



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CREATIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE AND TEACHER JOB SATISFACTION

Evangelia Kouroupiⁱ

MSc Programme,
Educational Policy and Administration,
Department of Social and Educational Policy,
University of the Peloponnese,
Greece

Abstract:

This quantitative study investigates the relationship between primary school principals' emotional intelligence, creative school climate, and teachers' job satisfaction. The research was conducted in ten of the twelve primary schools in the city of Corinth, Greece, between September and November of the 2017–2018 school year. Participants comprised 10 school principals and 72 teachers. Data were collected through two questionnaires incorporating scales adapted from the Wong Law Emotional Intelligence Scale, the Overall Job Satisfaction scale, the Maslach Burnout Inventory, and a creative school climate questionnaire. Data analysis was performed using SPSS and included descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha internal-consistency coefficients, and Pearson correlations, with statistical significance set at 0.05. Teachers rated principals' emotional intelligence as satisfactory ($M=36.23$, $SD=5.79$, $\alpha=0.777$), while job satisfaction was relatively high ($M=56.74$, $SD=8.14$, $\alpha=0.830$). Principals' emotional intelligence was positively associated with creative school climate ($r=0.533$, $p<0.001$), and creative climate was positively associated with teachers' job satisfaction ($r=0.422$, $p<0.001$). In contrast, no statistically significant direct relationship was found between principals' emotional intelligence and teachers' job satisfaction. The findings highlight the importance of emotional and interpersonal competencies in school leadership, particularly for fostering a supportive and creative organizational climate. They also suggest that teacher job satisfaction is a multifactorial phenomenon and that school climate may represent an important intermediate domain of influence.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, educational leadership, school climate, job satisfaction, school principals

ⁱ Correspondence: email kouroupievangelia@gmail.com

1. Introduction

School leadership is a critical factor in school functioning, as principals are required to combine administrative, pedagogical, and interpersonal responsibilities. In this context, emotional intelligence has been associated with the ability to recognize and regulate emotions, demonstrate empathy, communicate effectively, and manage relationships (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Goleman, 1999). These competencies are particularly important in schools, where daily collaboration, decision-making, and conflict management shape the climate in which teachers work (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Saitis, 2007).

The concept of emotional intelligence was systematically developed by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and later became widely known through the work of Goleman (1999). In Goleman's approach, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management are core dimensions that can be directly associated with leadership practice (Goleman, 1999; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). A principal's ability to understand teachers' emotional needs, regulate personal reactions, support collaboration, and foster a sense of fairness may influence the organizational life of the school.

At the same time, school climate encompasses the quality of relationships, feelings of safety and belonging, collaboration, open communication, acceptance of innovative initiatives, and approaches to problem-solving (Kavouris, 1998; Pasiardi, 2001). A creative climate does not merely imply the absence of conflict; it refers to conditions that enable teachers to take initiative, express ideas, and participate in decision-making (Peterson & Deal, 1998).

Teacher job satisfaction is likewise a multidimensional variable. It is associated with interest in the work itself, social relationships, recognition, a sense of security, working conditions, and experiences of occupational burnout (Brayfield & Rothe, 1951; Maslach & Jackson, 1986). The literature used in the original study suggests that both school leadership and school climate may be related to job satisfaction, although findings are not always consistent (Dinham & Scott, 2000; Zempylas & Papanastasiou, 2006).

Against this background, the present study focuses on three relationships: (a) between principals' emotional intelligence and teachers' job satisfaction, (b) between principals' emotional intelligence and creative school climate, and (c) between creative school climate and teachers' job satisfaction. The study was conducted in an urban setting, specifically in the primary schools of the city of Corinth.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Emotional Intelligence and Leadership

Salovey and Mayer (1990) conceptualized emotional intelligence as a set of abilities related to the appraisal and expression of emotions, their regulation, and their use in problem-solving. Bar-On's model emphasizes social and emotional competencies that support adaptation and effective individual functioning (Bar-On, 2006).

