EFFECT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND GENDER ON OCCUPATIONAL STRESS OF UPSACS EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

The present study is undertaken with a view to found out the influence of emotional intelligence and gender on occupational stress among UPSACS employees. The study was based upon 120 male and female employees of medical services situated in Moradabad, Rampur, J.P. Nagar Bijnor, Meerut and Bareilly Districts. Out of 120 employees 60 of them were male (20 having high emotional intelligence, 20 having moderate emotional intelligence and 20 were of low emotional intelligence) and 60 female employees were from i.e. (20 having high emotional intelligence, 20 having moderate emotional intelligence and 20 were of low emotional intelligence). A 3x2 factorial design was used the first independent variable was emotional intelligence and the second independent variable was gender. The analysis of results indicated that emotional intelligence; gender had significantly effect of occupational stress. The employees working with low emotional intelligence were found to be more occupational stress than those of working with high emotional intelligence. The female employees were having more occupational stress than male employees working. The interaction effects both the independent variables were found to significant.
INTRODUCTION

This review examines the origins of occupational stress, as well as the causes and consequences of experiencing stress at work, in order to provide a broad framework for understanding the role of other variables in the stress process. The experience of occupational stress has long been implicated in the development of negative outcomes for the individual employee and the employing organization. General well-being as well as levels of satisfaction with and commitment to the organization has each been identified in the literature as decreasing as a result of the employee experiencing occupational stress. The intertwined relationship between occupational stress and emotion has also been purported to play a role in the stress – outcomes relationship. As a consequence many stress management intervention programs have surfaced in the literature, although none with emphasis on utilizing emotions more effectively. It is apparent that emotion may play more of a role in the stress process than previously thought and it is reasonable to argue that an intervention focused on effective utilization of emotions may significantly contribute to the reduction of the negative outcomes due to occupational stress.

The term stress is derived from the Latin word stringer, which means ‘to draw tight’, and was used in this way in the 17th century to describe a hardship or an affliction (Cartwright & Cooper, 1997)). Later in the 18th century the term stress referred primarily to an individual’s ‘force, pressure, strain or strong effort’. It was these early definitions used in physics and engineering that began to influence the notion that stress may affect individuals, where forces are seen to exert pressure on an individual, producing strain (Hinkle, 1977).

Emotions are an integral and inseparable part of everyday organizational life. The experience of work is saturated with emotions, from moments of fear, joy, frustration or grief to an enduring sense of commitment or dissatisfaction (Ashforth
& Humphrey, 1995). A review on emotions in the workplace (Ashforth & Humphrey) emphasized how past research fostered the belief that ‘emotion is the antithesis of rationality’. Ashforth and Humphrey argue that this belief is too simplistic and that the experience of work is saturated with emotion. Recent empirical work examining the relationship between emotions and aspects of work and strain has referred to the work of Hochschild (1983) who introduced the concept of emotional labor (Abraham, 1998; Morris & Feldman, 1997). Emotional labor refers to the quality of interactions between employees and any person they interact with (termed the ‘client’). During interactions with ‘clients’ the role of many employees is to express appropriate emotions, as their job requires. For instance, in her seminal book published in Hochschild, 1983 investigated the work of flight attendants. She demonstrated that their job could not be fully described by the physical aspects of their work, sensor motor and cognitive demands, but that a substantial part of their job was dealing with passengers and their emotions. Apart from having to work on tasks given to them, extending physical and or mental effort, employees are also required to manage their emotions as part of their job (Zapf, 2002). Based primarily on the work of Hochschild, Zapf suggests that emotion work (emotion labor) possesses three characteristics: it occurs in interactions with the client; emotions are displayed to influence others’ emotions, attitudes and behaviors; and any emotional display has to follow certain rules (appropriate to the job requirements).

