

## The importance of emotional intelligence in reducing work fatigue in playgroup and kindergarten teachers

**Nur Fachmi Budi Setyawan <sup>a</sup>\*, Faizatun Nisa Luthfia <sup>b</sup>**

Universitas Mercu Buana Yogyakarta. Jl. Wates Km. 10 Sedayu, Yogyakarta 55753, Indonesia

<sup>a</sup> [fachmi@mercubuana-yogya.ac.id](mailto:fachmi@mercubuana-yogya.ac.id); <sup>b</sup> [190810336@student.mercubuana-yogya.ac.id](mailto:190810336@student.mercubuana-yogya.ac.id)

\* Corresponding Author.

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to examine the relationship between the level of emotional intelligence and the level of work fatigue in playgroup and kindergarten teachers. The research participants were 100 teachers from various educational institutions at playgroup and kindergarten level in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. The instruments used included the emotional intelligence scale and work fatigue scale. The data collection method was through a scale distributed to participants which was then analyzed by using the Karl-Pearson product moment analysis method. The results of data analysis showed that there was a significant negative correlation between the level of emotional intelligence and the level of work fatigue in play group and kindergarten teachers ( $r = -0.672$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This showed that the higher the level of emotional intelligence, the lower the level of work fatigue felt by teachers. Vice versa, the lower the level of emotional intelligence, the higher the level of work fatigue felt by the teacher. The emotional intelligence variable contributed 45.1% to work fatigue, while the remaining 54.9% was influenced by other factors. This study provided important implications for future researchers as well as administrators of educational institutions and teachers to improve the understanding and development of emotional intelligence as a strategy to reduce the level of work fatigue in teachers at the play group and kindergarten levels. In an effort to improve welfare and the quality of teaching, fostering emotional intelligence needed to be integrated into training and professional development programs for teachers.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Work Fatigue, Playgroup and Kindergarten Teachers

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### INTRODUCTION

The Education is one of the things that can help in improving the nation's progress. Education is a place for someone to develop themselves through various activities, both cognitive and social activities. Based on published survey data on [worldpopulationreview.com](http://worldpopulationreview.com), in 2021, the quality of education in Indonesia was ranked 54th out of 78 countries included in the world education ranking. In general, a teacher is someone who dedicates themselves to providing education. According to Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, the age of early childhood is from birth to 6 years of age. This period is a challenge in itself because the form of development carried out by teachers includes religion and morals, physical motor, cognitive, social emotional, language and art (Suminah, et al. 2018).

Setiawan (2013) said that the role or duties of Early Childhood Education Teachers are as planners, facilitators and evaluators. The planning is determining goals, themes, activity centers,

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and preparing activity plans. The teacher acts as a facilitator, namely when he becomes a model, creates a pleasant learning environment, prepares materials and play facilities, and provides motivation for children to learn and create positive experiences. Meanwhile, the teacher's role is as an evaluator who makes observations regarding the development of children's abilities, compiling anecdotal notes and measuring interactions (sociometry). These three roles can explain that the three roles or tasks of teachers are not easy and are quite draining which can cause fatigue. In general, fatigue is defined as a condition where a person feels tired, lethargic, and lacks energy so that they do not have the motivation and energy to do something.

Frone and Blais (2019) explained that work fatigue is an important thing in a job because it can affect a person's work safety, work attitude, health and performance. According to Tarwaka (2014), fatigue is part of the body's mechanism to protect the body from damage and can recover after rest. Maslach and Leiter (2016) defined work fatigue as a condition when someone not only feels exhausted or overwhelmed by the workload they have, but when someone feels they have lost their motivation and identity. Fatigue is defined as a process of decreasing efficiency, work performance, as well as decreasing endurance and physical strength in order to be able to carry out activities well. According to Maslach (2003) there are three dimensions that influence work fatigue, including emotional exhaustion or a feeling of tiredness at work, depersonalization where a person becomes cynical towards other people, and reduced personal accomplishment, namely dissatisfaction with the results of one's work. These three dimensions or aspects can be the reason when a teacher experiences a change in attitude towards other people.

