



A study on relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Coping Stress at Workplace

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ABSTRACT

Stress is a state of mental pressure which may cause psychological, physical, and behavioural problems. Dealing with stress at work-place in today's setting has taken prime importance. Therefore, knowing the sources of stress and the strategies to cope with the it are very important. Emotional Intelligence is one of the methods to deal with distress. Simply put, it is the ability to limit negative feelings of anger, stress and anxiety, and focus on positive feelings of patience, confidence and empathy. Emotional Intelligence acts as a buffer in work related outcomes as workers are stressed and insecure in work environment. The current study's goal was to determine the relationship between employees emotional intelligence and stress levels at workplace. For the study, a representative group of 50 employees were chosen working in Project team of Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (Refineries Division) out of total 200 employees. The standardised measures of

Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire and Perceived Stress Level Questionnaire, were utilised to collect answers using an online survey questionnaire. The Pearson correlation approach, t- statistics, ANOVA and Regression were used to examine the data. According to the study's results, there was significant negative relationship found between employees Emotional Intelligence (EI) and their stress levels at workplace. High EI meant employees are better prepared to cope-up with stress. Further study results also showed that employees emotional Intelligence and their stress levels were individualistic in nature rather gender specific.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Stress*

INTRODUCTION

Stress in today's world leads to deep psychological effect which can be displayed as irritability or fatigue or exhaustion, insomnia, hostility, loss of self-control, sadness, devoid of focus, or problems related to memory, or more. Persisted worry will lead to additional problems, such as depression, anxiety, or burnout. However, one need stress management techniques to improve one's mental health and quality of life. Previous research has explored that stress emanates from work which emanates excessive demands and pressures.

Selye (1956) explained stress as a physiological response pattern and further suggested a theory on General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) model. GAS model has three ideas explained below for stress; response as a defence strategy. Response has three stages: Alarm, Resistance and Exhaustion. Stress if continued and serious, it may cause illnesses.

Lazarus (1956) suggested that there were two types of stress; eustress or good stress and distress or negative stress.

Eustress or Positive stress effects the individuals positively. It motivates and radiates good energy, increases ability to manage, Enhance performance.

Distress or Negative stress effects the individual negatively. It acts as a demotivator, brings anger, anxiety and depression, reduces ability to manage, increases fear of unknown.

Stress at Workplace

Stress at work is a contemporary epidemic that lowers wellbeing and reduces productivity. Many things might cause it, such as an overwhelming workload, pressed deadlines, disagreements, or a lack of assistance. Burnout, anxiety, and even depression are among the severe consequences to one's physical and emotional well-being. Prioritizing open communication, providing tools for stress management, and establishing supportive work environments must be top priorities for employers. Workers must also learn how to set limits, take care of themselves, and ask for assistance when necessary. Managing stress at work involves more than just increasing output; it also involves protecting people's health and well-being and creating an environment where everyone can work in a fulfilling and sustainable environment.

Emotional Intelligence

Effective interpersonal relationships and personal development are predicated on emotional intelligence (EI). Empathy includes the capacity to identify, comprehend, and control one's own feelings as well as those of others. People with high emotional intelligence (EI) are skilled at handling social situations, settling disputes, and encouraging teamwork. They are self-aware, able to identify their advantages and disadvantages without being overcome by ego. They also demonstrate empathy, paying attention to the thoughts and feelings of others out of a sincere care. People who develop their emotional intelligence are better able to communicate, make better

decisions, and are more resilient overall, which makes their personal and professional lives more satisfying.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Previous studies have found that stress levels had statistically significant relationship with emotional intelligence (EI). Pau and Croucher (2003) explored the EI and stress in undergraduates and an inverse relationship between EI and perceived stress was found.

Montes-Berges and Augusto, (2007) findings carried with nurses and nursing students led to the conclusion that EI was a domain set which reduces the consequences coming out of negative stress.

Lopes and Salovey (2004) study showed that individuals with higher EI used problem-focused coping style.

Lam and Kirby (2002) investigated the idea that EI was correlated with greater individual performance. Saras et al. (2009) analysed the link between EI and stress levels among group of managers. Correlation and regression results showed that that stress was a subset of EI. Kumar and Rooprai (2009) did a study to find out how EI explained the variation in managing stress. Correlation, results showed that variation in stress was being accounted by Emotional Intelligence.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

To study the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Stress of the Employees.

