

INFLUENCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON ORGANISATIONAL ROLE STRESS AMONG IT SECTOR EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

With ever increasing globalised economy throughout the world, employee performance for improved productivity at minimal operating costs for higher profitability has become imperative for sustained success in this highly competitive market conditions. In addition, most modern organizations constantly undergo radical changes in their organizational process to remain adaptive to the changing business environment. In this context, motivating employees for contributions to effective performance with minimized organizational work stress are vital components of any Human Resource Department. This study is an attempt to map the Organizational Role Stress and Emotional Intelligence levels among the employees in Information Technology sector for understanding the extent of influence on each other. Statistical analysis of the primary data collected reveals existence of a very weak relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Organizational Role Stress among employees of IT sector.

KEYWORDS: Emotional Intelligence, Organisational Role Stress, Information Technology Sector

I. INTRODUCTION

Modern organizations can survive in the dynamic, competitive environment of today only if they capitalize on the full potential of each employee. Organizational Psychology holds that successful organizations not only owe their success solely to market realities and sustainable competitive advantages but also to human capital. Effective utilization of Human Resources (HR) has become an essential among modern organizations particularly owing to cut throat competitions prevailing in globalized business scenarios. It is no wonder, that management of HR with emphasis on enhanced performance has received wide spread attention from researchers, managers and HR practitioners over the past two decades. Attitudes of employees towards work and organizational interventions through employee engagement process have been well accepted practices towards performance enhancements. Adequate contributions in this direction also emphatically point out the importance of stress free environment in successfully accomplishing higher performance efficiency. Some of the stressors identified in any work environment, that has a major influence on employee performance include, work overload, unsupportive relationship, work life imbalance, poor communication, poor working conditions and changes in organizational process. Dynamic business environments often results in employees experience stress owing to roles performed by them in the organizations. Towards this, the Emotional Intelligence has been found to be very effective in preventing stress among employees [1] [2].

India with its strategic positioning has evolved into a major destination for Information Technology (IT) based organizations and has been recognized to be among the top ten high stress workplaces [3]. Estimating the level of role stress among employees in such industries undoubtedly is important in alleviating factors influencing the stress but also

will be of great help in devising coping strategies. This paper is devoted to, presenting the details of investigation carried out towards identifying major factors that can be important in estimation of role stress levels and identifying the extent of contribution by Emotional Intelligence in minimising the ill effects of Organizational Role Stress on employee performance among employees particularly engaged in the Indian IT sector. Ensuing section presents recent and relevant studies undertaken in this direction along with definitions of the parameters employed in the study. The study methodology, description of the instrument developed and its validation are presented in the subsequent section. Analysis of the data collected and major interpretation of the results are discussed in the penultimate section with a concluding section summarizing the major findings from the study and possible scope for future studies.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study mainly focuses on estimating the level of Organizational Role Stress (ORS) and Emotional Intelligence (EI) among the employees particularly in the IT sector owing to the unique work environment prevailing. Pestonjee had identified 3 important sectors of life from which stress originates namely as, (i) Organizational& Job sector (ii) Social sector and (iii) Intra-psychic sector. Organizational/Job stress has been defined in terms of a misfit between skills & abilities of a person and the demands of his/her job [4]. The concept of Organizational/job stress falls under the umbrella of a broader concept known as Role Stress. Role stress refers to the conflict and tension due to the roles being enacted by a person at any given point of time. Enacted in the context of organizations, such role stresses are called organizational role stress. The stress induced due to roles performed by individuals as employees had been a potent organizational stressor [5], the outcomes of which have been found to be costly to the organization [6]. One of the pioneers of research on organizational role stress, Pareek had reiterated that the performance of a role in an organization had built in potential for conflict due to which stress may start rearing its head [7]. Such stress could contribute to various dysfunctional outcomes for the organization like job related tensions, job dissatisfaction, lower performance, etc.

Pareek identified ten different types of organizational role stressors [8]. They are described here briefly.

