



# Introducing emo-educational divorce and examining its relationship with teaching burnout, teaching motivation, and teacher success

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## Abstract

Emo-educational divorce is a newly developed concept referring to the loss of emotional investment in teaching or a particular course. It plays a vital role in guiding teachers and school administrators to minimize the detrimental effects of this phenomenon and enhance teaching quality. The present study aimed to develop a scale to measure teachers' emo-educational divorce. It also examined the relationship between emo-educational divorce, teacher success, teaching motivation, and burnout. A total of 552 teachers (males: 171; females: 381) representing both social sciences and non-social sciences with different educational backgrounds completed the four questionnaires: emo-educational divorce, teaching burnout, teaching motivation, and teaching success scales. The results were analyzed using SPSS and AMOS to determine descriptive and inferential statistics. The study revealed that the emo-educational divorce scale enjoyed psychometric properties. This study also demonstrated that emo-educational divorce negatively correlated with teacher success and teaching motivation but positively correlated with teacher burnout. Mediated by emo-educational divorce, teacher success was negatively predicted by teaching burnout yet positively predicted by teaching motivation in the path analysis models. However, the indirect relationships between teacher success and teaching burnout did not obtain a significant value. The study concludes with a discussion of the emo-educational divorce concept, its potential sources, and implications for research.

**Keywords** Emo-educational divorce · Teacher success · Teaching motivation · Teaching burnout

## Introduction

Teaching is considered a demanding profession (García-Carmona et al., 2019), and the teacher attrition rate is incrementally increasing (OECD, 2021). Research has shown that teacher motivation (Sato et al., 2022; Tao et al., 2019) and job burnout (Moueleu Ngalagou et al., 2019) could contribute to teacher attrition and teacher shortage. Contemporary literature yielded that when teachers are emotionally tired

and unsatisfied with their work, they tend to leave their job (Adabi & Ghafournia, 2020; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2020).

A highly motivated teacher may not like a particular course for whatever reason and may treat students in the course with coldness and have little desire to attend. According to Pishghadam (2022), this phenomenon is called emo-educational divorce, derived from Gottman and Silver's (1994) concept of emotional divorce in the family. Emo-educational divorce stems from a specific issue in the teacher's profession, like demotivation in motivation. For example, in an educational setting, a teacher might become demotivated as a result of tensions at the workplace (e.g., relationships with particular students or colleagues, or mandates regarding the course materials), resulting in a negative impact on the teacher's motivation to teach the particular students or materials and to build relationships with colleagues. Despite this partial demotivation, he maintained a high level of motivation for his profession on a holistic level. This experience resonates with the emotional divorce concept as the teacher's body is in the classroom, but his soul and heart are not with the students, colleagues, and materials. (Pishghadam, 2022).

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If a teacher loses motivation to teach, the state is called teaching burnout (Hakanen et al., 2006). Burnout can be dangerous and can reduce the efficiency and effectiveness of the teacher in the classroom because it has a bilateral relationship with teacher motivation (Slomp et al., 2020). However, a teacher who undergoes an emo-educational divorce temporarily loses some motivation. This can happen to anyone who, for whatever reason, does not like someone and cannot communicate with him. While extensive research has been conducted on teacher motivation, burnout, and teaching success, previous studies have not explored the possible bilateral relationships between these notions and emo-educational divorce. It would be interesting to investigate if emo-educational divorce could have a butterfly effect on teacher motivation, job burnout, and teacher success.

This study hypothesizes a positive relationship between motivation for teaching and teacher success but a negative relationship between the former variables with emo-educational divorce and teaching burnout. Therefore, this study attempted to examine the relationship between emo-educational divorce, motivation for teaching, teacher success, and teaching burnout. It also aimed to propose desirable models to better understand latent and apparent relationships between the four constructs. Hence, the following research questions have been examined in this study:

1. Does the emo-educational divorce scale enjoy psychometric properties?
2. Are there significant relationships between emo-educational divorce, teacher motivation, teaching burnout, and teaching success?
3. Can emo-educational divorce, teacher motivation, and teaching burnout predict teaching success?

## Literature review

### Motivation for teaching

Motivation for teaching is related to how teachers enact their professional practices (Abós et al., 2018). It can be best defined in the light of self-determination theory (SDT). Despite physical demands, human behavior is directed by three fundamental psychological needs: a need for autonomy, a need to feel competence, and finally, a need to experience relatedness. If organizations address these needs to a greater extent, their employees will be highly engaged and motivated in their job (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Therefore, motivation for teaching is a determining factor that could directly

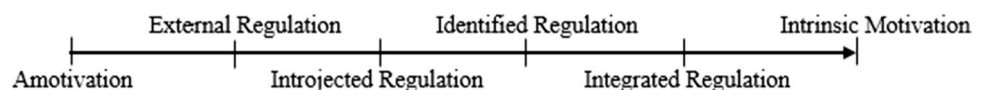
mediate teaching and learning processes and influence the quality of instruction (Viseu et al., 2016).

A plethora of research documented the significance of motivation for teaching as a pivotal psychological construct. This internal and external driving force could result in students' motivation (Pelletier et al., 2002) and leads to maximizing learning outcomes; it also evokes positive feelings about an assigned task and facilitates significant cognitive engagement with the materials (Cheon et al., 2018; Roth et al., 2007; Kaplan et al., 2003). More specifically, it influenced the extent to which teachers invest time and energy in quality instruction and that faculty with a high degree of emotional investment likely encourage students to be significantly engaged in learning (van den Berg et al., 2013). A higher degree of teacher motivation leads to greater job devotion (Thoonen et al., 2011) but lower burnout levels (van den Berghe et al., 2014). Therefore, an increase in harmonious passion for teaching results in an increase in job satisfaction and decreased burnout Carbonneau et al. (2008).

Motivation for teaching has been examined through numerous theoretical frameworks, including achievement goal theory, expectancy-value theory, and self-determination theory (SDT). The latest one is more plausible and frequently used by research scholars. Roth et al., (2007) argued that motivation could lead to different affective, behavioral, and cognitive effects on teachers. Several regulatory behavioral patterns can be described across a scale ranging from the least self-determined to the most intrinsic type. *Amotivation* is counted as the least intrinsic motivation type. Its peculiarities include a dearth of intention and competence to involve in a task and a low expectancy level to achieve the anticipated outcomes (Barbeau et al., 2010). A teacher, for example, may continue to teach even though he perceives it as futile and of no value. Moving up to the self-determination scale, extrinsic motivation falls into various external, introjected, identified, and integrated regulatory patterns (Reeve et al., 2008) (See Fig. 1). *External regulatory* patterns attribute performance to receiving rewards or avoiding punishment. For example, it can be seen in a teacher carrying out the teaching task to get a promotion. However, *introjected regulatory* pattern pertains to behaviors conducted to evade reprimand and the relevant feeling. For instance, it can be shown in a teacher who gets prepared in advance to avoid the feeling of blaming himself for having poor teaching performance.

On the contrary, *identified regulation* includes the activities in which one values his conduct due to understanding the significance of his job. For example, it can be observed in a teacher who values teaching for his professional and

**Fig. 1** Regulatory behavioral patterns of motivation (Reeve et al., 2008)



personal growth. In contrast, an *integrated regulatory* pattern refers to behaviors adjusted and adhered to the identity and aligned with a person's needs and values. For instance, some teachers experience integrated regulation because they regard teaching as integral to their identity. Ultimately, *intrinsic motivation* is the most self-determined type of motivation, distinguished by the absence of an external driving force to accomplish an activity but an inner positive emotional force caused by the teaching task itself (Roth, 2007; Barbeau et al., 2010). For example, some teachers choose to engage in their careers because they enjoy teaching. Intrinsic motivation and integrated regulation share several attributes in common. Nonetheless, the actions are evoked by innate pleasure in the former type rather than driven to accomplish the outcomes (Barbeau et al., 2010). Several scholars have employed Self-determination Theory (SDT) to examine the motivation for teaching (Abós et al., 2018; van den Berg et al., 2013; Christian et al., 2011; Roth et al., 2007; Assor & Oplatka, 2003).