Hypothesis

- H0: There will be no relationship between Emotional intelligence and stress levels.

- H1: There exists a correlation for the EI and Stress levels in the workers.

Sample

Representative sample of 50 participants (25% of Total Population of 200 workers of Project department (who are under constant work pressure) of Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (Refineries Division), and are put at different levels of Organisation.

Variables

Dependent Variable: Stress Levels of Employees

Independent Variable: EI amounts of Employee

Tools

- ***Perceived Stress Scale*** : The Perceived Stress Scale is one of the standard tools for the assessment of stress. The tool, created in 1983, stays a popular choice for helping us in understanding how different conditions affect feelings and stress felt by an individual. The scale of questions usually tell about the feelings and thoughts of the interviewees during the previous month. A 10- item scale uses 5- point Likert-Scale to find out the score.
- ***The Global Emotional Intelligence Test***: The test includes 40 questions of the Global EI Capability Assessment tool. Goleman's four quadrant EI shows the result. It is a psychological forced-choice test and accordingly respondents pick one statement out of pair of statements that depicts them properly.

Statistical Tools

Data analysis was carried out using SPSS package being the powerful tool for analysing data in different combinations and it is compatible with the Personal Computer. Data entry was done in SPSS for all the 50 respondents. Various statistical analysing techniques like T-tests, ANOVA, Correlation / Regression and descriptive statistics were used.

	Gender		Mean	Standard	Standard
		No	Value	Deviation	Error Mean
EI	0	26	30.4615	4.15914	.81567
	1	24	27.2083	4.09644	.83618

Analyses the relationship between EI and Stress levels of the employees of Project group of Indian Oil company. In statistics, the Pearson correlation coefficient correlation between two variables with linearity . R Value ranging from +1 and -1. A positive linear correlation will have +1, 0 means no correlation, and – negative linear correlation will have -1.

		EI	ST
EI	Pearson r value	1	-.688**
	(2-tailed) Sig.		<.001
	N	50	50
ST	Pearson r value	-.688**	1

	(2-tailed) Sig.	<.001	
	N	50	50

The result in the SPSS is as under: - From above as the Pearson co-efficient $r = (-) 0.688$, it was clear that EI levels had negative significant correlation with levels of stress of the workers. Also, it showed a straight negative link between the EI and Stress levels. The result found at 0.01 level ($p < 0.001$) was very much significant. Therefore Null hypothesis was rejected.

4.2 T- Test and One Way ANOVA was built to find out any difference which will be significant in EI and Stress levels between gender.

The result in the SPSS is as under: - Interpretation of Results.

Above Table showed, the t- statistics of Emotional Intelligence basis gender of employees. Results show that difference of significant proportion of emotional intelligence in Gender, as t value 2.783 was more than the t critical values at 0.01 ($t = 2.682$) and at 0.05 ($t = 2.011$).

	Gender		Mean	Standard	Standard
		No	value	Deviation	Error Mean
ST	0	26	15.423	5.10821	1.00180
			1		
	1	24	18.250	5.43939	1.11031
			0		

Interpretation of Results Above Table showed, the One way ANOVA of Emotional Intelligence basis gender of employees. Results show that difference of Emotional Intelligence between the

male and female employees was significant, as F value 5.696 was more than the F critical value at 0.05 ($F=4.043$), but the difference of EI in gender at 0.01 significance levels ($F=7.194$) was not significant.

		Df		F	Sig.
	Sum of Sq	value	Mean Sq.	value	value
Bet. Groups	79.380	1	79.380	2.816	.100
In Groups	1353.200	48	28.192		
Total	1432.580	49			

Interpretation of Results Above Table showed, the One way ANOVA of Stress Levels basis gender of employees. Results show that difference of Stress Levels in gender was not significant, as F value 2.816 is less than the F critical values at 0.01 ($F=7.194$) and at 0.05 ($F=4.043$). The difference in T result and ANOVA, at 0.01 significance for comparing means of two population of Emotional intelligence can be linked to the below fact:-

Lower significance levels require stronger sample data in order to reject the null hypothesis. In order to make the finding significant statistically at the 0.01 significance level require more substantial evidence than the 0.05 significance level. ANOVA is a statistical method for comparing the means of more than 2 population means whereas T- result used for the comparison two sample sizes both less than 30.