For the purposes of the present study, particular emphasis was placed on Goleman's model because it links emotional competencies with performance and leadership behavior (Goleman, 1999). Self-awareness and self-management concern a leader's personal capacity to recognize and regulate their own emotional state, whereas social awareness and relationship management concern empathy, influence, collaboration, conflict resolution, and relationship building (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002).

Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) describe several leadership styles, including visionary, affiliative, democratic, and coaching styles, which can contribute positively to organizational climate when applied according to contextual demands. In the school environment, the ability to shift flexibly among leadership behaviors is especially important because the principal simultaneously acts as administrator, coordinator, motivator, and mediator (Athanasoula-Reppa, 2001; Saitis, 2007).

2.2. School Climate and Creativity

School climate is formed through a complex network of relationships, perceptions, and organizational practices (Kavouris, 1998; Pasiardi, 2001). The literature reviewed in the original thesis emphasizes the importance of interaction quality, safety, collaboration, and opportunities for participation. Leadership can influence this climate through communication practices, fairness in the allocation of responsibilities, support for teachers, and encouragement of innovation (Peterson & Deal, 1998; Hallinger & Heck, 1998).

Creative school climate, as conceptualized in this study, refers to an environment in which teachers feel comfortable, can discuss school problems, participate in decisions, and are encouraged to develop innovative initiatives. Previous studies reviewed in the thesis provided indications that principals' emotional intelligence may be associated with a more positive school climate, although in some cases findings varied according to the variables and measurement instruments employed (Vasiou, 2008; Kasapa & Lekka, 2016).

2.3. Teacher Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to the overall positive or negative evaluation an individual develops toward their work (Brayfield & Rothe, 1951). For teachers, satisfaction is influenced by factors related to the educational work itself, relationships with students and colleagues, recognition, opportunities for development, and school working conditions (Dinham & Scott, 2000; Zempylas & Papanastasiou, 2006). Burnout represents an opposing dimension and is associated with fatigue, frustration, and a reduced sense of effectiveness (Maslach & Jackson, 1986).

The original literature review identified studies reporting a positive relationship between principals' emotional intelligence and job satisfaction, as well as studies linking a positive school climate with higher satisfaction (Vasiou, 2008; Kasapa & Lekka, 2016). The present study empirically examines these relationships within this specific Greek urban context.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of primary school principals' emotional intelligence on teachers' job satisfaction and on the development of a positive, creative climate within the school. A secondary aim was to investigate the extent to which principals employ characteristics of emotional intelligence in performing their role.

- 1) Is there an association between principals' emotional intelligence and teachers' job satisfaction?
- 2) Is there an association between principals' emotional intelligence and creative school climate?
- 3) Is there an association between creative school climate and teachers' job satisfaction?

The main hypothesis was that higher levels of principals' emotional intelligence and a more creative school climate would be associated with higher levels of teacher job satisfaction.

3.2. Research Instruments

Two questionnaires were used. Principals completed a 15-item self-report questionnaire based on the Wong Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS; Wong & Law, 2002), using a five-point Likert scale. The items focused on characteristics such as self-management, social awareness, and self-awareness.

Teachers completed a questionnaire comprising three main sections. The first included nine other-report items assessing the principal's emotional intelligence and one open-ended question and was likewise informed by the WLEIS (Wong & Law, 2002). The second included seven items and one closed-ended question on creative school climate, based on a creative school climate questionnaire. The third section addressed job satisfaction and was based on the Overall Job Satisfaction scale (Brayfield & Rothe, 1951) and the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1986), with items adapted to the school context.

The instruments were adapted to the specific characteristics of the Greek school context. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The principals' self-report questionnaire yielded $\alpha=0.745$ (15 items), the emotional intelligence scale as rated by teachers yielded $\alpha=0.777$ (9 items), the creative climate scale yielded $\alpha=0.754$ (7 items), and the job satisfaction scale yielded $\alpha=0.830$ (16 items as calculated in the original study).