Developing a scale to measure motivation for teaching, Abós et al. (2018) found a multi-factor model incorporating introjected regulation, identified regulation, external regulation, amotivation, and intrinsic motivation. This model also adhered to the self-determination scale. Moreover, the study revealed that work devotion was positively anticipated by the teachers' intrinsic motivation and external regulation. However, the devotion was negatively predicted by amotivation and introjected regulation. Likewise, intrinsic motivation was negatively anticipated by work boredom but positively predicted by amotivation. Considering SDT, Roth et al. (2007) argued that autonomous motivation for teaching (a type of intrinsic motivation) correlated and was a strong contributing factor to influencing "autonomy-supportive teaching" and the well-being of teachers (p. 770). This motivation for teaching was positively correlated with teacher success but negatively correlated with teacher exhaustion.

Van den Berg et al. (2013) examined the factors that affected faculty members' job motivation. They reported the most salient dynamics, including the supervisor's appreciation, teaching about one's specialty, working with small groups, having the autonomy to choose teaching materials, and receiving feedback on one's performance. Similarly, Christian et al. (2011) argued that support from colleagues and managers, learning opportunities, and control in a job forged not only a positive relationship with significant engagement in that profession but also triggered job motivation. Therefore, motivation for teaching can be exponentially developed by keeping teachers in decision-making loops, releasing a degree of authority, acknowledging their needs, and nurturing a supportive environment to promote a sense of competence and belonging (Assor & Oplatka, 2003). Therefore, teaching motivation plays a pivotal role in ensuring teacher success.

## Teacher success

Quality education primarily relies on teachers' success in any educational context (Pishghadam et al., 2011). Various principal qualities characterize teacher success. Successful teachers possess strong cognitive, socio-emotional, behavioral, and interpersonal skills to develop the content, deliver instructions, flexibly adjust teaching plans, provide quality feedback, and foster a sense of caring and rapport (Elizabeth et al., 2008).

Many scholars examined the relationship between different variables with teacher success. Teachers' creativity positively connects with teachers' effectiveness (Pishghadam et al., 2012). According to Amini et al. (2019), a negative relationship exists between teacher success and students' psychological reactance. Teachers' credibility and teaching competence also have a paramount significance on teachers' effectiveness (Pishghadam & Karami, 2017). Noorbakhsh et al. (2018) found a significant correlation between teacher success, identity, and stroke (any behavior to acknowledge others' values and presence). They also argued that reduced teacher burnout could maximize EFL teachers' success in different educational settings. Pishghadam et al. (2019) argued that teacher success, credibility, and stroke positively influence EFL learners' willingness to attend language courses. According to Drakhshan et al. (2020a), professional identity and autonomy were significant predictors of teacher success. Ratisyanti et al. (2021) found that teaching imagination and disciplinary competence influenced the teachers' success to a greater extent through a multiple linear regression analysis.

Moreover, working atmosphere, motivation for teaching, and managerial aptitude could guide teachers' success. As confirmed by Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), teacher-perceived success is predicted significantly and positively by teachers' nonverbal immediacy and credibility. It also accentuated the constructive effects of these two constructs on teacher success (Nayernia et al., 2020). Similarly, Sezgin and Erdogan (2015) argued that a substantial and positive correlation exists between perceived success, teacher self-efficacy, academic optimism, hope, and zest for teaching. The teacher's success is also predicted positively by the last three variables. Derakhshan et al. (2020a, b) found that perceived professional success positively depends on teachers' perceptions of continuing professional development and research. Moreover, a lack of personal achievement in teaching results in teaching burnout (Kim, 2016).

## Teaching burnout

Teachers demonstrate burnout syndrome to a greater extent than in other careers (Garrick et al., 2014; Kinman et al., 2011). Maslach (2003) defines Burnout as a state of

experiencing chronic long-term stress over an extended period. Three symptoms diagnosed with this syndrome: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal achievement (Maslach & Jackson, 1986) (See Fig. 2). *Emotional exhaustion* is perceived as being tired after depleting emotional resources or going beyond one's physical and emotional capitals (Friedman & Farber, 1992). Since it designates the emotional burden of this syndrome, it is regarded as a prominent symptom rather than the other two indicators. It occurs when individuals encounter excessive energy and time investment in the profession while accessing restricted vital resources (Kim, 2016). *Depersonalization* is the employees' far isolated attitude toward other individuals and is related to interpersonal constituent burnout syndrome. It prevails when teachers are desperate and prevented from any highly emotional interactions to cope with existing emotional depletion. Lack of personal accomplishment refers to the teacher's negative appraisals of his proficiency and the value of his profession. Low levels of personal accomplishment likely contribute to teacher burnout. In other words, when personal accomplishment is exponentially low, the degree of burnout is higher for the teachers (Kim, 2016).

Many scholars utilized Maslach's burnout scale to assess individuals' burnout syndrome across various contexts and professions (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). Conducting a systematic review, Mérida-López and Extremera (2017) found that teaching burnout is associated with several issues, including the intention to quit a job, a higher level of nonattendance, low degree of job satisfaction as well as the detrimental effects of burnout on teachers' health. It also has a negative relationship with emotional intelligence. Moueleu Ngalagou et al. (2019) examined the prevalence of teaching burnout among three hundred and three university teachers. They found the burnout level was 68% with the three symptoms: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment, among which depersonalization obtained a higher score. The study also revealed no significant difference between novice teachers and senior professors.

Moreover, the syndrome had a significant relationship with insufficient salary, poor working conditions, lack of colleagues' support, part-time teaching in other institutes, and slothfulness. Through a systematic review, Watts and Robertson (2011) argued that too many students, teaching hours,

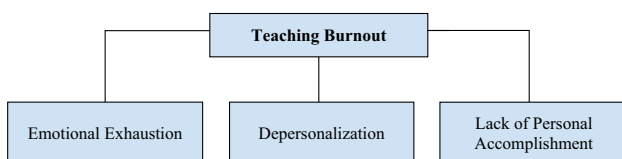
and a high level of student interactions influence teaching burnout, yet gender was not a predisposing factor. Moreover, this syndrome is more serious for novice teachers than senior professors. Likewise, Spittle et al. (2015) found that teachers' burnout did not differ by gender. However, it varied by age only in terms of personal accomplishment since novice teachers reported reduced levels of accomplishment, suggesting a greater degree of teaching burnout. Examining factors contributing to burnout syndrome during a global crisis, Pressley (2021) found that the existing teacher anxiety, administrative support, pandemic analysis scale, and the emotional pressures of communicating with parents are robust predictors of teaching burnout.

Various levels frame the burnout spiral. In the first level, the individual has a busy mind, sometimes overloaded but still creative. In the second level, the individual is always overburdened and assumes other people's problems yet has little space to formulate innovative ideas. The third level begins with negativity, a rejection of change, or a loss of control, leading to emotional outbursts. In level four, the person experiences negative thoughts, feels discontentment, builds anger, maintains a fuzzy mind, cannot get rid of stress and anxiety, and goes emotional. In the final level of burnout, the individual cannot see the solution, negative thoughts control his mind, and he cannot think straight, not being able to process thoughts and cope with daily life (INTEGRIS Health, 2021).

Scholars suggested ways and implications minimize this syndrome's adverse effects by examining the teachers' burnout. Rey and Extremera (2011) argued that teachers' social support is key in relieving burnout. Providing more support for teachers influences teacher efficacy during disruptive times (Pressley, 2021). Physical activities, sports, and leisure also were precautionary measures for teaching burnout (Moueleu Ngalagou et al., 2019). It will be highly effective if teacher training programs include strategies to prepare teacher candidates to manage the job's tensions when they begin teaching (Spittle et al., 2015). School administrators could also address and measure teachers' emo-educational divorce, identify the sources and minimize its adverse effects in school contexts (Pishghadam, 2022).

