Nexus between emotional intelligence and occupational stress: Role of workplace spirituality among teaching fraternity

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A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

The Union Government's New Education Policy 2020 of India is said to be a game changer and has brought many reforms into the education sector. This initiation provoked many changes in the education sector along with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. In this regard, there is a dire need to know the emotional status and stress among the teaching fraternity. The present study considers emotional intelligence and workplace spirituality as influencers of occupational stress. The findings of the study interpret that emotional intelligence and workplace spirituality predict occupational stress in the teaching fraternity. The mediation effect of workplace spirituality between emotional intelligence and occupational stress is nominal and very low. However, it is observed that high levels of spirituality and moderate emotional intelligence predict low-stress levels.

1. Introduction

Teachers' work sheds light on the interplay between personal relationships within classrooms and the societal structures of gender and class. In their efforts to develop fresh perspectives on the nature and origins of educational inequality, Connell et al., 2020; Varghese & Mandal, 2020) assert that teachers are no longer viewed as mere knowledge providers but, rather, as mentors and facilitators of learning (Connell et al., 2020; Varghese & Mandal, 2020). The Union Government's New Education Policy 2020 of India is a game changer, bringing many reforms into the education sector (Aithal & Aithal, 2020; Tilbury, 2011). Teachers are the most cherished assets for educational institutions. Teachers impart not only knowledge to the students but also play a significant role in shaping their bright future (Datnow, 2020). There are many research-based studies stated that beginners in the teaching profession were leaving this profession because of occupational stress (Alexandrache, 2015; Arnup & Bowles, 2016; Harmsen et al., 2018; McCarthy, 2019; Rajendran et al., 2020; Redin & Erro-Garcés, 2020; Ryan et al., 2017). It is often seen that a stressful event results in the 'fight-or-flight' responses caused by a rush of adrenaline hormones (Arkert et al., 2020; McEwen & Karatsoreos, 2020). Another study (Zeitlin, 2021) described the annual teacher turnover is higher in comparison with the turnover of all other occupations. Since teachers face prolonged unhealthy stress on the job, its negative consequences manifest in terms of lack of concentration, reduction of memory, increased chances of error, deterioration in planning and organization skills, irritability, problems in speech, lack of energy, etc., which consequently impact the ability with which teachers can perform and deliver their work. (Kundi, Sardar, & Badar, 2021) suggest that stress and emotional intelligence are negatively related. Individuals with emotional Intelligence have a low level of neuroticism with lower stress levels. However, the role of the psyche is generally underestimated and the role of biological factors is over-estimated in relation to occupational stress (Wadhera & Bano, 2020). Therefore, it is important to explore emotional intelligence with occupational stress. Also, Cunningham (2014) emphatically notes that the limited number of studies that have considered spirituality in examinations of work stress constitutes a major oversight (Cunningham, 2014). Researchers tend to ignore the variable of spirituality when, in fact, spirituality is a

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critical variable that should be considered in work stress research (Sani & Ekowati, 2021). Recent empirical studies have revealed workplace spirituality as a mechanism for managing work stress. Therefore, since college teachers work in a stressful environment, this study aims to explore the role of emotional intelligence and workplace spirituality in reducing occupational stress among teaching fraternity.

In various behavioural studies, occupational stress increases unfavorable health and performance concerns in employees. Occupational stress is generally a negative or disagreeable practice (Geving, 2007; Yang et al., 2008) at the same time, it is recognized that some stress may benefit individuals in terms of motivation and challenge (Seyle, 1976). The contradictory psychological impacts of the substantial level of felt stress pointed to as distress can negatively affect people (Chen et al., 2021). Occupational stress frequently arises from unforeseen responsibilities and strains that do not match an individual's experience, abilities, and expectations. Consequentially, occupational stress results in dire outcomes such as low morale of employees and poor performance at work. It frustrates an individual's capacity to cope. Furthermore, career uncertainty, health-related problems, work-life imbalances, frequent absenteeism, employee turnover, and other catastrophes admonish business organizations (Batista & Reio, 2019). Stress leads to teachers ineffective teaching and negatively impacts their student's scholarly accomplishment. Teachers with high-level job-related stress are vulnerable to occupational diseases, i.e., depression. Depression is a personal exertion; it could conceivably impact students' knowledge and cause poor relations with colleagues (Kongcharoen et al., 2019). Several antecedents generate occupational stress among teachers: work pressure, poor relationships with colleagues, management, long working hours, psychological exhaustion due to work overload, and distress caused by suspicion of being laid off (Moeller & Chung-Yan, 2013). The regular interactions of teachers with pupils and colleagues and the fragmented demands of teaching work generally lead to enormous pressure, starting to stress (Ortega-Jiménez et al., 2021). Occupational stress occurs in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization with college teachers; it decreases personal achievements, negatively influencing the quality of teaching and the execution of their institutions. (García-Arroyo & Osca Segovia, 2019). Thus, it is essential to understand the antecedents that could draw down occupational stress (Batista & Reio, 2019). Studies in the past have examined the work-related antecedents of occupational stress (Catano et al., 2010; García-González et al., 2020; Meng & Wang, 2018; Shrivastava, 2021; Wadhera & Bano, 2020). Emotional Intelligence is a psychological construct that is related to one's psyche and emotions. A person can perform complex tasks in a stressful, erotogenic environment. However, the role of the psyche and emotions has not been extensively explored (Wadhera & Bano, 2020) without affecting one's health and performance. "Emotional Intelligence has been defined as the extent to which individuals can be calm and stable under pressure and are less likely to encounter negative emotional states, such as anxiety, depression and anger" (Bajaj et al., 2019).

