

# Emotional Intelligence and its Relationship with Burnout among Special Education Teachers in Jordan : An Analytical Descriptive Study on the Southern Territory

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## Abstract

The present study aimed to identify the measurement of the level of emotional intelligence and the level of burnout among teachers working in special education centers in the southern territory in Jordan, and also aimed to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout, and how does this relationship differ according to educational level ( qualification ) , experience, and gender. The population of the study was consisted of male and female teachers working in special education centers in the southern territory of Jordan whom accounted for ( 200 ) male and female teacher ( 120 male teachers and 80 female teachers) .From this population a sample of 100 male and female teachers ( 60 male teachers and 40 female teachers ) using the random simple method. To achieve the goals of the study , the researcher used two measures , the emotional intelligence inventory and burnout inventory . The results of the study indicated a high level of for emotional intelligence against a low level of burnout among the individuals in the sample , and also , results indicated no significant statistical differences between emotional intelligence and burnout according to the variables of gender , educational level ( qualification ) , and experience .

**Keywords :** Emotional intelligence , Burnout , Special Education .

## Introduction

Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in social interaction and emotional integration with others in the various aspects of life as it form a basic preparation that works on activating the individual's skills and abilities and increase the positive ness of these skills and abilities as the inability for possessing the skills of emotional intelligence leads to increased problems for the individual such as the inability to understand the emotions of the others and the inability to control emotions and solving conflicts and controlling rashness and impulsiveness in different situations. Views regarding the concept of emotional intelligence are different , Salovey and Mayer ( 1990 ) defines it as the individual's ability to observe his/her own feelings and emotions , and the feelings and emotions of others and to distinguish between them and employing such a knowledge in instructing thoughts and behaviors.

Mayer , Salovey and Caryso ( 2004 ) also developed their definition for emotional intelligence as the ability on the correct realization and expressing feelings and the ability to understand , generate and regulate emotions to facilitate thinking and developing emotional and mental development .

## Statement of the study :

Teaching career is regarded as one of the important careers for special needs individuals by the preparing their own programs and plans to utilize the available resources in order to help them to adjust , adapt and integrate within their society. And the fact that teacher plays an important and a crucial role in special needs individuals' life must be addressed in addition to some aspects of his/her emotional developments by addressing the level of emotional intelligence , exhaustion and tiredness teacher is exposed to which in turn lead to the unwillingness to work as a consequence for loads and requirements required from teacher .

This study came to address the following research questions :

- 1- What is the level of emotional intelligence among teachers working in special education centers ?
- 2- What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout among teachers working in special education centers ?
- 3- Is there a relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout that is attributed to gender variable ?
- 4- Is there a relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout that is attributed to the educational level ( qualification ) variable ?

5- Is there a relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout that is attributed to experience variable ?

**Objectives of the study:** the current study aimed to identify if there were significant statistical differences between emotional intelligence and burnout among special education teachers in the southern territory of Jordan according to gender , educational level ( qualification ) , and experience variables , and also to identify the levels of emotional intelligence and burnout among the sample of the study .

**Significance of the study :** the significance of the current study comes from the fact that individual's possessing for the skills of emotional intelligence has a great importance as individuals with high emotional intelligence abilities are the most successful in their vocational life.

Emotional intelligence also has an important role in confronting the daily life pressures and stresses that individuals are exposed to , and individuals with high emotional intelligence possess low levels of behavioral problems and deal with emotional problems rationally.

As the topic of emotional intelligence is one of the basic aspects for teachers working in special education centers due to its effect on qualifying and developing their students socially and psychologically , this study came to select teachers in special education centers as they are regarded the most important element for teaching the categories of individuals with special needs and their education and their adaptation to the scarcity.

#### **Operational definitions of terms :**

- **Emotional intelligence :** the teacher of special education ability to observe his/her own emotions and feelings and the emotions and feelings of the others and to distinguish between them in order to instruct his/her thoughts and behaviors , and emotional intelligence is measured by the score obtained by the teacher's response on the items of intelligence used in this study .

