THE DISPARITY OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: A VOYAGE TO STRESS IN HEALTHCARE SECTOR

Dr. Nagaraju Battu[1]

[1]Head-Dept. of HRM, Director-Centre for HRD, Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, India

S. Kahmeera[2]

[2]Research Scholar, Dept. of HRM, Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, India

ABSTRACT

Background: *Healthcare professionals especially nurses suffer from stress due to the characteristics of their work and environment of the hospital. Disparity of emotions is a voyage to face the stress that has an effect on work outcomes. So emotional intelligence (EI) plays a vital role in balancing the emotions and has a control on stress.*

Objectives: *The objective of the paper is to study EI and stress conceptually and to investigate the relationship between EI and stress among the nurses in healthcare sector.*

Methods: *The study has been conducted in five hospitals of Guntur District in A.P. The sample size is 187 respondents and simple random sampling method is used to collect the data. The researcher has used two interview schedules i.e. EI and Workplace Stress. The schedules contain six subscales three from each, under which five items were included in each subscale. The reliability test Cronbach's Alpha, Correlation Coefficient and Linear Regression Analysis were computed in SPSS.*

Findings, Results & Discussions*: Findings reveal that there is an imbalance of EI among the nurses that leads to stress at workplace. The result shows that the nurses who scored less in overall scores have less in clarity of emotions and experience increase of stress. There is a strong, positive correlation between EI and stress, which is statistically significant (r =.922, n= 187, p=0.000<.0005) for all the variables. There is statistically significant (p=0.000<0.05) between EI and stress in the regression model where p value is less than 0.05 indicating that overall, the regression model is statistically significant predicts the increase of stress at workplace in nurses. The implications of the study are the nurses should not under-utilize or over-utilize the emotions. The nurses should have awareness of balance and usefulness in their emotions to have a healthy feeling. Proper training helps them to improve EI and resilience to protect themselves from the emotional imbalance when dealing with their core aspect of the work.*

KEYWORDS: *Emotional Intelligence, Disparity, Healthcare Sector, Workplace Stress, and Nurses*

INTRODUCTION

Individuals have to work at somewhere to make a living. It is the essence of human nature and most part of the everyday life is spent at workplace. Everyone should have good work ethics towards the relationship with their colleagues. The emotions and behaviors are shaped primarily by relationships.

Emotional Intelligence plays a vital role in human relations in the workplace. Generally employees frequently work together with others within proper emotional intelligence by inviting different ideologies, attitudes, personalities, culture etc. The disparity in EI may make the relations in workplace unmanageable which is a voyage to stress. Due to globalization, speed up of work and changing scenario, the employees' emotional intelligence is deteriorating and facing a lot of stress which intern resulting disturbances in relationship and quality of work.

CONCEPTUAL STUDY

Emotional Intelligence is pertinent in developing people and organization. EI provides a way to understand and to assess people's behaviors, attitudes, potentials, interpersonal skills and management styles. EI is an important determinant in human resources planning, job description, recruitment, interviewing, selection, management development, customer service, customer relations and more.

In healthcare sector, professionals especially nurses undergo lots of stress at workplace. It is their ability to recognize, understand and manage the emotions in the workplace before it triggers. Ghulam Nejad and Nik Peyma (2007) they stated that the major occupational stressors for nurses include lack of receiving reward and encourage, high workload, lack of key decision makings, lengthy work shifts, lack of control over working conditions, lack of career promotion. The nurses should be aware of their stressful situations and try to cope with them.

EI should be viewed in two dimensions as the nurse's perception and understanding of the patient's emotions and utilization of these perceptions of managing complex situations towards quality patient care. EI skills help nurses to deal with emotional demands of the stressful healthcare environment. In today's scenario, the nurses are not only should care about quality medical care but also preferences and choices, respecting patient's goals, obliging their emotions, spiritual and social needs using the talent of interdisciplinary resources.

The impact of work pressures is conveyed to falling of increased sickness and morale. A personal plan helps to deal more effectively with stress and brings vitality health and wholesome behavior.

STUDY VARIABLES

The researcher has taken the EI and stress variables under study.

EI Variables:-

EI is something which is a bit of intangible. It effects on navigate social complexities, behavior, and personal decision to achieve better results. The EI core skills pair up as personal competence and social competence. Individuals are with different personalities, wants and needs and ways of expressing emotions. EI becomes important while navigating all these to get success in life.