The study reveals that there exists a direct negative relationship between emotional intelligence and stress. Perhaps people with emotional intelligence have low neuroticism and lower stress levels. Moreover, emotional Intelligence as a personality trait has an essential role in influencing and shaping the behavior of employees (Rogers & Barber, 2019). When it interacts with job stress, weaker emotional Intelligence results in significant deviant behaviors in employees, such as increased absenteeism, deliberately withholding effort to damage the pace of work, early clocking out from work, exercising favoritism, theft, detrimental behavior towards co-workers, etc. Emotional Intelligence can buffer the stress deviance

linkages (Ferguson, 2004). Emotional stability and emotional intelligence emerged as the best predictor of teacher effectiveness. Therefore, as college teachers experience extreme emotional excitation, having emotional Intelligence may help retain self-esteem and quality of output (Singh & Jha, 2012). Theoretically, low emotional Intelligence makes an individual more vulnerable to stress, while high emotional Intelligence is associated with resilience and makes an individual less prone to burnout (Bajaj et al., 2019).

(Aboobaker et al., 2019) the author suggested that the spiritual values of an employee that have workplace acceptance tend to promote mental well-being and, therefore, reduce stress among such employees. The relevance of spirituality is increasing by leaps and bounds in the contemporary world because of spurious inflation in pressure resulting from the rising demands of one's occupation. (Zwingmann et al., 2011) stated that spirituality is categorised into two perspectives, where one view assumes that spirituality is a relationship with God. In contrast, the other perspective takes spirituality as the search for finding meaning in life. Spirituality relates to unity, transcendence, and searches for meaning (Janhsen et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2020; Senreich, 2013) defines a spiritual workplace "as a place where individuals can satisfy their inner selves by performing meaningful work with the feeling of working in a community." Based on this definition, workplace spirituality has three dimensions: inner life, meaningful work, and a sense of connection. Inner life reflects an individual's spiritual condition, promoting morale and productivity and reducing stress and burnout (Karakas, 2010). The dimension of meaningful work highlights the importance of employees engaging in purposeful work beyond the conventional pursuit of monetary rewards (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). A sense of connection represents the need for social support and fellowship among the co-workers in the organization. Workplace spirituality is an individual construct as well as an organizational construct. Organizations can enable employees to develop workplace spirituality by nurturing the dimensions of meaningful work, inner self, and a sense of connection (Petchsawang & Duchon, 2009). Spirituality is conceptualized as coping with job-related stress (Hartwick & Kang, 2013). The spiritual beliefs of an individual significantly influence one's interpretation of the stressors. Individuals with spiritual beliefs often attribute stressors to some higher purpose (Hartwick & Kang, 2013). Perhaps this spiritual attribution process helps to manage stress by creating a coping framework where an individual searches for a "more favourable understanding of the stressful situation and its implications. Finding a spiritual benefit in the stressor helps the individual to cope" (Park, 2014). Therefore, this spiritual coping mechanism creates a relevant backdrop to examine the role of workplace spirituality in managing work-related stress.

Recent empirical evidence reveals that workplace spirituality is a mechanism to manage work-related stress (Shrestha & Jena, 2021). If stress adversely affects health, then workplace spirituality positively influences health. These findings emphasize the relevance and importance of workplace spirituality since it improves employees' health conditions by creating a healthy atmosphere and helps employees find meaning in their work (Wadhera & Bano, 2020). (Kumar & Pragadeeswaran, 2011) have revealed a negative relationship between occupational stress and spiritual quotient amongthe executives at the workplace. Many organizations have begun to embrace workplace spirituality by developing employees' inner strength that helps satisfy the outer life, resulting in positive behavior. It creates an implication for educational institutions. College teachers' workplace spirituality has become essential in education-related workplaces (Milliman et al., 2003). As college teachers work under constant stress, workplace spirituality could help them develop an inner strength that could assist them in facing unprecedented job demands and ambiguities.

1.1. Research questions as follows

Does emotional intelligence significantly control the occupational stress of university teachers? To what extent does workplace spirituality mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational stress?

1.2. Objectives of the study

1. To examine the impact of emotional intelligence on occupational stress
2. To study the impact of workplace spirituality on occupational stress
3. To observe the mediating effect of workplace spirituality on the relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational stress

1.3. Conceptual framework

The above literature identified the research gap as many researchers have studied the mediation role of emotional intelligence on workplace spirituality and other variables. Very few studies have explored the relationship between occupational stress and workplace spirituality it is presented in Fig. 1. From the above research gap, the following conceptual framework was developed to examine the variables and their correlation by partially adopting the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2012) and Person-Environment fit theory (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011).

