



Moral Intelligence and its Relationship with Professional Performance among Intellectual Education Teachers in Primary School

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The research objectives of this work are: (1) to investigate the relationship between moral intelligence and professional performance among intellectual education teachers at primary schools in Al-Ahsa, Saudi Arabia, and (2) to draw comparisons between male and female teachers in terms of moral intelligence and professional performance. The data was collected from a sample of 191 male and female teachers at primary schools in Al-Ahsa, Saudi Arabia, in 2022. The moral intelligence scale and professional performance scale were applied to participants and data were analyzed using professional performance; Pearson correlation coefficient; and T-test. The results revealed several findings: (1) there is a significant positive relationship between the scores of the study sample according to the moral intelligence scale and their scores according to the professional performance scale, and (2) there are significant differences between male and female teachers in terms of both moral intelligence and professional performance, particularly among female teachers.

Keywords: moral intelligence, professional performance, intellectual education, primary school teachers, gender differences

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are the cornerstone of the education process in our institutions. Therefore, preparing teachers scientifically, psychologically, socially, and morally while continuously developing these aspects is essential to qualify them to fulfill their role in preparing and educating students effectively. Good teaching requires a combination of factors, such as passion, mastery of content, and knowledge and skills in teaching (Conti, 2002). Thus, preparing intellectual education teachers is particularly important

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because of the unique needs of this category of students. When discussing teacher preparation, addressing ethical aspects becomes crucial, especially for intellectual education teachers.

Providing a suitable school environment for teachers that caters to their psychological, social, and physical needs, including the necessary preparations, equipment, management systems, and supervision, plays a crucial role in developing their professional performance. This, in turn, creates an appropriate atmosphere that promotes psychological comfort for teachers (Zhang & Wu, 2016). However, the moral aspect of a teacher is no less important than the other aspects. We recognize that the school and society have many roles that help teachers carry out their job tasks effectively and develop their professional performance. At the same time, teachers also have responsibilities that contribute to their professional growth, and the most crucial of these are the ethical aspect and adherence to moral values and principles. Such ethical values are expressed through the teacher's moral intelligence, reflecting their behavior and interactions with students with intellectual disabilities.

Discussing the ethical aspects that intellectual education teachers must possess highlights a crucial and necessary aspect that all human beings should have, regardless of their profession or job. When teaching individuals with intellectual disabilities, ethical aspects become particularly important, as these students have unique characteristics and needs that require love, kindness, and attention, in addition to education, training, rehabilitation, and other psychological and material needs. Possessing ethical values would positively impact a teacher's performance with their students, which, in turn, contributes to increasing students' enthusiasm for education and achievement.

A teacher's moral behavior should align with the prevailing moral standards and values of the society they live in. Such behavior should be based on accepted moral principles. De Brito (2014) explains that "moral sentiments", or the feelings associated with moral assessments, link moral values with human behavior. This concept explains the impact of psychological, social, and ethical aspects on a teacher's professional performance, which is supported by several studies, such as Garwood et al.'s (2018), Sakalli Demirok's (2017), and Al-Hiyari and Al-Bairat's (2017). These studies demonstrate the importance of moral intelligence among teachers, which is defined as an individual's ability to distinguish between right and wrong (Al-Taie & Al-Dhabawi, 2017).

When an intellectual education teacher possesses sufficient moral intelligence, including dimensions such as kindness and empathy, conscience, self-control, respect, tolerance, and justice, it positively impacts their professional performance towards students with intellectual disabilities. This results in an increased effort by the teacher in educating these students, leading to positive feelings from the students towards their teacher. Such positive feelings can motivate students to learn, academic achievement, and psychological and social development. Therefore, the current study aims to identify the relationship between moral intelligence and professional performance among intellectual education teachers in Al-Ahsa Governorate, Saudi Arabia.

Emerging research on intellectual education teachers has highlighted various psychological and social problems and pressures that they encounter while teaching students with disabilities, which may affect their professional performance. One of the most crucial aspects impacting their professional roles is moral intelligence, given its significance for guiding intellectual education teachers' behavior toward their students with intellectual disabilities. When intellectual education teachers lack an appropriate level of moral intelligence and the necessary dimensions, such as compassion, empathy, conscience, self-control, respect, tolerance, and justice, it may negatively impact their teaching performance, interactions with students, parents, co-workers, school administration, and professional development. This negative impact could also affect the motivation and enthusiasm of these students towards education, hindering the achievement of the desired goals of educational institutions and their students.

