

Job Burnout as a Mediator between Emotional Intelligence and Lecturers' Job Performance in UAE Private Educational Institutes

Zakkia Uzair¹, Dr. Amiya Bhaumik²

¹Faculty of Business and Accountancy, Lincoln University College Malaysia, Main Campus, Selangor, Malaysia.

Email: zuzair@lincoln.edu.my

²Faculty of Business and Accountancy, Lincoln University College Malaysia, Main Campus, Selangor, Malaysia.

Email: amiya@lincoln.edu.my

ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of emotional intelligence (EI) on lecturers' job performance and the mediating role of job burnout in private educational institutes in the United Arab Emirates specifically in Sharjah and Ajman. A quantitative, correlational, cross-sectional research design was employed, and primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to lecturers in private education institutions. A total of 275 usable responses were obtained, yielding a 100% response rate for the final sample. Data were analysed using SPSS (Version 31) and AMOS (Version 31) through a multistage analytical procedure, including exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modelling (SEM). The refined measurement model demonstrated an excellent model fit and satisfactory reliability and validity. Structural path analysis revealed that emotional intelligence positively and significantly predicted lecturers' job performance while exerting a strong negative effect on job burnout. Job burnout, in turn, has a significantly negative impact on job performance. Mediation analysis using a bootstrapping approach confirmed the significant indirect effect of emotional intelligence on job performance through job burnout. The direct effect of emotional intelligence on job performance remained significant after including burnout, indicating partial mediation. This study highlights the importance of integrating emotional intelligence development and burnout-prevention strategies into institutional policies and professional development initiatives to sustain teaching effectiveness in demanding private education environments.

Keywords: emotional intelligence; job burnout; job performance; lecturers; private educational institutes; United Arab Emirates.

How to cite this article: Uzair Z, Bhaumik A. Job Burnout as a Mediator between Emotional Intelligence and Lecturers' Job Performance in UAE Private Educational Institutes. *Int J Drug Deliv Technol.* 2026;16(16s): 927-943. DOI: 10.25258/ijddt.16.16s.98

Source of support: Nil.

Conflict of interest: None

1. Introduction

Over the last two decades, the higher education landscape in the United Arab Emirates has experienced significant growth and internationalisation, primarily fuelled by the rise of private educational institutions. This evolution has improved accessibility and global competitiveness but has also increased the pressure on academic staff to perform well. In private educational institutions, lecturers are now expected to handle substantial teaching responsibilities, achieve demanding key performance indicators, and ensure high levels of student satisfaction in a competitive, market-driven setting. These institutional expectations subject lecturers to ongoing professional and emotional stress, which may affect their

personal well-being and job performance (Wilkins, 2010; Wilkins et al., 2012).

These pressures are exacerbated by the working conditions in private institutions in the UAE. Most lecturers are expatriates hired on short-term or renewable contracts, often juggling teaching with research, administrative tasks, and other service obligations. These contractual terms can lead to job insecurity, increased workload stress, and adversely affect job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Austin et al., 2014). In this environment, lecturers are required to consistently exhibit high levels of teaching effectiveness and professional involvement, despite limited job security and rising performance demands.

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In addition to the pressures of workload and accountability, lecturers at private educational institutions in the UAE navigate a distinctly multicultural teaching environment. These educators frequently interact with students from a wide array of cultural, linguistic, and educational backgrounds, necessitating teaching expertise and ongoing emotional effort. Effectively managing cross-cultural communication, meeting varied learning expectations, and addressing students' social-emotional needs require constant emotional regulation and interpersonal awareness (Heath et al., 2016; Loyd et al., 2024). Without sufficient organizational support, prolonged exposure to these emotional challenges can lead to emotional exhaustion and job burnout. Burnout, often marked by emotional fatigue and cynicism, has become a significant issue in higher education, especially in high-pressure and market-driven academic settings. Research shows that lecturers experiencing burnout tend to have decreased motivation, reduced teaching effectiveness, and lower job performance, which ultimately impacts student outcomes and the quality of the institution (Salami, 2011; Lee, 2017). In UAE private educational institutions, where performance metrics and student satisfaction are closely monitored, burnout poses a serious risk to workforce sustainability and the pursuit of teaching excellence.

Emotional intelligence (EI) is widely acknowledged as an essential personal asset that helps individuals recognise, comprehend, and manage their own and others' emotions. In educational environments, higher EI levels are linked to better interpersonal relationships, effective coping mechanisms and enhanced job performance (Sanchez-Gomez & Bresó, 2020). Nonetheless, recent research indicates that emotional intelligence alone may not be sufficient to maintain performance when lecturers face ongoing stressors and emotionally challenging work settings. International studies have recently highlighted that job burnout could be a significant mediating factor in understanding how emotional intelligence affects job performance (Sanchez-Gomez & Bresó, 2020; Gong et al., 2019). Although emotionally intelligent people are generally more capable of handling work demands, severe burnout can diminish or nullify the positive impact of EI on performance outcomes. Despite the importance of this mechanism, empirical studies in the UAE education sector have mostly explored emotional intelligence and job performance as direct relationships, with job burnout mainly considered an outcome variable

and limited focus on lecturers in private educational institutions (Khassawneh et al., 2022).