Therefore, based on the literature review, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1. Emotional Intelligence significantly predicts occupational stress among college Teachers.

H2. Workplace spirituality significantly predicts occupational stress among college Teachers.

H3. Workplace spirituality mediates between Emotional Intelligence and Occupational Stress.

2. Materials and methods

For the investigation, three data-gathering tools were employed, including the Workplace Spirituality Scale developed by Petchsawang and Duchon (2009), which encompasses four dimensions (a 22-item scale): Compassion, Meaningful Work,

Fig. 1. Conceptual model.

Transcendence, and Mindfulness (Petchsawang & Duchon, 2009). Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI) was developed by Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis and Hay Group to assess emotional and social competencies (Daniel Goleman, 2005). Occupational Stress Index (OSI) was developed by Singh and Srivastava (Srivastava & Singh, 1981).

The sample frame for the present research consists of faculty members employed in self-financing colleges within Chennai city. These faculty members work in colleges affiliated with the University of Madras, which is a public state university located in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. Established in 1857, it stands as one of India's oldest universities, established by an Act of the Legislative Council of India during British colonial rule. The University of Madras oversees various segments of colleges, including government colleges, government-aided colleges, and self-financing colleges. These affiliated colleges are located in Chennai city, Kanchipuram district, Tiruvallur district, and Vellore district. The research collected responses from faculty members employed in self-financing colleges within Chennai city.

Madras University-affiliated colleges are located in Chennai, Kanchipuram, Tiruvallur, and Vellore. However, this study exclusively focused on colleges within the Chennai region. According to the Madras University calendar, there are currently 25 self-financing colleges in operation.

The researchers obtained prior permission from the college principals and explained the purpose of collecting responses. Subsequently, the researcher received formal consent from the principals and met with faculty members in their respective departments during their leisure time. To manage time and costs efficiently, the researcher decided to collect 20 responses from each college, with ten from the Arts faculty and ten from the Science faculty.

In total, 500 questionnaires were personally distributed by the researcher with the assistance of colleagues to the faculty members. The study received 489 responses from faculty members. However, nine of these responses were discarded due to incomplete information. This left the researcher with 482 valid responses, which were used for the final analysis.

Therefore, the study's sample size comprised 482 participants, and the research methodology employed a convenience sampling method.

Workplace spirituality mediating role between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Occupational Stress (OS) was analyzed using the mediation analysis. The detailed indirect effect of numerous mediators expects the dependent variable to influence the Independent variable (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). A nonparametric PLS-SEM with bootstrapping procedure has been used for multiple mediation analyses to examine the model depicted (Etemadinezhad et al., 2008; Sarstedt et al., 2020). PLS-SEM was chosen to analyze the model, so all the constructs are weighty. All constructs were checked for significance as the constructs are loading positively.

All the constructs show the Cronbach alpha greater than 0.75, and Average Variance extracted (AVE) is greater than 0.5 (Sarstedt et al., 2020). All indicator loadings are above 0.6 and interpret significance (Etemadinezhad et al., 2008; Igbaria et al., 1995). Fornell-Larcker, heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) criterion and cross loadings are used to assess discriminant validity. The HTMT Criteria requires values less than 0.85 (Preacher & Hayes, 2008; Sarstedt et al., 2020). While comparing with other constructs, latent variable construct-related indicators must load high on their respective constructs.

3. Results

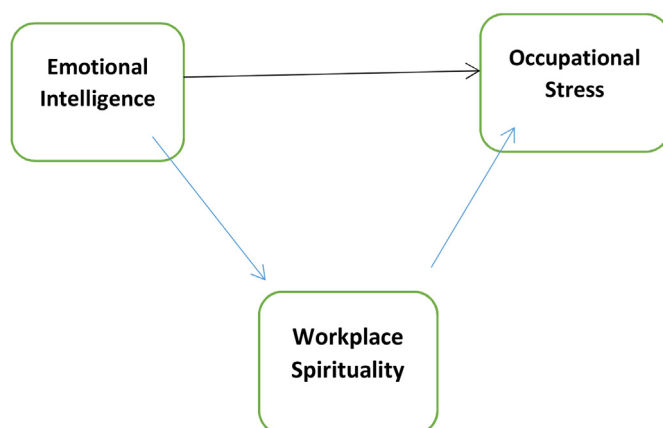The quantitative approach was implemented in the universities

and autonomous college teaching faculty to examine the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI), Workplace Spirituality (WPS) and Occupational Stress. The study was conducted on the self-financing Arts and Science colleges affiliated with the University of Madras. Because the target sampling frame must not be lowered to pick a sample, the study surveyed the entire population to collect data. The data collection period from October 2020 to May 2021 at Chennai, Tamilnadu State emerge as a global education hub (Aithal & Aithal, 2020).

The Descriptive analysis is described for 482 respondents, wherein 500 questionnaires were disseminated among self-financing arts and science college teachers and the results are given in the following Table 1.