Based on research conducted by Jeon HJ, Diamond L, McCartney C, and Kwon KA (2022) on 121 teachers, the average work fatigue score was 1.93. Apart from that, research conducted by Wiranti, et al (2022) at five State Elementary Schools in Depok City on 26 teachers, obtained information that several causes of work fatigue were 37.5% feeling tired all over the body, feeling anxious and decreased thinking power had the same percentage, namely 29.1%, and 12.5% first feeling tired before doing work. The results of interviews conducted with 10 Playgroup and Kindergarten Teachers in three Playgroup and Kindergarten educational institutions showed that the workload experienced by the teachers was quite draining on the mind and emotions, resulting in work fatigue.

According to Suma'mur (2009), there are two factors that cause work fatigue, namely factors within the individual (internal) and factors outside the individual (external). Internal factors that cause work fatigue are age, gender, nutritional status, health status and psychological condition. Meanwhile, external factors that cause work fatigue are related to performance or workload, work period and work environment. Emotional intelligence is thought to be one of the important factors influencing teacher fatigue. Furthermore, according to research by Mailani, Irfani and Assyofa (2023), emotional intelligence and workload simultaneously had a 41.6% effect on work fatigue.

Emotional intelligence is a person's ability to provide self-motivation, resilience in the face of failure, control emotions and delay gratification and regulate mental states (Goleman, 2004). Someone who has good emotional intelligence if the individual is able to understand, enter, attract, and use inner emotions to help in thinking (Senduk, 2013). Goleman (2004) also described the main components that are the basis of emotional intelligence, namely recognizing one's emotions, managing emotions, motivating oneself, recognizing other people's emotions, building relationships with other people, individuals are able to handle other people's emotions.

Some research have been done. Cofer et al (2018) in their research stated that emotional intelligence possessed by individuals had a positive effect on a person's ability to solve

problems so that they could prevent fatigue. Another study from Nurhalisa and Supriyadi (2020) showed that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and chronic fatigue in nurses at Wonosari Hospital. There are not many studies that examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and job burnout in teachers, especially in playgroup and kindergarten teachers. This research can be used as a reference for Playgroup and Kindergarten teachers to pay more attention and manage their emotional conditions before carrying out learning activities. As for educational institutions, it is hoped that they can give reconsideration in providing workload outside of their work so as to reduce the work fatigue experienced. The success of education is something that becomes a benchmark for a teacher. This is reinforced by research conducted by Avionela and Fauziah (2016), obtained information that the work demands imposed on five working days are 37.5 hours in 24 face-to-face hours each week. In addition, learning modules to innovative teaching styles are also tasks that are assigned so that students are excited during teaching and learning activities. These demands, if carried out every day, can cause fatigue and loss of enthusiasm for work. Work fatigue that occurs in Playgroup and Kindergarten Teachers is related to the workload and conditioning of children during learning so that it is often difficult to manage emotions. While the perceived impact of job burnout felt by the teacher is sometimes increasing the tone of speech towards students but more often venting emotions and fatigue at home with a partner. Actually, several ways have been done to reduce fatigue. One example is that teachers do self-conditioning to regulate emotions before continuing learning, but this method is not effective. Therefore, it is important to conduct this research by examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and work fatigue.

## METHODS

A purposive sampling technique was used in determining subjects for this research. The subjects used in this research were Playgroup and Kindergarten teachers, totaling 100 subjects. The subject criteria in this research are someone who works as a Playgroup and Kindergarten teacher for approximately 1 year in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. The selection of subject criteria with a minimum profession as a teacher for approximately 1 year, which is to later be used as a comparison between those who have not been working as a teacher for a long time and those who have been working as a teacher for a long time because usually subjects with less than one year of profession are still in the process of adapting to the job so that the perceived job fatigue will be higher than those who have been working as Playgroup and Kindergarten teachers for a long time. The data collection method used a Likert scale with four alternative answers, namely Very Suitable (VS), Suitable (S), Not Unsuitable (U), Very Unsuitable (VU). The use of four alternative answers aimed to avoid central tendency. The data collection instrument was composed of favorable and unfavorable statements. There were two scales used as variable measuring tools in this research, namely the emotional intelligence and work fatigue scales which were compiled by the researcher himself.

