

Emotional intelligence and stress management of teachers: A comparative study among Malaysian primary schools



Subadrah Madhawa Nair^a ✉ | Lim Gim Ping^a  | Kaneshvaran a/I Selvam^a  |
Alif Fairus Bin Nor Mohamad^a  | Noor Suriati Binti Sharibudeen^a  | Radhega A. P. Ramasamy^b

^aFaculty of Education & Humanities, UNITAR International University, Kelana Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.

^bSchool of Education, Lincoln University College, Kelana Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.

Abstract Emotional intelligence is a key determinant of teachers' professional development. This study aimed to identify the significant differences in emotional intelligence and stress management scores among primary school teachers in the northern region of Peninsular Malaysia. This quantitative study employed a descriptive research design. Primary school teachers from three types of schools participated in the study. The researchers used stratified random sampling to select 162 teachers from National Primary Schools, National-Type Chinese Primary Schools, and National-Type Tamil Primary Schools. A set of questionnaires was used to collect data on teachers' emotional intelligence and stress management. Before the actual study, a pilot test was conducted to obtain the reliability of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to the teachers with the approval of their headmasters. The data from the questionnaire were analysed using the SPSS program for Windows. The findings from the ANOVA test revealed no significant difference in the teachers' emotional intelligence scores across the three types of schools. However, there was a significant difference in the mean stress management scores of teachers among the three types of schools. Results of the Tukey HSD test indicated that teachers from National-Type Chinese Primary Schools had significantly better stress management compared to teachers from National Primary Schools. However, there was no significant difference in stress management between teachers from National Primary Schools and those from National-Type Tamil Primary Schools, nor between teachers from National-Type Tamil Primary Schools and those from National-Type Chinese Primary Schools. This study may serve as a valuable reference for state education departments and the Ministry of Education (MOE) in efforts to enhance the emotional intelligence and stress management of primary school teachers in Malaysia.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, stress management, teachers, primary schools, quality education

1. Introduction

Education is a fundamental element of nation-building, and effective educational management is critical to achieving social goals (Zaki et al., 2022). The success of developed nations such as the United States and the United Kingdom demonstrates that a well-structured educational system is vital for enhancing teachers' professional development. Within these systems, teachers play a crucial role in ensuring efficient and effective management, as their ability to navigate the complexities of modern educational needs is essential for student success and overall school performance.

According to Meher et al. (2025), emotional intelligence is a key determinant of teachers' professional development and influences all aspects of their pedagogical practice. Central to effective teaching is the ability to manage the classroom, a skill that is greatly enhanced by emotional intelligence. Emotionally competent teachers can perform their duties more effectively and contribute positively to the learning environment (Ngui & Lay, 2019). Stress has become a common issue among teaching professionals, but teachers with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to manage it (Peláez-Fernández et al., 2021).

As mentioned by Nwoko et al. (2020), today's educational environment is more complex, and teachers have more responsibilities. In addition to teaching duties, teachers are also responsible for students' moral development and managing increased workloads (Sidek et al., 2020). Teachers are highly stressed because of the burden of responsibility placed upon them, along with growing demands from stakeholders (Zarin et al., 2021). Thus, teachers must be able to effectively manage their emotions and cope with stress to ensure they make rational decisions and handle more complicated situations (Todmal et al., 2023).

This study aims to investigate the role of emotional intelligence in managing stress among primary school teachers, with a particular emphasis across three school types in Malaysia: National Primary Schools (SK), National-Type Chinese Primary

Schools (SJKC), and National-Type Tamil Primary Schools (SJKT). Since there are three types of public primary schools in Malaysia, this research focuses on comparing emotional intelligence and stress management levels among teachers from SK, SJKC, and SJKT schools. By examining these factors across the three school types, the study identifies whether there are any significant differences in teachers' stress management according to school types, and how their emotional intelligence is manifested in their work.