- **Inter-Role Distance (IRD):** It is experienced when there is a conflict between organizational and non-organizational roles.
- **Role Stagnation (RS):** This kind of stress is the result of the gap between the demand to outgrow a previous role and to occupy a new role effectively. It is the feeling of being stuck in the same role. Such a type of stress results in perception that there is no opportunity for one's career progression.
- **Role Expectation Conflict (REC):** This type of stress is generated by different expectations by different significant persons about the same' role; and the role occupant's ambivalence as to whom to please.
- **Role Erosion (RE):** This kind of role stress is the function of the role occupant's feeling that some functions which should properly belong to his /her role are transferred to / or performed by some other role.
- **Role Overload (RO):** When the role occupant feels that there are too many expectations from the significant roles in his/her role set, he/she experiences role overload.
- **Role Isolation (RI):** This type of role stress refers to the psychological distance between the occupant's role and other roles in the same role set.

- **Personal Inadequacy (PI):** This type of stress arises when the role occupant feels that he/she does not have the necessary skills and training for effectively performing the functions expected from his/her role.
- **Self-Role Distance (SRD):** When the role a person occupies goes against his/her self-concept, then he/she feels self-role distance type of stress. This is essentially a conflict arising out of mismatch between the person and his/her job.
- **Role Ambiguity (RA):** It refers to the lack of clarity about the expectations of the role which may arise out of lack of formation or understanding.
- **Resource Inadequacy (RIN):** This type of stress is evident when the role occupant feels that he/she is not provided with adequate resources for performing the functions expected from his/her role.

Several studies have suggested that individuals with high Emotional Intelligence are more capable of understanding and managing their emotions, which allows them to adjust to their surroundings and become more tolerant to challenging conditions, including stress [9] [10]. Individuals have had resorted to different methods to handle stress, including use of intelligence, especially their emotional intelligence [11]. EI is defined as the "ability to adaptively recognize emotion, express emotion, regulate emotion and harness emotions" [12]. The Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) is a 33 item self-report measure of emotional intelligence developed by Schutte et al. The SSEIT is method of measuring general Emotional Intelligence (EI), using four sub-scales: *Emotion perception*, *Utilizing emotions*, *Managing self-relevant emotions*, *Managing others' emotions*.

Bulik studied the relationship between EI and perceived stress in the workplace and health-related consequences among human service workers in Poland [13]. The results confirmed an essential, but not very strong, role of EI in perceiving occupational stress and preventing employees of human services from negative health outcomes. Rooprai investigated the role of EI in managing stress and anxiety at workplace among management students in India [14]. In his study, EI established negative relationship with stress and anxiety. Ayranci studied the concepts of EI and stress, and conducted a study of the relationship between these two variables [15]. The nurses who worked at some of the private and governmental hospitals in Turkey were studied, and this study identified a significant relationship between EI and stress. The study of Riaz and Khan was set out to find the impact of EI and stress on 150 faculty members of graduate teaching sector in Pakistan [16]. The results indicated that EI has a weak negative relation with stress.

The present study envisages investigating on possible interrelationships between Organizational Role Stress, and Emotional Intelligence among employees in IT sector.

III. QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The questionnaire for the investigation was developed using instruments established through previous researches. The organizational role stress (ORS) scale, which was developed and standardized by Pareek to measure the role stress, had been used in this study [8]. The ORS instrument comprised of 50 items to measure 10 different types of role stressors (5 statements for each role stressor) assessable on a five point Likert scale. Demographical characteristics of the employees were categorized as Personal attributes, comprising age, gender, family status, number of children, educational qualification, native place, number of family members and earning members and annual income; Job attributes that includes number of days leaves availed, total experience, job overtime, salary satisfaction, challenging nature of work,

recognition and appreciation for employee contribution and effective skill application and Environmental attributes such as experiencing organizational change. Employee details on the demographical characteristics had been compiled through additional 23 items as indicated above. Thus the instrument developed for the study comprised a total of 106 items essentially derived from the well established instruments reported in literature.

