



A STUDY ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG EXECUTIVES OF SMES

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ABSTRACT :

Emotional intelligence is a cognitive ability which is separate but also associated to, general intelligence. Emotional intelligence includes emotional awareness, assertiveness, independence, self regard and self actualization. Stress is the body's physiological response to the stressor, and strain is the body's longer-term reaction to chronic stress. Occupational stress can affect your health when the stressors of the workplace exceed the employee's ability to have some control over their situation or to cope in other ways. This paper gives relationship between Emotional intelligence and Occupational stress of 61 post graduate Executives in a selected Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)



KEYWORDS : Human Resource Management, Emotional Intelligence, Occupational stress, Roll Stress and Job Stress.

INTRODUCTION

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE:

In 1964 the term "emotional intelligence" seems first to have appeared paper by Michael Beldoch¹, and in the 1966 paper by B. Leuner entitled Emotional intelligence and emancipation which appeared in the psychotherapeutic journal: Practice of child psychology and child psychiatry.²

The popularity of Emotional Intelligence (EI) has stemmed primarily from the suggestion that it underpins various aspects of performance and success that are not accounted for by other psychological constructs (such as intelligence and personality). One of the rapidly growing areas of interest with regard to EI is its role in the workplace. Traditionally the workplace has been considered to be a cold and rational environment, a place where there is no room for the experience or expression of emotions and in fact researchers fostered the belief that emotion is the anti-study of rationality' (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995³ ; Ashkanasy, Zerbe & Hartel, 2002⁴).

Many prominent researches have proved that we feel before we think and take action. This is also known as our survival nature. However, once you become aware of what one is feeling, the probability of successfully dealing with one's emotions is vastly improved. The ability to take a pause, step back, recognize and acknowledge what one's feeling allows one to exercise self-control and to adopt coping skills .An essential emotion

management strategy and practice is optimism and a positive attitude, the ability and trait to look for the positive in the negative. In other words, knowing how to deal constructively and positively with anger, negativity and failure is emotional management at its best.

OCCUPATIONAL STRESS:

Workplace stress and role stress stem from a wider phenomenon 'stress' which is a psychological construct that people may experience everyday (Quick et al., 1997⁵). It is a concept which is hard to avoid. The term stress has evolved over time and has long been recognized as an inevitable aspect of life.

Emanating from workplace stress, the stress induced due to roles performed by individuals as employees at workplace has been a critical organizational stressor (Kahn et al., 1964⁶; Srivastava, 2007⁷), the outcomes of which have been found to be costly to the organization (Fisher and Gitelson, 1983⁸).

Contemporary theories of stress have moved away from understanding the construct as either a response or as an external event, but rather view it as a dynamic interaction between the individual and their environment. Contemporary theories of stress, either explicitly or implicitly, recognise the central role of psychological processes (such as perception, cognition and emotion) in understanding (for example see Cox & Griffiths, 2010)⁹:

- how the individual recognises, experiences, and responds to stressful situations,
- how they attempt to cope with that experience, and
- how it might affect their physical, psychological and social health).

There are several key contemporary theories in the scientific literature that have helped to clarify the causes and mechanisms that underpin work-related stress. Many of these theories have been extensively researched and have been used to guide approaches to intervention.

Therefore, there is a need to establish the linkage between EI competencies and stress. The present study attempts to give relationship between Emotional intelligence and Occupational stress among post graduate executives in Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

REVIEWS:

Feyerherm & Rice (2002)¹⁰ investigated the relationship among a team's EI, the team leader's EI and team performance using three components in workplace namely: understanding emotion, managing emotion, and identifying emotions. The study assessed the EI and performance levels of customer service teams and their leaders. The three components of EI studied only understanding emotion and managing emotion positively correlated with some measure of team performance.

Manshor, A. T., Fontaine, R.; Choy, Chong Siong¹¹ (2003) - in their study examined the sources of occupational stress among Malaysian managers working in multi-national companies (MNCs). It was found that workloads, working conditions, and relationship at work were the main concern of the managers that lead to stress at the work place. The results also indicated that certain demographic variables do influence the level of stress among managers.