- **Burnout :** the emergence of exhaustion on special education teacher as a result of the continuous work loads and requirements he/she faces in service , and is measured by the score obtained by the teacher on burnout inventory.

- **Special education teacher :** each individual has the responsibility of teaching special needs individuals in special education centers and hold a certificate or a license issued by the supervisor party.

- **Special education centers :** public and private educational institutions practice teaching career for special needs individuals ( Al-Rihani , 1985 ).

#### **Theoretical framework and early studies**

##### **Theoretical framework:**

By reviewing the theoretical literature regarding emotional intelligence, we find that many researchers that emotional intelligence has a multiple characteristic that includes five main components represented in *emotional knowledge* which is the main aspect for emotional intelligence and expresses the ability to the good realization and being alert to the individual's own emotions and realizing the relationship between thoughts and feelings and events that individual encounters in the various aspects of life , *emotional regulation* which refers to the ability to regulating and directing emotions toward achievements and superiority, and this aspect is represented in the ability to control the negative emotions and converting them into positive ones, *empathy* expresses the ability to realize the others and emotionally integrated with them and understanding their emotions and feelings and being in accordance with them , and finally , *communication* which refers to the positive influence on others by recognizing their emotions and feelings .

And hence , emotional intelligence has gained a lot of interest by researchers recently in an attempt to identify to what extent do teachers and workers in educational fields have the skills of emotional intelligence and its relationship with some variables .

##### **Early studies :**

##### **Arabic Studies :**

**Bani Younis ( 2007 )** investigated the levels of emotional intelligence and burnout and the relationship between them , and the extent of the difference of this relationship according to the difference in experience in teaching , the educational level ( qualification ) , or gender . The sample of the study was consisted of 480 male and female teachers working in public high schools in Irbid third directorate of education .

The results of the study indicated that the level of emotional intelligence was high , and the level of burnout was moderate . The results also showed an adverse relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout and indicated no significant statistical differences in the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout according to gender and experience variables.

**Al-Sartawi ( 1997 )** investigated the levels of burnout among special education teachers in Riyadh/Saudi Arabia and its relationship with some variables . The results of his study indicated significant

statistical differences according to specialization variable on depersonalization dimension , but no significant statistical differences were find for specialization variable on reduced personal accomplishment in favor of individuals who hold degrees in special education major.

### Foreign studies

**platsidou**( 2010) conducted a study that aimed to identify the relationship between emotional intelligence , burnout and job satisfaction among special education teachers for the primary stage in Greece .The results showed high levels of emotional intelligence among the sample of the study, and also showed a significant statistical relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout, the findings also indicated that teachers who obtained high scores on the emotional intelligence inventory had a low level of burnout, and an increased level of job satisfaction, and as indicated by the results of regression analysis that emotional exhaustion was predictable through job satisfaction , and that personal achievement could be predicted by emotional intelligence.

**potter**(2006) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout among workers in the field of mental health care, the sample was consisted of (121) participants, including (49) semi-professional participants , and (72) professional participants. The results showed statistically significant differences on the scale of emotional intelligence in favor of semi-professional workers, and also showed a correlation between emotional intelligence and burnout ,and that emotional intelligence can be a significant predictor to burnout level.

**Chan** (2006) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout, his sample was consisted of (167) teachers of high school teachers in Hong Kong. The results showed a significant statistical relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout , results also indicated that emotional exhaustion as a component of burnout is affected by positive emotional regulation and evaluation , the results also indicated that the lack for the sense of personal accomplishment ( reduced personal accomplishment ) could develop relatively through the use of positive emotions.

**Evers, tomic & broywers** (2005) conducted a study that aimed to identify the relationship between the elements of emotional intelligence and the levels of burnout among high school teachers in the Netherlands, the sample of the study was consisted of (433) teachers. Results indicated that the unadjusted thinking processes among teachers prevented them from rational thinking while working , results also showed that poor adjustment to thinking processes increased burnout among teachers.