Consequently, there is still a shortage of empirical studies that specifically address the integration of emotional intelligence, job burnout, and lecturers' job performance within a unified mediation framework in the UAE's private education sector. To fill this gap, the current study seeks to explore how job burnout mediates the connection between emotional intelligence and lecturers' job performance in private educational institutions in the United Arab Emirates.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability of an individual to recognise, comprehend, manage, and effectively use emotions in themselves and others (Sanchez-Gomez & Bresó, 2020). EI is primarily understood through two theoretical frameworks: the ability model and the mixed (or trait) model. The Ability model considers EI a collection of cognitive-emotional skills related to emotional perception, facilitation, understanding, and regulation, placing it alongside traditional forms of intelligence (Gutiérrez-Cobo et al., 2017). In contrast, the mixed model combines emotional abilities with personality traits, motivational elements, and social skills, viewing EI as a wider array of emotional and social competencies that enhance effective functioning in both personal and professional settings (Killgore et al., 2012).

In educational environments, emotional intelligence (EI) is particularly important because of the emotionally challenging nature of teaching, which demands ongoing emotional regulation, empathy, and interpersonal interaction. Systematic reviews and empirical research consistently show that educators with higher EI tend to have better classroom management, stronger relationships with students, and more effective teaching (Gkintoni et al., 2025; Alam & Ahmad, 2017). For lecturers, EI aids in managing academic stress, maintaining job satisfaction, and adapting to changing pedagogical and institutional requirements (García-Martínez et al., 2021).

Research within the UAE's higher education sector further emphasises the importance of Emotional Intelligence (EI). According to Khassawneh et al. (2022), Emotional Intelligence Competencies have a significant impact on the behaviour of educators and the success of students, highlighting EI as a vital personal asset in

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multicultural and performance-oriented academic settings. Additionally, EI has been associated with conflict resolution, innovative work behaviour, and transformational leadership among academic staff, which are crucial for addressing the evolving challenges faced by higher-education institutions (Baba et al., 2019; Shafait et al., 2021).

Based on Goleman's mixed model, EI is typically defined through four primary dimensions: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Self-awareness allows individuals to identify their emotions, stress triggers, and behavioural patterns, aiding reflective practice and emotional resilience (Ramesar et al., 2009; Lee, 2017). Self-management involves the ability to control emotions, manage impulses, and adjust to changing situations, which is linked to effective stress management and consistent professional performance (Salameh-Ayanian et al., 2025). Social awareness, especially empathy, helps in understanding the emotions and needs of others, thereby improving intercultural communication and inclusive teaching methods (Guntersdorfer & Golubeva, 2018). Relationship management encompasses the ability to establish relationships, handle conflicts, and influence others, contributing to collaboration, leadership success, and a positive academic work environment (Dulewicz et al., 2005; Filice & Weese, 2024).

2.2 Job Burnout

Job burnout is a psychological condition that arises from long-term exposure to persistent work-related stressors and is primarily identified by feelings of emotional exhaustion and a cynical attitude. Emotional exhaustion signifies a state of being emotionally drained and lacking emotional resources, whereas cynicism involves creating psychological distance and developing negative perceptions toward work and its beneficiaries (Chaudhry et al., 2021).

Burnout has emerged as a growing concern in both higher and private education due to increased workloads, accountability for performance, technological advancements, and changing teaching expectations (Ashour et al., 2021). The swift growth and competitive environment of the UAE's education sector, especially in private institutions, have exacerbated these challenges (Wilkins, 2010). While there is a scarcity of empirical research specifically focused on burnout among lecturers

in UAE higher education, data from high-pressure professions within the UAE workforce reveal high levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation, underscoring burnout as a major occupational hazard (Aljawarneh et al., 2025). These insights imply that similar stress factors are likely to affect lecturers in performance-oriented private educational settings (Ashour & Fatima, 2016).

2.3 Lecturers' Job Performance

Lecturers' job performance is a complex concept that includes teaching effectiveness, research output, service roles, and administrative duties. In private education settings, teaching effectiveness is often prioritised and typically evaluated through student satisfaction, learning outcomes, and service quality metrics (Ramsden, 1991). Lecturers are also required to show flexibility and resilience in their teaching methods, especially in response to digital changes and blended learning environments (Weidlich and Kalz, 2021). Private educational institutions encounter unique challenges that impact lecturers' job performance, such as market-driven demands, limited resources, and increased competition for student enrolment (Hoque et al., 2023). The pressures of research and administrative tasks add to these challenges, potentially hindering lecturers' ability to effectively manage their professional responsibilities (Tian & Lu, 2017). Furthermore, psychological well-being and a positive attitude towards technology are recognised as significant factors in lecturers' job performance, particularly in technology-enhanced teaching settings (Bangun et al., 2021).