Researchers conducted a trial or try out of emotional intelligence and work fatigue scales. Scale filling began on July 10, 2023 to July 24, 2023 using google form by sharing the link <https://forms.gle/ZyTmuZMM6kWN9EBbA> which was then distributed via whatsapp and instagram social media and distributing research questionnaires offline by visiting the research location directly. After the researchers tested the emotional intelligence and work fatigue scales, the researchers then tested the reliability and differentiation of the items to find out which items were canceled. Furthermore, researchers conducted research by distributing emotional intelligence scales and work fatigue scales to subjects who had been determined on August

07, 2023 to August 19, 2023. This research also carried out hypothesis testing using multiple linear regression analysis techniques (Pearson Product Moment). Data processing was carried out by using the help of a computer program, namely Jamovi.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research used a type of correlational quantitative research where analysis of research results uses data described based on conclusions from numbers processed using statistical methods (Azwar, 2017). Hypothetical and empirical score data were described, namely minimum and maximum values, mean, and standard deviation for the emotional intelligence and work fatigue scales. The results of the analysis of the 19-item emotional intelligence scale and the 15-item work fatigue scale are as follows:

**Table 1.** Description of Research data

Variable	N	Mean	Min	Max	SD
Emotional Intelligence	100	61,9	44	74	4,81
Work Fatigue	100	24,6	15	38	5,22

Based on descriptive data, categorization can be carried out on the variable of emotional intelligence and work fatigue. The categorization carried out by the researchers was based on the mean and standard deviation values which were then grouped into three categories, namely high, medium and low categories. The Table 2 and Table 3 are the results of the categorization of the emotional intelligence scale and work fatigue.

**Table 2.** Categorization of the Emotional Intelligence Scale

Categorization	Score	N	Percentage
Low	$X > 57$	15	15 %
Medium	$57 < X < 67$	70	70 %
High	$67 < X$	15	15 %

**Table 3.** Categorization of the Work Fatigue Scale

Categorization	Score	N	Percentage
Low	$X > 20$	14	14 %
Medium	$20 < X < 29$	68	68 %
High	$29 < X$	18	18 %

This research used a normality test with the Shapiro-Wilk p analysis technique. Azwar (2012) stated that if the p value is  $> 0.050$ , it means that the distribution of the data is normally distributed, but if the significance value is  $p < 0.050$ , it can be said that the data is not normally distributed. The results of the normality test obtained from the emotional intelligence variable were  $p = 0.059$  ( $p > 0.050$ ) while the work fatigue variable obtained a value of  $p = 0.175$  ( $p > 0.050$ ). These data showed that both variables were normally distributed. The results of the normality test can be seen in the Table 4.

**Table 4.** Result of Normality Test

	Work Fatigue	Emotional Intelligence
N	100	100
Shapiro-Wilk W	0,982	0,976
Shapiro-Wilk P	0,175	0,059

The linearity test carried out in this research was used to show the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable by testing the significance of F. If the significance value of  $p < 0.050$  means that the independent variable and the dependent

variable have a linear relationship, whereas if the value of  $p > 0.050$  then the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable does not have a linear relationship. The results of the linearity test obtained a value of  $F = 80.6$  with a  $p$  value  $< 0.001$ , which means that emotional intelligence and work fatigue had a linear relationship. The Table 5 is a table of linearity test results:

**Table 5.** Result of Linearity Test

Model Fit Measures

Model	Overall Model Test			
	F	df1	df2	p
1	80,6	1	98	< .001

The Researchers tested the hypothesis using product-moment correlation analysis (Pearson correlation) developed by Karl Pearson. From the results of the hypothesis test, the correlation coefficient value was negative ( $r_{xy} = -0.672$ ), with a  $p$  value  $= <0.001$ , which means there was a negative correlation between emotional intelligence and work fatigue in Playgroup and Kindergarten teachers in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. This showed that the higher the emotional intelligence, the lower the work fatigue experienced by Playgroup and Kindergarten teachers. Vice versa, the lower the emotional intelligence, the higher the work fatigue felt by Playgroup and Kindergarten teachers.