The participants in this research were faculty members working at affiliated colleges of Madras University. In total, 482 respondents completed the questionnaire, without leaving any questions among 500 sample size. The gender breakdown was male 270 (56%) and female 212 (44%). The average age was 47 years, with a standard deviation of 7. Among 482, married respondents are more, which is 387 (80.3%). In examining the educational qualifications of faculty members within colleges affiliated with Madras University, it was found that 36.3% held postgraduate (P.G.) and M.Phil. degrees, while 34% possessed a postgraduate degree along with NET/SLET qualifications. Nearly 30% of the faculty members held Ph.D. qualifications. Regarding their teaching experience, a significant portion fell into the zero to 5 years of total experience category, comprising 37.3% (180 individuals), while 39.4% (178 individuals) reported zero to 3 years of association with their current institution, indicating a relatively low retention rate. Consequently, the majority of respondents held the designation of Assistant Professor, accounting for 386 individuals (80.1%). In terms of income, 40% (193 individuals) reported earnings between Rs. 25,001 to Rs. 50,000, with 23.7% (114 individuals) earning below Rs. 25,000.

3.1. Structural equation modelling using PLS

PLS-SEM was used to analyze the model fit of the variables considered for the study. The results show the correlation, path confidence, factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha value, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), construct reliability and validity, discriminant validity, collinearity statistics and R-Square values.

As shown in Fig. 2, the PLS-Bootstrapping for the model performed provides the estimates for the path coefficients to connect the hypothesized correlations between the variables. The range of the path coefficient values is "-1 to +1". Stronger positive relationships are denoted by path coefficient values that are "closer to +1″, while stronger negative relationships are denoted by path coefficient values that are "closer to −1". Although the path coefficient values closer to −1 or +1 are predominantly significantly different, bootstrapping can be used to determine the significance level.

This response rate of the questionnaire method is 96.4%, and it is sufficient to conduct the study (Cooper, D. R. & Schindler, 1998). Structural path analysis results are as follows. The results portrayed that Workplace spirituality positively correlated with Emotional intelligence and Occupational stress (Bradberry et al., 2009) (0.57, 0.83). Hence, H1 is proved. Emotional intelligence significantly influences Occupational stress ($\beta = 0.869$, $p > 0.05$). Workplace spirituality is significantly related to Occupational Stress ($\beta = 0.806$, $p > 0.05$), the outcome of the study reveals the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of workplace spirituality (0.948), emotional intelligence (0.958), and occupational stress (0.911).

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics on the demographic profile of the respondents.

| Specification		Frequency	Percentage
Gender of the respondent	Male	270	56%
	Female	212	44%
Age group	Below 35 years	124	25.7%
	36—45 years	186	38.6%
	46—55 years	138	28.6%
	Above 55 years	34	7.1%
Marital Status	Single	95	19.7%
	Married	387	80.3%
Educational Qualification	P.G. with NET/SLET	164	34%
	P.G. and M.Phil.	175	36.3%
	P.G., M.Phil. and Ph.D	143	29.7%
Total Work Experience	Less than 5 years	180	37.3%
	5—7 years	163	33.8%
	7—10 years	99	20.5%
	Above 10 years	40	8.3%
Experience in current institution	0—3 years	178	36.9%
	3.1—6 years	190	39.4%
	6.1—9 years	100	20.7%
	Above 9 years	14	2.9%
Designation	Assistant Professor	386	80.1%
	Associate Professor	96	19.9%
Monthly Net Salary	Below Rs.25000	114	23.7%
	Rs.25001 to Rs.50000	193	40%
	Rs.50001 to Rs.75000	106	22%
	Rs.75001 to Rs.100000	44	9.1%
	Above Rs.100000	25	5.2%
Working Shifts	Shift-I	324	67.2%
	Shift-II	158	32.8%
Subject Taught	Social Sciences	223	46.3%
	Sciences	192	39.8%
	Language	67	13.9%
Weekly workload	17 h per week	154	32%
	17—20 h per week	328	68%