2.4 Emotional Intelligence and Lecturers' Job Performance

Extensive empirical studies have consistently shown a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and job performance in educational settings. EI is increasingly regarded as an essential skill that helps lecturers handle the emotional challenges of teaching, maintain engagement, and perform well in complex interpersonal situations. Research from the UAE's higher education sector suggests that EI skills greatly impact lecturers' professional behaviour, leading to improved teaching effectiveness and student achievement (Khassawneh et al., 2022). Likewise, Berry and Cassidy (2013) contend that educators with high emotional intelligence are better at managing emotional labour,

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dealing with work-related stress, and fostering positive relationships with their students and colleagues.

Recent studies in vocational education and training contexts have further emphasised the importance of emotional intelligence in lecturers' professional success. A study from South Africa found that emotional intelligence can be deliberately cultivated among leaders and lecturers through structured mentoring programs (Prummer et al., 2024). This study identified emotional awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and resilience as key elements of emotional intelligence, underscoring their significance for both personal well-being and organizational effectiveness. Notably, peer group mentoring was highlighted as a particularly effective method for developing emotional intelligence, emphasising the socially integrated and developmental nature of emotional skills within educational institutions. Koçoğlu (2011) highlighted that interpersonal emotional intelligence was closely tied to engagement efficacy, indicating that teachers with higher emotional intelligence view themselves as more adept at inspiring students, managing classroom dynamics, and maintaining student involvement. These results suggest that emotional intelligence not only improves interpersonal skills but also boosts teachers' confidence in fulfilling essential teaching duties. In addition to individual studies, the role of emotional intelligence as a predictor of professional success has been supported by systematic assessments of its measurement tools. A thorough review by Bru-Luna et al. (2021) validated the reliability and construct validity of commonly used emotional intelligence scales across various professional settings. Although this review primarily focuses on methodology, its conclusions reinforce the broader idea that emotional intelligence is a consistent and quantifiable trait that can predict job performance outcomes. This is especially pertinent for lecturers, whose responsibilities demand ongoing emotional involvement, alongside cognitive and instructional tasks. Moreover, studies have indicated that emotional intelligence is not an innate characteristic but can be developed through specific training interventions. Muyia and Kacirek (2009) investigated the effects of leadership development programs on emotional intelligence quotient (EQ) scores and found notable enhancements after participants underwent structured training. Although this research was conducted outside the realm

of higher education, the results provide valuable insights for academic institutions, suggesting that initiatives aimed at developing emotional intelligence can improve lecturers' job performance and leadership abilities. Additionally, comparative research consistently shows that individuals with higher emotional intelligence tend to perform better at work. Dries and Pepermans (2007) found that people with high emotional intelligence exhibit stronger performance, emphasising skills such as assertiveness, independence, and social responsibility. These skills are directly relevant to lecturers' professional duties, which involve effective classroom management, collaboration with stakeholders, and balancing teaching, administrative and emotional tasks.

H1: Emotional intelligence has a significant positive effect on lecturers' job performance.

2.5 Emotional Intelligence and Job Burnout

Emotional intelligence is widely recognised as a valuable personal asset that helps prevent job burnout by improving emotional regulation, stress assessment, and coping ability. Studies conducted in various work settings have indicated that individuals with higher emotional intelligence experience less emotional exhaustion and cynicism (Lee, 2017; Galanis et al., 2024). Research in the healthcare and public service sectors has also revealed that emotional intelligence mitigates the negative effects of emotional labour and job stress on burnout (Hong & Lee, 2016; Cao et al., 2022). In educational settings, lecturers with greater emotional intelligence consistently report lower levels of burnout and higher job satisfaction, with emotion regulation being a particularly crucial protective factor (D'Amico et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2022). These findings imply that lecturers with strong emotional intelligence are better prepared to handle ongoing academic stressors, thereby reducing their susceptibility to burnout in challenging educational settings.

H2: Emotional intelligence has a significant negative effect on lecturers' job burnout.

2.6 Job Burnout and Lecturers' Job Performance

Job burnout is frequently linked to decreased job performance, primarily because of a lack of energy, disengagement, and psychological withdrawal. Emotional exhaustion and cynicism can erode lecturers' motivation, teaching effectiveness, and professional capabilities, resulting in lower performance outcomes (Taris, 2006; Lubbadeh, 2020). Research among university faculty indicates that increased burnout

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correlates with reduced job performance, whereas academics who perform well generally report lower burnout levels (Lei, Bashir, et al., 2024; Lei, Alam, et al., 2024). While some studies propose alternative or reciprocal causal relationships, the prevailing theoretical view in occupational stress research identifies burnout as a strain mechanism that adversely impacts work performance, especially in emotionally demanding fields such as teaching (Farhady et al., 2009).

H3: Job burnout has a significant negative effect on lecturers' job performance.