3.3. Sample and Procedure

The study involved 10 primary school principals and 72 primary school teachers. Ten of the twelve primary schools in the city of Corinth participated, representing 83.3% of the schools in this specific urban setting. Of the principals, four were men and six were women. Of the teachers, 21 were men and 51 were women. The study was conducted from September to November during the 2017–2018 school year.

Table 1: Main characteristics of the sample.

Group	N	Men	Women	Key characteristics
Principals	10	4	6	60%: 21–30 years of service · 30%: >30 years
Teachers	72	21	51	38.9%: 11–20 years · 25%: 21–30 years

Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, the anonymity of their responses, and the exclusive use of the data for research purposes. To reduce the possibility of pressure when teachers evaluated their principal, teacher questionnaires were distributed and collected directly by the researcher rather than through school principals. The researcher was not present while the questionnaires were being completed.

3.4. Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS. Frequencies, means, standard deviations, ranges, and Cronbach's alpha internal-consistency coefficients were calculated. Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the research questions. Statistical significance was set at $\alpha=0.05$.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Principals' Emotional Intelligence

Principals' responses indicated a positive self-perception of their emotional competencies. Eighty percent reported that they were often able to control their emotions, while 90% reported that they always or often understood how others felt based on their behavior. All principals stated that they always or often set goals and made strong efforts to achieve them. Similarly, 90% reported that they were always or often sensitive to the emotional state of others.

According to the interpretation of the original study, teachers' evaluations did not differ substantially from principals' self-perceptions. Overall, 84.5% of teachers reported that their principals always or often encouraged their efforts, 77.6% stated that principals always or often encouraged them to be creative, and 87.3% indicated that principals always or often considered teachers' views in decision-making. In addition, 90.2% rated their principals as always or often able to control their anger and calmly manage emotional problems.

The overall principals' emotional intelligence scale, based on teachers' responses, had a mean of 36.23 (SD=5.79), a range of 20–45, and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.777. These results support the view that the participating principals displayed, to a satisfactory degree, behaviors associated with social awareness, relationship management, and emotional self-regulation.

4.2. Creative School Climate

Teachers generally evaluated the climate of their schools positively. A total of 97.1% reported that they always or often felt comfortable in the school environment. Regarding

innovation, 56.9% stated that the school climate always or often emphasized innovative programs and activities, while 61.4% reported that there was always or often meaningful reflection on aspects of school functioning that were not working well.

The overall creative climate score was $M=27.38$. The narrative text of the original thesis reports $SD=4.64$, whereas the corresponding Table 16 reports $SD=4.37$. Because the primary data are not available for recalculation, this discrepancy should be verified before final submission. Scale reliability was $\alpha=0.754$.

4.3. Teacher Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction was relatively high. A total of 81.4% of teachers reported that working conditions were always or often satisfactory, while 80.6% stated that their work was always or often highly interesting. In addition, 77.8% reported that they always or often felt creative at work and 86.0% that they always or often felt happy. Fatigue was nevertheless present: 34.3% reported that they always or often felt exhausted at the end of the working day.

The overall job satisfaction score was $M=56.74$ ($SD=8.14$), with a range of 29–73 and Cronbach's alpha of 0.830. The data indicate that a positive attitude toward the profession coexists with specific pressures and elements of fatigue, confirming the multidimensional nature of job satisfaction.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics and reliability of the main scales

Variable	M	SD	Range	Cronbach α
Principal emotional intelligence (teacher ratings)	36.23	5.79	20–45	0.777
Creative school climate	27.38	4.64*	17–35	0.754
Job satisfaction	56.74	8.14	29–73	0.830

*In the original thesis, Table 16 reports $SD=4.37$, whereas the narrative text reports $SD=4.64$; verification against the primary data is required.