IV. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The population chosen for the study had been drawn from among individuals employed in IT sector, essentially working in different places in the state of Kerala located in the southernmost part of India. Study sample had been chosen through Random Sampling Technique. The study conducted through personal interview yielded 472 duly completed questionnaires from a total of 510 distributed resulting in a response rate of 92.55%. The minimum sample size needed for this study estimated based on Bill Godden, recommends 383 for estimated population size of 60,000 having 50% response distribution with 5% margin of error and at 95% confidence level [17]. The estimate was subsequently verified through software developed by Raos oft [18]. Data collected in this investigation was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 17.0). The results obtained from the analysis and inferences derived are presented below.

Initially the internal consistency of the instrument developed for the study was evaluated through Chronbach's alpha test that demonstrated excellent reliability with a score of 0.95 for ORS and 0.828 for EI. The Table 1 presents the demographical characteristics of the sample.

It may be observed from Table 1 that majority of the respondents belonged to the age group of 21 - 30 followed by age group of 31-40 and only few above this level indicating average age of the sample to be reasonably low and can be expected to have strength to cope up with role stress. Two thirds of the respondents were males. Married and unmarried individuals among the sample were nearly equal. While 41% of incumbents were with postgraduate qualification while 56 % were graduates depicting clearly the Industry Employment composition. Majority of the respondents belonged to the study area hailing from relatively smaller families and belonging to middle income group ranging up to an annual income of one million INR. Experience among the sample chosen was reasonably spread from below 1 year to above 5 years. Majority of the respondents work up to 10 hours per day albeit preferring more than 10 to 15 days annual leave indicating typical stressful working environment. Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for EI and ORS. While average EI among the respondents can be observed to be high that of Stress level of the respondents was measured to be moderately high.

It can be observed from Table 2 that among EI parameters self management and perception being high which can be attributed to the organizational culture prevailing and high educational qualifications of the incumbents. Among the different types of ORS it can be observed that the employees in this industrial sector essentially demonstrate relatively high Role Erosion followed by Role Ambiguity and Personal Inadequacy as compared to other types indicating low organizational support in these directions. This can be explained by the fact that in most of the organizations from which data was collected, belong to high employment category and hence the Management intervention to individual employee needs are minimal. As a second stage of the study inter relationship between the parameters including ORS and EI were established. The correlation of ORS and its components with EI and its dimensions can be observed from Table 3. It can be observed from the table that EI has a significant positive correlation with inter role distance, role over load and inter role distance. EI has no correlation with ORS and other stressors indicating that among highly educated and skilled people, EI has no role on reducing stress.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (n= 472)

Details	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age	21-30	363	76.91
	31-40	100	21.19
	41-50	7	1.48
	51-60	2	0.42
Gender	Male	286	60.59
	Female	186	39.41
Family Status	Married	222	47.03
	Unmarried	247	52.33
	Divorced	3	0.64
No. of Children	No	330	69.92
	One	94	19.92
	Two	46	9.74
	Three	2	0.42
Educational Background	PG	197	41.74
	UG	265	56.14
	Diploma	10	2.12
Native place	Kerala	420	88.98
	Tamilnadu	31	6.57
	Karnataka	2	0.42
	Andhra Pradesh	10	2.12
	Jharkand	3	0.64
	Bihar	5	1.06
	Uttar Pradesh	1	0.21
No. of family members	Two	45	9.53
	Three	114	24.15
	Four	187	39.62
	Five	78	16.52
	above Five	48	10.16
No. of earning members	One	68	14.41
	Two	267	56.57
	Three	110	23.30
	Four	19	4.03
	Above four	8	1.69
Annual Income (million INR)	0.1-0.3	114	24.15
	0.3-0.7	238	50.42
	0.7-1.0	75	15.89
	1.0-1.5	15	3.18
	1.5-2.0	22	4.66
	2.0-2.5	5	1.06
	2.5-3.5	3	0.63
Tenure (years)	Less than 1	30	6.36
	1-2	104	22.03
	2-3	70	14.8
	3-4	52	11.02
	4-5	40	8.47
	5-8	99	20.97
	Above 8	77	16.31
Experience in the present organization (years)	Less than 1	66	13.98
	1-2	157	33.26
	2-3	102	21.61
	3-4	36	7.63
	4-5	32	6.78
	Above 5	79	16.74
Working hours/ day (hours)	8	159	33.69
	9	197	41.74
	10	103	21.82
	Above 10	13	2.75
Leave availed during last one year (days)	Below 1	25	5.30
	1-5	61	12.92
	5-10	90	19.07
	10-15	145	30.72
	Above 15	151	31.99