2.7 Job Burnout as a Mediator between Emotional Intelligence and Lecturers' Job Performance

Recent empirical studies have highlighted the role of job burnout as a mediator between emotional intelligence and job performance. Sanchez-Gomez and Bresó (2020) found that burnout serves as a partial mediator in the EI–performance connection, suggesting that individuals with high emotional intelligence tend to perform better mainly by experiencing less exhaustion and disengagement. Similar mediation effects have been observed in various occupational settings, where EI indirectly boosts performance by alleviating burnout and enhancing psychological resources (Gong et al., 2019). In educational environments, burnout has been identified as a mediator between EI and outcomes such as self-efficacy, organizational citizenship behaviour, and academic performance (Cohen & Abedallah, 2015; Wang et al., 2022). Nonetheless, empirical research exploring this mediation model within the UAE's private education sector, especially among lecturers, is lacking.

H4: Job burnout mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and lecturers' job performance.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Context

This study utilised a quantitative, correlational design to explore how job burnout mediates the connection between emotional intelligence and the job performance of lecturers in private educational institutions in the United Arab Emirates. The study was conducted in Sharjah and Ajman, two emirates known for their high density of private higher education institutions and varied expatriate academic workforce. A cross-sectional survey method was chosen because it is suitable for investigating relationships among latent variables at a single point in time. Primary data were gathered through a structured questionnaire administered to lecturers in private educational institutes. Secondary data were sourced from

peer-reviewed academic journals, books, and published reports to underpin the study's theoretical and empirical basis.

3.2 Sampling Technique and Participants

Due to the lack of a complete list of lecturers at private educational institutions and the practical difficulties in reaching respondents, a non-probability sampling method was selected. Initially, purposive sampling was employed to ensure that the participants met specific criteria, specifically being currently employed as lecturers in private educational institutions in the UAE. This method was supplemented by snowball sampling, in which participants were encouraged to forward the survey link to eligible colleagues, thereby boosting participation within the target group. A total of 275 questionnaires were distributed to the participants. The sample consisted of 52.4% male and 46.5% female respondents. Regarding age, 19% were between 21 and 30 years old, 29% were between 31 and 40 years old, 30.9% were between 41 and 50 years old, and 20% were over 51 years old. Regarding marital status, 51.3% were married and 45.5% were single. Regarding educational qualifications, 64.4% had a master's degree, 15.6% held a doctoral degree, and 19.3% had a bachelor's degree. Regarding teaching experience, 19.3% had 0–5 years, 66% had 6–10 years, 12.7% had 11–15 years, and 2% had more than 15 years of experience.

3.3 Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis was carried out in several phases using SPSS and AMOS (Version 31). The process began with exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using SPSS to explore the underlying factor structure of the measurement items and determine the data's appropriateness for factor analysis. Subsequently, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed using AMOS to confirm the measurement model. CFA was used to evaluate factor loadings, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, ensuring that the observed indicators accurately represented their corresponding latent constructs. The model fit was assessed using various goodness-of-fit indices, such as the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), in accordance with the recommended threshold values found in the literature (Sathyanarayana & Thangamuthu,

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2024). Structural analysis was performed only after achieving an acceptable fit for the measurement model. Before proceeding with structural modelling, a correlation analysis was conducted to investigate the direction and strength of the relationships among the study constructs and to identify any potential multicollinearity issues (Yeatts et al., 2017). This step ensured that the constructs were sufficiently related for hypothesis testing, while remaining conceptually distinct.

3.4 Structural Equation Modelling and Mediation Analysis

After confirming the validity of the measurement model, structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to examine the proposed connections between lecturers' emotional intelligence, job burnout, and job performance. SEM is particularly effective for theory-driven research, as it enables the simultaneous estimation of multiple relationships while considering measurement errors (Schreiber et al., 2006). To explore the mediating effect of job burnout, mediation analysis was performed using the bootstrapping method, which provides bias-corrected confidence intervals for indirect effects and does not rely on the assumption of normality in the sampling distribution (Tibbe & Montoya, 2022). Bootstrapping is widely acknowledged as a robust and dependable approach for testing mediation effects within SEM. Both direct and indirect effects were evaluated to ascertain whether job burnout significantly mediated the relationship between emotional intelligence and lecturers' job performance.

3.5 Normality Test

Table 1. Normality Statistics (Construct Level)

Construct	No. of Items	Mean	Skewness (Range)	Kurtosis (Range)
Self-Awareness (SLFA)	7	3.08	-0.28 to -0.07	-1.16 to -0.91
Self-Management (SM)	7	3.18	-0.31 to -0.01	-1.15 to -0.91
Social Awareness (SA)	9	3.11	-0.27 to -0.04	-1.19 to -0.93
Relationship Management (RM)	7	3.07	-0.19 to -0.03	-1.13 to -0.91

Job Burnout (JB)	8	2.94	-0.01 to 0.20	-1.18 to -1.01
Job Performance (JP)	9	3.06	-0.27 to -0.04	-1.16 to -0.97

Table 1 displays the normality statistics at the construct level, showing that the data were roughly normally distributed. As illustrated in Table 1, the skewness values for all constructs ranged from -0.31 to 0.20, and the kurtosis values ranged from -1.19 to -0.91, which are well within the recommended limits for univariate normality. According to the established guidelines, skewness values within ± 2 and kurtosis values within ± 7 indicate no significant breach of normality assumptions (Kline, 2016; Hair et al., 2021). The slightly negative kurtosis values suggest mildly platykurtic distributions, which are acceptable for large samples.

