined emotional intelligence as the ability to monitor one's own emotions and those of others, to differentiate between them, and to use this information to guide both thinking and behaviour. This model suggests that the information derived from understanding feelings and effectively managing emotions is utilized to facilitate cognitive processes and guide decision-making in our daily lives (Faltas, 2017).

Work Engagement

Kahn proposed that "people can use varying degrees of their selves" and aimed to develop a grounded theory on engagement by examining the work conditions that influence how much individuals "personally engage, or express and employ their personal selves, and disengage, or withdraw and defend their personal selves" (Kahn, 1990, p. 692). From his findings, Kahn identified three psychological conditions essential for engagement: safety, work meaningfulness and availability. On the other hand, where an individual or group of workers are deprived of these conditions, it would lead to disengagement at work place.

This theory was established in the study to reflect the extent to which teachers may be emotionally and cognitively invested in their work in the presence of meaningfulness, safety and availability. Therefore, teachers' capacity to perceive, understand, regulate, and utilize emotions effectively in oneself and others is vital. It is likely that teachers with higher emotional intelligence will be able to generally better manage classroom dynamics, respond to student needs, and navigate school environment challenges, all of which can directly influence their level of engagement.

Conceptual Framework

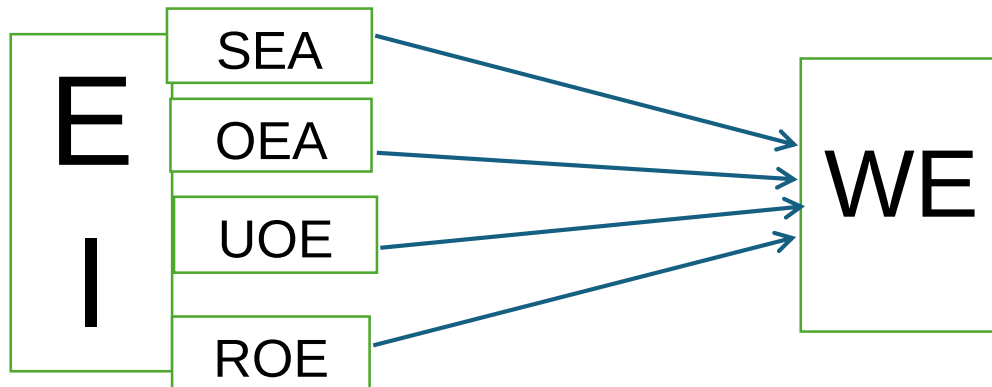


Figure 1: Conceptual framework for this present study

This simple model depicts that emotional intelligence is an influential factor of education and can be used to explain teachers work engagement (WE). Emotional intelligence (EI) as a model has four dimensions via self-emotion appraisal (SEA), others' emotion appraisal (OEA), use of emotion (UOE), regulation of emotion (ROE). This model shows that EI is likely to have direct relationship with work engagement of teachers, either positive or negative, however, the individual dimensions are not likely to explain its predictive value equally. Therefore, in this study it was postulated that EI is likely to significantly predict WE, and that not all the dimensions are likely to predict WE. Again, it was envisaged that not all the dimensions of EI will significantly predict the levels of WE.

Research methods

The key components of the study were the description of the philosophical foundations, research approach and design, population, sample and sampling technique, and the instrument. This study supported the idea of post-positivism paradigm which focuses on researching issues in the context of involving experiences of the majority and announcing the results of what the majority says is acceptable (Jockson, 2021; Musa & Aldiabat, 2024). Also, the study primarily employed a quantitative approach in testing hypotheses and investigating the phenomenon through measurable data (Ghanad, 2023, Habes et al., 2021). In addition, the research design used was descriptive (cross-sectional) survey research: a type of observational study, or research that involves analyzing information about a population at a specific point in time (Kumar & Praveenakumar, 2025).

The target population of the study was teachers in public senior high schools in the Greater Accra Region. The accessible population was selected teachers from 28 schools generated from 8 existing zones of varied number of schools. The sample size was 415, a population of 6,749 (361 but additions of 15% to 415) (Stratton, 2021).

A multi-sampling procedure approach was employed, combining proportionate, simple random, and systematic sampling procedures in selecting the respondents. Finally, the instrument used to gather data was a questionnaire. I adapted emotional intelligence and work engagement scales by Wong and Law's (2002), and Klassen et al. (2013) respectively. These scales were pilot tested and validated utilising Karl Joreskog's Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with a covariance-based structural equation model (Hair et al., 2014).