Kumar, S. And Rooprai, K. Y. (2009)¹² conducted an investigation to find out the role of emotional intelligence in managing stress and anxiety at workplace. The findings indicate that the low and high level of Emotional Intelligence establish relationship to some extent with stress and anxiety. Negative correlation of Emotional Intelligence with stress and Anxiety highlights that emotional intelligence will prove helpful tool in dealing with stress and anxiety at workplace.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM:

Factors of Emotional Intelligence in a personality are means to be effective socially in work place. Emotional Intelligent employee actively interacts with their coworkers. In the present study Emotional intelligence and Occupational stress of executives in Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) were measured and its relationship was identified.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

1. To measure Emotional intelligence of post graduate executives in selected SMEs.
2. To measure Occupational stress of post graduate executives in selected SMEs.
3. To find relationship between Emotional intelligence and Occupational stress of executives in selected SMEs.

NULL HYPOTHESIS

There is no relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Occupational Stress among post graduate executives in selected SMEs.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study was conducted in 10 selected SMEs located in the region of Puducherry, Southern part of India. The method used for the study is random sampling method. For the study 61 post graduate executives working in SMEs were used as samples. Executives were employees who work in supervising and managing cadre in SMEs. The emotional intelligent scale developed by Hyde, Pethe and Dhar (2002) was used to measure the level of emotional intelligence of the executives. In the same way to measure the Occupational stress of the executives Role stress scale developed by Pareek's (1981) was used.

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

From the total of 61 random samples 50 were male executives and 11 were female executives. Distributed and collected questionnaires from the executives. There are 10 variables in Emotional intelligent scale. Integrity, Self Development, Managing Relations, Self Motivation, Altruistic Behavior, Self Awareness, Empathy, Emotional Stability, Value Orientation and Commitment are those variables. These 10 variables consist of 34 items. Each respondent responded each item on a 5 point Likert scale.

Table 1
Emotional Intelligence – Selected SMEs

Emotional Intelligence	Male	Female	Total
Low	36	9	45
Medium	7	2	9
High	7	0	7
Total	50	11	61

Emotional Intelligence of 61 executives was shown in the above table. From the results it was indicated that 36 male and 9 female had low Emotional Intelligence. The executives in selected SMEs were found low in Emotional Intelligence.

There are 10 variables in the Occupational Stress Scale. Inter Role Distance, Role Stagnation, Role Expectation Conflict, Role Erosion, Role Overload, Role Isolation, Personal Inadequacy, Self Role Dependence, Role Ambiguity, Resource Inadequacy are the 10 variables consist of 50 items. 5 point Likert scale is used to measure each item.

Table 2
Occupational Stress – Selected SMEs

Occupational Stress	Male	Female	Total
Low	5	1	6
Medium	10	2	12
High	35	8	43
Total	50	11	61

indicated that 35 male and 8 female had high Occupational Stress. The executives in selected SMEs were found high in Occupational Stress.

Table 3
Two – tailed Correlation –Spearman's Rho

Correlations				
			Emotional Intelligence	Occupational Stress
Spearman's Rho	Emotional Intelligence	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.406
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	61	61
	Occupational Stress	Correlation Coefficient	-.406	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	61	61
** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed)				

From the above correlation table it is proved that there is a negative correlation between the Emotional Intelligence and Occupational Stress. Thus the Null Hypothesis is rejected and the Alternative Hypothesis is accepted. The executives who had low level of Emotional Intelligence were had higher level of Occupational Stress.

CONCLUSION:

The present study concluded when executives had low level of Emotional Intelligence then their level of Occupational was high. Stress is the result of less awareness on one's own emotions. From the results it is proved that Emotional Intelligence and Occupational Stress were negative in relationship. Low level Emotional Intelligence executives possess high and medium Occupational Stress. High level Emotional Intelligence executives experience low level of Occupational stress. In work place like SMEs executives gain higher EI though experience to control Occupational stress.

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