1.1. Problem Statement

Teachers have an important role in the country's educational system, yet their workload has increased tremendously. This increasing burden causes major stress for the teachers that affects both their well-being and the quality of their work (Othman & Sivasubramaniam, 2019). According to Maculada et al. (2025) teachers' stress and stress management are emerging concerns in educational studies in the Asia-Pacific region. Yin and Lee (2022) also highlighted that stress and burnout among teachers can make them demotivated and affect their classroom teaching. In the education system, teachers play an important role in ensuring efficient and effective management, as their ability to handle the complexities of modern educational needs is essential for student success and overall school performance. As such, teachers must have emotional intelligence and learn how to manage their stress.

According to Meher et al. (2025), emotional maturity is a key determinant of teachers' professional development, influencing all aspects of their pedagogical practice. Central to effective teaching is the ability to manage the classroom, a skill that is highly enhanced by emotional intelligence. Self-efficacy and emotional competence among teachers can enhance their teaching performance (Ye et al., 2024). Stress is becoming a common issue among teaching professionals, but highly emotionally intelligent teachers can deal with stress more effectively than those with low emotional intelligence (Peláez-Fernández et al., 2021).

As mentioned by Krishnan & Awang (2020), today's educational environment is more complex, and teachers have more responsibilities. In addition to teaching duties, teachers are also responsible for students' moral development and dealing with increased workloads (Sidek et al., 2020). Teachers are highly stressed because of the burden of responsibility placed upon them, along with growing demands from stakeholders (Zarin et al., 2021). Thus, teachers must be able to effectively manage their emotions and cope with stress to ensure they make rational decisions and deal with more complicated situations (Todmal et al., 2023).

This study aims to investigate the role of emotional intelligence in managing stress among primary school teachers, with a particular emphasis on comparing these aspects across three school types: National Schools (SK), Chinese National-Type Schools (SJKC), and Tamil National-Type Schools (SJKT). This research focuses on comparing emotional intelligence and stress management levels among teachers from SK, SJKC, and SJKT schools. By examining these factors across the three school types, the study intends to identify any significant differences in teachers' stress management as well as how their emotional intelligence is manifested in their work.

According to Tran et al. (2020), stress is an external force or pressure that affects one's physical and mental well-being. Rapid development in technology and society makes stress even worse. Numerous studies provide empirical evidence of Malaysian teachers experiencing stress and burnout (Amzat et al., 2021). They were most likely to come under pressure from parents, students, and school management, making them unable to perform and deliver the demands of the job that the Ministry of Education has placed on them.

Primary schools form a cornerstone of the Malaysian education system, shaping the early development of students and preparing them for long-term academic success. Teachers at this level commonly face distinctive challenges in managing student behavior, encouraging basic literacy and numeracy skills, and coping with the complexity of primary education. The introduction of School-Based Assessment (PBS) and the shift from KBSR to KSSR are two examples of changes to the national education curriculum that have left primary school teachers with more work (Chin et al., 2019; Jonglai et al., 2021). Parental expectations, demands for extracurricular involvement, and an increased administrative workload contribute to elevated stress levels (Othman & Sivasubramaniam, 2019). According to Nair et al. (2024), teachers' satisfaction can be gauged by observing the contentment and happiness level that they experience in their working environment.

Despite the plethora of research that has examined emotional intelligence in relation to student learning attitudes and personality development, more research is needed to compare stress management and emotional intelligence across different types of primary schools in Malaysia. Every type of school has its own set of administrative structures, pedagogies, and community expectations, which may influence the levels of stress and emotional intelligence experienced by teachers. Specifically, this study seeks to address this gap by evaluating these variables among teachers in SK, SJKC, and SJKT schools in the Seberang Perai Utara district of Penang. The comparison of these school types is crucial because each school type has distinct operational and cultural components that could affect the stress level and emotional intelligence of teachers.

1.2. Research Questions

Three research questions were formulated for this study:

RQ1: Is there a significant difference in emotional intelligence scores among teachers from National Primary Schools, National-Type Chinese Primary Schools, and National-Type Tamil Primary Schools?