3.6 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

3.6.1 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.			0.923
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square		6199.088
	df		946
	Sig.		<.001

The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) test for sampling adequacy produced a score of 0.923, surpassing the advised minimum of 0.60 and placing it in the "excellent" category, which suggests that the data are highly appropriate for factor analysis (Kaiser, 1974; Hair et al., 2019). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was found to be statistically significant ($x^2 = 6199.088$, $df = 946$, $p < .001$), indicating that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix and that there are sufficient intercorrelations among the variables. These findings strongly support the decision to conduct exploratory factor analysis.

3.6.2. Total Variance for Eigenvalues

Table 3: Total Variance Explained

Total Variance Explained

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Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1			1			5		
	2			2			.		
	5	28		5	28		2	11	
	6	.5	28.	6	.5	28.	7	.9	11.
	5	57	557	5	57	557	4	86	986
2	3			3			4		
	2	7.		2	7.		6	10	
	4	37	35.	4	37	35.	6	.5	22.
	7	9	935	7	9	935	2	94	581
	2	9	6.	2	9	6.	4		
3	8	78	42.	8	78	42.	3	9.	
	4	2	717	4	2	717	3	84	32.
	2	9	6.	2	9	6.	3	8	429
	5	5.		5	5.		3		
	7	84	48.	7	84	48.	8	8.	
4	3	7	565	3	7	565	4	74	41.
	2	4	5.	2	4	5.	9	7	176
	9	66	54.	9	66	54.	3		
	5	9	234	5	9	234	8	8.	49.
	5	5	9	5	5	9	1	66	836
6	1			1			3		
	8	4.		8	4.		.		
	5	20	58.	5	20	58.	7	8.	
	1	6	44	1	6	44	8	60	58.
	6	4	44	6	4	44	6	4	44

Table 3 provides a summary of the total variance accounted for by the factors identified through the principal component analysis. According to the Kaiser criterion (eigenvalues > 1), six factors were selected, which together explained 58.44% of the total variance. This percentage exceeds the generally accepted minimum threshold of 50% in social science research

(Hair et al., 2019; Field, 2018). Before rotation, the first factor explained the largest share of variance, indicating a general, underlying construct. After applying Varimax rotation, the variance was more evenly distributed among the retained factors, indicating a clear and interpretable factor structure in which each factor significantly contributed to explaining the data.

3.6.3 Exploratory Factor Analysis Results

The factor solution derived from Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalisation revealed a distinct and comprehensible factor structure. Each retained item exhibited strong loadings on its respective factors, with factor loadings reaching or surpassing the suggested threshold of 0.60, signifying good convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). There were no significant cross-loadings, and the extracted factors corresponded well with the study's theoretical framework. These findings validate the adequacy of the measurement structure and provide empirical support for advancing to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

3.7 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

To validate the measurement model derived from exploratory factor analysis, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed using AMOS (Version 31). The process adhered to the two-stage approach suggested in the literature, where exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was initially used to refine the scale, followed by CFA for theory-based validation (Hair et al., 2019; Kline, 2016). During the EFA phase, four items were eliminated because of low loadings and cross-loadings. In the CFA phase, two more items were removed because of low standardised loadings and high modification indices. The refined measurement model exhibited satisfactory psychometric properties, establishing a solid foundation for further testing of the structural model.

3.7.1 Measurement Model Specification

Table 4: Model Fit Indices for the Modified Measurement Model

Fit Index	Recommended Value	Modified Measurement Model
CMIN / DF	Less than 5	1.011

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The goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	> .90	.894
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)	> .80	.870
Tucker and Lewis Index (TLI)	> .90	.998
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	> .90	.998
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	> .90	.870
IFI (Incremental Fit Index)	> .90	.998
PNFI (Parsimony Normed Fit Index)	> .50	.821
PCLOSE (p-value for Close Fit)	> .05	1.000
SRMR	< .08	.045
RMSEA	< .08	.006

As shown in Table 4, the revised measurement model exhibited an excellent fit with the data. The chi-square statistic was not significant ($\chi^2 = 812.074$, $df = 803$, $p = .404$), suggesting a good match between the proposed model and observed covariance matrix. The model's adequacy was further supported by the relative fit index, with a chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio of $CMIN/df = 1.011$, which is comfortably below the recommended limit of 5 (Hair et al., 2019; Kline, 2016). Incremental fit indices surpassed the suggested cut-off values, with the Comparative Fit Index ($CFI = .998$), Tucker–Lewis Index ($TLI = .998$), and Incremental Fit Index ($IFI = .998$) all exceeding the .90 benchmark, indicating a significant improvement over the null model (Bentler, 1990; Tucker and Lewis, 1973). Absolute fit indices also confirmed the model's adequacy, with the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation ($RMSEA = .006$) and Standardised Root Mean Square Residual ($SRMR = .045$) well below the recommended thresholds (Hair et al., 2019). A PCLOSE value of 1.000 suggested a close fit of the model at the population level. Although the Goodness-of-Fit Index ($GFI = .894$) and Normed Fit Index ($NFI = .870$) were slightly under the typical cut-off of .90, these values are deemed acceptable in complex measurement models with multiple constructs when other fit indices show strong model performance (Hair et al., 2019; Byrne, 2016).