Data analysis and Results

Research question

What are the levels of a) work engagement, b) emotional intelligence of senior high school teachers in Greater Accra?

Research question one sought to determine the emotional intelligence levels of SHS teachers in Greater Accra. A 6-point Likert-type scale comprising 16 items was employed to evaluate emotional intelligence levels among teachers. A cut-off point was established to determine low, moderate and high emotional intelligence as follows; on the six Likert-type scale: Range of scores = $6-1=5$ (i.e. highest – lowest); the mid-point of the range = $5/3 = 1.66$, hence the cut off point for determining whether a value was low was addition of 1.66. Thus $1+1.66$ will be 2.66, this will give us the first level. The second level will range from $2.67 + 1.66 = 4.33$. And the final range will be $4.34+1.66 = 6.00$. Therefore, in this study these cut off points were used: Low: 1.00-2.66, Moderate: 2.67-4.33, and High: 4.34-6.00. Emotional intelligence levels are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents Levels of Emotional Intelligence

Subscales	No. of items	Mean	SD
Self-Emotion Appraisal	4	5.77	0.273
Others' Emotion Appraisal	4	5.71	0.279
Use Of Emotion	4	5.84	0.266
Regulation Of Emotion	4	5.81	0.258
Mean of means	16	5.78	0.269

Source: Field survey (2025)

The established mean cut of point and the overall mean of means of Emotional Intelligence were low, moderate and high ranges, and the Mean of means = 5.78 respectively. This indicate that teachers' level of Emotional Intelligence was very high (4.34-6.00). Again, among the four dimensions of emotional intelligence, use of Emotions ($M = 5.84$, $SD = 0.266$) was the most adopted, followed by Regulation of Emotions ($M = 5.81$, $SD = 0.258$), Self-Emotion Appraisal ($M = 5.77$, $SD = 0.273$), then Others' Emotion Appraisal ($M = 5.71$, $SD = 0.279$). Largely, all the four dimensions of emotional intelligence were qualified.

The second part of the research question sought to determine the work engagement levels of SHS teachers in Greater Accra. A 6-point Likert-type scale comprising 13 items was employed to evaluate work engagement levels among teachers. The established mean cut off points range were utilized as Low: 1.00-2.66, Moderate: 2.67-4.33, and High: 4.34-6.00. Work engagement levels are provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Respondents Levels of Work Engagement

Scale/sub-scales	No. of items	Mean	SD
Emotional Engagement	3	5.46	0.407
Cognitive Engagement	3	5.38	0.242
Social Engagement (colleagues)	3	5.55	0.345
Social Engagement (Students)	4	5.53	0.347
Mean of means	13	5.47	0.335

Source: Field survey (2025)

The established mean cut off points and the overall mean of means of work engagement were low, moderate and high ranges, and Mean of means = 5.47 respectively. This indicated that respondents were highly engaged (4.34- 6.00) in all levels of work engagement. Again, among the four dimensions of work engagement, Social Engagement (colleagues) (M = 5.55, SD = 0.345) was the most adopted, followed by Social Engagement (Students) (M = 5.53, SD = 0.347), Emotional Engagement (M = 5.46, SD = 0.407), then Cognitive Engagement (M = 5.38, SD = 0.242). Largely, all the four dimensions of work engagement were experienced.

Evaluation of Structural Model

The structural model indicates the causal relationships between the latent variables. The study tested the model presented below (Table 3), using the Partial-Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with the help of the SmartPLS 4.0 software. PLS-SEM test of significance is achieved through the use 5000 bootstrap samples with bias corrected and accelerated. The structural model tested in this study involved the direct effects of emotional intelligence and work engagement. The effects of emotional intelligence on work engagement were explored in the models presented below to test hypotheses 1, 2, 3.

1. *Emotional intelligence will significantly predict work engagement.*
2. *Emotional intelligence will significantly predict levels of work engagement.*
3. *All the dimensions of emotional intelligence will significantly predict levels of work engagement.*

Table 3: Results of Structural Model

	Standardised coefficients (β)			Effect Size f^2	Quality criteria	
Paths	Direct	Indirect	Total		R^2	Q^2
EI -> WE	0.845***		0.845**	0.050	0.148***	0.016

** $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$

The model presented in the table (Table 3) tested the direct effect of emotional intelligence on work engagement. The results indicated that the model was significant and the exogenous variable accounted for 14.8% of the variance in work engagement with predictive relevance (Q^2) of 0.016.

