

Emotional Intelligence: Managing Stress and Anxiety at work Place**¹Deepak Ranjan Sahoo**

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Abstract:

The phenomenon of emotional intelligence is a growing topic for behavioural investigation as researchers strive to understand its influence on various social interactions. Recent research indicates that emotions play an integral part in Managing stress and Anxiety at workplace. A review of the literature highlights the need for examination of the relationship of emotional intelligence as an overarching concept to the Management of Stress and Anxiety. The researcher examines and investigates the measurement of emotional intelligence as a predictor in managing Stress and Anxiety. Stress management component and anxiety component; emerge as a significant with respect to the relationship with Emotional Intelligence.

Key Words: Emotional Intelligence, Stress Management, Intelligence Quotient, etc.

Introduction: Emotions are our responses to the world around us. The various emotions of anger joy, fear, sadness etc are the result of our thoughts and feelings and actions. Our emotions are perhaps the greatest potential source of uniting all members of the human species. Emotions are universal. Emotions affect our day to day living in the personal as well as Professional ground. Emotions matter a lot in life they are the most important resources that human beings possess. Emotions connect us deeply to other; hence they are the lifelines to self awareness and self preservation. Emotions act as motivational factors in our life; They provide us with happiness, enthusiasm, self Control & determination.

Statement of the problem: Each and every research starts with the problem. A problem is an intellectual motivation calling for an answer in the form of scientific enquiry. Statement of the problem is “Importance of Emotional intelligence in managing stress and anxiety at work place.”

Relevance of the study: Emotions play an important role in the workplace. Studies reveal that emotional intelligence can bring in positive effect to the organisation bottom line. A professional should be competent enough to be aware of his/her emotions and to regulate them. It stand to reason that employees who feels good about themselves and those who feel appreciated will work better for the organisation.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To study the importance of Emotional intelligence (EI) at workplace.
2. To study the significance of Emotional intelligence (EI) in managing stress at workplace.

3. To study the significance of Emotional intelligence (EI) in managing anxiety at workplace.

Emotional Intelligence: Emotional Intelligence is the knowledge about what feels good, what feels bad and how individual should progress from bad to good. It is about Emotional awareness and emotional management skills, which enables an individual to regulate and balance emotions leading to long term satisfaction & happiness. It is all about the understanding our emotions and those of others to make wise decisions and to reach win-win outcomes for all concerned.

Definitions:

According to Daniel Goleman, “Emotional Intelligence is the capacity for recognising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationship.”

According to Salovey and Mayer, “Emotional Intelligence includes an ability to monitor one’s own and other belief and emotions to discriminate among them and use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions.”

Emotional Intelligence is about influence without manipulation or abuse of authority .It is about perceiving learning, relating and innovating, prioritising and acting in ways that take into account and legitimise emotions, rather than relying on logic or intellect or technical analysis. Emotional Intelligence is now being considered to be important in organisational factors. Such as organisational change, leadership, management performance, stress management and Job satisfaction. It is not uncommon to use emotions and emotion related thought and behaviour as the ingredients in an Institutionalised recipe of emotional culture.

Basic components of Emotional Intelligence: Emotional intelligence has basic component such as:

- **Self awareness:-**Self awareness is the heart of Emotional intelligence. It is the foundation on which most of the other elements of Emotional intelligence are built. It is the ability to recognize and understand your moods, emotions and drives as well as their impact on others. Emotional self awareness is also about knowing What motivates you, what brings you, fulfilment and What lifts your heart and fills you with energy and aliveness.
- **Self-Regulation:** - Self regulation or impulse control is the ability to regulate your emotions and behaviour. It involves resisting or delaying an Impulse drive and temptation to act responding versus reacting.
- **Interpersonal Skills:** - Interpersonal effectiveness involves being empathetic (i.e., being aware of understanding and appreciating the feelings of other). Being a member of social group establishing a mutually satisfying relationship.
- **Adaptability:-**Adaptability is the capacity to cope with environmental demands by effectively and realistically sized up and flexibly dealing with problematic situations. It is

the ability to adjust your emotions thought and behaviour to changing situation and conditions.