Source: Primary data
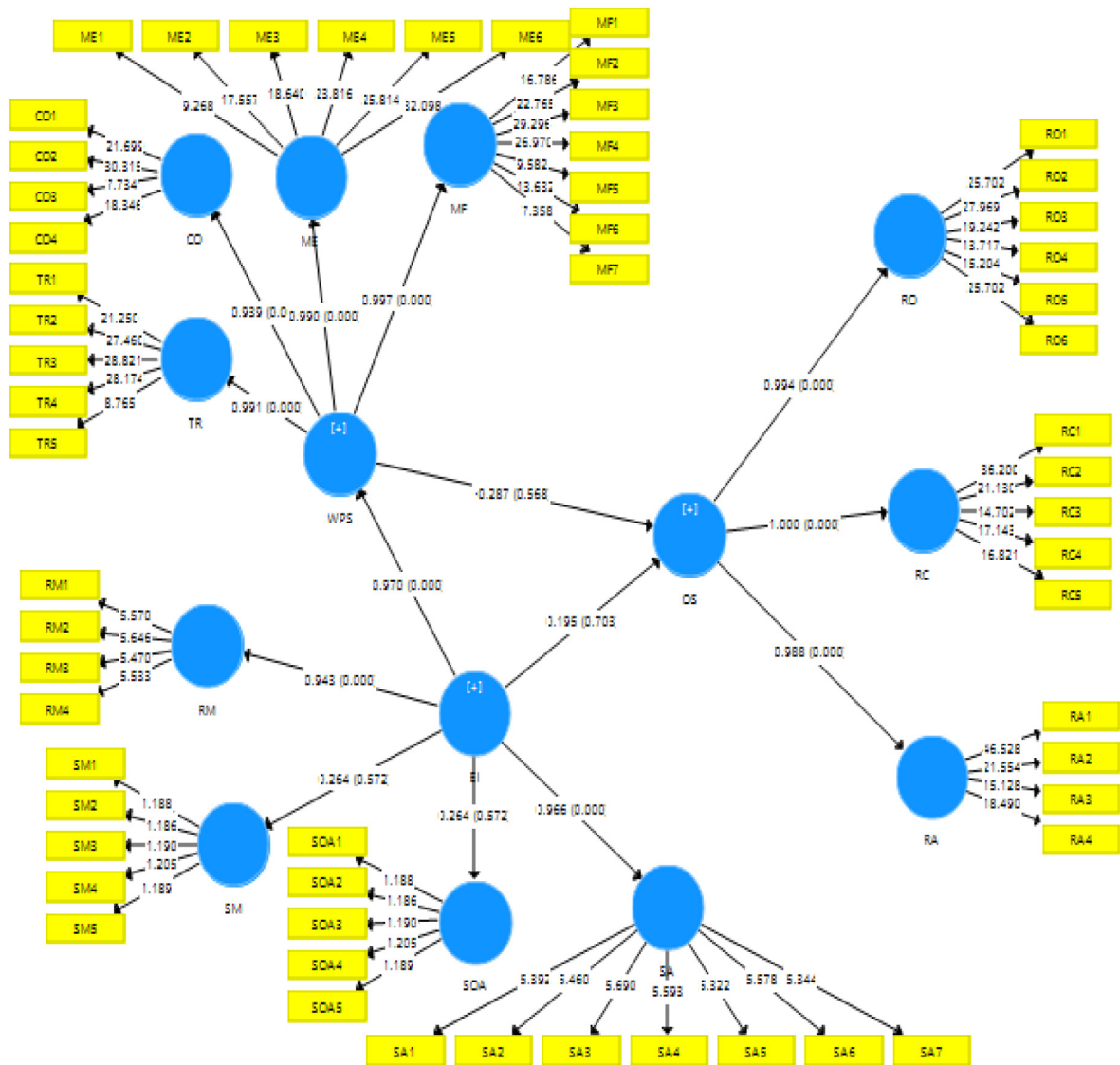
Fig. 2. Path coefficients with p-values.

The above table shows that variance extracted values are greater than 0.5 for workplace spirituality, emotional intelligence and occupational stress, and Cronbach alpha values are above 0.70, which supports convergent validity of the instrument. The correlation between the variables is non-linear. Table 2 interprets that the constructs considered for the study are empirically unique, and a relationship exists between the constructs, measuring the various traits of unrelated items of variables (Subhani, 2014).

There are two methods to evaluate discriminant validity: cross-loadings of the indicators and the Fornell-Larker criterion, which

mandates that each construct's AVE value is significantly greater than the correlation with all other constructs. Discriminant validity is a minor group related to construct validity, which is a prerequisite for analysing the relationship between latent variables. For the variance-based SEM model, the Fornell-Larker criterion and cross-loading examination are the dominant approaches for discriminant validity. The Heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) criterion for discriminant validity assessment in variance-based structural equations modeling. HTMT ratios of correlations assessing the discriminant validity. Using the bootstrap method, AVE, CR and HTMT ratio support and validate the model (Hayes, 2013) as shown in Fig. 3 and values presented in the Table 3.

From Table 4, the Chi-square value is 4.071, which is close to the ideal value of 4, indicating a good model fit with a statistically significant p-value of 0.021. Additionally, a good model fit is indicated when the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is less than 0.10; in this case, the SRMR value is 0.070. Furthermore, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) is 0.789, and a value closer to 1 suggests a better fit. The model can be considered a better fit based on the NFI value. In summary, the results suggest that the model fits well is presented in Table 5.

Table- 2
Construct reliability and validity.