The first hypothesis postulated that: *Emotional intelligence will significantly predict work engagement.* The result showed that the effects of Emotional intelligence (EI) on work engagement ($\beta = 0.845$, $p < .001$) was significant. This means that the hypothesis one was supported.

Table 4: Effects of Exogenous Variable on levels of Work Engagement

	Standardised coefficients (β)			Effect size	Quality criteria	
Paths	Direct	Indirect	Total	f^2	R^2	Q^2
EI -> EE	0.201***		0.201	.040	0.045	0.009
EI -> CE	0.094		0.094	.008	0.015	0.22
EI -> SEC	0.076		0.076	.056	0.154***	0.118
EI -> SES	0.238***		0.238	.056**	0.053**	0.031

Emotional intelligence had significant effect on social engagement with students ($\beta = 0.238$, $p < .001$), than emotional engagement ($\beta = 0.201$, $p < .001$). On the other hand, emotional intelligence was found not

to be significant on both cognitive engagement ($\beta = 0.094$, $p > .001$), and social engagement with colleagues ($\beta = 0.076$, $p > .001$). The second hypothesis that: *emotional intelligence will significantly predict levels of work engagement* was not significant. This means that the hypothesis two was not supported.

Dimensions of emotional intelligence on work engagement

The hypothesis that emotional intelligence will significantly predict work engagement was supported, further analysis was done on the dimensions and the result presented in Table 5.

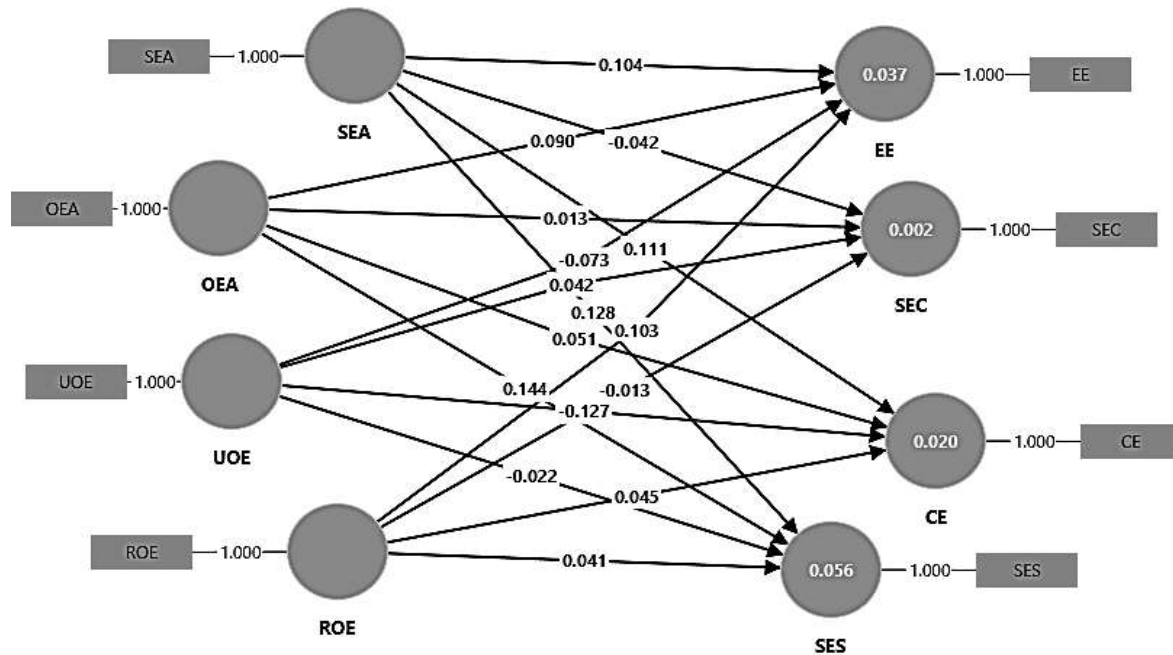


Figure 2: Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence and Work Engagement

OEA = Others' Emotion Appraisal; ROE = Regulation of Emotion; SEA = Self-Emotion Appraisal; UOE = Use of Emotion; EE=Emotional Engagement, CE=Cognitive Engagement; SEC=Social Engagement (colleagues); SES= and Social Engagement (Students).