4.4. Correlations among the Main Variables

Pearson analysis yielded two statistically significant positive correlations. Principals' emotional intelligence was positively correlated with creative school climate ($r=0.533$, $p<0.001$). Creative school climate was also positively correlated with teachers' job satisfaction ($r=0.422$, $p<0.001$). In contrast, the direct relationship between principals' emotional intelligence and job satisfaction was not statistically significant at the 5% level.

Table 3: Pearson correlations among the main variables. The original thesis does not report the exact r coefficient for the first, non-significant relationship in the summarized result

Relationship	Pearson r	p	Conclusion
Emotional intelligence – Job satisfaction	—	>0.05	Not statistically significant
Emotional intelligence – Creative climate	0.533	<0.001	Positive, statistically significant
Creative climate – Job satisfaction	0.422	<0.001	Positive, statistically significant

The strongest finding of the study concerns the positive relationship between principals' emotional intelligence and creative school climate. Supporting and providing feedback

to teachers, encouraging creativity, demonstrating democratic and fair behavior, and managing emotions effectively are behaviors consistent with emotionally intelligent leadership (Goleman, 1999; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). The finding is also consistent with Greek work reviewed in the original thesis linking principals' emotional intelligence with school climate (Vasiou, 2008; Kasapa & Lekka, 2016).

The absence of a direct statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction differs from part of the literature reviewed in the original study (Vasiou, 2008; Kasapa & Lekka, 2016). However, this result does not imply that leadership is irrelevant to teachers' work experience. Rather, the positive association between emotional intelligence and creative climate suggests that leadership may operate through the organizational environment rather than through a simple direct relationship with job satisfaction.

The positive relationship between creative climate and job satisfaction reinforces the view that within-school conditions are important to teachers' professional experience (Dinham & Scott, 2000; Zempylas & Papanastasiou, 2006). A school in which teachers feel comfortable, participate in decision-making, receive support, and are encouraged to innovate is more likely to provide conditions associated with positive professional experiences.

5. Recommendations

The findings support the systematic inclusion of emotional-intelligence skills in preparation and professional-development programs for educational leaders. Particular emphasis may be placed on self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, constructive feedback, conflict management, and participatory decision-making.

At the school-management level, practices that cultivate a creative climate should be strengthened, including systematic dialogue about school problems, support for innovative initiatives, fair allocation of responsibilities, encouragement of initiative, and meaningful teacher participation in decision-making. At the same time, job satisfaction should not be treated as the outcome of a single factor, but as a complex outcome requiring consideration of organizational, professional, and personal conditions.

Future research should employ larger and geographically more diverse samples, examine urban and rural schools separately, and use multilevel models, given that teachers are nested within schools. It would also be useful to test, using appropriate analyses, whether school climate mediates the relationship between leadership emotional intelligence and job satisfaction.

6. Limitations of the Study

The study has several limitations. First, the sample was drawn from a single city and included only 10 principals, which limits the generalizability of the conclusions. Second, the measures were based mainly on self-reports and other-reports, which may be affected

by socially desirable responses or subjective perceptions. Third, the cross-sectional correlational design does not permit causal conclusions.

In addition, the original study used adapted or researcher-developed versions of some instruments. Although the Cronbach's alpha coefficients are acceptable, further psychometric documentation of these adaptations is required. Finally, because the primary dataset is not available at the present stage of converting the thesis into an article, it was not possible to recalculate the statistical indices or resolve the discrepancy identified in the standard deviation of the creative climate scale.

7. Conclusion

The study highlights emotional intelligence as an important dimension of educational leadership, particularly in relation to the development of a creative and supportive school climate. The positive association between principals' emotional intelligence and creative climate, as well as between creative climate and job satisfaction, underscores the importance of relationships, communication, fairness, and encouragement of creativity within the school. The absence of a direct statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction indicates that teachers' satisfaction is multifactorial and cannot be attributed solely to principals' characteristics. Consequently, the development of emotionally competent leadership is valuable as a means of improving the organizational life of schools, but it should form part of a broader strategy for supporting teachers and strengthening school climate.