A theoretical paper by Briner (1999) outlines reasons why the role of emotions in the workplace has generally been ignored in research. Firstly Briner highlights that the workplace has traditionally been viewed as a rational, logical and a non-emotional environment with its main purpose being the completion of specific tasks, such that emotions have been considered irrelevant or even unnecessary to
effective workplace performance. Emotions are transient and therefore difficult to assess in self-report techniques such that many researchers and practitioners tend to avoid this area of study and instead focus on more easily measurable constructs such as attitude or satisfaction. Briner attributes the recent resurgence in interest in emotions in the workplace to the notions that psychology as a whole has begun to pay more attention to affect, and that due to an increase in the number of employees working in service industries the demand for emotional expression in the context of customer service has risen, and finally, because of the popularization of the construct of EI. Since the work of Hochschild (1983) and Ashforth and Humphrey (1995), researchers have begun to integrate two areas of workplace research (job satisfaction and occupational stress) with emotion research. Although this research is limited, a number of papers have been published relating emotions to job satisfaction and occupational stress.

The Indian context - The transition of gender inequality and gender roles away from traditional to modern gender role expectations has been observed to constitute cultural universals that affect the work-family interface. The growing number of educated women in India who participate in the urban, organized, industrial sector in technical, professional, and managerial positions has been accompanied by a steady growth in dual earner families. Gender role expectations and gender-based socialization have led men to identify themselves with the family role. The participation of women in paid employment has therefore been hailed as a harbinger of changes in gender relations within the family, reflected in the term ‘new families’. As a concept, new families describe family systems defined by three characteristics:

a. Egalitarian norms of family relationships.

b. Equitable distribution of domestic labor, and
c. Shared decision-making patterns and gender-free perceptions.

In the review of the evidence for the emergence of new families in terms of gender role, domestic division of labor, and decision making, Bharat (2003) noted that working women and their spouses continue to regard bread winning as essentially a man’s job and home management as a woman’s job (Bharat, 1995; Ramu, 1989). Hence, Indian women continue to bear the burden of household responsibility regardless of their employment status (Bharat, 1992). Despite evidence that men in dual-earner families have assumed household responsibilities for less taxing and masculine responsibilities (Bharat, 2003) concluded that the emergence of new families in India is a distant reality. Specifically, it was noted that while social, legal, and economic reforms have helped women in, a small measure to join the work force, the continuing influence of normative attitudes and values have prevented them from altering society’s and their own perceptions of sex roles and demand an equal distribution of domestic responsibilities (Bharat, 2003).

Although emergence of new families may be a distant reality, the direction of the changes suggests that family relations in India are characterized by a coexistence of traditional and modern gender role expectations. Consequently, compared to the West, there will be similarities and differences in men’s and women’s experiences of the work-family interface since Bandura (1977, 1982, 1997) proposed his theory of self efficacy, organizational researchers have recognized the many and varied applications of this construct. We believe that efficacy theory (both at the individual and group level) should be applied to occupational stress research for two major reasons. First, at the individual level, self-efficacy is likely to have an impact on the way in which employees cope with stressors in the work place. It has been shown that individuals with high levels self-efficacy tend to do something about stressors, whereas those with low self-efficacy have a greater tendency to
worry about them. It has been suggested that a strong sense of collective efficacy may contribute to both a positive interpersonal climate and greater co-operation and helping among group members. This positive interpersonal climate may buffer the effects of stressors by providing group members with emotional support during stressful periods and may have a buffering effect by providing group members with the means necessary to actually reduce stressors.