RQ2: Is there a significant difference in stress management scores among teachers from National Primary Schools National-Type Chinese Primary Schools, and National-Type Tamil Primary Schools National Primary Schools National-Type Chinese Primary Schools, and National-Type Tamil Primary Schools?

RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence and their stress management levels across different school types?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework

This study is based on Cognitive-Behavioral Theory (CBT), developed by Beck (1976) and Goleman's (1995) model of Emotional Intelligence. Beck posits that stress and emotional reactions are influenced by cognitive patterns, such as negative thoughts or irrational beliefs, which in turn affect emotional and behavioral responses. The theory emphasizes that by identifying and changing negative thought patterns, individuals can control emotional regulation and manage stress effectively. CBT techniques such as cognitive reappraisal, cognitive restructuring, and mindfulness are particularly effective for stress management. Cognitive reappraisal, for example, helps individuals reinterpret stressful situations in a more positive light, reducing their emotional response. Emotional intelligence (EI) plays a crucial role in this process, as it enhances self-awareness, allowing individuals to recognize and manage their thoughts and emotions more effectively. Emotional intelligence helps individuals identify negative cognitive patterns and apply CBT techniques to regulate their emotional responses to stress. In literature, the relationship between EI and stress management is well-documented, with high EI being linked to better emotional regulation and more effective coping strategies in response to stress (Pathak et al., 2025; Kanesan & Fauzan, 2019; Shahid et al., 2017). Both EI and CBT contribute to stress management by fostering emotional awareness and providing tools to change negative thought patterns, offering a comprehensive approach to coping with stress.

Goleman's (1995) model of Emotional Intelligence (EI) consists of five key elements: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Self-awareness is the ability to recognize and understand one's own emotions. Individuals with high self-awareness tend to have greater self-confidence and a clear understanding of their emotional states. Self-regulation involves the ability to manage and control one's emotions, redirect impulses, and stay focused on important information (Apar & Rodzalan, 2022). Those with strong self-regulation remain calm and handle problems efficiently. Motivation refers to the use of emotions to drive oneself toward achieving goals. It involves setting objectives, maintaining focus, and staying positive despite setbacks (Goleman, 1995; Mohamad & Jais, 2016). Empathy is the capacity to recognize and understand the emotions of others through their language, behavior, and expressions. It fosters compatibility and helps individuals relate to people from different backgrounds (Goleman, 2006). Social skills encompass the ability to build and maintain relationships, communicate effectively, and demonstrate respect, openness, and empathy. These skills enable individuals to understand others' needs and exchange thoughts and ideas over time (Ugobueze, 2024).

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a cognitive capacity that enables individuals to recognize and interpret emotional signals and information (Wang, 2022). It encompasses the ability to identify, regulate, and express one's own emotions as well as those of others (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Nair et al. (2024) highlighted that teachers have to remain patient and cool when children do not pay attention, during lesson preparation, and when getting suitable materials. According to Maamari and Majdalani (2019), EI evolves through four distinct levels: emotional perception, emotional absorption, emotional understanding, and emotional management. Low levels of EI have been associated with self-destructive behaviors such as substance abuse, strained interpersonal relationships, and depressive symptoms (Yıldırım & Arslan, 2023; Kundu & Bej, 2024). Given these associations, researchers believe that EI is closely linked to self-efficacy and that the two constructs are interrelated.

Evidence from existing studies suggests that teachers with high levels of EI and self-efficacy are better equipped to manage classroom dynamics and foster positive interactions. Teachers who exhibit strong emotional control often demonstrate greater self-efficacy, which enhances their ability to create supportive and engaging learning environments (Kundu & Bej, 2024). High EI is particularly crucial for teachers as it contributes to improved mental health and cultivates a nurturing educational atmosphere that promotes the academic, social, and emotional development of students.