### Emo-educational divorce

Emotional divorce is a hidden and unrecorded phenomenon in the lives of many married couples who continue to live together only as housemates, without any feelings or affection despite not being legally divorced (Bastani et al., 2010). There is little intimacy between them, they cannot express their feelings and emotions, and their marital relationship is not harmonious (Zahrakar et al., 2019). This divorce only maintains the family structure and leads to a cold and empty family life lacking love and friendship. Its members continue



**Fig. 2** Teaching burnout syndrom constructs (Maslach et al., 1996)



with each other but are deprived of relationships, interactions, and emotional support. Such a state implies a lack of trust, respect, and love for each other. Instead of supporting each other, spouses act toward each other to harass and demean each other, and each seeks to find a reason to prove the other's fault and rejection (Laver & Laver, 2000). Trust is a significant source in educational institutions since it protects against burnout (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2015). Emotional reservation and suppression could significantly influence emotional divorce (Mahmoudpour et al., 2018). Parvaz et al. (2019) found that emotional divorce will be reduced by an incremental degree of psychological flexibility and implementation of positive metacognition.

Upon this psychological construct, Pishghadam (2022) introduced the concept of emo-educational divorce. It refers to a teacher with high motivation for teaching but does not like a course for any reason and shows indifferent behavior toward students, and feels reluctant to go to that course. The teacher may be physically present in the course but not mentally and heartedly. Teachers who experience emo-educational divorce temporarily lose their emotional investment and may even become disengaged with their students and colleagues. Emo-educational divorce can also be observed at a particular task and specific content. If we consider the analogy of an emotional divorce in married couples, the communicative ties cut off and bonds that suffer due to an emo-educational divorce may differ depending on the parties involved. The teacher may not be willing to interact with students in the classroom and beyond due to being emotionally disengaged. Alternatively, the teacher might avoid communicating with other colleagues about professional matters since he does not see any value in it and the policies and norms of the workplace are emotionally burdensome. Teachers may also lose interest in teaching specific content due to its complexity and non-relevance to the context. The lack of teaching aids, innovative ideas, and practical, real-world materials in the classroom, even if they are applicable, can contribute to this type of demotivation. Often, such demotivation results from the absence of several factors in the classroom, such as teaching aids, innovative ideas, and practical, real-world materials, even if they are applicable in nature.

Emo-educational divorce includes three main constructs: cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral. MacLean (1978) proposed the Triune Brain model composed of three interconnected regions that are the basis of these three constructs. The Neocortex (responsible for logic, thinking, problem-solving, and complex learning), the Limbic System (responsible for emotional responses), and the Reptilian Brain (which functions as a conduit for peripheral nerves and performs physical actions). The cognitive component refers to the upper brain, the socioemotional component to the mid brain, and the behavioral component to the lower brain

(Cesario et al., 2020). In fact, the upper brain is responsible for cognitive activities, the midbrain engages in the socio-emotional processes, and the lower brain contributes to causing behaviors (Basma et al., 2020). Each part is responsible for managing tensions in a relatively independent manner. We attempted to tap into the whole brain by including several items to cover cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral aspects.

Using MacLean's model as a basis, Pishghadam (2022) argued that cognitive refers to the way we perceive ourselves as individuals, what we are capable of, what we value, our goals, and our roles. In this construct, the teacher is unwilling to invest time and energy in thinking about a specific course and group of students. Identifying and managing emotions, developing compassion for others, cultivating positive relationships, making responsible decisions, and coping with challenging circumstances are all part of the socioemotional construct, which influences educational and professional success (Schoon, 2021). Neither teacher invests emotionally and interacts with a particular group or task in a socio-emotional construct. As the behavioral construct, detachment from emotion is demonstrated by actions. The teacher is taking a psychological distance from a specific course. It became apparent in his actions as he may limit the students' freedom, contributions, and opportunities to ask questions, not use innovative and practical activities in his instruction, nor introduce supplementary materials.

## Method

### Participants and settings

The participants for this study were 552 individuals (male = 171; female = 381), aged between 21 to 67 (average = 39.66 and SD = 9.60). The participants' teaching experiences fell into varying categories: 1–5 years ( $n = 159$ ), 5–10 ( $n = 67$ ), 10–15 ( $n = 65$ ), 15–20 ( $n = 104$ ), and over 20 years ( $n = 157$ ). The teachers' institution types included public school ( $n = 354$ ), private school ( $n = 83$ ), semiprivate school ( $n = 54$ ), and others ( $n = 61$ ). They were from two major disciplines: social sciences ( $n = 446$ ) and non-social sciences ( $n = 106$ ) with various educational backgrounds, namely high school ( $n = 20$ ), undergraduate ( $n = 256$ ), master's degree candidate ( $n = 231$ ) and Ph.D. candidate ( $n = 36$ ).

### Instrumentation

Three different questionnaires, namely job burnout, emo-educational divorce, and teaching motivation, were used for this study. The questionnaires were completed by 346 teachers, through which their success rate in teaching was

examined. The two questionnaires on teaching motivation and emo-educational divorce were validated, and a model was drawn for them. Furthermore, three questionnaires measured the relationships between these variables' effects. Next, the effect of burnout and teaching motivation on emo-educational divorce was calculated. Also, convergent and discriminant validity was calculated for the emo-educational divorce questionnaire.

### Teaching burnout questionnaire

This study utilized the Maslach Burnout Inventory Educator Survey (MBI-ES), a 22-item Likert scale developed by Maslach et al. (1996), to measure job burnout. Azizi et al. (2008) translated this scale into Persian and validated it to assess teachers' teaching burnout at the University of Tehran. The current study employed Azizi et al.'s (2008) questionnaire, consisting of three constructs: Emotional exhaustion measured by nine items, depersonalization assessed by five items, and reduced personal accomplishment measured by eight items. This self-report inventory uses a seven-point ordinal rating scale ranging from zero 'never' to six 'every day'. In the current study, the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient for this questionnaire was 0.91, demonstrating internal consistency between the 22 items.

### Teaching motivation questionnaire

Teaching motivation is measured by a 19-item Likert scale self-report questionnaire developed by Abós et al. (2018). It includes five constructs: Intrinsic motivation, identified motivation, introjected regulation, external regulation, and amotivation. Intrinsic motivation is assessed by four items (Q1, Q5, Q8, Q14), identified motivation by four items (Q2, Q3, Q13, Q16), introjected regulation by four items (Q4, Q9, Q11, Q12), external regulation by four items (Q6, Q7, Q10, Q15), and amotivation by three items (Q19, Q18, Q17). A 7-point scale is used for all items, ranging from 0 "strongly agree" to 7 "strongly disagree." The items are translated from English to Persian and passed the face validity by sending them to three field experts to identify any ambiguity and ensure that every item is clear and relevant. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient for this scale was 0.88, indicating internal consistency between the 19 items.

### Emo-educational divorce questionnaire

The researchers were inspired by Gottman and Silver's (1994) emotional divorce concept and MacLean's (1978) Triune Brain model to develop an emo-educational divorce questionnaire. Considering MacLean's (1978) model, the questionnaire includes three main constructs: Cognitive, socioemotional, and behavioral. The cognitive construct

is measured by six items (Q1 to Q6), the socio-emotional construct by six items (Q7 to Q12), and the behavioral construct by six items (Q13 to Q18). Each of the eighteen items is rated on a five-point scale, ranging from 0 "never" to 5 "always" (see Appendix 1). The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient for this survey was 0.88, signifying that the 18 items were internally consistent.

### Teacher success scale

A single-item survey was used to measure teachers' success. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they perceived themselves as successful teachers. On a five-point scale, the item was rated from 1 "very low" to 5 "very high". The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient for the scale was 0.9, indicating a high level of internal consistency.

### Data analysis

The obtained data from the questionnaires were analyzed using the SPSS software version 25 and Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) software. Utilizing descriptive statistics techniques, the data of the respondents were analyzed. Additionally, Pearson product-moment correlation and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) were used to determine the relationship between the variables, specify the factors in a model, and the items assumed to load on each factor in the various proposed models.