Variables	Cronbach Alpha	Rho_A	AVE	CR	WPS	EI	OS
WPS	0.948	0.985	0.701	0.955	1		
EI	0.958	0.971	0.855	0.967	0.771	1	
OS	0.911	0.969	0.722	0.929	0.847	0.832	1

Note: WPS — Workplace Spirituality, EI — Emotional Intelligence, OS — Occupational Stress.
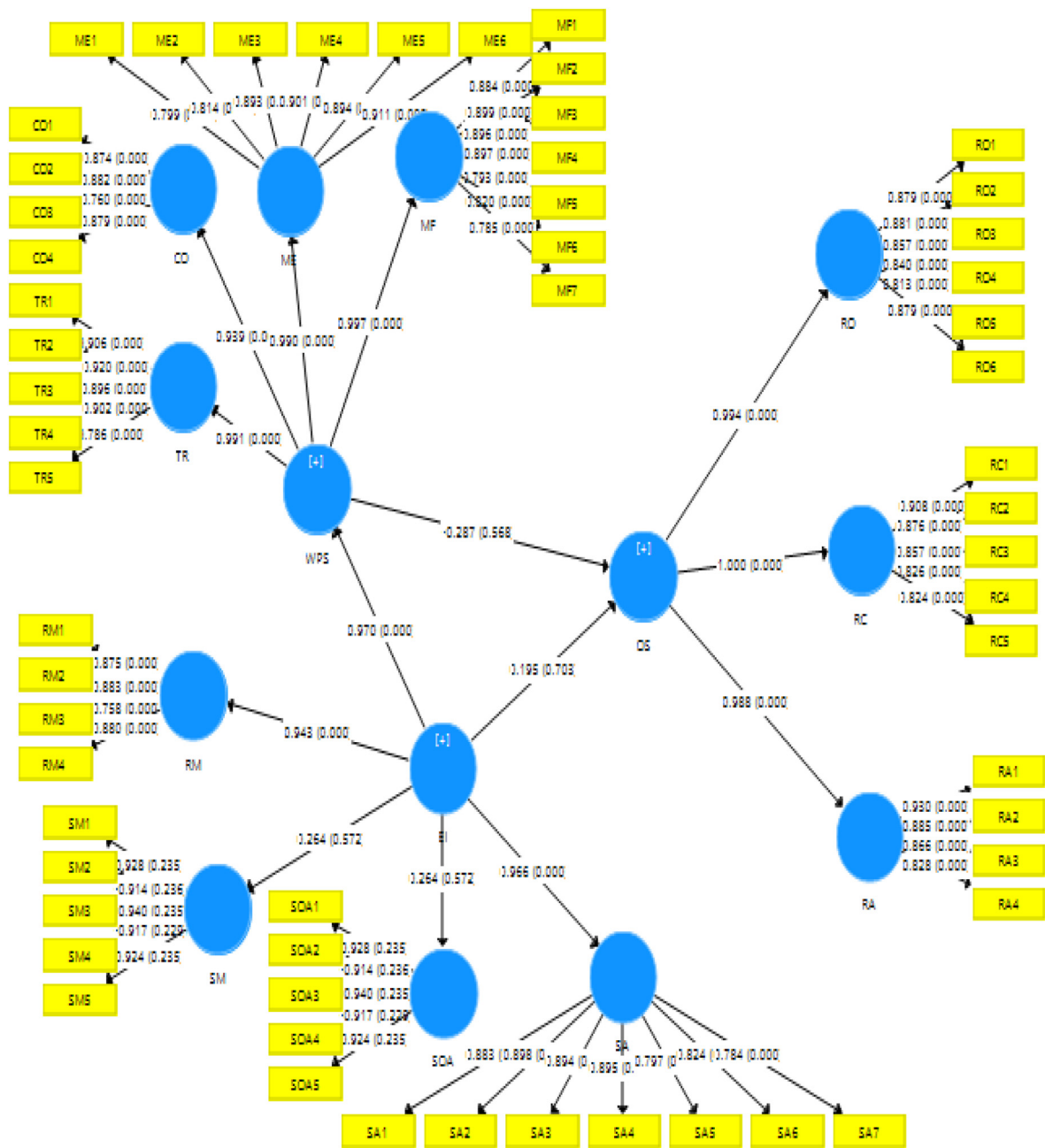Source: Data Interpretation

Fig. 3. Outer Weights loading with p-values.

Table 3
Discriminant validity.

Variables	Fornell-Larcker Criterion			HTMT Criterion (<0.85)		HTMT Confidence Intervals	Cross-Loadings and Loadings
	EI	OS	WPS	EI	OS		
EI	0.925					Yes	Satisfied
OS	−0.124	0.850		0.121		Yes	Satisfied
WPS	−0.030	−0.175	0.837	0.069	0.141	Yes	Satisfied

Note: WPS − Workplace Spirituality, EI − Emotional Intelligence, OS − Occupational Stress.
Source: Data Interpretation

3.2. Mediation analysis − Role of workplace spirituality

From Fig. 4, it is investigated that workplace spirituality mediates the association between emotional intelligence and occupational stress. The mediating effect was built into the model using the PLS-SEM approach. Workplace spirituality's mediation

Table 4
Model Fit measures.

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.070	0.070
d_ULS	0.932	0.932
d_G	0.790	0.790
Chi-Square	4.071	4.071
NFI	0.789	0.789

Source: Data Interpretation

Table 5
Mediation Analysis results.