3.8 Reliability and Validity Assessment

To assess the reliability and validity of the constructs, SPSS/AMOS version 31 was used alongside the Master Validity Tool to evaluate internal consistency, composite reliability, and both convergent and discriminant validity. This software analytical approach strengthened the reliability and validity assessments, thereby enhancing the empirical integrity of the measurement model.

Table 5: Internal Consistency, Convergent Validity Indices

Constructs	C A	C R	AV E	MS V	MaxR(H)
Self-Awareness	.89 5	.91 3	.56 9	.26 9	.920
Self-Management	.85 2	.86 3	.55 9	.26 9	.868
Social Awareness	.90 5	.89 4	.58 5	.22 4	.906
Relationship Management	.85 1	.87 3	.49 6	.27 8	.878
Job Burnout	.85 9	.87 8	.54 6	.27 8	.886
Job Performance	.87 3	.89 7	.52 2	.27 8	.899

Table 5 displays the findings related to the internal consistency reliability and convergent validity of all the constructs in the study. The internal consistency reliability was confirmed, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from .851 to .905, surpassing the recommended minimum of .70 (Taber, 2018). Similarly, the composite reliability (CR) values, which ranged from .863 to .913, indicated robust construct reliability and consistent measurement of latent variables (Hair et al., 2021). Convergent validity was largely confirmed, as the average variance extracted (AVE) values exceeded 0.50 for most constructs, showing that the constructs accounted for more than 50% of the variance in their observed indicators (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Although the AVE value for relationship management ($AVE = .496$) was slightly below the recommended threshold, its CR value (.873) was above .70, meeting the condition under which convergent validity can be deemed adequate despite slightly lower AVE values (Hair et al., 2019; Hair et al., 2021). These results affirm that the measurement

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items reliably and validly represent their corresponding constructs.

3.8.1 Discriminant Validity

Table 6 presents the evaluation of discriminant validity using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and maximum shared variance (MSV). The findings reveal that the square root of the AVE for each construct surpasses the inter-construct correlations, indicating that each construct has a stronger association with its indicators than with those of other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2019).

Table 6: Fornell–Larcker Discriminant Validity Matrix

Constructs	Social Awareness	Self-Awareness	Self-Management	Relationship Management	JB	JP
Social Awareness	.740					
Self-Awareness	.500	.748				
Self-Management	.393	.361	.765			
Relationship Management	.417	.350	0.357	.704		
JB	-.480	-.488	-0.473	-.527	.739	
Job Performance	.408	.460	0.389	.316	-.527	.722

The diagonal values, which represent the square root of AVE, for social awareness (.740), self-awareness (.748), self-management (.765), relationship management (.704), job burnout (.739), and job performance (.722) were consistently greater than their respective off-diagonal correlation coefficients. Furthermore, the maximum shared variance (MSV) values for all

constructs were lower than their AVE values, reinforcing empirical distinctiveness among the constructs (Franke & Sarstedt, 2019). Although moderate correlations were found among the dimensions of emotional intelligence and between burnout and job performance, these correlations were still below the corresponding square root of the AVE values, indicating theoretical relatedness without affecting discriminant validity.

3.9 Correlation Analysis

The aim of the correlation analysis was to investigate the intensity and direction of the connections between the main constructs of the research, specifically the dimensions of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management), aspects of job burnout (emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and work–life imbalance), and job performance. To evaluate the linear relationships among the study variables, Pearson’s product–moment correlation coefficient (r) was used, as it is suitable for continuous data that follow a normal distribution (Field, 2018; Pallant, 2020).

Table 7: Pearson’s Correlation Matrix of Study Constructs

Constructs	Self-Awareness	Self-Management	Social Awareness	Relationship Management	JB	JP
Self-Awareness	1					
Self-Management	.361*	1				
Social Awareness	.460*	.450*	1			
Relationship Management	.308*	.329*	.384*	1		
Job Burnout	-.482**	-.464*	-.436*	-.435**	1	

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Job Performance	.410*	.362*	.363*	.276	-.547	1
	*	*	*	**	**	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Table 7 illustrates that all dimensions of emotional intelligence have a positive and significant relationship with lecturers' job performance, with correlation coefficients ranging from $r = .276$ to $r = .410$ ($p < .01$). Among these, self-awareness exhibited the strongest positive link to job performance ($r = .410$, $p < .01$). Conversely, job burnout was negatively associated with both emotional intelligence dimensions ($r = -.435$ to $-.482$, $p < .01$) and job performance ($r = -.547$, $p < .01$), suggesting that increased burnout correlates with lower emotional intelligence and diminished job performance. The inter-correlations among the emotional intelligence dimensions were moderate and significant ($r = .308$ to $.460$, $p < .01$), indicating theoretical relatedness without any overlap. Notably, none of the correlation coefficients surpassed the recommended multicollinearity threshold ($r < .85$), affirming the appropriateness of the constructs for further structural equation modelling.