- **Stress tolerance:** - Stress tolerance is the ability to understand adverse event, stressful situations and strong emotions without falling apart but by actively coping with stress.
- **General mood and motivation:** - Two factors that facilitate emotionally intelligent behaviour are Optimism and Happiness. Optimism is the ability to look at the brighter side of life and to maintain a positive attitude even in the face of adversity. Happiness is the ability to feel satisfied with one's life to enjoy one and others to have fun and express a positive mood.

Emotional Intelligence at Workplace: A manager is a person who has to manage the mood of their organizations. The most gifted corporate leaders accomplish that by using a mysterious blend of psychological abilities known as emotional intelligence. They're self-aware and empathetic. They can read and regulate their own emotions while intuitively grasping how others feel and gauging their organization's emotional state.

Intelligence (EI) has been recently validated with major skill areas that can influence your career and create abilities that improve your worth at work. A very recent and excellent review of the EI literature Dulewicz and Higgs, 2000 demonstrates clearly that EI impacts on work success.

Studies of close to 500 organizations worldwide, reviewed by Goleman, indicate that people who score highest on EQ measures rise to the top of corporations. 'Star' employees possess more interpersonal skills and confidence, for example, than 'regular' employees who receive less glowing performance reviews.

'Emotional intelligence matters twice as much as technical and analytic skill combined for star performances,' he says. 'And the higher people move up in the company, the more crucial emotional intelligence becomes.' Bosses and leaders, in particular, need high EQ because they represent the organization to the public, they interact with the highest number of people within and outside the organization and they set the tone for employee morale, says Goleman. Leaders with empathy are able to understand their employees needs and provide them with constructive feedback. Different jobs also call for different types of emotional intelligence. For example, success in sales requires the empathic ability to gauge a customer's mood and the interpersonal skill to decide when to pitch a product and when to keep quiet.

“Don't bring your personal problems to work” is one variation of the argument that emotions are inappropriate in the workplace. Business decisions, so the argument goes, should be based on information, logic and calm cool reason, with emotions kept to a minimum. But it is unrealistic to suppose that emotions can be checked at the door when you arrive at work. Some people may assume, for a variety of reasons, that emotional neutrality is an ideal, and try to keep feelings out of sight. Such people work and relate in a certain way: usually they come across as rigid, detached or fearful, and fail to participate fully in the life of the workplace. This is not

necessarily bad in some situations, but it is usually not good for an organization for such people to move into management roles.

Developing emotional intelligence in the workplace means acknowledging that emotions are always present, and doing something intelligent with them. People vary enormously in the skill with which they use their own emotions and react to the emotions of others—and that can make the difference between a good manager and a bad one. It's not overly egalitarian to suggest that most professionals, managers and executives are fairly smart people (of course there can be glaring exceptions), but there can be a huge difference in how well they handle people. That is, the department manager may be a genius in technical, product or service knowledge—and get failing marks in terms of people skills.

Stress at workplace: The workplace had become a high stress environment in many organizations cutting across industries. Employees were experiencing high level of stress due to various factors such as high workload, tight deadlines, high targets, type of work, lack of job satisfaction, long working hours, pressure to perform, etc. Interpersonal conflicts at the workplace, such as boss-subordinate relationships and relationships with peers, were also a source of stress.

Experts believed that the dysfunctional aspects of stress could directly impact an organization's performance and also affect the well-being of its employees. Stress at the workplace was linked to absenteeism, higher attrition, and decreased productivity. Stress led to fatigue, irritability, poor communication, and quality problems/errors.

High stress levels also affected the morale and motivation of the employees. Prolonged exposure to stress without effective coping mechanisms could lead to a host of physical and mental problems. For instance, stress could lead to stress-induced gastrointestinal problems, irritable bowel syndrome, acidity, acid reflux, insomnia, depression, heart disease, etc. Moreover, stress could push the victim toward high risk behaviour such as smoking, drinking, and substance abuse. Stress-related illness led to increase in absenteeism and attrition affecting the profitability of the organizations.