## Results

The descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, for emo-educational divorce, teacher job burnout, teaching motivation, and teacher success questionnaires are shown in Table 1.

In the first step, the normality of the data was confirmed. According to Table 2, the values of Skewness and Kurtosis fell between -2 and 2, which indicates that the data distribution is normal.

The total reliability of scales and their substructures was assessed by Cronbach's alpha test and the retest. Based on the results of Table 3, the reliability values are optimal.

### Validity of the emo-educational scale

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and Harman's single factor test were utilized to evaluate the validity of this questionnaire. Since all data were collected using a research tool (questionnaire), Harman's single-factor test was performed to avoid the Common Method Variance (CMV) bias. The results revealed that the first factor accounted for 46.65%

**Table 1** Descriptive statistics for emo-educational divorce, teaching burnout, teaching motivation and teacher success

Questionnaire/Constructs	Mean	Max	Min	Standard deviation
Emo-educational divorce	12.89	54	0	10.61
Cognitive	2.51	15	0	2.96
Socio-emotional	2.54	15	0	2.77
Behavioral	2.54	19	0	2.91
Teaching burnout	20.11	75	0	15.88
Emotional exhaustion	8.43	48	0	9.26
Depersonalization	1.61	10	0	2.09
Reduced personal accomplishment	37.92	48	11	7.38
Teaching motivation	29.59	35	15	3.83
Intrinsic motivation	5.76	7	2	1.14
Identified regulation	6.12	7	2	1.01
Introjected regulation	5.71	7	3	0.96
External regulation	5.63	7	3	0.86
Demotivation	7.49	28	4	4.15
Teacher success	4.07	5	2	0.60

**Table 2** Normality test results for emo-educational divorce, teaching burnout, teaching motivation, and teacher success scales

Questionnaire/Constructs	Skewness	Kurtosis
Emo-educational divorce	1.09	1.29
Cognitive	1.43	1.81
Socio-emotional	1.39	1.14
Behavioral	1.71	1.40
Teaching burnout	1.26	1.34
Emotional exhaustion	1.77	1.97
Depersonalization	1.81	1.93
Reduced personal accomplishment	0.94-	0.80
Teaching motivation	1.08-	1.32
Intrinsic motivation	0.97-	0.82
Identified regulation	1.56-	1.98
Introjected regulation	0.59-	0.20-
External regulation	0.31-	0.39-
Demotivation	1.44	1.88
Teacher success	0.05	0.13-

of the total variance. Therefore, it can be concluded that the standard method bias cannot be problematic in this study.

After Harman's test, the validity of the questionnaire was assessed through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Figure 3 shows the CFA model for the designed questionnaire. As can be seen, the emo-educational divorce scale consists of three constructs (cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral), each of which is measured by six items.

Table 5 presents the indicators of goodness of fit. Reported indices (ratio of chi-square to the degree of

**Table 3** The reliability results of emo-educational divorce, teaching burnout, teaching motivation and teacher success scales

Questionnaire/Constructs	Reliability value	Number of items
Emo-educational divorce	0.88	18
Cognitive	0.87	6
Socio-emotional	0.91	6
Behavioral	0.89	6
Teaching burnout	0.91	22
Emotional exhaustion	0.92	9
Depersonalization	0.89	5
Reduced personal accomplishment	0.91	8
Teaching motivation	0.88	19
Intrinsic motivation	0.91	4
Identified regulation	0.91	4
Introjected regulation	0.84	4
External regulation	0.83	4
Demotivation	0.82	3
Teacher success	0.90	1

freedom ( $\chi^2 / df$ ), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR) confirm overall model fit. According to Schumacher and Lomax (2010), to fully fit the model with the data, the ratio of chi-square to the degree of freedom should be below 5. Also, according to Browne and Cudeck (1993), CFI and TLI need to be above 0.90, whereas RMSEA should be less than 0.8.

As can be seen, the indices are at the desired level, and the model is improved after the deletion of 6 items (items 3, 4, 9, 10, 13, and 16). Therefore, the validity of the designed questionnaire has been confirmed. Moreover, the reliability of the questionnaire is = 0.90 $\alpha$  after removing six items.

### Correlational analysis

As shown in Table 4, a significant relationship exists between several questionnaire factors. Teacher success has a negative relationship with emo-educational divorce ( $r = -0.20, p < 0.01$ ) and burnout ( $r = -0.34, p < 0.01$ ), yet a positive relationship with teaching motivation ( $r = 0.29, p < 0.01$ ). Such a pattern can be observed between the sub-constructs of these questionnaires. Edu-emotional divorce is also positively related to burnout ( $r = 0.64, p < 0.01$ ) but negatively related to teaching motivation ( $r = -0.47, p < 0.01$ ). Burnout is also inversely related to teaching motivation ( $r = -0.55, p < 0.01$ ).

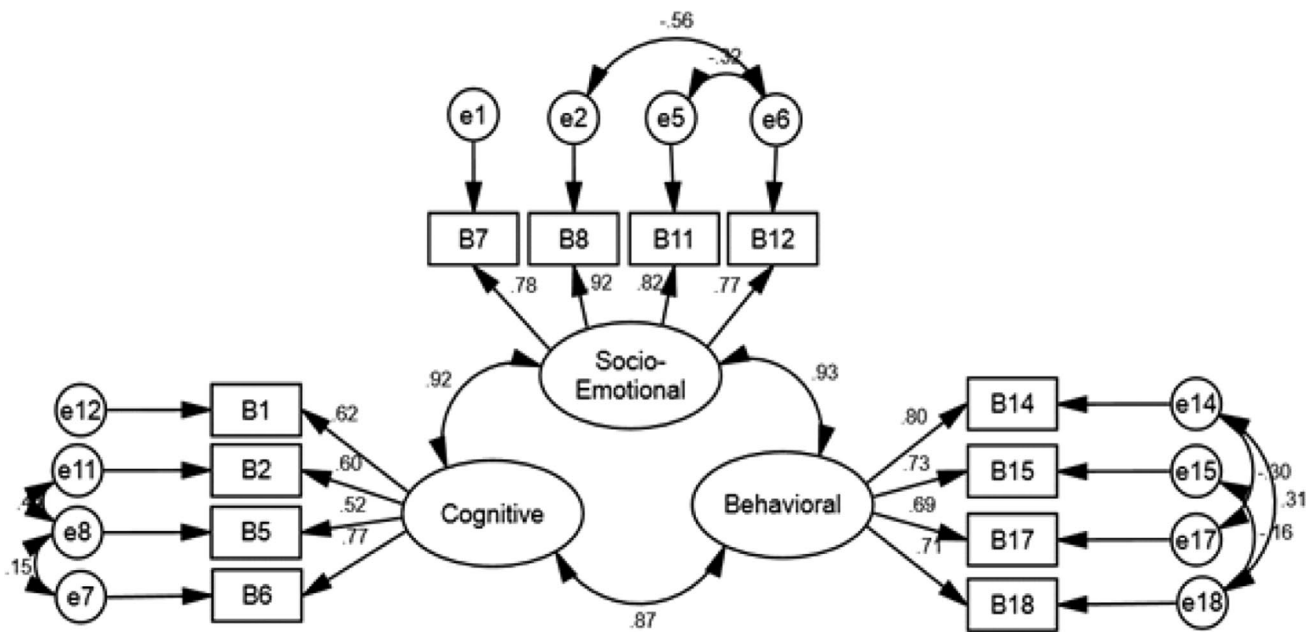


Fig. 3 Confirmatory factor analysis model for emo-educational divorce scale

### Path analysis

A path analysis method based on structural equation modeling was utilized to measure the relationships between variables. In this analysis, indirect relationships were investigated using the bootstrap method due to the existence of a mediating variable. Various models with direct and indirect relationships were designed to predict teacher success, of which two models had a desirable fit. Table 5 presents the goodness of fit indicators.

In the first model (Fig. 4, Table 5), the relationship between burnout sub-constructs and the dependent variable (teacher success) was measured through the mediating variable of emo-educational divorce. However, the model did not have a good fit.