Stress has now become an area of concern for all types of occupations. There is little doubt, however, that some professions have fared worse than others. The transactional perspective of stress (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984) emphasizes the role of ‘cognitive appraisal’ and ‘coping responses’. A stressful transaction begins with primary cognitive appraisal, which a situation requires as an effective response to avoid or reduce physical or psychological threat or harm, and a secondary appraisal that no completely effective response is immediately available. Any event or situation is not stressful in itself. It becomes a source of stress only when the focal person appraises it as to be a threat and to exceed his or her capability to deal with it. The person makes the best response possible and actively defines and shapes stressful transactions by means of his cognitive appraisals and coping responses. This is the reason that same situation or event is differently responded to by different persons. The concept of stress is bound to person, and is a subjective experience. Teaching, by its nature demands that teachers demonstrate or display emotion they may not actually feel. For instance, teachers are expected to demonstrate unusual love and kindness to their students. They are also expected to serve as mentors and motivate students who are even unwilling to learn. All these are in themselves stressful and amount to what Hochschild (1983) called ‘emotional labor’ which he defined as “the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display; emotional labor is sold for a wage
and therefore has exchange value”. These expectations lead to a kind of discrepancy between the expected and the actual emotion and thereby leading to emotional dissonance which is an aspect of emotional dissonance of emotional labor that is detrimental to one’s health and well being. Emotional intelligence (EI) has been heralded as the best predictor of work and life success (Goleman, 1995; 1996; 1998). Many claims have been made about the ability of this construct to predict work outcomes, such as job satisfaction, turn over (Goleman, 1998). Mayer, Salovey et al. (2000b) suggested that Emotional intelligence may have an impact on many work-related outcomes, including job performance and interpersonal interactions, such as job interviews and interacting with co-workers on a daily basis. Research confirmed that IQ accounts for approximately 20 per cent of the variance in life success, but emotional intelligence accounts for the remaining 80 per cent of the variance. Thorndike (1920) conceptualized social intelligence as the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls, to act wisely in human relations.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the present study were:

1. To study the occupational stress experienced by high emotional intelligence, Moderate emotional intelligence and low emotional intelligence of UPSACS employees.
2. To study the occupational stress among working male and female UPSACS employees.
3. To study the interactional effects of emotional intelligence and gender on occupational stress.

METHOD
Design: 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, i.e. male and female UPSACS employees.

Subjects: The sample was consisted of 120 UPSACS employees. (i.e. 40 of them were from high emotional intelligence, male and female, 40 of them were from moderate emotional intelligence male and female and 40 were from low emotional intelligence male and female respectively). All UPSACS employees were hospital situated in Moradabad, Rampur, J.P. Nagar, Bareilly, Meerut Districts. Their age ranged between 28 to 50 years and their average age was 39 years. They were assigned to the six groups by purposive sampling, each containing 20 subjects.

Tools:

1. Personal Biographical Sheet A self prepared personal Biographical sheet was employed to know personal information (i.e. job status, age, educational qualification and gender etc) and other information of subjects.

2. Emotional Intelligence Inventory For ascertaining the emotional intelligence levels of subjects, “The Emotional Intelligence Inventory” developed and validated by Mangal and Mangal (2004) was employed.

3. Occupational Stress Index “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.

**Procedure:** On the basis of sample, first of all group 1st consisting of 20 males of high emotional intelligence were administered the “occupational stress index” scale individually at a time in hospital, after the formation of rapport. Instructions as given in the manual were followed for administration. The similar procedure was followed for all the remaining three groups to collect the data. The scoring procedure was followed as prescribed in the manual.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

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, 114 = 21.91 P>.01) was found significant at .01 level of confidence. This leads to conclude that emotional intelligence is an influencing factor in determining the level of occupational stress among UPSACS employees.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of variance</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>d.f.</th>
<th>Mean square variance</th>
<th>f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E.I.</td>
<td>12336.07</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6168.03</td>
<td>21.91**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>5373.41</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5373.41</td>
<td>19.08**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.I. x Gender</td>
<td>4594.47</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2297.23</td>
<td>8.16**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With in groups</td>
<td>32098.05</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>281.56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>54401.99</strong></td>
<td><strong>119</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table – 2:- Mean Score of three type’s emotional intelligence groups in terms of occupational stress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Emotional intelligence</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Emotional intelligence</td>
<td>4817</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>120.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Emotional intelligence</td>
<td>5457</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>136.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Emotional intelligence</td>
<td>5795</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>144.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16069</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>133.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean of high emotional intelligence can be read from Table – 2 and equal to 120.43. The mean for the second type of emotional intelligence (i.e. Moderate emotional intelligence) can be read from table – 2 and is equal to 136.43. Mean for the third and final type of emotional intelligence (i.e. low emotional intelligence) can be obtained from table – 2 and is equal to 144.88. Thus, a subject who is in high emotional intelligence group gets minimum occupational stress score than subjects of moderate and low emotional intelligence groups.

