

## Studying Emotional Intelligence and Occupational Stress

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### Abstract:

*Emotions differentiate human beings from animals. It is a subjective conscious experience characterized by psycho-physiological expressions, biological reactions, and mental status. An emotional intelligent employee can well perform in all the area .Whenever there is change in culture & state of the organization at that time emotional intelligence helps to employee for coup up with environment and takes the right decision which is beneficial for the organization as well as the personal life of the employees.*

*The Objective of the current study was to assess the impact of emotional intelligence and gender on the occupational stress of employees. The emotional intelligence inventory developed and validated by Mangal and Mangal (2004) was used. The occupational stress index developed by Srivatava and Singh (1981) The analysis of results indicated that female employees having feel more occupational stress compare then male employees. Employees having high emotional intelligence feel lest occupational stress compare then employees having moderate emotional intelligence and low emotional intelligence. The interaction effects of both the independent variable were found to be not significant.*

**Key words:** Emotional intelligence, Gender and Occupational stress

## **INTRODUCTION**

Human services, sometimes called “direct person-related jobs”, include such occupations as counsellors, social workers, managers’ non managers, nurses, and teachers. In those jobs, the primary task is to modify the clients/patients physically or psychologically. In human services, knowledge, skills, motivation of employees, working conditions, expectations and behaviour of the customer create the service delivery process. The performance of human service occupations is inherent to strain and emotions, which may lead to sense of stress. Why is human service work so stressful?

Basically, stress results from the customers’ behaviour (sometimes demanding and aggressive) and complaints. Stress may also result from poor work conditions, particularly lack of control (autonomy), poor social relations and lack of social support, lack of rewards, work overload (particularly too many administrative tasks), or reutilization. Lack of emotional intelligence is one the leading cause of conflict, as the root of all conflict is a lack of sensitivity on the part of one or both parties and sensitivity is directly related to one’s emotional intelligence. Managers or leaders who are high on emotional intelligence will be able to mitigate problems long before they have a larger impact on the company. Stress in the workplace reduces productivity, increases management pressures, and makes people ill in many ways, evidence of which is still increasing. Workplace stress affects the performance of the brain, including functions of work performance; memory, concentration, and learning. Stress at work also provides a serious risk of litigation for all employers and organisations, carrying significant liabilities for damages, bad publicity and loss of reputation. It is here that emotional intelligence comes to our rescue and guides us to respond appropriately to different stressors .Emotional Intelligence helps to cope up with stressful situations. Stress management, therefore, largely

depends upon striking an emotional balance between a potential stress condition and one's reaction to it. Among other things / purposes, organizations are places where individuals are "organized" to work. To the extent that the work requires interactions among individuals, emotions such as excitement, anger and fear are indispensable in facilitating cooperation. Employees who are "intelligent" about their emotions will, therefore, be more efficient and effective in their interactions with the work environment and with their co-workers. Emotional intelligence has been found to be a significant moderator in various other workplace outcomes like job commitment, team building, positive work culture, etc. Emotional intelligence is very important in leadership roles, as leaders need everyone to do their jobs as effectively as possible and this requires a high degree of interpersonal effectiveness. Studies show that high emotional quotient differentiates average from superior performers, which can be critical for leadership positions. The purpose of this section is to review those current

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Human service work is evidently linked with experienced emotions. One aspect of this emotion at work, which is related to stress, is the requirement to express positive (and sometimes negative) emotions towards customers. Emotional dissonance, which (usually positive) that are not in line with those genuinely felt (neutral or negative) is rather conceived as stressful (e.g. smiling at a difficult customer may create emotional dissonance). Frequent experience of emotional dissonance leads to a loss of the capability to regulate one's own emotions, which means the loss of a particular internal resource.

The term emotional intelligence was foremost used by psychologists' John Mayer and Peter Salovey in the year 1990<sup>12</sup>.

Then Daniel Goleman (1995, 1998)<sup>5,6</sup> wrote books on this term Emotional Intelligence and working with Emotional Intelligence, who popularized the term emotional intelligence in the organizational set up. There after many research studies added support to emotional intelligence in organizational context.