4.3 Regression analysis was done to find the best fit model ideal for the Employees working in the Project Department of Indian Oil, as significant co-relation ($r = -0.69$) was found out between the EI and levels of stress of Employees.

	R		Adj. R	Std. Er. of
	value	R Sq.	Square	the Est.
1	.688	.475	.463	3.96343

Dependent Variable: ST Interpretation of Results

a) R square ---Coefficient of Determination: As evident from the R square value of 0.474 which showed the variability in stress levels was accounted 47.4% by the levels of emotional Intelligence the workers had.

b) Anova (general significance of the model): It was predicted through Anova by the F test . It was done to predict whether b (Regression Coefficient of predictor variable EI) has some value or not.

From ANOVA table F figure is found to be 43.196 whereas F critical value (0.05, 1,48) is 4.043. As F number (43.196) was more than F critical (4.043), the null hypothesis was not accepted. It means that value of b (Regression Coefficient of predictor variable EI) was present. From p value < 0.001 , we also concluded the above finding.

The finding can be interpreted as there was highly unlikely that b (also known as population slope) will be zero. The non-acceptance of the null hypothesis showed that regression model indicated the explanation for the variation in the dependent variable (Stress Levels). The bigger the F number, better the model would be fitted.

c) Regression Coefficients : The regression coefficient from above results :- $c = 41.198$ (Intercept- Constant) and the $b = -0.845$ (Slope- Regression Coefficient). The Linear regression equation based on the research was as under:- $ST = 41.198 - 0.845 * EI$

Above equation shows, Linear relationship negative, between the EI and Stress Levels. More on EI, less on perceived stress and other way around.

DISCUSSION

The study was conducted to find out whether there is a connection between EI and Stress levels of employees. Correlation statistical tool was used to analyse and understand data. The $r = (-) 0.69$ value of correlation between EI Levels and Stress levels of workers showed that there was a significant correlation between the two variables on negative side. High on EI means the workers are in better position to cope up with stress and are having less perceived stress. From the analysis done, the only way forward is to improve Emotional Intelligence to survive in this mad world as it has major bearing on stress levels.

The relationship $ST = 41.198 - 0.845 * EI$, based on regression analysis showed, strong negative correlation between employees EI levels and their perceived Stress levels as perceived by the employees.

Shen and Slater (2021) found that the employees' mental health and emotional well-being is impacted by stress at work. Emotional Intelligence is based on the idea of human touch. Employees high on Emotional Intelligence are assets for the organization as they are the torch bearers for good branding for the organization.

Developing emotional intelligence is the critical success factor which gives a true account of a person about their own strengths and flaws and how they cope up with adverse situations and most important, helping others to come out of their stressful situations.

The management needs to focus on imparting emotional intelligence skills so that personal and professional challenges can be handled which augurs well for the company and employee. Goleman, a pioneer in this area, had recognized that managers and leaders who are successful have had a more percentage of EI. Further results showed that Emotional Intelligence accounts for Eighty-Ninety percentage of the capabilities which decide high and low performers. It may be noted that based T -test and ANOVA, difference found in the mean score of EI between genders at 0.05 significance levels was significant but not at 0.01 levels Whereas difference found for mean score in the Stress levels between genders was not significant. Some of the study showed men have better stress management recourse than female whereas females who valued more on empathy, relationships, and social duty had better EI (Brackett et al., 2004; Extremera et al., 2006; Gerits et al., 2004). Aniela et al. (2018) study on “Stress Difference Analysis Based on Gender” found that difference between men and women was insignificant.

CONCLUSION

The survey and findings show that correlation between EI and stress levels at workplace was very much significant. Emotionally intelligent leaders, managers and professionals are the torchbearers of organizational practice and have less perceived stress as compared to other employees working in the same stressful setting. Moreover, the results also showed that EI and stress levels are not gender Specific as such but more towards individual ability to deal with stressful situation.

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