Several research studies conducted on intellectual education teachers have revealed that these teachers encounter numerous psychological and social factors while performing their functional roles in teaching intellectually disabled students. For example, studies conducted by Garwood et al. (2018), Sakalli Demirok (2017), and Al-Hiyari and Al-Bairat (2017) have identified such factors which may negatively impact their professional performance within the schools and centers they work in, as well as their attitudes towards their students and the teaching profession in the field of intellectual education. Such negative impacts could affect the psychological and social development of their students, in addition to their academic and rehabilitation aspects.

Based on the above, the present study aims to answer the following main question: What is the relationship between moral intelligence and professional performance among intellectual education teachers at the primary schools in Al-Ahsa Governorate, Saudi Arabia?

This main question is further supported by the following sub-questions: To what extent is there a relationship between the scores of the study sample on the moral intelligence and professional performance scales? To what extent do the moral intelligence scores differ between male and female teachers? To what extent do the professional performance scores differ between male and female teachers?

Moral Intelligence

Moral intelligence is defined as a collection of moral characteristics that help individuals to identify right and wrong and to translate theoretical knowledge and emotional responses into behavioral outputs of moral worth (Abu Romi & Al-Khalidi, 2017). It is also known as the capacity of an individual to distinguish between right and wrong, exercise self-control, empathize with and show sympathy for others' emotions, follow their conscience, be tolerant of others, and judge them with justice and fairness (Ahmed & Abdo, 2017). Mahmoud (2016) defines it as the ability of an individual to do what is right in an ethical manner without causing harm to others. Additionally, moral intelligence is the ability to apply moral principles to an individual's values, goals, and actions (Olusola & Samson, 2015). Al-Laithy et al. (2015) define it as the capacity of an individual to comprehend right and wrong, solve problems, achieve goals, and act in different situations in accordance with society's standards and ethics.

Moral intelligence is also characterized as handling moral information and regulating oneself to achieve desired moral outcomes (De Brito, 2014). Furthermore, it is defined as the capacity to distinguish between right and wrong based on the principles followed in society (Beheshtifar et al., 2011). In this regard, the present study defines moral intelligence as a collection of moral abilities that assist the intellectual education teacher in aligning their actions with the prevalent moral norms of society. This encompasses expressing moral capabilities with kindness, sympathy, conscience, self-control, respect, tolerance, and justice.

Manifestations of moral intelligence

Abu Romi and Al-Khalidi (2017) suggest that the expressions of moral intelligence and its competencies can be narrowed down to justice, responsibility (self-control), empathy (sympathy), conscience, respect, tolerance, and modesty. Moreover, Van Thiel and Van Delden (2014) assert that ethical conduct must be guided by a set of moral standards within the group that the individual is part of, meaning that it is linked to the prevailing moral beliefs of the society in which they reside.

Ahmed and Abdo (2017) outline that the elements of moral intelligence encompass empathy, conscience, self-control, respect, kindness, tolerance, and fairness. These virtues aid individuals in confronting moral challenges and pressures encountered throughout their lives, thereby cultivating moral qualities that enable them to make ethical decisions, act appropriately in situations, and solve problems in an ethical manner (Al-Helou & Sobha, 2015). In this context, Muhammad and Al-Safadi (2016) emphasize the significance of ethics in safeguarding societies from all harmful factors and fostering cohesive communities built on the principles of truth and virtue. Similarly, Christen and Alfano (2014) highlight the importance of ethical conduct among people and morality's role in regulating social interactions. Noncompliance with moral standards may lead to dissatisfaction among others, emphasizing the value of ethical behavior in organizing relationships with others in various societal institutions such as work, school, and university. Therefore, moral intelligence refers to an individual's awareness and capacity to regulate their behavior responsibly, aligning with the prevailing moral principles and values of society to achieve psychological and social compatibility, thereby exhibiting a high level of moral intelligence (Saleh, 2014).