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank Panagiota Papadiamantaki, supervisor of the original master's thesis, the members of the examination committee, and the principals and teachers of the primary schools of Corinth who participated in the study. No external funding was reported in the original thesis.

Creative Commons License Statement

This research work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0>. To view the complete legal code, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/legalcode.en>. Under the terms of this license, members of the community may copy, distribute, and transmit the article, provided that proper, prominent, and unambiguous attribution is given to the authors, and the material is not used for commercial purposes or modified in any way. Reuse is only allowed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

About the Author

Evangelia Kouroupi completed the master's thesis "Educational Leadership and Emotional Intelligence: A Study in the Primary Schools of Corinth" within the MSc Programme in Educational Policy and Administration of the Department of Social and Educational Policy, University of the Peloponnese. For final journal submission, the author's current position, current academic/professional affiliation and, if desired, ORCID and contact details should be added.

References

- Athanasoula-Reppa A, 2001. Educational Administration and Organizational Behavior. Ellinika Grammata, Athens, Greece.
- Bar-On R, 2006. The Bar-On model of emotional-social intelligence (ESI). *Psicothema* 18: 13-25. Retrieved from <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2006-12699-003>
- Brayfield AH, Rothe HF, 1951. An index of job satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 35: 307-311. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0055617>
- Dinham S, Scott C, 2000. Moving into the third, outer domain of teacher satisfaction. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 38(4):379-396. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230010373633>
- Goleman D, 1999. Working with Emotional Intelligence. Bloomsbury Publishing, London, UK. Retrieved from https://books.google.ro/books/about/Working_with_Emotional_Intelligence.html?id=yE1gHqW_T_0C&redir_esc=y
- Goleman D, Boyatzis R, McKee A, 2002. Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence. Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA, USA. Retrieved from https://books.google.ro/books/about/Working_with_Emotional_Intelligence.html?id=yE1gHqW_T_0C&redir_esc=y
- Hallinger P, Heck RN, 1998. Exploring the principal's contribution to school effectiveness. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement* 9(2). <https://doi.org/10.1080/0924345980090203>
- Kasapa D, Lekka N, 2016. The Emotional Intelligence of the Primary School Principal/Leader as a Factor in Creative School Climate and Teachers' Job Satisfaction. Piraeus University of Applied Sciences, Greece.
- Kavouris P, 1998. School Climate in Primary Education: An Important Factor in the Evaluation and Effectiveness of the School Unit. *Pedagogical Review*.
- Maslach C, Jackson SE, 1986. Maslach Burnout Inventory. Consulting Psychologists Press, Palo Alto, CA, USA. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277816643_The_Maslach_Burnout_Inventory_Manual

- Pasiardi G, 2001. School Climate: Theoretical Analysis and Empirical Investigation of Its Basic Parameters. Typothito, Athens, Greece.
- Peterson K, Deal T, 1998. How leaders influence the culture of schools. Educational Leadership. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45157470>
- Platsidou M, 2010. Emotional Intelligence: Theoretical Models, Measurement Methods, and Applications in Education and Work. Gutenberg, Athens, Greece.
- Saitis C, 2007. The Principal in the Contemporary School. Self-published, Athens, Greece.
- Salovey P, Mayer JD, 1990. Emotional intelligence. Imagination, Cognition and Personality 9: 185-211.
- Vasiou A, 2008. The Effect of Principals' Emotional Intelligence on School Climate, Job Satisfaction, Emotions at Work, and Teacher Burnout: A Two-Level Data Analysis. University of Thessaly, Greece.
- Wong CS, Law KS, 2002. The effects of leader and follower emotional intelligence on performance and attitude: An exploratory study. The Leadership Quarterly 13: 243-274. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843\(02\)00099-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(02)00099-1)