4. Results

4.1 Full SEM Model

Using AMOS, a complete structural equation model was assessed to explore the proposed connections between emotional intelligence, job burnout, and the job performance of lecturers within a unified framework (Figure 1). Emotional intelligence was represented as a higher-order latent variable consisting of four first-order components: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. To ensure the validity of the measurements, these dimensions were included, and hypothesis testing was conducted at the construct level. As previously mentioned, the structural model exhibited an excellent fit to the data, as evidenced by goodness-of-fit indices. The model accounted for a significant portion of the variance in job burnout ($R^2 = .407$), suggesting that emotional intelligence is a significant predictor of burnout among lecturers in private educational institutions in the UAE.

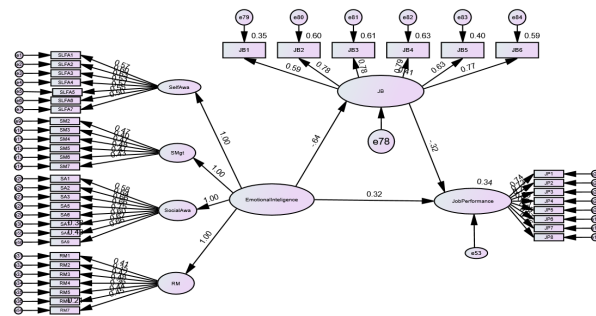


Figure 1: Full SEM Model

Table 8: Hypothesis Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Standardized Estimate (β)	S.E.	t-value	p-value	Results
H1	EI \rightarrow JP	.323	.115	3.807	< .001	Highly significant
H2	EI \rightarrow JB	-.638	.102	-6.676	< .001	Highly significant
H3	JB \rightarrow JP	-.321	.108	-3.731	< .001	Highly significant

The impact of emotional intelligence on job performance was both positive and significant ($\beta = .323$, $p < .001$), thus confirming H1. Additionally, emotional intelligence had a strong negative impact on job burnout ($\beta = -.638$, $p < .001$), supporting H2 and suggesting that lecturers with high emotional intelligence experience notably lower burnout levels. Furthermore, job burnout significantly and negatively affected job performance ($\beta = -.321$, $p < .001$), supporting H3 and demonstrating that burnout diminishes lecturers' performance. These results suggest that job burnout is a crucial intermediary mechanism that connects emotional intelligence to job performance. Lecturers with greater emotional intelligence experience less burnout, which in turn boosts their job performance. This pattern empirically supports the proposed mediation framework and highlights the significance of emotional intelligence as a vital personal

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resource for maintaining performance in demanding private higher-education settings.

4.2 Mediation Analysis

This study examined how job burnout mediates the link between emotional intelligence and lecturers' job performance by utilising a bootstrapping method with 2,000 resamples in AMOS. Bootstrapping was chosen because it offers reliable, bias-corrected confidence intervals for indirect effects without depending on normality assumptions and is highly recommended for mediation analysis in SEM (Hayes, 2022; Hair et al., 2021).

Table 9: Unstandardized Mediation Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Confidence Interval		p-value	Conclusion
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
H4	EI → JB → JP	.316	.336	.245	.437	.01	Partial Mediation

Table 9 reveals that the indirect impact of emotional intelligence on job performance through job burnout was positive and statistically significant ($B = .336, p = .001$). The 95% bias-corrected confidence interval for this indirect effect ($LL = .245, UL = .437$) excluded zero, confirming a significant mediating effect. This suggests that emotional intelligence indirectly boosts job performance by alleviating job burnout in lecturers. Even after accounting for job burnout in the model, the direct effect of emotional intelligence on job performance remained significant ($B = .316, p = .01$), indicating that job burnout partially mediated this relationship. These results support H4 and imply that emotional intelligence affects lecturers' job performance through both direct and indirect pathways, with the latter operating via reduced burnout. This pattern highlights job burnout as a crucial psychological mechanism through which emotional intelligence enhances performance in private

education

institutions.

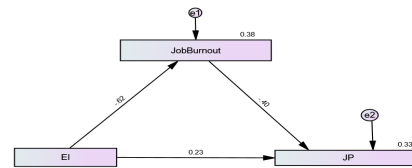


Figure 2: Mediation Analysis

5. Discussion

The current research offers empirical support for the crucial impact of emotional intelligence (EI) on improving lecturers' job performance, both directly and by mitigating job burnout. In line with the proposed hypotheses, the results demonstrated that emotional intelligence has a positive and significant influence on lecturers' job performance, consistent with previous studies in educational and professional settings. Prior research has shown that EI is a strong predictor of performance in roles that require emotional labor, as it helps individuals manage emotional tasks, control emotional responses, and sustain effective interpersonal relationships (Prentice & King, 2011; Khalid et al., 2018). These findings extend the evidence to lecturers in private educational institutions in the UAE, highlighting the importance of emotional skills in academic work environments.