These characteristics of the data become quite clear when these means are represented graphically, showing emotional intelligence along the abscissa and mean score of occupational stress along with the ordinate in figure – 1 which the help of bar graph.
MEAN OCCUPATIONAL STRESS SCORE A FUNCTION OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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 that 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 others 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 low level of emotional
intelligence. As a result they can avoid and control imbalance between work demands and abilities easily. It can be concluded that more the emotional intelligence level, less the level of occupational stress would be and vice – versa.

The F ratio for the second factor i.e. gender is 19.08 which is highly significant at 0.01 level of confidence (F, 1, 114 = 19.08 > 0.01). This shows that gender is a potential factor in determining the occupational stress. The mean of gender difference on occupational stress are given in Table – 3.

**Table – 3:-** Mean scores in terms of occupational stress scores of male and female UPSACS employees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male employees</td>
<td>7633</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>127.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female employees</td>
<td>8436</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>140.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16069</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
<td><strong>133.91</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A look at table – 3 clearly shows that mean of scores of male employees is 127.22 lower than female employees 140.60. In other words it means than female subjects have higher occupational stress than male subjects. These mean scores are represented graphically in figure – 2 showing gender on abscissa and mean occupational stress score on the ordinate with the help of bar graph.
However the question, which is more important at this point is: why do the male employees and female employees 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 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 of job at work place and feel more imbalances between work and abilities than male employees. They have to play a dual role, one as the mother and wife at home and the other as an 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. 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.

Interaction between emotional intelligence and gender is significant at 0.01 level of confidence (F, 2 , 114 = 8.16 > 0.01). This indicates that emotional intelligence and gender of subjects influence occupational stress level. The interaction effects of emotional intelligence and gender presents a comparison between male and female subjects with three combinations of emotional intelligence i.e. high, moderate, and low were calculated which are given in table – 4.
Table – 4:- Mean Scores of different combinations of emotional intelligence and gender in terms of occupational stress score.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels of Emotional intelligence</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Emotional intelligence</td>
<td>105.15</td>
<td>135.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Emotional intelligence</td>
<td>135.50</td>
<td>137.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Emotional intelligence</td>
<td>141.00</td>
<td>148.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean scores of Table – 4 shows that the mean scores of subjects of three level of emotional intelligence i.e. high, moderate, low and two levels of gender i.e. male and female show that both the combinations influence each other in significant manner. Revealed the table – 4, emotional intelligence mainly influence the male employees compare the female employees because differences of mean high and low emotional intelligence of male employees is 35.85 but female having mean difference is 13. This significant interaction is presented graphically in figure – 3 showing the emotional intelligence combination with gender on the abscissa and mean scores in term of occupational stress on the ordinate with the help of bar graph.

Figure – 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High E.I.</td>
<td>Moderate E.I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MEAN OCCUPATIONAL STRESS SCORES A FUNCTION OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND GENDER.

According to the figure – 3, Interactional effects shows that the major differences of occupational stress between male and female of high emotional intelligence group although according to the analysis of variance both groups are having highly significant each other but moderate emotional intelligence group and low emotional intelligence group are not shown major differences between occupational stress of male and female. If seen the emotional intelligence dimension that low emotional intelligence group feel more occupational stress compare the both groups i.e. moderate emotional intelligence and high emotional intelligence.

REFERENCES