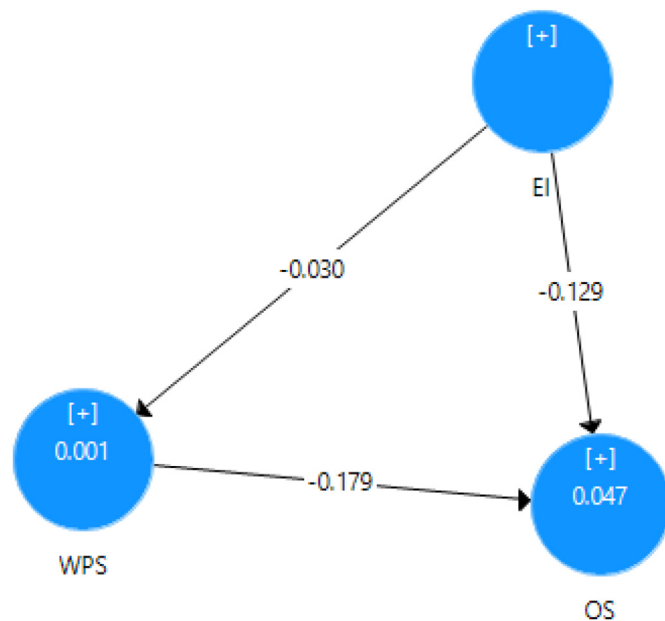| Paths	Coefficient	F-value	R-Square	R-Square adjusted
EI → OS	−0.129	0.017	0.047	0.047
EI → WPS	−0.303	0.001	0.001	−0.010
WPS → OS	−0.179	0.034		

Fig. 4. Mediation analysis.

effect considerably negatively influenced emotional intelligence and occupational stress. The outcome thus validated the third hypothesis. The results also imply that the relationship between emotional intelligence and professional stress is mediated by workplace spirituality.

The R^2, the coefficient of determination Heenseler (2016), is a metric of how accurately the model predicts the future. This impact ranges from "0 to 1," with "1″ representing complete predictive accuracy (Henseler et al., 2016). Because a wide range of multifaceted researchers produces R2, it strongly suggests that they rely on general guidelines with regard to an acceptable R^2, where values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25, respectively, describe significant, moderate, and inadequate degrees of productive accuracy. R^2 of endogenous factors reveals relevance but poor prediction accuracy from those previously mentioned results. From the above mediation analysis, path coefficients are as follows: Emotional Intelligence (EI) effect on Occupational Stress (OS) through Workplace Spirituality (WPS) is significant, and a mild effect was there. When compared to the direct effect of Emotional Intelligence on Occupational Stress, Workplace spirituality is mediating between these two variables

and exploring it as significant (Hayes, 2013).

4. Discussions

The paper examines the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI), Workplace Spirituality (WPS) and Occupational Stress (OS). Studies related to examining the impact of EI and WPS are very scarce as both variables are said to be the predicting variables and coping factors of Occupational Stress (Saxena et al., 2020; Zou & Dahling, 2017). The study reveals that Emotional Intelligence and Workplace Spirituality negatively predict Occupational stress among faculty members. (Khari & Sinha, 2020; Sharma & Kumra, 2020; Zou et al., 2020). As the present study reveals various levels of occupational stress, it is observed that School faculty and College faculty are experiencing high-stress levels compared to university teaching faculty, as it is proved by various researchers, faculty members are experiencing moderate to high-stress levels (D. Wu, 2020; Uma Maheswari & Sundaram, 2016).

From the analysis, it is proved that the male teaching fraternity is slightly more than the female. The average age of the teaching fraternity is 32 years with an average work experience of 5 years–7 years. Studies during the pandemic reflected almost the same description, as there was huge retrenchment happening in the education sector (D. Wu, 2020). Female fraternities is having high spirituality levels, especially in the constructs of meaningful work and compassion (Zou & Dahling, 2017). Highest work experienced respondents show high emotional intelligence, which helps reduce their occupational stress (Mahipalan & Sheena, 2019; Sharma & Kumra, 2020; Zou & Dahling, 2017).

The study examines the Emotional Intelligence of faculty members and workplace spirituality of faculty members among the four variables of workplace spirituality are Compassion, Meaningful Work, Transcendence and Mindfulness (Bradberry et al., 2009; Webb, 2009). Among these variables, meaningful work is significantly and negatively related to Occupational stress (X. Wu et al., 2020). From the above model developed by the researcher, there was a moderate relationship between Occupational Stress and Workplace Spirituality (Mahipalan & Sheena, 2019; Saxena et al., 2020). When emotional intelligence and workplace spirituality are positively correlated, there is a negative relationship with occupational stress (Charoensukmongkol et al., 2016; Petchsawang & Duchon, 2009; Phan et al., 2021; Saxena et al., 2020). Some studies elevated that emotional intelligence and workplace spirituality are the coping factors for occupational stress (Charoensukmongkol et al., 2016; Mahipalan & Sheena, 2019; Petchsawang & Duchon, 2009). This argument was denied in the current study.