By reviewing the mentioned above previous studies ,and some studies that have addressed the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout such as the study of potter( 2006), and the study of Bani Younis (2007), the results of these studies indicated a relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout.

### Methodology and procedures of the study

**Methodology of the study:** The researchers used the analytical and descriptive approach through monitoring and analysis the problem of the study using two measures which were applied on the teachers working in special education centers in the territory of South Jordan .

**Population of the study:** The study population was consisted of all teachers working in special education centers in the southern territory of Jordan and accounted for (200) male and female teachers.

**Table (1)**

**Population of the study**

Gender	No
Male teachers	120
Female teachers	80
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>

**The sample of the study:** The sample of the study was randomly selected , table ( 2 ) illustrates the construction of the sample :

**Table (2)**

**Sample of the study**

Gender	No
Male teachers	60
Female teachers	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

### Instruments of the study :

To achieve the objectives of the study the researchers used to measure to measured emotional intelligence and

burnout.

**Emotional intelligence inventory** : emotional intelligence inventory which was developed by Al-Rabee' (2007) this measure is consisted of (50) items that are distributed on five dimensions (emotional knowledge , emotional regulation, empathy, managing emotions, communication), and there are different reliability and validity statics within the Jordanian environment for this instrument (Al-Rabee;, 2007 ) . To ensure the reliability of the instrument , the researchers subscribed it to a jury of (8) arbitrators from the faculty members in Jordanian universities and specialists in special education and psychology, they agreed that the instrument was appropriate for the purposes of the current study so no changes or modifications occurred for the instrument.

The researchers then applied the tool on a pilot sample which was consists of (20) male and female teachers from outside the original sample of the current study, where the correlation and coefficients between the total score for each dimension of the scale and the total score on the scale as a whole was calculated, and the correlation and coefficients for the dimensions of the scale with the total score were ( 0.68, 0.72, 0.80, 0.79), respectively, these values were considered as the available indicators of the reliability of this measure and sufficient for the purposes of this study.

To check for the validity of the instrument , a pilot sample was selected from outside the original sample of the study and was consisted of (30) male and female teachers, and was applied twice with three weeks interval, then were validity coefficient were calculated using Pearson coefficients between the results of the two applications, also Cronbach Alpha was used. Table (3) shows the values of reliability coefficients for the areas and the tool as a whole using Pearson coefficient, and Cronbach Alpha.

Tale (3) Validity coefficients for the dimensions and the instrument as a whole using Bearson and Cronbach Alpha correlation coefficient

No	Dimension	Beareon correlations	Cronbach Alpha correlations
1	Emotional knowledge	0.72	0.81
2	Emotional regulation	0.86	0.83
3	Empathy	0.79	0.81
4	Emotional management	0.69	0.75
5	communication	0.82	0.84
6	Instrument as a whole	0.81	0.83

To correct the responses of the members of the sample, and to discuss the results , the following criterion was established to estimate the degree of emotional intelligence of teachers working in special education centers in the territory of South Jordan : (2.1low,4.2.moderate,6-4.1high).

**Burnout inventory** : The items of this instrument were constructed based on the Maslch Burnout Inventory (MBI) and this inventory is available in the studies of both Al-Jabri, 92000), and Al-Rashdan, (1995) and is consisted of (22) items distributed as follows: emotional exhaustion (9) items, the reduced personal accomplishment (8 ) items and (5) items for depersonalization.

The items of this instrument were constructed in the form of statements that constitute the teacher's feelings toward teaching profession, teachers were asked to determine the frequency of feeling on a 7-points scale according to the following classification: never (0), several times a year (1), once a month at least (2) , several times a month (3), once a week at least (4), several times a week (5), almost every day (6).

To ensure the reliability of the instrument , it was subscribed to a jury of accounted for (9) expert arbitrators specialists in measurement and evaluation and educational psychology, and psychology, and according to their observations and suggestions modifications in wording were made.