Research by Kundu and Bej (2024) further underscores the mediating role of teacher EI between mental health and teaching efficacy, supporting the hypothesis that EI can significantly enhance teacher performance. Their findings indicate that teachers with higher levels of emotional intelligence are better equipped to maintain positive mental health, which in turn boosts their teaching efficacy. Teachers with elevated EI not only excel in their instructional practices but also build strong, positive relationships with their students, fostering a collaborative and encouraging learning environment.

Moreover, the positive correlation between teachers' EI, especially the intrapersonal dimension, and self-efficacy with stress management has been consistently observed across various educational contexts and teacher settings. This relationship has been documented among both pre-service and in-service teachers (Quansah et al., 2025; Pathak et al., 2025), as well as

educators teaching various subjects like mathematics, physics, and languages (Rastegar & Memarpour, 2009; Mouton et al., 2013; Alrajhi et al., 2017; Miao et al., 2017). By cultivating their emotional intelligence, teachers are better equipped to foster an inclusive and supportive classroom environment that nurtures the holistic growth of all students.

Moreover, a positive correlation between teachers' emotional intelligence (EI), particularly the intrapersonal dimension, and self-efficacy has been consistently found across diverse educational contexts and teaching settings. This relationship has been documented among both pre-service and in-service teachers (Chan, 2008), as well as among educators teaching various subjects, such as mathematics, physics, and languages (Rastegar & Memarpour, 2009; Mouton et al., 2013; Alrajhi et al., 2017; Miao et al., 2017). By cultivating their emotional intelligence, teachers are better equipped to foster inclusive and supportive classroom environments that nurture the holistic development of all students.

The development of EI among teachers is essential for enhancing self-efficacy, promoting mental well-being, and creating positive educational experiences. As the research suggests, emotionally intelligent teachers not only manage their own emotional states effectively but also positively influence their students' academic and social outcomes. Therefore, prioritizing EI training in teacher education programs can yield long-term benefits for both educators and learners alike.

2.2. Stress Management

Stress is a complex and dynamic process that involves the interaction between an individual and their environment (Sebastian, 2018). It arises when individuals are exposed to internal or external challenges and react to these demands. Stress is a common issue in people's daily lives and can significantly impact their well-being.

The concept of stress has been defined in various ways by scholars. Stress is often considered a broad term attributed to diverse phenomena and interpretations (Shahsavarani et al., 2015). Generally, stress can be described as a physiological, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive response to environmental demands. It manifests when individuals face pressure and struggle to manage the situation effectively.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defined stress as a process of appraising events or situations as harmful, threatening, or challenging and assessing potential responses to those situations. They described stress as a unique interaction between individuals and their environment, in which the individual perceives the demands as overwhelming and beyond their coping resources, ultimately posing a threat to their well-being. This definition emphasizes the subjective nature of stress, whereby personal perception plays a crucial role in the stress response.

Additionally, the American Psychiatric Association (2014) recognizes stress as a significant psychological and physiological reaction to perceived demands or threats. This perspective aligns with the notion that stress not only affects emotional and cognitive functioning but also has a profound impact on physical health. The comprehensive understanding of stress provided by these definitions highlights its multifaceted nature and the importance of effective stress management strategies.

2.3. Previous Studies on Emotional Intelligence and Stress Management

Apar and Rodzalan (2022) adopted Goleman's Emotional Intelligence (EI) model, which includes five dimensions: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Based on their data analysis, four of these dimensions, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, and empathy, showed a positive and significant relationship with stress management. In contrast, the relationship of social skills with stress management is not significant.

Several researchers have explored the relationship between EI and stress management, highlighting the role of EI in helping individuals manage stress and remain focused on their tasks. This is because EI involves understanding and regulating not only one's own emotions but also the emotions of others. Employees with higher levels of EI have been found to cope with stress more effectively by using their EI constructively. They are more adept at recognizing their stress and staying motivated in their work.

