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Psychological Empowerment and Its Relationship with Emotional Creativity among Special Education Female Teachers in Riyadh

Abstract

This study examines the relationship between psychological empowerment and emotional creativity among special education female teachers in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Despite extensive research on both constructs independently, limited studies have explored their interaction within special education contexts. This study addresses this gap by investigating both the relationship and predictive role of psychological empowerment dimensions in emotional creativity.

A descriptive correlational-comparative design was employed with a sample of 150 teachers selected using stratified random sampling. Data were collected using validated measures of psychological empowerment and emotional creativity, demonstrating high reliability (Cronbach's α = 0.908 and 0.936, respectively). Statistical analyses included Pearson correlation, one-way ANOVA, Kruskal–Wallis tests, and multiple regression analysis.

The findings revealed significant positive relationships between all dimensions of psychological empowerment and emotional creativity (r = .319–.584, p < .01). Significant differences were observed in the impact dimension and overall empowerment across age groups, while no differences were found for emotional creativity or marital status. Regression analysis indicated that competence and impact significantly predict emotional creativity.

The study contributes to the literature by integrating psychological empowerment and emotional creativity within a special education context and highlights the importance of empowerment-based interventions for enhancing teachers' emotional functioning and professional effectiveness. These findings have important implications for educational policy and practice, particularly in the design of professional development programs that enhance teachers' psychological empowerment. Educational policymakers and school leaders are encouraged to adopt empowerment-based strategies to strengthen teachers' competence and perceived impact, thereby improving emotional adaptability and effectiveness in special education settings.

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Research Article

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Introduction

The field of special education has gained increasing global attention due to its critical role in supporting individuals with diverse learning and developmental needs. Teachers in this field are required to manage complex classroom environments characterized by emotional intensity, behavioral diversity, and individualized instructional demands. These challenges necessitate not only pedagogical competence but also psychological resilience and adaptability.

Psychological empowerment has emerged as a key factor in enhancing teacher effectiveness, as it reflects individuals' perceptions of meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact within their work environment. Empowered teachers are more likely to demonstrate initiative, engagement, and persistence in the face of challenges.

At the same time, emotional creativity represents the ability to experience and express emotions in novel, flexible, and effective ways. In emotionally demanding professions such as teaching, emotional creativity plays a crucial role

in managing interpersonal interactions and adapting to diverse classroom situations.

Despite the importance of these constructs, limited research has examined the relationship between psychological empowerment and emotional creativity, particularly in the context of special education. This study aims to address this gap by investigating how psychological empowerment contributes to emotional creativity among special education teachers.

Demographic Profile and Education

H1: Psychological empowerment is positively associated with emotional creativity among special education teachers.

H2: There are statistically significant differences in psychological empowerment based on age.

H3: There are statistically significant differences in emotional creativity based on age.

H4: Psychological empowerment dimensions significantly predict emotional creativity.

Literature Review

Psychological Empowerment

Psychological empowerment is a central construct in organizational and educational psychology, reflecting individuals' intrinsic motivation and their perception of control over work-related outcomes. Initially conceptualized by [1] and later operationalized by [2], psychological empowerment consists of four dimensions: meaningfulness, competence, autonomy, and impact.

These dimensions collectively represent a cognitive state through which individuals interpret their work roles. Meaningfulness reflects the alignment between personal values and job requirements, while competence corresponds to self-efficacy beliefs regarding task performance. Autonomy refers to the degree of independence in decision-making, and impact represents the perceived ability to influence organizational outcomes.

In educational contexts, psychological empowerment has been consistently associated with positive professional outcomes. Empowered teachers tend to demonstrate higher levels of engagement, innovation, and commitment, as well as improved classroom performance. In particular, psychological empowerment enhances teachers' capacity to adapt to dynamic classroom environments and manage complex instructional demands.

Within the field of special education, psychological empowerment becomes even more critical due to the nature of the work. Teachers in this field are required to address diverse student needs, often involving behavioral, emotional, and cognitive challenges. Consequently, a strong sense of competence and impact is essential for maintaining motivation and effectiveness.

Empirical studies support the importance of psychological empowerment in educational settings. For instance, [3] found that psychological empowerment significantly predicts work engagement, which in turn enhances performance outcomes. Similarly, [4] demonstrated that empowerment is positively associated with emotional functioning and job satisfaction among professionals in high-demand environments. In the Arab context, Abdul Latif (2020) reported that psychological empowerment contributes to emotional innovation and adaptive decision-making among teachers.

Despite these findings, most studies have focused on the direct outcomes of empowerment, such as performance and satisfaction, with limited attention to its role in shaping emotional processes.