The study's findings, which highlight a positive link between emotional intelligence and job performance, align with research conducted in education settings. Research involving pre-service teachers indicates that those with higher emotional intelligence, especially in interpersonal aspects, tend to exhibit greater teaching efficacy and engagement (Koçoğlu, 2011). Similarly, earlier studies have proposed that emotional intelligence enhances academic effectiveness by complementing cognitive skills, thereby improving professional performance in educational settings (Pishghadam et al., 2022). Collectively, these findings support the notion that lecturers with elevated emotional intelligence are better prepared to handle classroom dynamics, engage students, and maintain effective teaching performance in the classroom.

The findings also revealed a notable inverse correlation between emotional intelligence and job burnout, suggesting that lecturers with higher emotional

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intelligence tended to experience less burnout. This observation is consistent with a large body of research that identifies emotional intelligence as a protective factor against burnout, especially in professions with high emotional demands. Previous research has demonstrated that emotional intelligence can mitigate the impact of negative emotions and decrease emotional exhaustion and cynicism, thereby reducing burnout levels (Szczygiel & Mikolajczak, 2018; Gong et al., 2019). Additional evidence from the education and healthcare fields supports this connection, showing that emotion regulation and emotional awareness key elements of emotional intelligence—are vital in alleviating burnout and promoting psychological well-being (Lee, 2017; Sanchez-Gomez & Bresó, 2020).

The current research further verifies that job burnout significantly detracts from lecturers' job performance. This conclusion aligns with a wealth of empirical evidence from various sectors, such as education, healthcare, banking, and construction, which consistently indicates that increased burnout correlates with decreased job performance, lower job satisfaction, and reduced work engagement (Awwad et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2022). In academic settings, burnout hampers lecturers' ability to uphold instructional quality, manage workload pressures, and maintain effective interactions with students and colleagues, ultimately affecting performance outcomes.

The results revealed that job burnout mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and lecturers' job performance. This mediating role suggests that emotional intelligence boosts job performance not only directly but also indirectly by lowering burnout. This finding is consistent with previous mediation studies showing that emotionally intelligent individuals experience less emotional exhaustion and greater professional efficacy, leading to enhanced performance outcomes (Sanchez-Gomez & Bresó, 2020). Similar mediation effects have been identified among educators, where burnout was found to mediate the link between emotional intelligence and both in-role performance and organizational citizenship behaviour (Cohen and Abedallah, 2015). This study extends these findings to the UAE private education sector, offering empirical evidence that burnout is a crucial explanatory mechanism connecting emotional intelligence to lecturers' performance. By empirically confirming the mediating role of job burnout, this study adds to the growing body

of literature supporting the development of emotional intelligence as a strategic intervention in educational settings. Enhancing lecturers' emotional skills may thus be an effective strategy for reducing burnout and maintaining high job performance levels in increasingly demanding academic environments.

6. Conclusion

This study explored the connection between emotional intelligence, job burnout, and the job performance of lecturers at private educational institutions in the UAE. The results offer strong empirical support for the proposed model, showing that emotional intelligence significantly enhances lecturers' job performance, both directly and indirectly, by reducing job burnout. Lecturers with higher emotional intelligence were more adept at managing emotions, handling interpersonal challenges, and maintaining effective teaching performance, whereas those with lower burnout levels demonstrated greater professional effectiveness. These findings highlight emotional intelligence as a vital personal asset in academically challenging settings. The mediating role of job burnout provides valuable theoretical insights into how emotional intelligence affects performance outcomes. Instead of merely acting as a direct predictor, emotional intelligence serves as a protective factor that diminishes emotional exhaustion and cynicism, allowing lecturers to sustain higher job performance. By empirically confirming this mediation pathway in the UAE's private education sector, this study broadens the existing literature on emotional intelligence and burnout and addresses a significant contextual gap in higher-education research.

From a practical standpoint, the results have several key implications for educational institutions and policymakers. First, institutions should consider incorporating emotional intelligence development into their professional development and faculty training programs. Structured interventions that focus on emotional awareness, emotion regulation, empathy, and resilience can assist lecturers in managing emotional labour more effectively and reducing the risk of burnout. Second, recruitment and promotion policies might benefit from including emotional intelligence competencies alongside traditional academic and technical criteria, especially for positions that require significant student interaction and instructional responsibilities. Third, institutional leaders should prioritise strategies to prevent burnout, such as managing

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workloads, establishing mentoring systems, and implementing psychological support initiatives, as these measures indirectly enhance job performance by improving emotional well-being. Finally, this study emphasises the strategic importance of emotional intelligence as a sustainable resource for enhancing lecturer performance in increasingly demanding educational settings. By nurturing emotionally intelligent academic environments, institutions can boost individual performance and promote long-term organizational effectiveness, staff retention, and teaching quality. Future research could expand on these findings by examining longitudinal effects, intervention-based designs, or comparative analyses across public and private higher education sectors to further deepen our understanding of the dynamics between emotional intelligence, burnout, and performance.

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