These findings align with Kanesan and Fauzan (2019), who emphasized that EI is a suitable framework for stress management, as it requires the ability to manage both one's own emotions and those of others. Similarly, Shahid et al. (2017) observed a strong association between EI and stress management, noting that individuals with higher EI skills tend to manage stress more effectively and exhibit greater stress tolerance. This ability to acknowledge and understand their emotions enables individuals to handle stress successfully.

However, Yadav and Rai (2020) argued that EI may not significantly alleviate organizational stress. Despite this, the findings from the study indicate that individuals with high EI are less likely to experience negative effects on their stress management capabilities. Krishnan and Awang (2020) also highlighted that teachers with high EI are effective teachers.

Bentil (2025) found that teachers with higher emotional intelligence (EI) are able to direct and inspire student learning, leading to a more positive teaching experience and increased self-efficacy. This outcome aligns with the findings of Ju et al. (2015) in China, who advocated for the promotion of emotional intelligence due to its capacity to enhance teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and job performance. These scholars further argued that emotional intelligence should be integrated into

teacher preparation programs and training institutions. This study considers these claims highly relevant, particularly in the context of Ghana, where emotional intelligence is rarely incorporated into teacher preparation and training curricula.

The findings of this study also emphasize the crucial link between emotional intelligence and stress management. Teachers with higher EI are better equipped to manage their own emotions and navigate the emotional dynamics of their classrooms, which directly contributes to more effective stress management. By regulating their emotions, maintaining motivation, and empathizing with students, these teachers are less likely to feel overwhelmed by the pressures of teaching. The boost in self-efficacy that comes with strong EI increases teachers' confidence and competence in their roles, reducing anxiety and stress related to job performance. Enhancing emotional intelligence, therefore, helps teachers develop better stress management skills, leading to improved job performance, higher self-efficacy, and more positive teaching experiences.

Moreover, the study suggests that the effect of emotional intelligence on the influence of self-efficacy beliefs on the job performance of Social Studies teachers in public schools in the Central Region of Ghana is both supported and sustained. The findings show that teachers' effectiveness is enhanced by their emotional intelligence. This finding is clear and consistent with the broader literature, which shows a positive and statistically significant direct effect of teacher emotional intelligence on job performance. Therefore, any framework aimed at improving the job performance of Social Studies teachers in public schools in Ghana must prioritize the development of emotional intelligence alongside self-efficacy beliefs.

A study by Pozo-Rico et al. (2023) highlights the crucial connection between resilience, emotional intelligence (EI), and stress management in the teaching profession. Emotional intelligence training helps teachers recognize, understand, and manage their emotions, as well as those of others, which is essential in dealing with the many stressors of teaching. Teachers with high EI can better cope with challenges such as classroom management, diverse student needs, and educational changes, reducing burnout and enhancing their well-being. EI also improves how teachers interact with students, colleagues, and parents, fostering a positive and productive classroom environment. By being aware of emotional cues, teachers can adjust their responses to benefit both the emotional climate and academic outcomes. Additionally, teacher resilience, the ability to bounce back from challenges, relies heavily on emotional intelligence, as it helps teachers regulate their emotions and maintain emotional balance when faced with adversity. In this way, training in resilience and EI equips teachers with emotional tools to manage stress, build resilience, and create a supportive, effective learning environment.

3. Methodology

The research methodology employed to achieve the study's objectives and ensure accurate and valid results. The aspects covered include research design, population and sampling, research variables, data collection methods, and data analysis methods. The study utilizes inferential statistical analysis, specifically One-Way ANOVA and Tukey HSD, to examine differences in emotional intelligence and stress management scores among primary school teachers based on school type. Pearson correlation was used to identify the relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence and their stress management. Data analysis was conducted using the SPSS Program for Windows, version 28, to ensure systematic and reliable results.

3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive research design, which is appropriate for examining differences in emotional intelligence and stress management among primary school teachers in mainland Penang (Seberang Perai Utara), based on school type. According to Gay et al. (2012), a quantitative descriptive research design systematically describes a population, situation, or phenomenon in a natural setting. A set of questionnaires was distributed to the sample to collect the quantitative data. According to Konting (2005), using questionnaires is useful for understanding social and educational phenomena and making inferences about a population. This study aims to analyze the emotional intelligence and stress management levels of primary school teachers according to school types.