Emotional Creativity

Emotional creativity is a relatively recent construct introduced by [5], referring to the ability to experience and express emotions in novel, authentic, and effective ways. Unlike emotional intelligence, which emphasizes understanding and regulation, emotional creativity focuses on the generation of original emotional responses.

The construct consists of three dimensions:

- Originality (novel emotional expression)
- Flexibility (adaptive emotional responses across contexts)
- Effectiveness (functional and appropriate emotional expression)

In educational settings, emotional creativity plays a crucial role in shaping teacher–student interactions and classroom climate. Teachers who possess high emotional creativity are better able to respond to students' emotional needs, manage conflicts, and create supportive learning environments.

In special education contexts, emotional creativity is par-

ticularly important due to the diversity of emotional and behavioral challenges encountered. Teachers must frequently adapt their emotional responses to meet individual student needs, requiring both flexibility and innovation.

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of emotional creativity in promoting psychological well-being and adaptive functioning. Moanes (2018) found that emotional creativity is positively associated with self-esteem among teachers, while Al-Hajri and Al-Kharafi (2023) reported a relationship between emotional creativity and quality of life. These findings suggest that emotional creativity contributes not only to professional effectiveness but also to personal well-being.

Relationship Between Psychological Empowerment and Emotional Creativity

The relationship between psychological empowerment and emotional creativity can be understood through the integration of motivational and cognitive-emotional frameworks.

From the perspective of self-determination theory, psychological empowerment enhances intrinsic motivation by fulfilling basic psychological needs such as competence and autonomy. Intrinsically motivated individuals are more likely to engage in creative processes, including emotional expression.

Similarly, positive psychology emphasizes the role of positive internal states in expanding cognitive and emotional capacities. According to [6] broaden-and-build theory, positive psychological states—such as empowerment—broaden individuals' thought–action repertoires, enabling greater flexibility and creativity.

Empirical evidence supports this relationship. Studies have shown that psychological empowerment is associated with innovation, engagement, and adaptive behavior, all of which are closely related to emotional creativity. However, direct empirical investigation of the relationship between psychological empowerment and emotional creativity remains limited.

Research Gap

Despite the growing body of research on psychological empowerment and emotional creativity, several gaps remain:

- Most studies examine these constructs independently
- Few studies investigate their direct relationship
- Limited research focuses on special education teachers
- There is a lack of studies integrating both constructs within the Arab educational context.

This gap highlights the need for research that examines how psychological empowerment influences emotional creativity, particularly in emotionally demanding professions such as special education.

While previous studies have established the importance of psychological empowerment in enhancing motivation and performance [3,4] and others have highlighted the role of emotional creativity in promoting psychological well-being (Moanes, 2018), limited research has examined the interaction between these constructs. Moreover, existing studies have largely focused on general education settings, with minimal attention to the unique demands of special education. This lack of integration highlights a critical gap that the present study seeks to address by examining how psychological empowerment contributes to emotional creativity within a specialized educational context.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive correlational-comparative design to examine the relationship between psychological empowerment and emotional creativity. This design allows for:

- Identifying relationships between variables.
- Examining differences across demographic groups.
- Assessing predictive relationships.
- The use of both correlational and comparative approaches provides a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Population and Sample

The study population consisted of special education female teachers in Riyadh. A sample of 150 teachers was selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure representation across different age groups.

This sampling method enhances the generalizability of the findings and reduces sampling bias.

Instruments

Psychological Empowerment Scale

Based on Spreitzer's (1995) model

Adapted by Akar (2013)

24 items across four dimensions

Emotional Creativity Scale

Based on Averill's theory

Developed by Al-Hamdani (2014)

30 items across three dimensions

Validity Procedures

Content validity was established through expert evaluation, ensuring that items accurately represent the constructs. Construct validity was assessed through internal consistency correlations, confirming that items are appropriately related to their respective dimensions.

Reliability

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha:

- **Psychological Empowerment:** α = 0.908
- **Emotional Creativity:** α = 0.936

These values indicate high internal consistency.

Data Collection

Data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed to participants. Ethical considerations were observed, including informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation.

Statistical Analysis

The following statistical methods were used:

- Pearson correlation → relationships
- ANOVA → age differences
- Kruskal–Wallis → marital status
- Multiple regression → prediction

These methods were selected to align with the research objectives and ensure accurate analysis.

Results

Correlation Analysis

To examine the relationship between psychological empowerment and emotional creativity, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated.