In the second model (Fig. 5, Table 5), the relationship between teaching motivation sub-constructs and the dependent variable (teacher success) was assessed through the mediating variable of emo-educational divorce, which the model did not have a desirable fit for.

In the third model (Fig. 6, Table 5), the relationship between teaching burnout and the dependent variable (teacher success) was measured through the mediating variable of emo-educational divorce. According to the model, teaching burnout directly and negatively predicts teacher success ( $\beta = -0.54$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Mediated by emo-educational divorce sub-constructs,

including cognitive ( $\beta = -0.08$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), socio-emotional ( $\beta = -0.26$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and behavioral ( $\beta = -0.05$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), the indirect relationships between teaching burnout and teacher success is still negative with varying degrees.

In the fourth model (Fig. 7, Table 5), the relationship between teaching motivation and the dependent variable (teacher success) was measured through the mediating variable of emo-educational divorce. According to the model, teaching motivation directly and positively predicts teacher success ( $\beta = 0.31$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Despite being mediated by educational emotional divorce substructures, comprised of cognitive ( $\beta = 0.01$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), social-emotional ( $\beta = 0.01$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), and behavioral ( $\beta = 0.01$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), indirect relationships between teaching burnout and teacher success are not significant.

Table 5 presents the indicators of goodness of fit. Reported indices (ratio of chi-square to the degree of freedom ( $\chi^2 / df$ ), Comparative Fit Indexes (CFI), Tucker Lewis (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RSMEA), and Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR) confirm overall fit for the models. To fully fit the models with the data, according to Schumacher and Lomax (2010), the ratio of chi-square to the degree of freedom should be below 5. Furthermore, the Comparative Fit and Tucker Lewis indexes should be above 0.90, while the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation needs to be less than 0.8.



**Table 4** Correlation table for emo-educational divorce, teachers' burnout, teaching motivation and teacher success scales

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Emo-educational divorce	1														
Cognitive	.84**	1													
Socio-emotional	.86**	.56**	1												
Behavioral	.87**	.57**	.67**	1											
Teaching Burnout	.64**	.48**	.68**	.49**	1										
Emotional exhaustion	.52**	.38**	.58**	.38**	.89**	1									
Depersonalization	.53**	.41**	.55**	.42**	.66**	.49**	1								
Reduced personal accomplishment	-.57**	-.44**	-.58**	-.46**	-.84**	-.53**	-.51**	1							
Teaching motivation	-.47**	-.38**	-.46**	-.38**	-.55**	-.47**	-.36**	.49**	1						
Intrinsic motivation	-.38**	-.31**	-.37**	-.30**	-.46**	-.38**	-.27**	.43**	.81**	1					
Identified regulation	-.49**	-.41**	-.47**	-.39**	-.53**	-.45**	-.32**	.49**	.83**	.74**	1				
Introjected regulation	-.08	-.07	-.06	-.08	-.19**	-.17**	-.08*	.16**	.64**	.37**	.33**	1			
External regulation	-.33**	-.28**	-.33**	-.23**	-.37**	-.32**	-.25**	.32**	.71**	.42**	.48**	.35**	1		
Demotivation	-.48**	-.34**	-.50**	-.40**	-.51**	-.43**	-.41**	.44**	.77**	.47**	.55**	.38**	.49**	1	
Teacher success	-.20**	-.15**	-.24**	-.14**	-.34**	-.23**	-.26**	.37**	.29**	.18**	.26**	.24**	.24**	.19**	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation is significant at the level of 0.05 (2-tailed)

**Table 5** Goodness indexes of models' fit

	$\chi^2/df$	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR	
Confirmatory factor analysis model (Fig. 1)	3.50	44	0.95	0.93	0.08	0.03	Desirable
The first path analysis model (Fig. 2)	80.67	4	0.83	0.10	0.37	0.10	Undesirable
The second path analysis model (Fig. 3)	143.23	3	0.81	0.27	0.50	0.08	Undesirable
The third path analysis model (Fig. 4)	4.90	6	0.98	0.94	0.08	0.02	Desirable
The fourth path analysis model (Fig. 5)	3.29	12	0.98	0.95	0.06	0.03	Desirable