Inferential statistics, specifically One-Way ANOVA and Tukey HSD, were used to test for significant differences in emotional intelligence and stress management scores among teachers from different school types. Pearson correlation was used to examine the relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence and their stress management.

This study includes dependent and independent variables. The independent variables are types of schools. The dependent variables are stress management and emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is measured through five dimensions: Recognizing one's own emotions, managing one's own emotions, motivating negative emotions, recognizing other people's emotions, and managing relationships.

3.2. Population and Sampling

The total population of schools in the Northern District of mainland Penang is 2,652. Stratified random sampling was used to select 63 schools and 162 teachers as the sample for this study. Of the 63 schools, 43 (68.25%) were National Primary Schools, 16 (25.39%) were National-type Chinese Schools, and 4 (6.35%) were National-type Tamil Schools. A total of 162

respondents participated in this study. These three types of schools were included because they are government primary schools in Malaysia, and the proportions reflect the distribution of schools within the district.

3.3. Pilot Test and Data Analysis

Before the actual study, a pilot test was conducted among 40 primary school teachers to obtain the reliability of the questionnaires. Cronbach’s value for emotional intelligence was 0,7 and 0.82 for stress management, which indicates the items in both the questionnaires are at an acceptable level and can be used for the study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Two senior education lecturers validated the content validity and the face validity of both questionnaires in this study. The quantitative data were collected using a structured questionnaire. To analyze the data, One-Way ANOVA and Tukey HSD were used to determine whether there were significant differences in emotional intelligence and stress management scores among teachers from different school types. The findings from One-Way ANOVA and Tukey HSD guided the answering of Research Questions (RQ1 & RQ2). The Pearson correlation test was used to answer RQ3.

3.4. Ethical Consideration

The researchers obtained permission from the school principals before entering the schools to collect data. The purpose of the study and the confidentiality of the data were explained to them. The researchers also obtained permission from the teachers before they participated in the study. Participation was entirely voluntary, and the researchers assured the confidentiality and anonymity of all participants. All the findings were reported objectively without any bias.

4. Results

RQ1: Is there a significant difference in emotional intelligence scores among teachers from National Primary Schools, National-Type Chinese Schools, and National-Type Tamil Primary Schools?

The findings of the One-Way ANOVA test in Table 1 indicate that there is no significant difference in the emotional intelligence scores among teachers based on school type ($F = 1.84, df=2, p=.162$). These results suggest that the emotional intelligence levels of teachers across the three school types (National Primary Schools, National-Type Chinese Schools, and National-Type Tamil Primary Schools) are comparable, showing no significant differences. This finding answers Research Question 1.

Table 1 Findings of ANOVA Test on Emotional Intelligence.

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.437	2	.219	1.842*	.162
Within Groups	18.883	159	.119		
Total	19.320	161			

Note: The level of significance is at $p<0.05$.

RQ2: Is there a significant difference in stress management scores among teachers from National Primary Schools, National-Type Chinese Schools, and National-Type Tamil Primary Schools?

The findings of the One-Way ANOVA test in Table 2 indicate that there is a significant difference in the stress management scores based on school type, ($F = 4.83, df=2, p = .01$). These results demonstrate that teachers’ stress management levels differ significantly across the three school types (National Primary Schools, National-Type Chinese Primary Schools, and National-Type Tamil Primary Schools). Therefore, these findings address Research Question 2.

Table 2 Findings of ANOVA Test on Stress Management.

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.405	2	3.203	4.831*	.009
Within Groups	105.400	159	.663		
Total	111.806	161			

Note: The level of significance is at $p<0.05$.