Variable	Originality	Flexibility	Effectiveness	Total Emotional Creativity
Meaningfulness	.364**	.482**	.492**	.478**
Autonomy	.319**	.406**	.451**	.413**
Competence	.429**	.506**	.517**	.504**
Impact	.401**	.467**	.522**	.491**
Total Empowerment	.451**	.546**	.584**	.555**
Note. **p < .01				

Table 1: Correlation Matrix Between Psychological Empowerment and Emotional Creativity (N = 150)

As shown in Table 1, all dimensions of psychological empowerment are positively and statistically significantly correlated with emotional creativity and its sub-dimensions ($p < .01$). The correlation coefficients range from moderate to strong ($r = .319–.584$), indicating a consistent positive relationship between the variables. The strongest association was observed between total psychological empowerment and effectiveness ($r = .584$), while the weakest was between autonomy and originality ($r = .319$).

Age Differences (ANOVA)

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine differences in psychological empowerment across age groups.

Dimension	F	p	η^2
Meaningfulness	1.274	.283	.017
Autonomy	2.318	.102	.031
Competence	1.526	.221	.020
Impact	3.634	.029*	.048
Total Empowerment	3.050	.050*	.041
Note. *p < .05. η^2 = effect size			

Table 2: One-Way ANOVA Results for Psychological Empowerment by Age Group (N = 150)

As shown in Table 2, no statistically significant differences were found across age groups for meaningfulness, autonomy, or competence ($p > .05$). However, statistically significant differences were observed in the impact dimension ($F = 3.634$, $p < .05$) and the total psychological empowerment score ($F = 3.050$, $p = .050$). These findings suggest that age is associated with differences in perceived impact and overall empowerment.

Post Hoc (Scheffé)

A Scheffé post hoc test was conducted to identify the spe-

cific group differences.

Comparison	Result
36–40 vs 31–35	Significant (p < .05)
Other comparisons	Not significant

Table 3: Scheffé Post Hoc Comparisons for Age Differences in Psychological Empowerment

As shown in Table 3, the post hoc analysis indicates that the significant differences in psychological empowerment were primarily between teachers aged 36–40 and those aged 31–35. No statistically significant differences were found among the remaining age groups.

Emotional Creativity Differences

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine differences in emotional creativity across age groups.

Dimension	F	p	η²
Originality	.154	.857	.002
Flexibility	.271	.763	.004
Effectiveness	1.363	.259	.018
Total Emotional Creativity	.790	.456	.011
Note. η² = effect size			

Table 4: One-Way ANOVA Results for Emotional Creativity by Age Group (N = 150)

As shown in Table 4, no statistically significant differences were found in emotional creativity or its dimensions across age groups (p > .05). This indicates that emotional creativity remains stable regardless of age.

Regression Analysis

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine whether psychological empowerment dimensions predict emotional creativity.

Predictor	Significance
Competence	Significant (p < .01)
Impact	Significant (p < .01)
Meaningfulness	Not significant
Autonomy	Not significant

Table 5: Regression Analysis Predicting Emotional Creativity from Psychological Empowerment

As shown in Table 5, competence and impact were found to be significant predictors of emotional creativity, whereas meaningfulness and autonomy were not statistically significant predictors. These results indicate that perceived ability and influence play a more critical role in predicting emotional creativity among teachers.

Socioeconomic Analysis

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between psychological empowerment and emotional creativity among special education female teachers in Riyadh. The findings revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between all dimensions of psychological empowerment and emotional creativity, as well as the predictive role of competence and impact. These findings are discussed in light of theoretical frameworks and previous empirical studies.

Relationship Between Psychological Empowerment and Emotional Creativity

The results demonstrated significant positive correlations between psychological empowerment and emotional creativity (r = .319–.584), indicating that teachers who perceive themselves as empowered are more capable of generating flexible, original, and effective emotional responses. This finding is consistent with [4], who reported a positive relationship between psychological empowerment and emotional functioning. It also aligns with [3], who found that empowerment enhances engagement and adaptive performance among employees.

This finding can be explained through self-determination theory, which posits that individuals who experience autonomy and competence are more intrinsically motivated. Intrinsic motivation, in turn, enhances creative processes, including emotional expression. Teachers who feel capable and in control of their work environment are more likely to experiment with new emotional responses and adapt effectively to complex classroom situations.

From a positive psychology perspective, psychological empowerment represents a positive internal state that broadens cognitive and emotional capacities [6]. This broadening effect enables individuals to access a wider range of emotional responses, thereby enhancing emotional creativity.

In the context of special education, this relationship becomes particularly important. Teachers are frequently required to respond to unpredictable student behaviors and emotionally charged situations. Psychological empowerment provides them with the confidence and flexibility needed to navigate these challenges, resulting in more

adaptive emotional responses. These findings extend existing research by demonstrating that psychological empowerment not only influences performance outcomes but also plays a critical role in shaping emotional processes, particularly in high-demand professional contexts such as special education.