The professional performance of intellectual education teachers

The professional performance of a teacher is impacted by numerous factors, such as those related to their workplace or school, as well as societal factors in all its aspects, including the individual teacher's fulfillment of job responsibilities (Samii, 2018). It is also defined as the degree to which an individual attains and completes their job-related tasks, reflecting how they satisfy their job requirements (Al-Zeyoudi, 2018). This encompasses the activities, actions, and practices undertaken to accomplish desired performance in their job while ensuring the necessary resources are available to efficiently complete required work to achieve predetermined objectives (Al-Otaibi, 2017). Furthermore, it involves all forms of behavior a teacher exhibits, expressed through activities and practices that enable them to fulfill their educational tasks and roles to achieve predetermined goals (Al-Hussein, 2017).

Based on this, the present study defines professional performance as the extent to which intellectual education teachers fulfill their educational and pedagogical obligations as teachers, including their practices and activities related to educating students with intellectual disabilities. This is evaluated through their teaching performance, professional social relations, and professional development.

The relationship of moral intelligence with the professional performance of intellectual education teachers

Professional performance is influenced by various factors, including the absence of specific goals, lack of participation in performance evaluation, varying levels of performance, job dissatisfaction, and administrative inactivity (Samii, 2018). Samii categorizes these factors into external factors, such as political, legal, economic, and social factors, and internal factors, such as the human element, management and nature of work, organizational climate, and technical job-related factors. In this regard, Chan (2017) emphasizes the significance of enhancing the professional performance of teachers while helping school principals and teachers maintain their professional performance by participating in professional development programs and creating a suitable environment for work in schools.

Various factors affect teachers' personality and professional performance, highlighting the significance of providing them with a conducive environment to enhance their professional development. In addition, teachers, particularly those teaching students with intellectual disabilities, must possess several important qualities and traits, including moral qualities and behaviors. This is due to the unique nature of this student population, who require teachers to understand and sympathize with their unique circumstances, which, in turn, affects the teacher's performance when interacting with and educating these students. Lyons and Higgins (2014) emphasize the importance of emotional connections between teachers, students, and parents in creating a safe and supportive school environment for children's education.

Kleiner (2012) emphasizes that teachers must have a passion and enthusiasm for their teaching topics to effectively engage students. Teachers presenting lessons without enthusiasm can negatively impact students' interest in the topic. For teachers of students with intellectual disabilities, it is especially important to possess emotional and spiritual aspects towards their job as educators. This category of students requires love and attention, and teachers play a crucial role in their lives, particularly during the education phase. Therefore, teachers must demonstrate an appropriate level of care and attention toward students with intellectual disabilities.

Hence, efforts should be made to enhance teachers' understanding and passion for the subjects they teach so that students can sense positive emotions from their teachers. Howard (2018) emphasizes the importance of treating individuals with special needs naturally and positively, as this can positively influence their perception of themselves. Students with intellectual disabilities have the right to receive education and appropriate care, with access to all necessary resources and qualified teachers (Chase, 2017).

Zhang and Wu (2016) highlight the correlation between special education teachers' spiritual values and their sense of psychological well-being, which is reflected in their performance in educating children with special needs. This, in turn, contributes to increased learning and achievement for this group of children.

Intellectual education teachers' ethical and moral behavior is crucial in their professional performance in providing care and education to their students. This is evident in the impact of their professional performance on various psychological and social aspects, particularly Moral Intelligence, which positively influences student achievement. Students are affected by their teachers' emotions toward them, including kindness, sympathy, conscientiousness, attention, respect, justice, and tolerance. Hence, this study examines the relationship between moral intelligence and professional performance among intellectual education teachers, given its significance for teachers, particularly those working with students with intellectual disabilities. Educational institutions must provide an appropriate educational climate for teachers and students, contributing to achieving desired goals in raising and educating students with intellectual disabilities. Some studies suggest that students' achievement is impacted by their teachers' professional performance, highlighting the importance of developing professional performance among teachers and studying all factors and variables that affect it.

Previous studies about intellectual, educational teachers

In 2018, Bozgeyikli conducted a study to predict the quality of life of special education teachers based on their psychological needs. The study included a sample of 238 special education teachers in Kayseri. The results showed a negative correlation between the quality of professional life and the psychological needs of the teachers. Additionally, the study indicated that the levels of psychological needs could be used to predict the quality of professional life.

Garwood et al. (2018) conducted a study to identify the reasons for poor performance among special education teachers in rural areas. The study sample comprised 120 special education teachers. The results indicated that behavior management and psychological burnout were contributing factors. The study also found that having good working relationships with co-workers and administrators, as well as building strong relationships with students, contributed to the teachers' enjoyment of an appropriate work-life balance and good mental health. The study revealed gender differences in professional performance, with female teachers outperforming their male counterparts.