The results of the Tukey HSD test presented in Table 3 clearly indicate that the mean stress management score of teachers in National-Type Chinese Primary Schools is significantly higher than that of teachers in National Primary Schools (Mean Difference=.49, $p= .012$). However, the mean difference in stress management scores between teachers in National Primary Schools and National-Type Tamil Primary Schools is not significant. Similarly, the mean difference in stress management scores between teachers in National-Type Chinese Primary Schools and National-Type Tamil Primary Schools is also not significant.

RQ3: Is there a significant relationship between teachers’ emotional intelligence and their stress management levels across different school types?



Findings in Table 4 reveal a significant positive correlation between teachers’ emotional intelligence and their stress management ($r = .88, p = .000$). The correlation is strong and positive, indicating that teachers with higher emotional intelligence tend to manage stress more effectively than those with lower emotional intelligence. Therefore, these results address Research Question 3.

Table 3 Comparison of Mean Stress Management.

Tukey HSD						
Types of schools	Types of Schools	Mean difference (I-J)	Standard error	Sig.	95% Inner confidence	
					Lower bound	Upper bound
SK	SJKC	-.48534*	.16820	.012	-.8833	-.0874
	SJKT	-.31101	.18086	.201	-.7389	.1169
SJKC	SK	.48534*	.16820	.012	.0874	.8833
	SJKT	.17433	.22048	.709	-.3473	.6960
SJKT	SK	.31101	.18086	.201	-.1169	.7389
	SJKC	-.17433	.22048	.709	-.6960	.3473

Note: The level of significance is at $p < 0.05$.

SK= National Primary Schools; SJKC= National-Type Chinese Primary Schools; SJKT= National-Type Tamil Primary Schools.

Table 4 Correlation between Teachers’ Emotional Intelligence and Their Stress Management.

		Emotional Intelligence	Stress Management
EI	Pearson Correlation	1	.88**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	162	162
SM	Pearson Correlation	.88**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	162	162

Note: The level of significance is at $p < 0.05$.

EI= Emotional Intelligence; SM= Stress Management.

5. Discussion

5.1. Differences in Levels of Emotional Intelligence Among Teachers

The findings indicate that there is no significant difference in the mean of emotional intelligence scores among teachers from the three types of schools. This reveals that all teachers from National Primary Schools, National-Type Chinese Primary Schools, and National-Type Tamil Primary Schools have a similar level of emotional intelligence, with no differences observed among teachers from these three types of schools.

Very few studies have been conducted on the differences in emotional intelligence levels among teachers from National Primary Schools, National-Type Chinese Primary Schools, and National-Type Tamil Primary Schools. However, Bentil (2025) stated in his study that a high level of emotional intelligence enables individuals to manage and handle matters in a more organized manner, making their lives more meaningful. This statement aligns well with the findings of this study, as teachers from these three types of schools demonstrate high emotional intelligence, allowing them to manage and handle school-related tasks in an organized and systematic way. This is further supported by the research findings, which indicate no significant differences in emotional intelligence among teachers from these schools.

Additionally, Salovey and Mayer (1990) define emotional intelligence as an individual's ability to regulate their own emotions and understand others’ emotions when making assessments by using knowledge to guide appropriate thoughts and actions. This statement is relevant to teachers in National Primary Schools, National-Type Chinese Primary Schools, and National-Type Tamil Primary Schools, as the study's findings reveal that there are no differences in emotional intelligence among teachers. Therefore, it can be concluded that teachers in these schools can regulate their own emotions and understand others’ emotions when making assessments, and ensure that they take the proper actions in managing school-related tasks. These findings are consistent with Krishnan and Awang (2020), who stressed that EI of teachers is crucial in the educational environment because it enhances teaching practice, and mental well-being of teachers, and has an impact on students’ academic performance.