Emotional intelligence means understanding once own feeling and able to handling those feeling without disturbing them self. In the same way understanding what others feel and handling relationship effectively. Motivate one to complete job creatively and perform their pear. Many independent employee join together and work under one roof for attaining one ultimate objective of organization. Organization is a pool of human resource of different kind. Every human resource is dependent on one other in terms of relationship as superior and subordinate. Every individual is unique in their talent, understanding, performance, attitude, competencies, and involvement and so on.

In turn, ability to recognise people's emotions and to regulate one's own emotions to be very important in human service work. This ability, defined as emotional intelligence (EI) construct, has been introduced by Salovey and Mayer. It refers to one's ability to be aware on one's own feelings, to be aware of other feelings, to differentiate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and behaviour. A temporary definition of emotional intelligence according to these authors indicates that it is "...an ability to recognize the meanings of emotions and the relationships, and to reason and problem-solve on the basis of them. Emotional Intelligence is involved in the capacity to perceive emotions, assimilate emotion-related feelings, understand the information of those emotions and manage them".

Emotional intelligence has become of widespread interest to psychological research in recent years. It has been claimed that emotional intelligence is one of the important

factors that determine success in life and psychological well-being. Nowicki and Duke provide evidence for a direct link between emotional intelligence and academic achievement. Svyantek and Rahim indicate that EI may be an important adaptive mechanism for helping individuals to interact with their environment, including work environment. Goleman reports that EI is twice as important as technical skills and more important than IQ for success in jobs at various levels. Weisinger suggests that EI is related to success at work and plays a significant role in a certain aspect of effective team leadership and team performance. It should be, however, stressed that studies exploring the relationship between EI and experienced job stress and its outcomes are rather scanty. In one of them, Slaski and Cartwright found that managers' high emotional intelligence revealed less subjective stress and had better physical and psychological well-being. Similarly, Gardner and Stough revealed a negative relationship between EI and occupational stress. In another study, Bar-On et al. indicated that police officers who scored significantly higher on emotional intelligence were less vulnerable to experienced stress and better coped with it. In turn, Reilly in a study of hospital nurses identified a negative correlation between EI and burnout syndrome. Similarly, Duran and Extremera in their study including professionals employed in institutions for people with intellectual disabilities, revealed a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout syndrome, and personal accomplishment in particular. The data clearly indicated that EI expressed in the ability to recognize, express, and control emotions may have an impact on the perceived job stress and the consequences of experienced stress.

The purpose of the study was to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived stress in the workplace and health-related consequences in human service workers.

According to its contemporary meaning, occupational stress is a complex, dynamic process in which various factor (stressors) and modifying variable are interrelated. Whether a stressor produces an enduring hearth outcome or not depends on the extent to which the person perceives the condition as stressful and responses to it. His or her perception and response are affected by a number of modifying variables, mainly by personal resources. These resources seem to become very important factors that determine the experience of occupational stress and its related effects.

## **THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The main objectives of the present study were:

1. To study the occupational stress experienced by employees of different emotional levels.
2. To study the occupational stress experienced by male and female employees.
3. To ascertain the relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational stress of male and female employees.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A 3x2 factorial design with an equal number of subjects per cell was used. The first independent variable, i.e. emotional intelligence was varied in three ways – high emotional intelligence, moderate emotional intelligence and low emotional intelligence. The second independent variable was gender difference, i.e. male and female.

The sample was consisted of 120 representing various human service professions (i.e. 60 of them male and having high EI, moderate EI and low EI and 60 were from female employees having high EI, moderate EI and low EI respectively). All employees worked in various

instructions/organization situated in Moradabad, Amroha, Bijnore, Rampur and Bareilly Districts. Their age ranged between 22 to 50 years and their average age was 36 years. They were assigned to the six groups by purposive sampling, each containing 20 subjects.

A self prepared personal Biographical sheet was employed to know personal (i.e. gender, age, educational qualification, organizational status etc) and other information of subjects. For ascertaining the emotional intelligence levels of subjects, "The Emotional Intelligence Inventory" developed and validated by Mangal and Mangal (2004) was employed. It contains 100 statements.

"The Occupational Stress Index" developed by Srivastava and Singh (1981) was used to measure the occupational stress of the subjects. It consisted of 43 highly discriminating items in Hindi. Each item was to be rated on the 5 point scale. The item relate to almost all relevant components of the job life which causes stress in some way or the other. The reliability index ascertained by split half (odd-even) method and Cronbach's alpha-Coefficient for the scale as a whole were found to be 0.935 and 0.90 respectively.