Emotional Expression:-

Expression of emotions play a vital role in employees' communication at workplace. Emotions of attitudinal and behavioural shows significance on groups and society. Emotions are normally related with specific occurrences or events and are intense enough to disrupt thought processes. The effective expressing of emotions makes creating greater understanding amongst colleagues about self and perceptions of genuineness and trust.

Emotional Control:-

Stressful situations such as staff layoffs, department changes, facing budget cuts, conflicts with supervisor and colleagues, work overload etc. are common in a workplace. It is harder to manage emotions under pressure in some circumstances. Uncontrolled emotional behaviors could seriously harm the professional reputation, as well as the productivity. Controlling emotions is a learning process to control and feel stable and respond to them in healthy helpful way.

Emotional Management:-

Emotional management is the balancing of both positive and negative emotions that arise from various situations at workplace. At workplace, positive emotions help employees to obtain favorable outcomes including achievement, job enrichment and higher quality social context. Negative emotions drive to fear, anger, stress, hostility and sadness. The idea behind the emotional management at workplace is that it is a skill through which employees treat emotions as valuable data in navigating a situation.

Stress Variables:-

Stress is a prompt reaction that disturbs physical or mental equilibrium. Stress may be perceived differently by different people. Some individuals can handle it better than others. Situations which are positive or negative may be perceived as stressful. There are many causes that people feel stress at workplace.

Relationship with Colleagues:-

A variety of challenging and dysfunctional relationships are spread in the workplace. Relationships with colleagues at workplace can be hard work at times even though they are in best relations. It is a life time practice skill that learning to maintain sustainable healthy relationships and choosing to end unhealthy ones. Most of the jobs demands regular contact with different people at work. Unsupportive and poor relationships with colleagues and supervisors can be a possible source of pressure. Good relationship at work is an important component to make emotionally healthy workplace.

Job Characteristics:-

Good job description reflects to stress free situations. Job characteristics like skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback have an influence on critical psychological states. Job related stress can be caused by poor work design and work systems, and the way it is managed and it is the extent to which lack of job security, job changes fear of skill redundancy, financial rewards, job role, ambiguity, work overload etc. Internal work demotivation leads to job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, turnover and lack of job permanence.

Work Environment:-

The work environment is the surroundings and conditions in which the employees work together. A part from the job scope, the factor that influence the employees is the work environment. A healthy working environment is one in which there is an absence of harmful conditions and abundance of health-promoting. It composed of physical conditions like physical violence, work performance closely monitored, disturbances, lighting and ventilation, improper infrastructure, pollutants etc.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Many researchers highlighted the EI characteristics in various fields of research. But still there is a need of intervention of EI and stress in healthcare sector especially among nurses when they are dealing with the patients. Nurses have a high complex of stress, risky and demanding work environment. Nursing staff has to control their emotions to treat the patients in the best way. Balance of EI is needed in the areas where there is more association with the public, increased working hours, greater workplace role and responsibility etc.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Newton et. al (2016) the study examined the role of EI as a buffer to job stressors on employee adjustment. The design of the study is based on job demands model. In this 306 nurses in the health care sector is taken to test stressors, EI and their interactions nursing adjustment outcomes. The two-way moderated hierarchical multiple regression was analysed. The findings of the study revealed that mixed results in terms of the expected EI and the five significant moderating effects. Some interactions support a buffering hypothesis and its effect was also found those with low EI. The study enables a better understanding how EI moderated the effects of stressors on work outcomes. The staff who are characterized by higher trait EI should train in self-awareness and dealing with emotional behaviors. The implications are HR managers could focus on selecting staff, who possessed higher trait EI for roles where ambiguity and overload are endemic to the job performed.

Zohre Nakhaei Sobhi and Hossein Jennabadi (2015) in their study they stated that occupational conflicts and job stress are the unavoidable events in human life and social life which can be managed by emotional intelligence. EI is a cost effective, efficient and real method in the resolution of conflict and stress. Their study aimed to relate these three aspects. The stratified random sampling method has been used with sample size of 182 nurses and tools used was Pearson Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Regression. The components of self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness and relationship management could predict both the conflict and job stress management. These have positive and significant correlation which conflict management and job stress management ($p<0.01$). They recommended that managers should give in-service training to the nurses in hospital of Zabol. It is also highly suggested that when individuals are anxious and stressed out prior to any behavior they should think what they are doing and consider the results of their own actions and effectively control and manage conflict and stress through emotional intelligence.

OBJECTIVES

1. To conceptually study the emotional intelligence and stress in healthcare sector.
2. To analyse the relationship between emotional intelligence and stress at workplaces in nurses
3. To offer suggestions to improve the emotional intelligence and minimize the stress.