Table 5: Path Coefficient of Emotional Intelligence Dimension and Work Engagement

	(O)	(M)	STD	T stats	P values	f2	R ²	Q ²
OEA -> CE	0.051	0.051	.062	2.821	0.002	.002	.021**	.020
ROE -> CE	0.045	0.043	.052	3.876	0.001	.002		
SEA -> CE	0.111	0.110	.057	1.947	0.002	.030		
UOE -> CE	-0.127	-0.127	.054	2.362	0.018	.011		
OEA -> EE	0.090	0.088	.058	2.546	0.002	.016	.027**	.037
ROE -> EE	0.103	0.104	.052	1.973	0.049	.009		
SEA -> EE	0.104	0.105	.056	1.847	0.065	.009		
UOE -> EE	-0.073	-0.074	.059	0.238	0.216	.004		
OEA -> SEC	0.013	0.014	.067	0.202	0.840	.000	.021	.002
ROE -> SEC	-0.013	-0.013	.056	0.235	0.815	.000		
SEA -> SEC	-0.042	-0.043	.059	0.713	0.476	.001		
UOE -> SEC	0.042	0.043	.063	0.676	0.499	.001		

OEA -> SES	0.144	0.143	.057	2.512	0.012	.015**	.032**	.056
ROE -> SES	0.041	0.042	.055	0.756	0.450	.001		
SEA -> SES	0.128	0.128	.056	2.275	0.023	.013		
UOE -> SES	-0.022	-0.021	.060	0.360	0.719	.000		

The coefficients of determination (R^2) for the four models indicated that the dimensions of work engagement accounted for 2.1%, 2.7%, 2.1%, and 3.2% of the variances: Others' Emotion Appraisal, Regulation of Emotion, Self-Emotion Appraisal, and Use of Emotion respectively. The predictive relevance values (Q^2) of all the four models were positive, an indication that the models were relevant in predicting the four dimensions of work engagement. The results indicated that not all the dimensions of EI significantly predicted work engagement dimensions ($\beta = 0.051$, $p < .001$), ($\beta = 0.090$, $p < .001$) and ($\beta = 0.144$, $p < .001$). Therefore, the hypothesis that: *All the dimensions of emotional intelligence will predict the dimensions of work engagement* was not significant.

Discussions of the findings

The four dimensions of emotional intelligence measured—use of emotions, regulation of emotions, self-emotion appraisal, and others' emotion appraisal—were all relatively high and above the established cut-off mean range. This means that the degree of influence of emotional intelligence on teachers in Greater Accra was phenomenal. It also means that teachers in the region are best able to relate to their learners and other stakeholders which is likely to translate in their work engagement (Abiodullah & Aslam, 2020; Maamari & Majdalani, 2019; Welmilla, 2020).

Again, the overall mean scores indicated that teachers in the Greater Accra region exhibit relatively high levels of engagement. **This** implies that they are unlikely to exhibit characteristics of disengaged workers as described by Shvarts (2010), such as resisting change, or being openly critical of their institutions. Instead, the findings shown that these teachers are innovative, proactive, supportive of school visions, and resilient in the face of challenges. Therefore, it can be inferred that teachers in the region are actively and positively engaged, consistently putting in more than the required effort, adapting to change, and contributing meaningfully to the success of their schools.

The assertion that emotional intelligence significantly influences teachers' work engagement, as indicated by other studies, was largely corroborated in this study (Bakker & Bal, 2010; Gontur & Dekom, 2017; Rivers et al., 2007). While numerous previous studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and teachers' work engagement, consistent with the findings of this study, a few studies present differing views on this relationship (Chikobvu & Harunavamwe, 2022; Pranitasari et al., 2022; Selvi & Aiswarya, 2023).

The direct relationship between emotional intelligence and work engagement in this study shown positive relation. This means emotional intelligence influences teachers work engagement in education sector especially in second cycle schools. It is right to state that when emotional intelligence of teachers in SHS increases their work engagement will also increase accordingly, and that when emotional intelligence of teachers in SHS decreases, their work engagement will also decrease.

This proclamation is accurate because the models used in this study especially the Mayer and Salovey's (1990) ability model explains that an individual with emotional intelligence has the capacity to track his or her mood, and that of others to distinguish between them, and to use the available information to direct both thought and behaviour of himself and that of others is likely to relate well at work environment. This

means that a teacher's ability to track both emotions at work place, that of him or herself and others is a massive asset in improving his or her work engagement.

According to Khan, an atmosphere of safety, work meaningfulness, and availability of resources, support from management are the conditions that improve work engagement among employees. Teachers who feel safe to work in an environment free of hostility and antagonism due to their ability to control emotions at both ends would be highly engaged at work in schools (Burnett & Lisk, 2021). This is likely to increase their work performance which may serve as a launching pad for work meaningfulness to be highly enjoyed in such schools which would motivate teachers to improve their work engagement (Bakker & Bal, 2010; Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2018; Manoharan & Ashtikar, 2022).