Mrstik et al. (2018) conducted a study to examine the impact of professional development on the retention of novice special education teachers. The study involved the use of modeling, specifically short videos, during the teachers' rest times. The study's results revealed that professional development programs supported by graphic modeling effectively improved the job performance of special education teachers.

Bettini et al. (2017) conducted a study to identify the preparation of highly effective special education teachers and its impact on student achievement. The study was conducted in a school in Victoria, which was taken as a sample. The study's results

highlighted the need to improve the overall performance of special education teachers in the region.

Conley and You (2017) conducted a study to identify the reasons behind the departure of many special education teachers from the field. The study focused on the impact of administrative support and involved a sample of 2060 special education teachers in the United States of America. The results of the study indicated that administrative support and the effectiveness of the teachers' team had a direct and significant impact on the intentions of special education teachers to leave their jobs and search for alternative employment. The study also found statistically significant differences in the intention to leave the special education teaching profession among the sample members, with less experienced teachers being more likely to leave.

Al-Hayari and Al-Bairat (2017) conducted a study to develop ethical standards for the special education profession in Jordan based on international ethical standards. The study results showed statistically significant differences in the perceived importance of ethical standards among the study sample based on gender, type of institution, experience, and type of disability. The differences favored the teachers in terms of gender, experience, and type of institution and disability.

Sakalli Demirok (2017) conducted a study to identify the relationship between job satisfaction and professional commitment among special education teachers. The study involved a sample of 60 male and female teachers from special education laboratories in Cyprus. The study's results indicated a positive, statistically significant relationship between job satisfaction and professional commitment among the study sample of special education teachers.

Al-Omairen (2016) conducted a study to identify the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance among workers in special education centers in Jordan. The study results showed no statistically significant differences in the average scores of the study sample members in both emotional intelligence and job performance based on gender, social status, number of years of experience, and job title. However, the results indicated a positive relationship and statistical significance between emotional intelligence, performance, and job performance among the study sample members of the special education laboratories.

Al-Fadhli (2015) conducted a study to identify the effect of job burnout on the job performance efficiency of special education teachers in Kuwait. The study sample included 111 special education teachers in Kuwait who completed a two-dimensional tool to measure job burnout and performance efficiency. The study results indicated a statistically significant inverse relationship between the scores of the study sample members on the job burnout dimension and the job performance efficiency dimension.

In 2013, Aliwa conducted a study investigating the relationship between social responsibility, professional adjustment, and life satisfaction among special education teachers. The study found a positive and statistically significant correlation between social responsibility and professional compatibility among the participants. Additionally, the results revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship

between social responsibility and life satisfaction. Furthermore, the study concluded no significant differences between male and female teachers regarding social responsibility, professional compatibility, and life satisfaction.

Several studies have been conducted on intellectual education teachers, as shown in the previous research presentation. Some of these studies focused on the quality of professional performance and development and their correlation with certain variables, including studies by Bozgeyikli (2018), Garwood et al. (2018), Mrstik et al. (2018), Bettini et al. (2017), Al-Amiri (2016), and Al-Fadhli (2015). On the other hand, other studies examined intellectual education teachers' ethical and personality traits, their attitudes toward students, and their role in professional performance. Examples of these studies include those conducted by Garwood et al. (2018), Al-Hiyari and Al-Bairat (2017), Sakalli Demirok (2017), and Aliwa (2013).

Based on the theoretical framework and previous research presented, the current researcher draws the following conclusions:

First, a limited number of studies have examined the relationship between moral intelligence and professional performance among intellectual education teachers. Therefore, the current study aims to investigate this relationship among a sample of intellectual education teachers in Al-Ahsa Governorate.

Second, most previous studies have used scales and questionnaires to measure moral and social intelligence and various personality traits. Some have used scales and questionnaires to measure professional performance among samples of intellectual education and special education teachers. In this study, the researcher will use the moral intelligence and professional performance scales to measure the degree of moral intelligence and professional performance among the study sample members of intellectual education teachers. The comparative descriptive approach will be used to verify the study hypotheses.

Considering the study problem, questions, significance, objectives, theoretical framework, and previous studies, the researcher formulated the following study hypotheses: 1) There is a positive and statistically significant correlation between the scores of intellectual education teachers on the moral intelligence scale and their scores on the professional performance scale; 2) There are significant differences in the mean scores of male and female teachers on the moral intelligence scale; and 3) There are significant differences in the mean scores of male and female teachers on the professional performance scale.