To check for the validity of the instrument , it was applied twice with three weeks interval on a pilot sample of (22) male and female teachers working in special education centers outside the original sample of the study, then reliability coefficients were calculated using Cronbach Alpha where the values of correlation coefficients for the areas of the instrument were as follows: emotional exhaustion (0.88), depersonalization (0.89), reduced personal accomplishment (0.86), and for the instrument as a whole (0.87), to correct the responses of the individuals of sample on the items of the instrument , Maslach classification which is available in the study of Al-Tawalbih ( 1999) as shown in table (4):

Table (4) Classification of the dimensions of Maslach Burnout Inventory ( MBI)

Dimension	Burnout level		
	Low	Moderate	High
Emotional exhaustion	17 -0	29-18	54-30
Depersonalization	5-0	11-6	30-12
Reduced sense personal accomplishment	8-0	14--9	48-15

Questionnaires then were distributed on the participants , and the researcher previously arranged with the administrators of the special education centers in order to complete the questionnaires honestly.

## Results and discussion :

**1 - Results of the first question:** What is the level of emotional intelligence among teachers working in special education centers ?

Table (5) shows means and standard deviations of the level of emotional intelligence among teachers working in special education centers in the territory of the South Jordan:

Table (5) Means and deviations for the responses of the sample on the dimensions of emotional intelligence inventory and the instrument as a whole

dimension	Means	SDs	Level of emotional intelligence
Emotional knowledge	4.12	0.37	High
Emotional regulation	4.14	0.36	High
Empathy	4.22	0.38	High
Emotional management	3.84	0.39	Moderate
communication	3.66	0.33	Moderate
Instrument as a whole	4.02	0.33	High

Table (5) indicates that the level of emotional intelligence of teachers working in special education centers in the southern region was high on the following dimensions of the instrument ( emotional knowledge, and the emotional regulation, and empathy), while was moderate on the dimensions of (management of emotions, and communication), while was high on the instrument as a whole. This result can be attributed to the Ministry of Social Development set conditions in the process of selecting teachers who are able to deal with this category of individuals, as well as the policy of offering and creating training programs and workshops that is followed by the ministry and the organization of qualification programs for teachers during their service.

The t results of this study are consistent with the results of the study of platsidou ( 2010 ) which indicated a statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout.

For the level of burnout among teachers working in special education centers in the territory of the south of Jordan , table (6) shows the means and the standard deviations of the level of burnout among teachers :

Table (6) Means and deviations for the responses of the sample on the dimensions of burnout inventory and the instrument as a whole

Dimensions	Means	SDs	Burnout level
Emotional exhaustion	18.13	10.66	moderate
depersonalization	2.63	4.21	low
Reduced sense of personal accomplishment	5.29	5.82	low
Instrument as a whole	26.05	15.05	low

By reviewing table (6) , it can be seen that the level of burnout among teachers working in special education centers in the territory of the south was moderate for the dimension of emotional exhaustion, and low for the dimensions of depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment and on the scale as a whole. This result can be attributed to teachers' feelings in this area to their achievements they have achieved with this category of individuals, and also moderate emotional exhaustion can be attributed to the possibility that teachers may confront emotional exhaustion as a result to their interaction with this category of individuals ( special needs individuals who need more care and attention.

**2 - Results of the second question :** What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout among teachers working in special education centers ?

Table (7) Pearson correlation coefficient between the areas of emotional intelligence and the measure as a whole, and between the areas of burnout and the measure as a whole among teachers working in special education centers in the territory of the South Jordan:

Emotional intelligence	Burnout							
	Emotional exhaustion		Depersonalization		Reduced sense of personal accomplishment		Instrument as a whole	
	correlation	Value	correlation	Value	correlation	Value	correlation	Value
Emotional knowledge	-0.04.5	0.519	-0.08.5	0.360	-0.14	0.105	-0.11	0.200
Emotional regulation	-0.12	0.140	-0.17	0.051	-0.26	*0.001.8	-0.22	*0.007.5
Empathy	0.13	0.142	-0.18	*0.029	-0.9	0.250	0.01	0.985
Emotional management	-0.14	0.109	-0.01	0.975	-0.02.8	0.700	-0.10	0.210
communication	-0.02.6	0.752	-0.9	0.269	0.05.8	0.462	0.03	0.749
Instrument as a whole	-0.05.6	0.525	-0.08.7	0.300	-0.11	0.152	-0.111	0.211

Table (7) shows the existence of a negative statistical significant relationship and between the field of emotional intelligence (emotional regulation, and the whole measure of burnout ), and shows that there is no relationship between the other emotional intelligence fields and the measure as a whole and the measure of burnout.