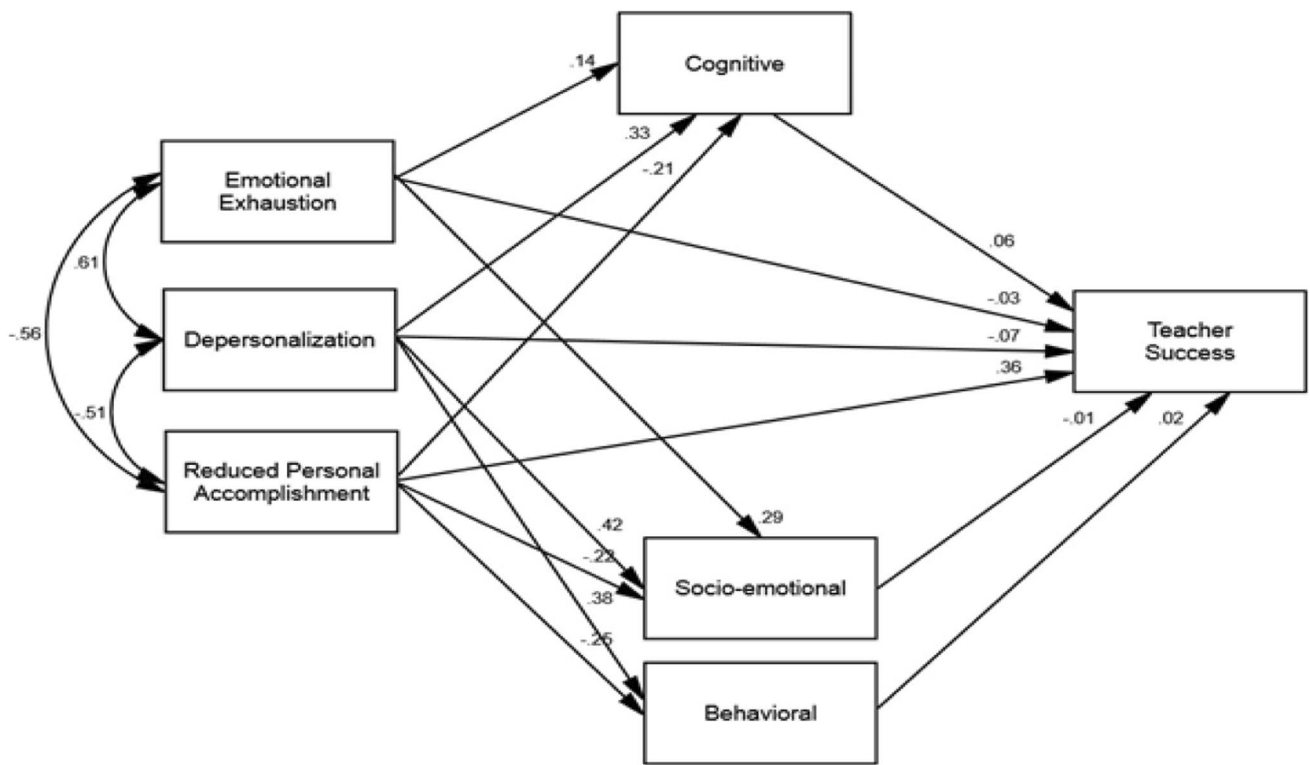


Fig. 4 The First Path Analysis Model for Teacher Success

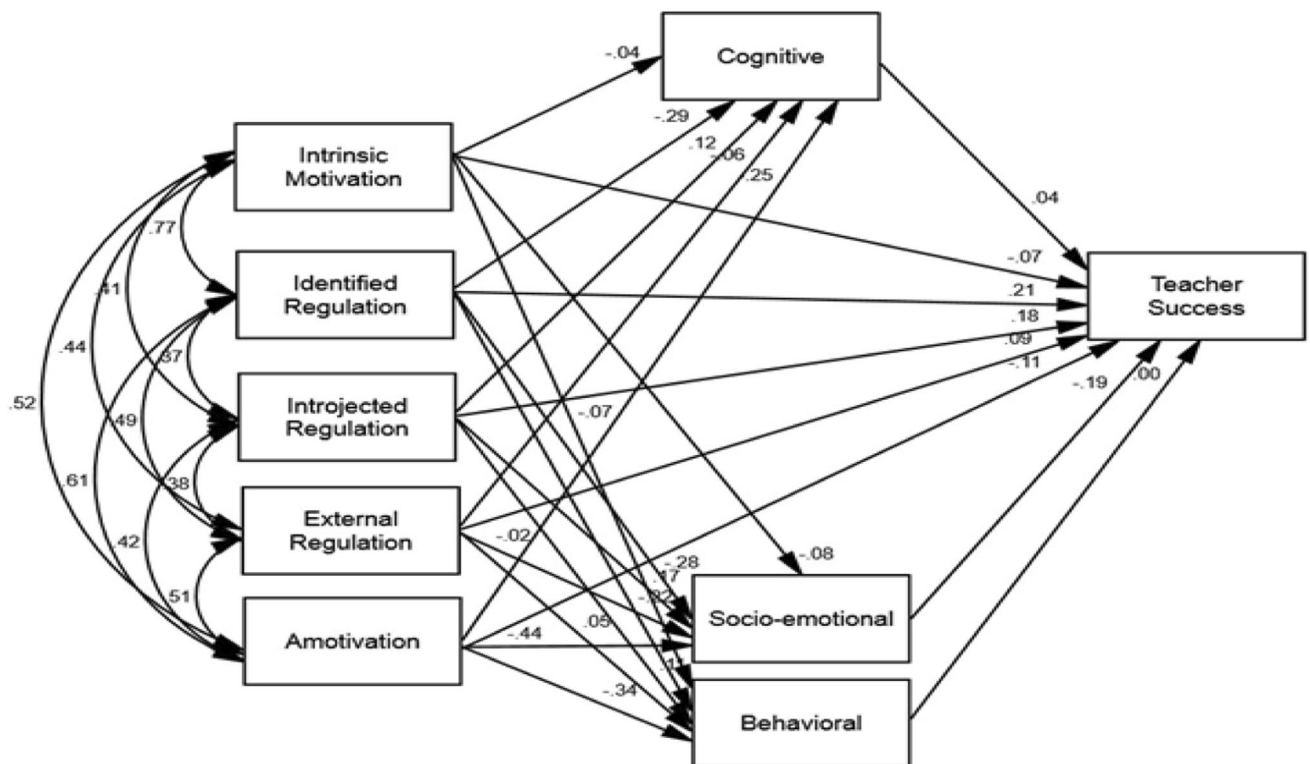


Fig. 5 The Second Path Analysis Model for Teacher Success

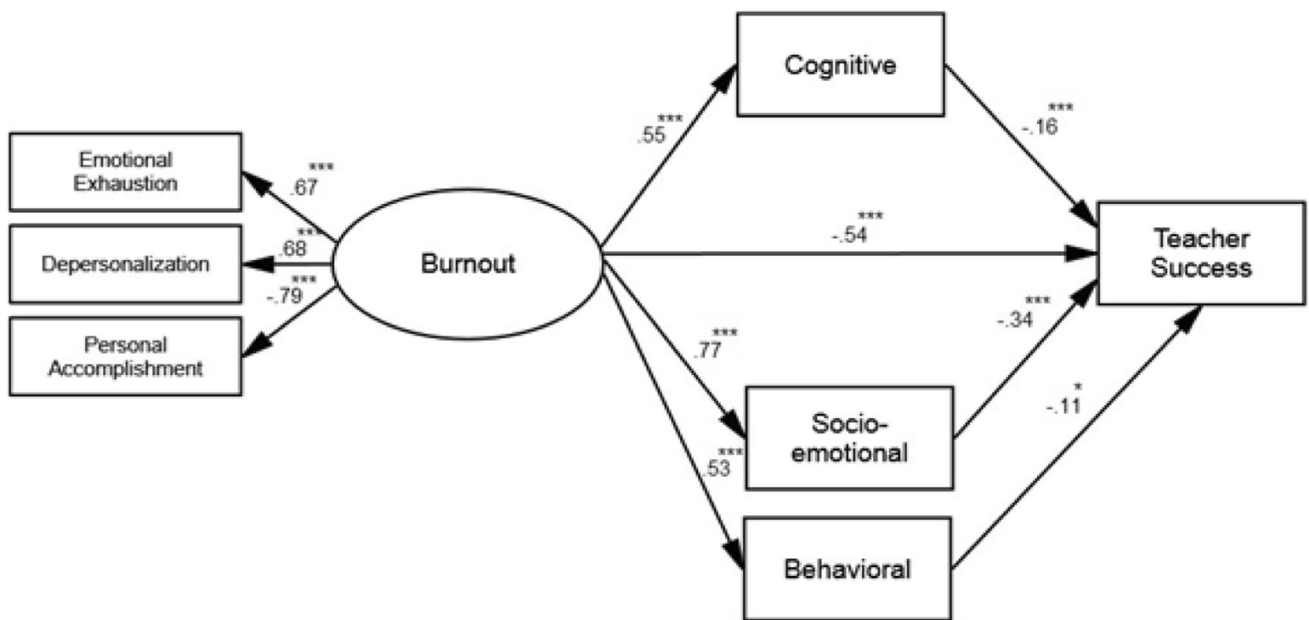


Fig. 6 The Third path analysis model for teacher success

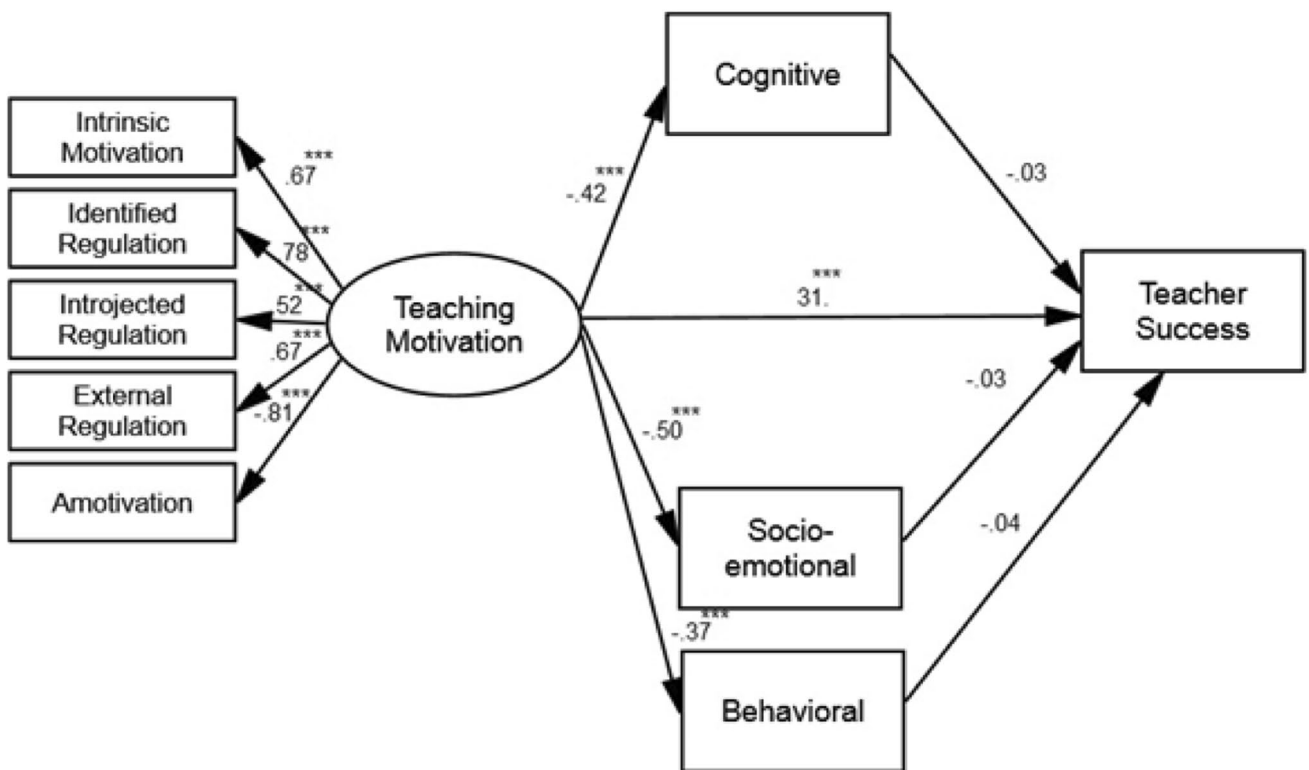


Fig. 7 The fourth path analysis model for teacher success

## Discussion

The first research question focused on developing an emo-educational divorce scale and examining whether it enjoyed psychometric properties. The authors developed an 18-item questionnaire comprising three main cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral constructs. After getting descriptive statistics, the scale successfully passed the normality and reliability tests, indicating that the items' values were generally distributed, and that internal consistency was optimal as the values were representative ( $2 < N > -2$ ;  $\alpha = 0.88$ ). Subsequently, the scale was validated using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and passing several statistical tests. The indices were at a desirable level; the scale was improved after the six items' deletion, and its validity was confirmed.

The subconstructs of emo-educational divorce can also be divided into (1) cognitive, (2) Socio-affective, and (3) Behavioral. In the cognitive construct, the teacher, for example, does not think about the students in a particular class. The teacher also does not want to collect students' feedback and viewpoints. In the socio-affective construct, the teacher does not like the students. He does not have a positive relationship with the students. The teacher-student rapport is not established, and the teacher gets angry quickly. Lastly, in the behavioral construct, the teacher becomes aggressive, deals with indifference, does not allocate time for students, and performs tasks superficially. Therefore, emo-educational divorce is an emotional state where the teacher does not communicate effectively with the students and continues to teach unwillingly. In this case, the teacher may communicate effectively with students in several classes but cannot establish rapport and communicate effectively in one classroom (Pishghadam, 2022). However, job burnout is a condition in which a teacher suffers frustration and emotional distress in all classes (Bakker & Costa, 2014). Nonetheless, if the teacher experiences stress and emotional detachment in only one class, the experience may be considered as emo-educational divorce, an acute form of job burnout (Pishghadam, 2022). Teachers who have experienced burnout exhibit a reduced ability to tolerate emotional turmoil and demonstrate a lack of rapport with their students (Brown et al., 2010). In this essence, burnout is diagnosed by “a loss of energy, debilitation, chronic fatigue, and the feeling of being worn out” (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017, p. 777). It also negatively influences teachers' educational outcomes and well-being (Meidani et al., 2021).

The second question investigated the relationship between emo-educational divorce, teacher motivation, teaching burnout, and teaching success. All questionnaires passed normality and reliability tests after obtaining descriptive statistics. The correlational analysis revealed

that factors are significantly related. Teacher success maintained a negative relationship with emo-educational divorce and teaching burnout. However, it positively correlated with teaching motivation (Ratisyanti et al., 2021). In addition, emo-educational divorce was a positive predictor of teaching burnout, indicating a positive relationship between the two, yet it was negatively associated with teaching motivation. Teaching burnout is negatively correlated with teaching motivation (Kim, 2016). The relationship between burnout and motivational regulations that guide teachers in getting involved in a particular task or career is complex. The autonomous regulations, including identified and intrinsic components, are negatively related to job burnout, yet more negatively at the career level compared to the task level. However, controlled regulations which entailed introjected and external constituents were positively related to burnout, yet more positively at the task level compared to the career level (Fernet et al., 2017).

The third research question investigated whether emo-educational divorce, teacher motivation, and teaching burnout predict teacher success. Different models with direct and indirect relationships were assessed to predict teacher success, whereas emo-educational divorce was a mediating variable. Only two models achieved a desirable fit (3rd and 4th path analyses). Mediated by emo-educational divorce, teacher success was negatively predicted by teaching burnout, indicating a negative relationship between the two in the third path analysis model. However, measured via mediating variable of emo-educational divorce, teacher success was positively predicted by teaching motivation in the fourth path analysis model (Viseu et al., 2016). Yet, the indirect relationships between teacher success and teaching burnout were insignificant. According to Thoonen et al. (2011), the incremental level of teaching motivation results in more significant job commitment. However, van den Berghe et al. (2014) argued that higher teaching motivation leads to a lower degree of teaching burnout.