Workplace spirituality is an important antecedent to predict emotional intelligence, and a significant relationship is found in the study (Ashmos DP, 2000; Charoensukmongkol et al., 2016). As the three dimensions of workplace spirituality positively relate to emotional intelligence, future studies can determine the potential determinants of workplace spirituality (Bengal & Bengal, 2016; Charoensukmongkol et al., 2016). When faculty members find meaning in their jobs, they feel involved and committed to the workplace (Wen et al., 2019; Zou & Dahling, 2017). This leads to happiness and belongingness towards the organization, and the results of the current study are reliable with other studies of workplace spirituality (Charoensukmongkol et al., 2016; Petchsawang & Duchon, 2009; Preacher & Hayes, 2008). The faculty members with high workplace spirituality have low occupational stress even though they have a moderate level of emotional intelligence (Ashmos DP, 2000; Charoensukmongkol et al., 2016; V. Kumar & Kumar, 2014). In contrast, the present study interprets that if self-management, social awareness and self-awareness of

emotional intelligence differ significantly, only there would be an impact on occupational stress. However, workplace spirituality is a predecessor of occupational stress, not a mediating variable.

5. Conclusion and future implications of the study

The term workplace spirituality must not be understood as something related to religion. In the organizational context, it is viewed as mindfulness towards the work, compassion, meaningful work and perfection (Bengal & Bengal, 2016; Mahipalan & Sheena, 2019). Spirituality refers to those vital things for happy work. The study can extend to examine the other factors of workplace spirituality, such as personal beliefs at the workplace, altruism, and trust. The intrinsic sources' role can be elevated to cope with occupational stress (Zare et al., 2021). If the research extends further to the role of emotional quotient as a job resource and workplace spirituality on job-related stress, that helps the organizations to ensure increased productivity, less absenteeism and better performance with maximum utilization of resources. The present study proves that workplace spirituality and emotional intelligence separately act as coping factors for work-related stress for teaching fraternity but not as mediating roles. Organizations can be keen on developing relationships among employees, which impacts occupational stress in terms of role ambiguity, clarity, and conflict. Many respondents feel that their roles have become a big mess recently, such as unplanned meetings and all works are framed as important without time frames.

Further research can be extended to workplace spirituality and emotional stability as coping strategies. The demographic profile impact is also examined as an impact factor on occupational stress. The same study can also be carried out in other states, as the state universities have their own policies and practices to progress. Future research will be extended with the importance of India's National Educational Policy 2020 and its impact on the teaching fraternity. (Aithal & Aithal, 2020); Numerous researchers have looked into how different employment outcomes are impacted by workplace spirituality, but the literature is still missing on the mechanisms through which these effects occur. Occupational stress mediated between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction (Mittal et al., 2023). The significance of utilising workplace spirituality as a powerful instrument for reducing OS, improving performance and morale, and assisting in the formulation of future human resource development strategies was proved in police personnel (Jalan & Garg, 2022), but the finding study gave different results as that workplace spirituality has a negative impact on understanding the roles of the academicians.

This study is limited to self-financing college teachers concerning Chennai city only, and it is recommended for future research to consider testing the conceptual model among the university teaching fraternity. The role of various demographic factors in influencing the relationships was not considered for the present study. Future studies may investigate the role of gender, age, marital status, total work experience, etc., as moderating factors, which could further explain the intention to stay. Studies should attempt to identify the possible moderating and mediating influence of institutional variables related to teaching fraternity in the relationship between alignment with values and work productivity. The findings of this paper will assist higher education institutions in developing timely, appropriate measures to lessen occupational stress and in understanding the spiritual side of their faculty members.

This finding may indicate that spiritual activities at work serve as useful coping mechanisms for overworked employees, which rejuvenate and ultimately safeguard individuals from getting unduly exhausted. The workplace would have a favourable impact on work-related exhaustion. The present study suggests that there are distinct relationships between spiritual traditions and ideals at work and significant employee health outcomes, such as mental well-being, fatigue from working, and occupational stress. In a time when there is increasing evidence of the negative effects of stress on employee health and workplace loyalty and engagement, as well as organisational performance and customer service, these are areas of growing concern to human resources and occupational health services, as well as managers. The influence of organisational and personal spirituality variables on worker stress and wellbeing has largely been ignored in studies of organisational health to date.

The study (Pradhan et al., 2022) found that workplace spirituality assures the engagement of academicians and even emotional intelligence is mediating moderately. In contrast, the results of the present study worked as a different model where emotional intelligence was not significantly different among the responses, but workplace spirituality constructs showed some difference among the respondents. The effect of these two variables does not impact occupational stress. Role ambiguity, role overload and role clarity are the constructs considered for the study. To overcome and balance these hurdles, emotional intelligence and workplace spirituality are not influencing much. It is observed that workplace spirituality and emotional intelligence may influence overcoming other constructs of occupational stress, and it is observed as the further scope of research.

It is advised that the institutions must follow the job descriptions and key result areas as per their designations for each academician role, like workload and their contributions to the institutions. Proper time frames for quality output must be framed for the best knowledge transfer to the learners.

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