On the basis of sample, first of all group 1<sup>st</sup> consisting of 20 male employees having high emotional intelligence were administered the "Occupational Stress Index" scale individually at a time in working hours, after the formation of rapport. Instructions as given in the manual were followed for administration. The similar procedure was followed for all the remaining five groups to collect the data. The scoring procedure was followed as prescribed in the manual.

## **HYPOTHESES**

The present Study is designed to resolve the controversies in the field of occupational stress. On the basis of previous

researches and theoretical considerations, the following hypotheses are formulated.

1. There is a significant difference between occupational stress of employees having high, moderate and low emotional intelligence. Subjects of high EI have felt less occupational stress than subjects of moderate and low EI.
2. There is a significant difference between occupational stress of male and female employees, i.e. male subjects have less occupational stress as compared to female staff.
3. There is a significant interaction between emotional intelligence and gender in occupational stress, i.e. male subjects with high, moderate & low EI have less occupational stress than female subjects of high, moderate & low level of EI.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table – 1. Summary of ANOVA on occupational stress scores.**

Source of variance	Sum of squares	d.f.	Mean square variance	F
E.I.	11431.85	2	5715.93	9.05**
Gender	5589.68	1	5589.68	8.85**
E.I. X Gender	1697.15	5	339.43	0.54
with in groups	70114.65	111	631.66	
<b>Total</b>	<b>88833.33</b>	<b>119</b>		

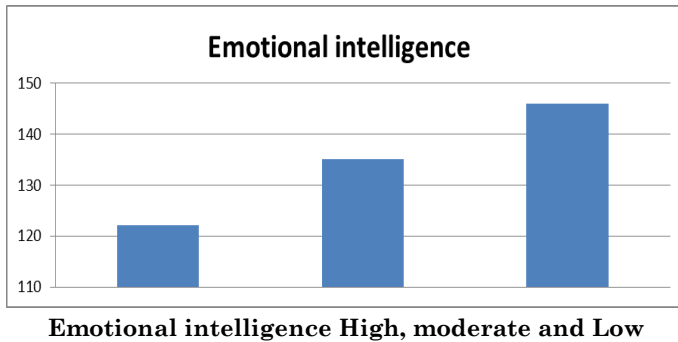
\*denotes significance level at .05

\*\*denotes significance level at .01

Two way ANOVA was used to examine the main as well as the interaction effects of Emotional intelligence and Gender on occupational stress. A look at the **Table -1** revealed that the main effect of Emotional intelligence was found significant. The F value (2, 111) = 9.05  $P > .01$  was found significant at .01 level of confidence. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and the research hypothesis is confirmed that there is a significant difference in occupational stress employees having high,



moderate & low level of EI. Employees of low E.I. ( $M = 146.00$ ) experienced more occupational stress as compare to moderate E.I. ( $M = 135.15$ ) and high E.I. employees ( $M = 122.16$ ).

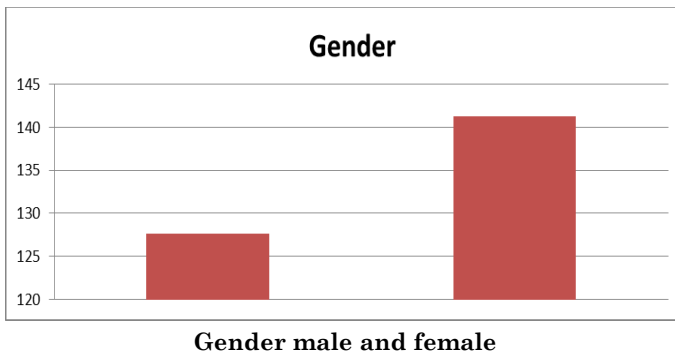


The analysis of data demonstrates that emotional intelligence is an influencing and determining variable of occupational stress. It shows that there is a significant difference in occupational stress of employees having high emotional intelligence moderate emotional intelligence and low emotional intelligence. In this connection, the finding of the study show that high emotional intelligence subjects having least occupational stress comparing than moderate emotional intelligence subjects and low emotional intelligence subjects. Here the question, which is more significant and important at this juncture is: why do the subjects of high emotional intelligence, moderate emotional intelligence and low emotional intelligence subjects differ in occupational stress? A possible explanation can be put forward to account for these differences with the help of theoretical informational framework. Occupational stress is probably more a relationship between an individual's ability and work demands. It is the relationship between work characteristics and individual's ability to manage the environment which may be needed to the explanation of occupational stress.