This finding can be attributed to the fact that individuals who have a high level of emotional regulation exhibit a low level of burnout, but it doesn't agree with the results of the study of Bani Yunis (2007), which indicated the that there is a statistical significant relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout among teachers.

**3- Results of the third question :** Is there a relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout that is attributed to gender variable ?

Table (8) shows the Pearson correlation coefficients between each dimension of emotional intelligence and the dimensions of burnout and the measure as a whole according to gender variable.

Table (8) Matrix of Pearson correlation coefficients between the total score of emotional intelligence and its dimensions and the total score of burnout and its dimensions according to gender variable

Emotional intelligence	Gender	No	Burnout			
			Emotional exhaustion	Depersonalization	Reduced sense personal accomplishment	Instrument as a whole
Emotional knowledge	Male	60	0.02.8	-0.21	*-0.38	-0.15
	Female	40	-0.12	0.03.6	0.01	-0.07.6
Emotional regulation	Male	60	-0.9	-0.13	*-0.30	-0.21
	Female	40	-0.15	-0.21	-0.22	*-0.24
Empathy	Male	60	*0.27	*0.35	*-0.44	-0.03.6
	Female	40	0.01.8	-0.03.7	-0.10	-0.02.7
Emotional management	Male	60	-0.21	0.01.7	-0.13	-0.19
	Female	40	-0.8	0.03.8	0.02.7	-0.05.6
communication	Male	60	-0.04.8	-0.02.7	-0.18	-0.8
	Female	40	-0.02	0.019	0.21	0.10
Instrument as a whole	Male	60	-0.01	-0.18	*-0.39	-0.17
	Female	40	-0.9	-0.01.6	0.02.7	-0.06.5

As table (8) shows, the correlation between the dimensions of emotional intelligence and the measure as a whole and burnout do not differ according to gender, since there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout except for the second dimension of emotional intelligence (emotional regulation) and burnout among females where the relationship was negative and statistically significant.

This between-genders indifference can be explained of terms of the equal skills of emotional intelligence among both genders ( males and females ) and are not limited to a gender rather the other. This result confirms the result of the study of Bani Younis (2007), which indicated that there was no statistically significant differences in the relationship between the level of emotional intelligence and level of burnout among teachers due to the variable of gender.

**4 - Results for the fourth question :** Is there a relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout that is attributed to the educational level ( qualification ) variable ?

Table (9) shows Pearson correlation coefficients between each dimension of emotional intelligence and burnout dimensions and the measure as a whole according to the variable of educational level ( qualification ) .

Table (9)

Matrix of Pearson correlation coefficients between the overall score of emotional intelligence dimensions and between the overall score of burnout dimensions according to the variable of educational level ( qualification )

Emotional intelligence	Educational level	No	Burnout			
			Emotional exhaustion	Depersonalization	Reduced sense personal accomplishment	Instrument as a whole
Emotional knowledge	Diploma	57	-0.10	-0.8	-0.13	-0.14
	Bachelor	43	0.45	0.34	-0.44	0.30
Emotional regulation	Diploma	57	*-0.18	-0.16	*-0.24	*-0.26
	Bachelor	43	0.42	0.12	*-0.59	0.22
Empathy	Diploma	57	0.9	*-0.22	-0.11	-0.03.7
	Bachelor	43	0.13	0.25	0.05.7	0.14
Emotional management	Diploma	57	*-0.21	-0.01.8	-0.2.8	-0.15
	Bachelor	43	0.49	0.37	-0.22	0.39
communication	Diploma	57	-0.05	0.06.8	0.05.7	0.01
	Bachelor	43	-0.10	-0.08	-0.31	-0.18
Instrument as a whole	Diploma	57	-0.11	-0.11	-0.11	-0.16
	Bachelor	43	0.34	0.23	-0.38	0.22