Motivation could also be classified as active and passive motivations along a dual continuum (engagement, involvement, disengagement, and exvovement). Through this model, active motivation occurs when teachers were completely involved and engaged mentally in accomplishing a task. The absence of mental engagement leads to active demotivation, yet the task was performed. Passive motivation occurs when teachers cannot put their motivational choice and inclinations into action but persistently muse over the existing problem. If left untreated, passive motivation could have detrimental effects (Pishghadam et al., 2019). Similarly, emo-educational divorce can lead to job burnout and quitting if it is not addressed. Such job burnout may result from other factors, such as a heavy workload, a limited or inefficient level of control, inappropriate incentives

to reward, community problems, injustice in the workplace, and value-related issues (Leiter & Maslach, 2005). Also, job burnout is associated with workload and colleague support (Parrello et al., 2019). A positive relationship exists between tense job demands and burnout, as Bakker et al. (2000) asserted that individuals might experience a long-term state of exhaustion that may result in psychological disengagement from the job. The same is true with teacher-student relationships because teachers with close relationships reported greater personal accomplishment over time, yet conflicted relationships predicted increased emotional exhaustion (Corbin et al., 2019; Cui, 2022).

Emotional intelligence and emotional literacy could be used as strategies to cope with emo-educational divorce in the workplace. With respect to Pishghadam et al.'s (2013) emotion concept (emotion + frequency), teachers need to be equipped with emotional management and emotional monitoring skills to know how to positivize their emotions to cope with negative emotions in the class and be involved in their teaching. As sense-induced emotions relativize cognition and motivation (Pishghadam et al., 2016), a teacher in a class can experience an emotional sensory experience due to various external mandates at work (Pishghadam et al., 2018). In a classroom where the teacher's senses and emotions become negative (Akbari & Pishghadam, 2022), the frequency of emotions decreases and moves toward negative. Therefore, when a teacher is subjected to negative emotions from students, colleagues, or the institution, the frequency of the senses is negatively affected, leading to demotivation and emo-educational divorce. Likewise, to minimize teaching burnout and its adverse effects, *Ikigai* may be an effective coping strategy. It is a Japanese term meaning "reason for being." It encompasses values related to passion, mission, vocation, and profession while residing in the center. This visualization helps to identify where a person's identity lies about the four sections. Moreover, it provides a means of bridging one's well-being and professional accomplishment towards the center (Bethune & Kell, 2020).

## Conclusion

The stages of emo-educational divorce can be summarized as follows: Initially, the teacher enters the classroom with great enthusiasm and motivation for teaching. He displays many positive emotions toward the class and its students (love at first sight). In the initial sessions, he spends considerable time creating the content, establishing an effective relationship with the students, and training them to master the content as teachers would (metavolvement). However, after some time, he realizes that students' capacity in the class differs from what he initially anticipated. Consequently, he does not receive the necessary strokes from his students

while teaching. At this stage, there is not much of a connection between the teacher and the student regarding emotion and motivation. The teacher usually tries to teach so that the content can be institutionalized in the students' minds, but he is not concerned with establishing an emotional connection; only deep learning and information transfer are essential to him (involvement). Once this lack of motivation persists, he will only be seen as an individual responsible for conveying the curriculum. He will have more of a listener role in the classroom, in which he does not wish to participate actively (exvolvement). A continuation of this stage may result in the final stage, which is job burnout. A teacher like this is not motivated to develop content and attend class but instead counts down the minutes to complete the class and teaching (avolvement). There is, therefore, the possibility of both active and passive demotivation in emo-educational divorce (Pishghadam et al., 2019).