METHOD

The present study employs a descriptive, correlational, and comparative approach to investigate the relationship between moral intelligence and professional performance among teachers of intellectual education at the primary schools in Al-Ahsa Governorate, Saudi Arabia. It aims to verify this relationship and examine the differences between male and female teachers regarding their moral intelligence and professional performance.

The sample of the study

The study population comprised all intellectual education teachers at the primary schools in the Department of Education in Al-Ahsa Governorate, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The primary sample for the study consisted of 191 male and female teachers of intellectual education at the primary schools in the Department of Education in Al-Ahsa Governorate for the academic year 2022, with 102 male and 89 female teachers.

Methods

The following tools were used by the researcher in the current study: Moral Intelligence Scale (Al-Sayed, 2019): This scale consists of 45 paragraphs distributed across six main dimensions: kindness and empathy (eight paragraphs), conscience (seven paragraphs), self-control (eight paragraphs), respect (eight paragraphs), tolerance (seven paragraphs), and justice (seven paragraphs). The first, third, and fourth dimensions each contained eight items, while the second, fifth, and sixth dimensions each contained seven items. The scale was designed using a triple Likert scale (always, sometimes, rarely), where always was assigned three points, sometimes two points, and rarely one point.

Professional Performance Measure (Al-Sayed, 2019): This measure consists of 28 items distributed across three main dimensions: teaching performance (nine items), social-professional relations (nine items), and professional development (ten items). The scale uses a three-point Likert scale (always, sometimes, rarely), where always was assigned three points, sometimes two points, and rarely one point.

Procedure of the study

The researcher followed a set of procedural steps in preparing the current study. First, a literature review on the study variables was conducted, which included Arab and foreign references, studies, and standards to collect relevant scientific material and build a theoretical framework. Next, the moral intelligence and professional performance scales were applied to an initial sample of male and female intellectual education teachers at the primary schools in Al-Ahsa Governorate to standardize the scales. The validity and reliability of the measures were calculated using appropriate statistical methods. The primary study sample was then selected from teachers of intellectual education in the primary schools in Al-Ahsa Governorate, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The measures of moral intelligence and professional performance were applied to the main study sample, and the resulting quantitative data was unloaded into tables and processed statistically. The results were then interpreted and discussed in light of the study's theoretical framework and previous research. Based on the study's findings, the researcher proposed a set of educational recommendations and future research directions.

Statistical methods used in the study

In processing the data obtained from the tools used in the current study, the researcher used the following statistical methods: The internal consistency method was used to calculate the validity of the measures of moral intelligence and professional performance; the split-half method (Spearman-Brown) and Alpha Cronbach were used

to verify the stability of the measures of moral intelligence and professional performance; Pearson correlation coefficient; and T-test.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of checking the first hypothesis

This hypothesis states a positive and statistically significant relationship exists between the scores of intellectual education teachers in the study sample on the moral intelligence scale and their scores on the professional performance scale.

To verify the validity of this hypothesis, the researcher used the Pearson correlation coefficient to determine the significance of the relationship between the scores of intellectual education teachers in the study sample on the moral intelligence and professional performance scales. The following table illustrates the results.

Table 1

Correlation coefficients between the scores of the study sample in each of the measures of moral intelligence and professional performance (n = 191)

Dimensions	Kindness and sympathy	personal pronoun	Self-judgment	respect	tolerance	Justice	Total degree of moral intelligence
teaching performance	0.718**	0.760**	0.527**	0.669**	0.498**	0.439**	0.734**
Social relations	0.677**	0.608**	0.528**	0.702**	0.682**	0.414**	0.737**
professional development	0.461**	0.507**	0.397**	0.297**	0.301**	0.359**	0.483**
Overall score for professional performance	0.699**	0.714**	0.553**	0.608**	0.546**	0.466**	0.735**

**= function at 0.01. level *= a function at the 0.05. level Degrees of Freedom = (191 - 2)

It is evident from the table (Table 1) that there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between the scores of intellectual education teachers on all dimensions of the moral intelligence scale, as well as its total score, and their scores on all dimensions of the professional performance scale, as well as its total score, at a significance level of 0.01.