Emotional intelligence was one of the variables that had a positive effect on work fatigue. The results of this research were in line with the results of previous research conducted by Cofer, et al (2018) which stated that a person's emotional intelligence had a positive effect on a person's ability to solve problems, thus preventing fatigue. Based on this statement, it can be said that emotional intelligence was needed by a person in carrying out or completing work because this could also be a trigger for work fatigue felt by a person as a result of the work carried out. Based on the results of the determination test (R-Square), the R-Square value was 0.451, which means that emotional intelligence contributed 45.1% to work fatigue. Meanwhile, the remaining 54.9% was influenced by other factors not included in this research analysis. In this study, 70% of research subjects had a level of emotional intelligence in the medium category, while the number of research subjects with a level of work fatigue which was also in the medium category was 68%. The medium category in this research means that the research subjects who were Playgroup and Kindergarten teachers had good emotional intelligence in carrying out teaching and learning activities while working as teachers. Meanwhile, the level of perceived work fatigue means that the many demands of work outside of teaching and learning activities were also the cause of the felt work fatigue. Thus, if a Playgroup and Kindergarten teacher had a low level of emotional intelligence, the higher the work fatigue they would feel.

A person's ability to have emotional intelligence is related to a person's ability to understand and control the emotions felt in each job (Akbar, 2013). Someone who has good emotional intelligence means they can overcome stress, conflict, failure, and survive in the face of frustration so they don't easily experience fatigue (Zuraida, 2016). Good emotional management is also one of the basic skills of emotional intelligence because it can make a person have self-quality because it can provide benefits to themselves and others (Rismanto, 2016). Tully, Tiwa, and Hartati (2022) in their research revealed that good self-management skills will provide positive results on performance, thereby reducing the risk of stress which results in physical and emotional fatigue during work.

Motivating yourself is also one of the skills that can become the basis of a person's emotional intelligence. Rahayu and Fauziyah (2019) revealed that someone who is good at

managing emotions can then motivate themselves and others who feel hopeless, anxious or angry about certain things. Research conducted on special school teachers showed that a teacher with high work motivation tended to feel what his students felt so that he could understand the feelings and conditions of his students, or in other words, good motivation was able to produce quality students (Hapsari and Mardiana, 2016).

Empathy is included in a person's personality, especially a teacher because a teacher with good empathic abilities is usually better at considering emotions and paying attention to tone of voice, body gestures and facial expressions when talking or dealing with other people (Muljawan, 2016). Jamaluddin (2015) stated that someone who is skilled in building social relationships means having good relationships individually and in groups. in line with research conducted by Milatz, Lufotenegger & Schober (2015) which stated that the level of emotional exhaustion was said to be low if a teacher felt close to all of his students, even though he was not actually that close.

## CONCLUSION

Based on data analysis and findings from research that had been conducted, it can be concluded that there was a significant negative relationship between emotional intelligence and work fatigue in Playgroup and Kindergarten teachers in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. Thus, the higher the emotional intelligence possessed by a Playgroup and Kindergarten teachers, the lower the level of work fatigue felt. Vice versa, the lower the emotional intelligence possessed by Playgroup and Kindergarten teachers, the higher the work fatigue felt. The results of the categorization showed that Playgroup and Kindergarten teachers in the Special Region of Yogyakarta had a medium level of emotional intelligence and work fatigue. This showed that 68% of Playgroup and Kindergarten teachers experienced work fatigue (68 subjects) and 70% had a medium level of emotional intelligence (70 subjects).

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