HYPOTHESIS

H_0: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and stress at workplace in nurses

H_1: There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and stress at workplace in nurses

METHODOLOGY

The study has been conducted in the five hospitals of Guntur District. The total population in five hospitals is 623 nurses among them 187 have been chosen with simple random sampling method. The researcher has collected the data through the two interview schedules i.e. EI and Workplace Stress, developed after extensive study of literature. The schedule concentrated on six subscales three from each under which five items were included in each subscale. The statistical tools used are Correlation Coefficient and Linear Regression Analysis. The reliability test Cronbach's Alpha of EI and Workplace Stress is .975 and .977 respectively. It means the reliability is excellent.

DATA INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

Table – 1   Correlations Coefficient of EI and Workplace Stress variables

Variables		Emotional Expression	Emotional Control	Emotional Management	Relationship with Colleagues	Control in Job Work	Work Environment
Emotional Expression	Pearson Correlation	1	.950**	.922**	.946**	.941**	.919**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	187	187	187	187	187	187
Emotional Control	Pearson Correlation	.950**	1	.931**	.949**	.974**	.935**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	187	187	187	187	187	187
Emotional Management	Pearson Correlation	.922**	.931**	1	.937**	.934**	.899**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	187	187	187	187	187	187
Relationship with Colleagues	Pearson Correlation	.946**	.949**	.937**	1	.958**	.921**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	187	187	187	187	187	187
Job Characteristics	Pearson Correlation	.941**	.974**	.934**	.958**	1	.931**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	187	187	187	187	187	187
Work Environment	Pearson Correlation	.919**	.935**	.899**	.921**	.931**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	187	187	187	187	187	187
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							

The table-1 reveals that that correlation coefficient determines the relationship between the EI and stress. There is a strong, positive correlation between EI and workplace stress, which is statistically significant ((where for all the variables of EI, r is above .922) r=.922, n=187, p=0.000<.0005)) for all the variables. For all the workplace stress variables r is above .922 (r=.922, n=187, p=0.000<.0005). In case of emotional management and work environment the r=.899 where p=0.000<.0005. There is a minor variance in managing positive and negative emotions in work place environment. Hence in all cases, H_1 is accepted so that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and stress at workplace in nurses.

Table – 2   Regression Analysis of EI and Workplace Stress variables

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	ANOVA Sig.	Coefficients Sig.
.965[a]	.932	.931	.329	.000[a]	.000[a]
.977[a]	.955	.954	.293	.000[a]	.000[a]
.941[a]	.886	.884	.429	.000[a]	.000[a]
a. Predictors: (Constant), Emotional Management, Emotional Expression, Emotional Control					

The table-2 depicts that the R values (0.965, 0.977 & 0.941) indicates a high degree of relationship between EI and workplace stress variables. The R^2 values (0.932, 0.966 & 0.884) indicates the total variation in the stress by the EI i.e. as there is decrease in EI, there is increase in stress. There is statistically significant (p=0.000<0.05) between EI and stress variables in the regression model where p value is less than 0.05 indicating that overall, the regression model is statistically significant predicts the increase of stress at workplace among nurses (i.e., it is a good fit for the data). The coefficients provide the stress is statistically significant (p=0.000<0.05) in the regression model where p value is less than 0.05 indicating that overall, the regression model is statistically significant predicts the imbalance of EI at workplace in nurses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings of the study reveals that the nurses in the healthcare sector are likely undergoing stress because of disparity in emotional intelligence. The nurses are facing the problems in the relationship with colleagues, job characteristics and work environment. There is imbalance of positive and negative emotional feelings in the stressful work environment. The nurses are feel disturbances in relationship with colleagues due to inclinations, temper, affections, conflicts, habits, moral dispositions, and natural impulses. The job characteristics that nurses feel stress are long hours, work overload, low salaries and managerial bullying. The stressful work environment like toxic environment, noise, pains and deaths of the patients.

The implications of study is that the nurses should have the ability to identify their own emotions as well as the others. They should not under-utilize or over-utilize the emotions. Instead of out bursting their emotions, they should control and manage positive and negative emotions. The nurses should have awareness, balance and usefulness in their emotions to have a healthy feeling. They should be given proper training to improve EI and deal with their core aspect of the work. It is important for nurses to have the resilience to protect themselves from the emotional pressures in the work place because dealing with the unhealthy patients is a great task of job. The ability should be maximized to fully leverage EI for both personal and professional life of employees and organization.

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