Predictive Role of Competence and Impact

The regression analysis revealed that competence and impact significantly predict emotional creativity, while meaningfulness and autonomy do not. This finding is consistent with [7] theory of self-efficacy, which emphasizes the role of perceived competence in shaping behavior and performance. It also aligns with previous empirical studies indicating that individuals with higher self-efficacy are more likely to engage in innovative and adaptive behaviors.

This finding highlights the importance of functional empowerment components:

- Competence (self-efficacy) enables teachers to trust their abilities and engage in creative emotional expression without fear of failure.
- Impact reflects the perception of influence, which increases engagement and encourages proactive behavior.

These results are consistent with [7] theory of self-efficacy, which emphasizes the role of perceived competence in shaping behavior and performance. Teachers who believe in their capabilities are more likely to adopt innovative strategies, including emotional responses.

In contrast, meaningfulness and autonomy did not significantly predict emotional creativity. This may be explained by:

- High baseline levels of meaningfulness among teachers.
- Structural constraints limiting autonomy in educational systems.

Thus, not all dimensions of empowerment contribute equally to emotional creativity. However, this result contrasts with some previous studies that identified autonomy as a significant predictor of creative behavior. This discrepancy may be explained by contextual constraints within educational systems, where teachers' autonomy is often limited by institutional policies and standardized curricula.

Age Differences in Psychological Empowerment

The findings showed significant differences across age groups in the impact dimension and total psychological empowerment, favoring older teachers. This finding is consistent with organizational research suggesting that professional experience enhances individuals' perceived influence and confidence in decision-making processes. Older teachers may develop stronger professional identities, which contribute to higher levels of perceived impact.

This can be attributed to:

- Greater professional experience
- Increased confidence in decision-making
- Higher levels of organizational influence
- Older teachers may have developed stronger professional identities and greater familiarity with institutional systems, enabling them to perceive a higher level of impact.

Absence of Age Differences in Emotional Creativity

No significant differences were found in emotional creativity across age groups, suggesting that emotional creativity is not dependent on demographic factors. This finding supports previous research indicating that emotional creativity is relatively independent of demographic variables and is more closely related to psychological and cognitive factors such as emotional awareness and flexibility.

This indicates that emotional creativity is more closely related to:

- Emotional awareness
- Cognitive flexibility
- Learned psychological skills

This finding aligns with previous research suggesting that emotional creativity is relatively stable across demographic variables.

Absence of Differences by Marital Status

The absence of significant differences based on marital status suggests that:

- Professional and psychological factors are more influential than personal variables.
- Emotional creativity and empowerment are shaped primarily by workplace experiences.

This result reinforces the idea that professional and organizational factors play a more significant role in shaping psychological empowerment and emotional creativity than personal or social variables. It challenges assumptions that social factors significantly influence emotional functioning in professional contexts.

Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to the literature by:

- Integrating psychological empowerment and emotional creativity into a unified framework
- Extending positive psychology applications in educational contexts
- Providing empirical evidence within the under-researched field of special education

Practical Implications

The findings have important implications for educational practice:

Training programs should focus on enhancing:

- Teacher competence
- Decision-making involvement

Educational institutions should:

- Foster supportive environments
- Increase teachers' perceived impact

Limitations and Future Research

Limitations include:

- Cross-sectional design
- Restricted sample (Riyadh only)
- Self-report measures

Future research should:

- Use longitudinal designs
- Include diverse samples
- Examine mediating variables such as emotional intelligence

Conclusion

This study provides empirical evidence for the significant relationship between psychological empowerment and emotional creativity among special education teachers. The findings demonstrate that teachers who perceive themselves as competent and influential are more capable of generating adaptive and innovative emotional responses.

Among the dimensions of psychological empowerment, competence and impact emerged as the strongest predictors of emotional creativity, highlighting the importance of self-efficacy and perceived influence in shaping emotional functioning. These results emphasize that emotional creativity is not merely a personality trait but a skill that can be developed through psychological and professional support.

The absence of significant differences across demographic variables further suggests that emotional creativity is a universal capacity that can be enhanced through targeted interventions rather than being determined by age or social factors.

From a practical perspective, the study underscores the need for educational institutions to adopt empowerment-based approaches that enhance teachers' confidence, autonomy, and influence. Such approaches can lead to improved emotional adaptability, better classroom management, and ultimately more effective teaching outcomes.

In conclusion, fostering psychological empowerment among special education teachers represents a promising strategy for enhancing emotional creativity and improving both teacher well-being and student learning experiences.

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