Organizations cutting across industries were gearing up to provide employees with a stress-free healthy environment. The efforts to address this issue were more pronounced in some industries than others. Experts felt that, though stress at the workplace is a global phenomenon, professionals in some industries were more susceptible to stress than others. For instance, surveys conducted in 2006 and 2007 in the UK and the US respectively, found that employees in Information Technology (IT) industry (including the ITeS outsourcing industry) were the most stressed. Accordingly, these organizations had started implementing various unconventional methods to decrease stress at the workplace.

Even in India, organizations had woken up to this menace and were resorting to novel methods including teaching the employees dancing and music, trekking, etc, to reduce stress at the

workplace. For instance, Tata Consultancy Services Ltd. had started different clubs like Theatre Club, Bibliophile Club, Adventure & Trekking Club, Fitness Club, Sanctuary Club, Music Club and Community Services Club, etc. Infosys Technologies Ltd. focused on increasing self-awareness and provided the employees with guidance on how to cope with stress through a series of workshops by experts.

In addition to conducting stress management workshops, organizations were also conducting off-site picnics, games, and inter-departmental competitions. Some companies were also using a system of mentors and promoted open communication to improve interactions and camaraderie at the workplace. Employees in most of the established companies had access to in-house counseling centers. Some companies had also employed nutritionists to provide healthy food at the office canteens and counsel the employees on healthy eating habits and lifestyle. Some companies were also considering employing psychologists to counsel their employees.

Experts felt that organizations were resorting to creative methods to address the issue of stress at the workplace, but more action was required on this front, both in terms of assessment of the situation and implementation of concrete steps to tackle the problem.

Anxiety at workplace: In today's economic upheavals, downsizing, layoff, merger, and bankruptcies have cost hundreds of thousands of workers their jobs. Millions more have been shifted to unfamiliar tasks within their companies and wonder how much longer they will be employed. Adding to the pressures that workers face are new bosses, computer surveillance of production, fewer health and retirement benefits, and the feeling they have to work longer and harder just to maintain their current economic status. Workers at every level are experiencing increased tension and uncertainty, and are updating their resumes.

Work is one of the leading sources of stress and anxiety. Dealing with strict supervisors, chances of a demotion, whether you can get your job done on time and ultimately, the fear of getting fired can really give every worker something to be anxious about.

In any workplace, there is an existing system that you are forced to adhere to. These may include rules, regulations and office policies. Sometimes anxiety is brought about the fact that there may be some conflict of interest between doing what you think is right and what the present system dictates. This may be further illustrated when workers have to deal with customers or with their relationship with their co-workers. It is human nature to ease his or her own anxiety - either by adapting or leaving your workplace.

Like other forms of anxiety, job-anxieties can present in the form of panic, hypochondriac fears, work-related worrying, post-traumatic stress, or work-related social anxieties. Anxiety can lead to avoidance. Job anxiety can therefore be one explanation for sick leave, work absenteeism, or early retirement. Otego University study has shown that 45 per cent of newly diagnosed cases of depression or generalised anxiety disorder were directly related to workplace stress. 12 per cent of people who experienced stress at work and had no history of mental health problems had a

first episode of depression or anxiety at the age of 32. People with high levels of psychological demands at work were 75-80 per cent more likely to suffer from depression or anxiety than those with the lowest levels (Martin, 2007).

Conclusion: The present study was conducted to find out the role of emotional intelligence in managing stress and anxiety at workplace. After analysis the emotional intelligence will correlate negatively with stress and anxiety, and Emotional intelligence will be predicted through levels of Stress and Anxiety, is partially conformed. The present study indicates that the low and high level of Emotional Intelligence establish relationship to some extent with stress and anxiety. Negative correlation of Emotional Intelligence with stress and Anxiety highlights that emotional intelligence will prove helpful tool in dealing with stress and anxiety at workplace.

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