The results of checking the second hypothesis

The hypothesis states that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the moral intelligence scale, and the results are presented in Table 2. To test the validity of this hypothesis, the researcher utilized the T-test for independent groups to determine the significance of the differences between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the moral intelligence scale, and the following table illustrates the results.

Table 2
The significance of the differences between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the moral intelligence scale

The dimension	the sample	the number	mean scores	standard deviation	degrees of freedom	value (t)	Indication level
Kindness and sympathy.	Male teachers	102	21.303	2.646	189	6.468	0.000
	Female teachers	89	23.303	1.309			
personal pronoun	Male teachers	102	21.666	2.645	189	5.581	0.000
	Female teachers	89	23.370	1.219			
Self control.	Male teachers	102	20.686	2.493	189	2.443	0.015
	Female teachers	89	21.561	2.444			
Respect	Male teachers	102	21.902	2.773	189	4.646	0.000
	Female teachers	89	23.370	1.171			
Tolerance	Male teachers	102	20.941	2.606	189	2.564	0.011
	Female teachers	89	21.910	2.605			
Justice	Male teachers	102	21.627	2.532	189	3.243	0.001
	Female teachers	89	23.438	1.975			
The overall degree of moral intelligence	Male teachers	102	128.127	13.690	189	5.109	0.000
	Female teachers	89	136.955	9.468			

Table 2 shows that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of male and female teachers on all dimensions of the moral intelligence scale, as well as its total score, at a significance level of 0.01, except for the dimensions of self-control and tolerance, which were significant at the 0.05 level. The results indicate that all differences were in favor of the female teachers.

The results of the verification of the third hypothesis

The hypothesis proposes that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the professional performance scale, and Table 3 displays the results. To examine the validity of this hypothesis, the researcher conducted the T-test for independent groups to determine the significance of the differences between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the professional performance scale, and the following table illustrates the results.

Table 3

The significance of the differences between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the professional performance scale

The dimension	the sample	the number	mean scores	standard deviation	degrees of freedom	value t	Indication level
teaching performance	Male teachers	102	26.323	3.057	189	6.904	0.000
	Female teachers	89	28.842	1.691			
Social relations	Male teachers	102	27.019	3.011	189	3.547	0.000
	Female teachers	89	28.382	2.155			
professional development	Male teachers	102	25.019	4.664	189	3.394	0.001
	Female teachers	89	27.000	3.126			
Overall score for professional performance	Male teachers	102	78.326	9.201	189	5.226	0.000
	Female teachers	89	84.224	5.591			

Table 3 shows that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of male and female teachers on the dimensions of the professional performance scale, as well as its total score, at a significance level of 0.01. The results indicate that the mean scores of female teachers were significantly higher than those of male teachers.

DISCUSSION

The previous presentation of the study results clearly indicates a positive correlation between moral intelligence and professional performance among Intellectual Education teachers at a level of 0.01. This means that when a teacher possesses an appropriate level of moral intelligence, it positively impacts their professional performance. The results of this hypothesis demonstrate a positive relationship between all dimensions of the moral intelligence measure, including compassion, empathy, conscientiousness, self-control, respect, tolerance, and justice, and all dimensions of the professional performance scale, including its total score. The findings suggest that when intellectual education teachers possess these abilities or dimensions of moral intelligence, it impacts their professional performance in terms of teaching performance, professional social relations, and professional development. This indicates that the teacher's moral intelligence abilities contribute significantly to their performance while working with people with intellectual disabilities. It helps them distinguish their professional performance by treating their students with concern, kindness, tolerance, and conscience.

It is known that students with intellectual disabilities have distinctive characteristics that set them apart from their peers. They require more love, kindness, care, and a sense of security than others. Therefore, when intellectual education teachers possess moral intelligence abilities such as kindness, empathy, conscience, self-control, respect, tolerance, and justice, it helps them to interact with their students with intellectual disabilities appropriately. This positive interaction reflects on their professional performance during teaching and dealing with these students, their parents, co-workers, and the school or center they belong to. Additionally, possessing moral intelligence

contributes to developing their professional performance. This illustrates the correlation between the scores on the moral intelligence scale and the scores on the professional performance scale.