If there is an emo-educational divorce in a class, the students tend to show indifference and lack enthusiasm for the teacher's lessons. They may not participate in class discussions or activities or be unable to answer most of the teacher's questions or demonstrate their skills. This may result in a lack of communication between the teacher and the students. It is possible that a teacher may observe unpleasant or disrespectful behavior from some students and that the students may demonstrate irresponsibility and a lack of commitment to class and homework. Consequently, such a teacher is likely to have a great deal of disagreement with the students. Students may also regularly criticize the teacher's performance. Forming an emo-educational divorce may also be influenced by destructive arguments and false pride on the part of some students. As a result, the student feels that he has a greater depth of knowledge than his teacher, destroying him constantly, sometimes unjustly. By contrast, the teacher may have other classes with greater academic capability and more capable students. Compared to the class with no appropriate educational and emotional connection, they will suffer an emotional and educational breakup.

There is no rapport between the teacher and the student in such a class. In many cases, the teacher and student make decisions based on their emotional reactions. As an example, a teacher may use much punishment (e.g., dismissing students from the class, assigning them heavy homework, taking a hard test, displacing students, etc.), and there is no empathy and cooperation between the teacher and the student. When courses are not assigned to the teachers based on their specialties and interests, it may cause emo-educational divorce because the teachers will not have specialized knowledge regarding the content, which can lead to a lack of interest in teaching as well as the factors identified above.

A teacher who has experienced emo-educational divorce may be reluctant to attend that class and may count down the days until the end of the semester. He frequently glances at



his watch while teaching and does not experience flow. Due to this, his presence in the classroom only serves to relieve responsibility. The main manifestations of emo-educational divorce may be found in cutbacks in-class discussion by the teacher, spending less time with the student inside and outside the classroom, reducing encouragement and strokes to the student, unwillingness to do research with the student, lack of cheerfulness and happiness in the classroom, diminished emotions, excitement, and enthusiasm in the classroom, and over blaming students. The emo-educational divorce can therefore be divided into local and global levels as follows:

The term Type in the model refers to both the relationship between the teacher and the students (subject) and the relationship between the teacher and the environment (object). Moreover, Scope in the model refers to the magnitude of divorce, which can be at a small scale (local) or at a large scale (global).

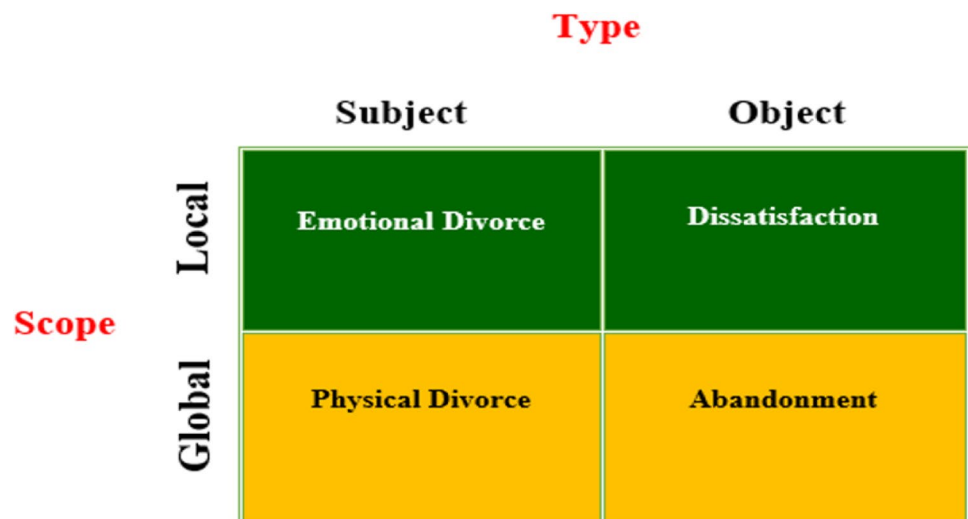
As illustrated in Fig. 8, at the local level, the instructor either emotionally disengages himself from "students" of a specific class (emotional divorce) or becomes dissatisfied with "the school environment" (emotional dissatisfaction), such as disliking his own office. In general, he attempts to be present only as part of his job responsibilities due to demotivation or a passive motivation state in which the teacher fails to actualize his motivational choices (Pishghadam et al., 2021). At the global level, he completely separates himself from "students in all classes", leading to teaching burnout (physical divorce) and not even wishing to enter "the educational environment" at all (abandonment). In this case, he may even tender his resignation. Therefore, to prevent irreparable damage to the educational system, it is imperative to examine the factors and causes of emo-educational divorce, burnout, and total disengagement from the classroom.

Considering that the emo-educational divorce concept is new and in its infancy, there is still much to be learned from this study. Teachers in various contexts can use the

emo-educational scale proposed in this research to assess and understand their stage of emo-educational divorce. An assessment of this nature could enhance relationships between teachers and students. Also, it will allow teachers to identify the internal and external tensions they may experience and develop strategies for coping with these tensions. Moreover, educational policymakers can be informed about the importance of providing teachers with emotional and well-being resources and support. It is pivotal for policymakers to understand how emo-educational divorce can significantly affect the attitude and performance of teachers. Therefore, investing more in well-being and emotional support in the workplace effectively empowers teachers and prevents emo-educational divorce. The results of this study and the proposed scale could also provide valuable information regarding how to address potential emotional labor teachers may experience. When this is accomplished, teachers will be more motivated and successful, and job burnout will be less likely to occur in an environment free from emotional conflict and where emotional relationships between community members are strengthened.

Due to the exploratory nature of the emo-educational divorce, semi-structured, in-depth interviews could be conducted in the future utilizing prompts suggested by Rahmati et al. (2019), which outline topics such as the initial motivation to become a teacher, motivating and demotivating factors that influence participants in this process, teacher inspiration sources, as well as the effects of their teaching experiences. Further research could also examine other psychological concepts, including teacher identity crisis and teachers' mental well-being and their relationship to emo-educational divorce. Moreover, future researchers can investigate the internal and external factors relevant to teachers' teaching contexts that may influence their rate of emo-educational divorce.

Fig. 8 Emo-educational divorce model



## Appendix 1: Emo-educational divorce questionnaire

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching level: \_\_\_\_\_ Degree: \_\_\_\_\_

Teaching background: \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching place: \_\_\_\_\_

Read each item in the questionnaire and choose the best response as it follows:

Never          Rarely          Sometimes          Frequently          Always

In teaching, I experience the following situations in relation to some classes and students:

1. Not thinking about my students and their success.
2. Not concerned with the opinions of my students.
3. Not thinking about what I will be doing in the classroom and the educational scenario for the next session between classes.
4. No innovative ideas occur to me in the class.
5. Not involving my mind in the students' academic problems.
6. Not wishing to engage in an argument with students.
7. Experience frequent boredom and restlessness in class.
8. Not empathizing with the students in the class and not having a pleasant feeling towards them.
9. Not having a close relationship with the students in the class.
10. Students often make me angry.
11. Not paying attention to students and their presence in class.
12. The students in my class do not motivate me to teach.
13. Not allowing students to exercise authority and have freedom of movement in the classroom.
14. Not allowing students to present and participate in class activities.
15. Not using real-world works (i.e., field trips, handicrafts, laboratory) even if they are practical in nature.
16. Not allowing students to joke and laugh in class.
17. Not using any teaching aids (PowerPoint, videos, photos, etc.) in the classroom.
18. Not allowing students to ask questions.

**Supplementary Information** The online version contains supplementary material available at <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-022-04000-2>.

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**Data availability** The datasets generated and analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

### Declarations

**Ethical approval** All procedures performed in the study were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

**Informed consent** Informed consent was obtained from all the individual participants included in this study.

**Conflicts of interest/competing interest** The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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