Table (9) indicates that there is no relationship statistical significant relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout according to the variable of educational level (qualification), while there is a correlation between the regulation of emotions and burnout in the category of bachelor degree holders , this can be interpreted based on the lack for motivations and privileges to the individuals with high qualifications and degrees and this in turn leads to the absence of statistically significant differences in the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout according to the variable of educational level (qualification).This result contrasts the study of Bani Yunis (2007), which indicated statistical significant differences between emotional intelligence and burnout due to the variable of educational level (qualification).

5- **Results of the fifth question** : Is there a relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout that is attributed to experience variable ?

Table (10) shows Pearson correlation coefficients between each dimension of emotional intelligence and burnout areas and the measure as a whole according to experience variable:

Table (10)Matrix of Pearson correlation coefficients between the overall degree of intelligence and emotional dimensions and the total score of burnout and its dimensions experience variable

Emotional intelligence	Experience	No	Burnout			
			Emotional exhaustion	Depersonalization	Reduced sense personal accomplishment	Instrument as a whole
Emotional knowledge	Less than 4 years	23	0.11	-0.05.7	-0.29	-0.01
	4-12 years	56	0.07	*0.38	*0.37	0.27
	12 years and above	21	-0.12	-0.18	*-0.32	*-0.24
Emotional regulation	Less than 4 years	23	0.7.6	-0.26	*-0.58	-0.18
	4-12 years	56	-0.8	0.23	0.02	-0.02.8
	12 years and above	21	*-0.27	-0.18	*-0.35	*-0.33
Empathy	Less than 4 years	23	0.03.7	0.03.6	-0.16	-0.01
	4-12 years	56	*0.38	0.27	0.29	*0.43
	12 years and above	21	0.01	*-0.29	*0.34	-0.19
Emotional management	Less than 4 years	23	-0.15	-0.19	-0.29	-0.27
	4-12 years	56	-0.13	*0.47	0.19	0.05
	12 years and above	21	-0.11	-0.07.7	-0.14	-0.15
communication	Less than 4 years	23	0.10	0.25	-0.05	0.16
	4-12 years	56	0.06.8	*0.34	0.18	0.15
	12 years and above	21	-0.11	0.01	0.027	0.06.8
Instrument as a whole	Less than 4 years	23	0.05.8	-0.06.7	*-0.38	-0.9
	4-12 years	56	0.06	*0.40	0.20	0.21
	12 years and above	21	-0.14	-0.17	*-0.29	*-0.25

From table ( 10) , it can be seen that there is a statistical significant relationship between teachers who have more

than 12 years experience and the level of burnout, and that there is no statistical significant relationship to on the measure as a whole on the other dimensions of the variable of experience , and the table also shows , the different correlation between the dimensions of intelligence emotional (knowledge, emotional regulation , and empathy), and the level of burnout according to experience variable as there is a negative statistical significant correlation among teachers who have more experience and the level of burnout, this can be attributed to what distinguishes the most experienced statistically significant as have a high ability to form good social relationships and control their feelings and their behaviors and actions.

This result contrasts the findings of the study of Bani Younis (2007), which indicated no statistical significant differences between the level of emotional intelligence and burnout among teachers according to the variable years of experience.

**Recommendations:** In light of the results of the study , the researchers conclude with the following suggestions and recommendations :

- Increasing the attention and concern to teachers with less experience through training programs and courses that help them to regulate their emotions and control them.
- Develop training programs for female teachers regarding regulation of emotions in order to maintain low levels of burnout.
- Preparation of in-service training programs in the field of emotional intelligence for teachers of special education because of their role in increasing teacher ' ability to control and regulate emotions.
- Conducting further studies on the topic of emotional intelligence and its relationship to other variables.

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