This finding aligns with Sakalli Demirok's study (2017) results, which discovered a positive correlation between job satisfaction and professional commitment among special education teachers in Cyprus. It also agrees with Al-Omaireen's study (2016), which found a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and job performance among workers in special education centers in Jordan. Furthermore, the results of this hypothesis are consistent with the findings of the Eliwa study (2013), which revealed a positive correlation between social responsibility, professional compatibility, and life satisfaction among special education teachers.

The study's second hypothesis revealed statistically significant differences between the average scores of male and female teachers on the Moral Intelligence scale and all its sub-dimensions, with female teachers scoring higher. The researcher attributes the higher moral intelligence of female teachers to their extensive experience in educating students with intellectual disabilities, similar to male teachers. However, female teachers may have the edge over their male counterparts in certain aspects related to the dimensions of moral intelligence, such as kindness and empathy, conscientiousness, self-control, justice, respect, and tolerance, due to their maternal affection and experience in dealing with children. This could positively affect their interaction with students with intellectual disabilities. These aspects may be more apparent in female teachers than in male teachers. These findings are consistent with the results of the study conducted by Al-Hiyari and Al-Bairat (2017), which found that female teachers have higher moral standards than male teachers. However, the results of this hypothesis differ from those of the Aliwa study (2013), which found no differences between male and female teachers in terms of social responsibility.

The study's third hypothesis showed statistically significant differences between the average scores of teachers on the professional performance scale and all its sub-dimensions, with female teachers scoring higher. This result aligns with the findings of the second hypothesis, which revealed statistically significant differences between male and female teachers in moral intelligence in favor of female teachers. Therefore, the existence of differences in professional performance between male and female teachers in favor of female teachers is a logical outcome, given the results of the previous two hypotheses.

On the other hand, the researcher attributes the results of the third hypothesis to the distinctive qualities of female teachers, such as maternal affection and experience in childcare. These qualities contribute to their high scores on the professional performance scale regarding teaching performance and their interactions with intellectually disabled children, socio-professional relationships with the children and their parents, school administration, and professional development. The superiority of female teachers over male teachers in moral intelligence gives them an advantage in professional performance, where moral intelligence and its dimensions, such as kindness and empathy, conscientiousness, self-control, justice, respect, and tolerance,

contribute to their teaching performance with intellectually disabled students, interactions with parents, managing their school or center, and professional social relations and development. These findings align with the conclusions of the Garwood et al. study (2018), which revealed statistically significant differences between male and female teachers in professional performance, with female teachers performing better. However, these results differ from those of the Al-Omaireen study (2016), which found no statistically significant differences in job performance between male and female special education teachers.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the possession of moral intelligence abilities—such as kindness, empathy, conscience, self-control, respect, tolerance, and justice—by intellectual education teachers significantly enhances their professional performance. This impact is evident across various facets of their role, including teaching effectiveness, interactions with students, colleagues, school management, and parents, as well as their overall professional development. The study reveals that female teachers demonstrate higher levels of both moral intelligence and professional performance compared to their male counterparts. This finding underscores a positive relationship between moral intelligence and professional success. The superior performance of female teachers in moral intelligence correlates with their enhanced professional performance, highlighting the importance of cultivating moral intelligence in educational settings. The evidence suggests that focusing on developing moral intelligence among teachers could lead to improved outcomes in teaching quality, professional relationships, and career growth. Therefore, integrating moral intelligence training into professional development programs for teachers could be highly beneficial.

Based on the results of the current study, the researcher recommends the following educational recommendations:

- Ethical criteria should be established for selecting intellectual education teachers, beginning from their university enrollment.
- Attention should be paid to intellectual education teachers' moral and personal aspects to ensure they are qualified to interact with their students.
- Special education departments should focus on educating intellectual education teachers on ethical and moral intelligence, given its significant impact on their interactions with students with intellectual disabilities.
- Special education departments should organize training programs to develop the moral intelligence skills of intellectual education teachers, contributing to their professional performance.
- Periodic evaluations of the moral intelligence capabilities of intellectual education teachers should be conducted to ensure that they possess the appropriate level of moral intelligence, consistent with their work with intellectually disabled students.

- Special education departments should focus on establishing a link between the personal aspects of teachers and their students' achievement levels.

In light of the study's results, the researcher suggests conducting the following research studies:

- Investigating the status of moral intelligence among intellectual education teachers in relation to specific variables.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of a counseling program in enhancing the moral intelligence levels of intellectual education teachers.
- Examining the relationship between certain environmental factors and moral intelligence among intellectual education teachers.

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