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Variables Mean (max)	Mean (Max)	Standard Deviation	No. of Items
Managing others	30.05 (40)	4.08	8
Managing own	34.31 (45)	4.19	9
Perception	35.51 (50)	4.56	10
Utilization	22.98 (30)	3.08	6
Overall EI	122.85 (165)	12.15	33
IRD	12.37 (20)	4.13	5
RS	11.73 (20)	3.65	5
REC	11.74 (20)	3.7	5
RE	13.47 (20)	2.94	5
RO	12.11 (20)	3.71	5
RI	12.45 (20)	3.54	5
PI	12.78 (20)	3.63	5
SRD	9.57 (20)	3.59	5
RA	12.94 (20)	3.75	5
Rin	12.10 (20)	3.80	5
Overall ORS	121.30 (200)	30.05	50

V. CONCLUSIONS

Although this research was conducted among employees belonging to the IT sector in Kerala, the research was not specific to this sector. The results obtained are valuable in estimating the level of ORS and EI among the employees. The high Chronbach's alpha values indicate a high internal validity of the questionnaire developed and used for the study. In general, as the sample space concerns about population engaged in IT sector, the qualification levels of the incumbents are relatively high resulting in a good EI values and also shows moderately high ORS. In the study, ORS appears to have no direct relationship with EI. Essentially this study reveals that while the sample space considered exhibit high ORS as well as high EI, it can be safely concluded that EI does not influence the ORS and any organizational intervention towards enhancement of EI would not be minimizing ORS experienced by individual employees.

Table 3: Correlation between ORS and EI

Variables	Mng Others	Mng Own	Percep-Tion	Utili-Zation	Total EI	IRD	RS	REC	RE	RO	RI	PI	RA	Rin	SRD	Total ORS
Managing others	1															
Managing own	.902**	1														
Perception	.878**	.918**	1													
Utilization	.860**	.901**	.894**	1												
Total EI	.950**	.972**	.966**	.945**	1											
IRD	.077	.084	.093*	.119**	.095*	1										
RS	-.040	-.065	-.033	-.011	-.041	.685**	1									
REC	.027	-.028	.026	.032	.013	.652**	.716**	1								
RE	.054	.040	.042	.060	.050	.410**	.551**	.524**	1							

Table 3: Contd.,

RO	.086	.067	.097*	.113*	.093*	.722**	.654**	.725**	.455**	1						
RI	.071	.041	.072	.079	.067	.622**	.707**	.730**	.598**	.698**	1					
PI	.017	-.022	.005	.041	.008	.499**	.596**	.610**	.466**	.558**	.632**	1				
RA	.035	.030	.042	.071	.044	.567**	.712**	.651**	.596**	.602**	.695**	.646**	1			
Rin	.105*	.113*	.123**	.146**	.125**	.941**	.694**	.637**	.428**	.713**	.630**	.522**	.609**	1		
SRD	.053	.047	.079	.101*	.071	.629**	.654**	.720**	.561**	.690**	.762**	.649**	.697**	.649**	1	
ORS	.060	.039	.068	.093*	.065	.833**	.852**	.852**	.666**	.837**	.861**	.754**	.823**	.844**	.857**	1

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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