In other words, it is an interaction between job demands and job control. More over due to different levels of emotional

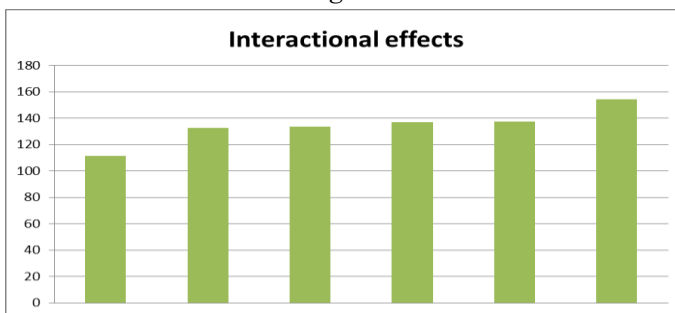
intelligence, one is already pre occupied with ability to control one's emotions and emotions of others. Subjects with high emotional intelligence can better control emotions and it helps them to control the emotions of other also. Subjects with high emotional intelligence can feel convenient in command with others. They can understand their ability and work environment better in comparison to subjects having moderate and low level of emotional intelligence. As a result they can avoid and control imbalance between work demands and abilities easily. Hence, little chances are there for feeling occupational stress. It can be concluded that more the emotional intelligence level, less the level of occupational stress would be and vice-versa.

The main effect of the second independent variable i.e. Gender was also observed to be significant ( $F = 1, 111 = 8.85 P > .01$ ). This obviously shows that gender is an attribute of occupational stress. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected and fourth substantive hypothesis was accepted that there is a significant difference in occupational stress of male and female employees. The occupational stress was more in female employees ( $M = 141.25$ ) than male employees ( $M = 127.60$ ).



It was point out in the review of studies that there is a significant difference in occupational stress of male and female subjects. However, the question, which is more important at

this point, is: why do the male and female differ in occupational stress? The facts of differences in arousing different amount of occupational stress can be explained with the help of the theoretical framework. The research for an explanation of these differences continues to be a complex and controversial issues. Sex role may help in explaining these differences in amount of occupational stress of the various possible explanations of gender difference in occupational stress. As per theoretical framework, women feel more pressure of occupation or job at work place and feel more imbalances between work and abilities than males. They have to play a dual role, one as mother and wife at home and the other as employee in work place. In their cases, most of the times when they are at home, they get irritated by various incidents i.e. may be due to action of children, may be because of an ailing parent at home and may be due to some unkind remarks made by husband or other members of family. Females are considered to be more reserved and silent in comparison to males. Social relationships are greatly affected by attitudes, beliefs and stereotypes, about how a person is supposed to behave. It is also observed that women are less social and want to maintain proper distance from students and colleagues than male employees. Therefore, females feel more pressure of job at work and whenever there is more work/work overload in the organization. There is every possibility that an imbalance in capability and work demands might be aroused. Hence, they may feel more occupationally stressed than their male colleagues.



The interaction effects between Emotional intelligence and gender is not significant at any level of confidence ( $F_{5, 111} = 0.54$ ). Thus, the research hypothesis that there is a significant interaction between three levels of EI and two levels of gender is rejected and the null hypothesis is retained. This indicates that emotional intelligence and gender of subjects do not influence occupational stress.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the present study it can be concluded that low level of emotionally intelligent employees will have feel high occupational stress in workplace compare than high level of emotionally intelligent employees. So, employees have used own emotional intelligence to remove workplace stress. But we concluded another aspect of the above study that high level of emotionally intelligent employees will also have stress in workplace. It is also clear that the human service organizations were task focused. Even training and development programs are held on productivity basis. Work pressure, job insecurity and customer bad behaviour are main causes for occupational stress of employees. Thus, organizations must also focus on reducing occupational stress of their employees by conducting stress control programs.

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