Differences in Stress Management Levels Among SK, SJKC, and SJKT Teachers

The second research objective was to examine differences in stress management scores among teachers from National Primary Schools, National-Type Chinese Primary Schools, and National-Type Tamil Primary Schools. The findings indicate that there are significant differences in teachers’ stress management scores based on school type. Tukey HSD analysis revealed a significant difference in stress management levels between teachers from National Primary Schools and those from National



Type Chinese Primary Schools. These findings suggest that the workload experienced by teachers in SK and SJKC differs significantly. Although the Ministry of Education has standardized the education system across communities, the management culture in National Primary Schools and National-Type Chinese Primary Schools varies considerably. This variation is reflected in the significant differences in stress management levels observed between SK and SJKC teachers.

In discussing this subtopic, no specific studies have been conducted on the differences in stress management levels among SK, SJKC, and SJKT teachers. Therefore, there is limited literature to support the findings of this research question. However, the results on stress management levels indicate that the stress management levels among SK, SJKC, and SJKT teachers are at a moderate level. Hence, this finding aligns with the statement by Shahid, Stirling, and Adams (2017), which suggests that moderate levels of stress are believed to be the most beneficial, as they can enhance motivation and personal development.

5.3. Correlation between Teachers' Emotional Intelligence and Their Stress Management

The findings of this study indicate that there is a significant correlation between teachers' emotional intelligence and their stress management. The correlation is also high and positive. These findings support findings by Pozo-Rico et al. (2023) who highlight that teachers' emotional intelligence (EI) helps their stress management in the teaching profession. Similarly, findings by Yadav and Rai (2020), Kanasan and Fauzan (2019), and Bentil (2025) reveal that emotional intelligence enables individuals to handle stress successfully.

6. Conclusions

Overall, this study provides insights into emotional intelligence levels, stress management levels, and differences in emotional intelligence and stress management based on school type (SK, SJKC, and SJKT). The findings indicate that teachers in the studied schools practice emotional intelligence based on Goleman's (1995) model of Emotional Intelligence. When teachers' emotional intelligence is at a high level, their stress management is at a moderate level. The results also show there is no significant differences in teachers' emotional intelligence based on school type. Additionally, there is a significant difference in teachers' stress management according to school type. It is hoped that the findings of this study will benefit the teachers and education management in this country.

This study provides a clear depiction that there are significant differences in stress management scores among teachers in three types of primary schools. Additionally, emotional intelligence has a significant influence on stress management among primary school teachers. Emotional intelligence and teachers' stress management play a crucial role in realizing a school's overall success. Low emotional intelligence and high stress levels can negatively affect teachers' commitment to their schools. Therefore, primary school teachers across Malaysia should be attentive to emotional intelligence and stress management.

As such, this study has crucial pedagogical and practical implications. In terms of pedagogical implications, high emotional intelligence and low stress levels among teachers are believed to ensure excellent school performance. When schools perform well, the quality of education will not be compromised, and the nation will be able to produce highly educated individuals. In terms of practical implications, the Ministry of Education should provide training for teachers to develop their EI and to handle stress management.

Several recommendations for future studies are made based on the limitations of this research. First, only 162 teachers from the northern region of Peninsular Malaysia were involved in the study. Therefore, it is hoped that future researchers will use a larger sample from across Malaysia to enable better generalization. Second, this study focused only on differences in emotional intelligence and stress management based on school type. Future studies should explore other demographic factors, such as gender, age, and teaching experience, to gain better insights into teachers' emotional intelligence and stress management.

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7. Declarations

7.1. Ethical considerations

Ethical guidelines and principles were strictly observed in the conduct of this study. The authors ensured that all participants were fully informed about the purpose and procedures of the research. Informed consent was obtained from participants before data collection. All personal data were anonymized, and participant confidentiality was maintained. The study received ethical approval from the Ethics Review Committee of UNITAR International University: UNITAR/FEH/REC/2025/03.

7.2. Use of artificial intelligence (AI)

The authors declare that the AI Tool (ChatGPT 5.0) was used exclusively for language editing and grammatical improvement. The use of ChatGPT did not influence the scientific content, introduction, literature review, study design, data analysis, data interpretation, results, or conclusion of the manuscript. Full responsibility for the content remains with the authors.

7.3. Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

7.4. Funding

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