On the other hand, a few surveys raise disagreement to the above-mentioned results (Chikobvu & Harunavamwe, 2022; Pranitasari et al. 2022;). They agree that emotional intelligence would need a mediating variable in order to influence work engagement. In this study, the result indicates that the total direct effect of emotional intelligence strongly predicts work engagement without any mediating variable. This means that emotional intelligence - work engagement relationship would still be strong and positive without any mediating variable.

The dimensions of emotional intelligence explained that there were differing degrees of influence on the levels of work engagement which means that though emotional intelligence positively predict work engagement but not at equal magnitude when it comes to individual dimensions. It was found that teachers' social engagement with colleagues explained the greater part of dimensions of emotional intelligence, followed by their emotional engagement at work, and their cognitive engagement and social engagement with students in that order. This confirms the report that emotional intelligence has direct effect on teacher work engagement levels (Fuentes et al., 2018; Pérez Yan et al., 2018; Zhu et al. 2015).

This study aver that individual levels of the variables exert different degrees of influence on each other. Therefore, a key interest should be taken to observe equally all the elements and promote them without preferring one another. Since no one knows which, one would greatly influence the other.

Also, the revelation that teachers' social engagement with colleagues scored highest as a level of work engagement suggests that teachers may suppress their negative emotions when it comes to their interactions with other colleagues, and would (pretend to) control their emotions due to work ethics and code of conduct, as not to display such negative attitudes at work. An event where their cognitive engagement scored the highest, then we could confidently conclude that teachers are highly engage at work in the region, but then their social engagement outweighed their cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and social engagement with students (who they mostly interact on daily bases for some hours than with colleagues).

More so, if teachers' regulation of emotions or others emotion appraisal consistently scored high in predicting all the dimensions of work engagement then one would confidently state that teachers' emotional intelligence dimension of others emotion appraisal predicts work engagement dimension of cognitive engagement or emotional engagement, but then there was no single result where one emotional intelligence dimension consistently scored high in all the levels of work engagement.

This means that teachers have differing emotional dispositions when it comes to dimensions of emotional intelligence. Teacher A may do well in regulation of emotions, and not in use of emotions, while teacher B may do well in others emotion appraisal and use of emotions, but not in self-emotion appraisal and regulation of emotions.

In addition, teachers' work engagement levels would not be the same: one would score high in emotional engagement, social engagement with students, and not do well in cognitive engagement, social engagement with colleagues. All these explain the individual differences as human capital in school environment.

Conclusions and implications for practice and research

The study concludes that emotional intelligence (EI) among teachers in the Greater Accra Region is consistently high across all four measured dimensions, and it plays a strong, direct role in enhancing their work engagement. Teachers demonstrate positive professional behaviours such as adaptability, innovation, and resilience, indicating that they are not only engaged but actively contributing to institutional success. The findings firmly support the widely held view in educational research that higher EI leads to higher work engagement, confirming that emotionally intelligent teachers are better equipped to manage relationships and workplace demands effectively. Importantly, the study establishes that this relationship exists even without mediating variables, reinforcing the strength and independence of EI as a predictor of engagement.

The implications of these findings are significant for educational policy and school leadership. Since emotional intelligence directly influences how teachers perform and engage, investing in EI development—through training, mentorship, and supportive work environments—can substantially improve educational outcomes. The study also highlights that different dimensions of EI and engagement do not contribute equally, and individual differences among teachers must be acknowledged. For example, stronger social engagement with colleagues compared to students suggests a possible imbalance that may affect classroom dynamics. This implies that interventions should be holistic and tailored, ensuring that all aspects of emotional intelligence and engagement are nurtured rather than focusing narrowly on one dimension.

In practice, schools should create emotionally supportive environments that encourage self-awareness, emotional regulation, and interpersonal sensitivity among teachers. Leadership should prioritize policies that foster psychological safety, collaboration, and meaningful work, as these conditions enhance both EI and engagement. Professional development programs can be designed to strengthen weaker EI dimensions among teachers while leveraging their strengths. Additionally, recognizing individual differences in emotional and engagement profiles can help administrators assign roles, design teams, and support teachers more effectively. Ultimately, applying these insights can lead to improved teacher performance, better student outcomes, and a more cohesive and productive school environment.

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