



ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND WORK LIFE BALANCE OF CAREER WOMEN IN JOB STRESS

P.NIVETHA

PhD scholar, Alagappa Institute of Management, Alagappa University, Karaikudi, Tamilnadu - 630002

Dr. S.SUDHAMATHI

Assistant Professor, Alagappa Institute of Management, Alagappa University, Karaikudi Tamilnadu - 630002

ABSTRACT The purpose of this study is to find out the role of emotional intelligence and work life balance of career women in job stress. Work-life balance is the term used to describe practices in achieving a balance between the demands of employees' family (life) and work lives. The demands and pressures of work make difficult to stretch time for balancing work-life activities. Women taking up work-life balance challenge have an impact on women's advancement. Organization also may create work place culture and climates that reflect concern for employees' lives outside of work. It is important for organizations to periodically review current work processes and practices to determine which ones lead to work inefficiencies and employee stress. In this background the present study was undertaken to determine the Indian Career women work-life balance. The present study focuses on the relationship between role efficacy and emotional intelligence as related to work- life balance of Career women. There is a significant impact of factors affecting role efficacy on Emotional Intelligence. Emotions is involved in everything we do: every action, decision and judgment. Emotionally intelligent people recognize this and use their thinking to manage their emotions rather than being managed by them.

KEYWORDS : Emotional intelligence, Work life balance, emotions, career women.

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century is also an era of stress. Individuals face job stress in their organization and daily lives due to globalization, information technology revolution, and speed of life. The most important effects of these can be seen in the business world, and they can manifest themselves as changes that organizations make in their structures, strategies, activities, and technologies. Constantly changing organizations impose new roles and duties on their employees which have effect on their work life balance, and the employees who want to handle new roles and duties need to have efficiency in intelligence quotient (IQ) and efficiency in emotional quotient (EQ) in the processes of decision making and problem solving. A completely stress-free life is impossible, and stress becomes a characteristic of human existence. Individuals have used various methods to handle stress, including using their intelligence, especially their emotional intelligence (Siren, 2007).

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a social intelligence that enables people to recognize their own, and other peoples' emotions. Moreover, emotional intelligence enables people to differentiate those emotions, and to make appropriate choices for thinking and action (Cooper and Sawaf, 1997; Mayer and Salovey, 1993). It is an intelligence that may be learned, developed and improved (Perkins, 1994; Sternberg, 1996). Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to perceive, control, and evaluate emotions. Some researchers suggest that emotional intelligence can be learned and strengthened, while other claim it is an inborn characteristic. It is also, defined as the ability to use your awareness and sensitivity to discern the feelings underlying interpersonal communication, and to resist the temptation to respond impulsively and thoughtlessly, but instead to act from receptivity, authenticity and candour (Ryback, 1998). Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer (1990) in their influential article "Emotional Intelligence," defined emotional intelligence as, "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions". Emotionally intelligent people are defined in part as those who regulate their emotions according to a logically consistent model of emotional functioning.

Emotional intelligence allows employee to think more creatively and use his emotions to solve problems. Daniel Goleman believes that emotional intelligence appears to be an important set of psychological abilities that relates to work life balance and life success. It is empathy and communication skills as well as social and leadership skills that will be central to your work life balance and personal relationships. The ability to manage feelings and handle stress is another aspect of emotional intelligence that has been found to be important for successful work life balance. Emotional intelligence has as much to do

with knowing when and how to express emotion as it do with controlling it. Empathy is a particularly important aspect of emotional intelligence. Emotions are more successful in work as well as in social lives. Emotional Intelligence is now being considered to be an important organizational factor.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Stress is recognized worldwide as a major challenge to workers health and the healthiness of organizations. Stress can be brought about by pressures at work. Job stress can be a real problem to the organization as well as to the workers. Job stress can manifest itself in numerous ways. A range of somatic and mental ailments such as, tension headaches, allergies, back problems, colds and flu, depression (Arroba & James, 1990), anxiety, irritation, tension and sleeplessness (Cooper, Cooper & Eaker, 1988) and may lead to health compromising coping strategies such as increased consumption of drugs (Quick, Nelson & Quick, 1990). Chronic exposure to stress may have even very serious consequences such as cancer, heart disease, respiratory illnesses, strokes, arthritis, ulcers and high blood pressure (Quick, Nelson & Quick, 1990; Cooper, Cooper & Eaker, 1988). However, all individuals do not develop such problems in face of stress. However, this study is examining the role of emotional intelligence and work life balance in job stress.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of this study:

- To examine the role of emotional intelligence and work life balance of career women in job stress.
- To find out the relationship between emotional intelligence of career women and job stress.
- To identify the factors causing job stress in a work place.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study on the role of emotional intelligence and work life balance of career women in job stress will cover all the factors that cause job stress and approaches by which emotional intelligence can be used to maintain a stable work life balance.

ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND WORK LIFE BALANCE OF CAREER WOMEN IN JOB STRESS

Emotions are an inseparable and integral 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/understanding of work is

saturated with emotion of employees whether manager or non-manager.

A manager is a person/ individual who have to manage/cope the mood of their organizations. The most gifted corporate leaders achieve that by means of a mysterious combination of psychological abilities/skills known as emotional intelligence. They are empathetic and self-aware. They can regulate or control and read their own emotions while intuitively grasping how others gauge and feeling their organization's emotional state. Emotional Intelligence (EI) has been recently validated with major skill areas that can influence your career and create abilities/skills that improve your value/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. Research studies of approximately 500 organisations worldwide, reviewed by Goleman, point out that individual who scores highest on EQ measures, raise to the top of corporations. For example, 'Star' employees possess more confidence and interpersonal skills, than 'Regular' employees who obtain less glowing reviews of performance.

The fundamental thought underlying the notion of Emotional intelligence is that efficacious actions entail more than pristinely rational thought. Emotion is segregating for bracing and arranging behavior. In like manner, to be happy and productive in life, one needs more than essentially cognitive competence. This study investigated if emotional intelligence has an impact on job stress, job satisfaction and organizational commitment of employees. Emotional intelligence has extensive effect on job stress, job satisfaction and organizational commitment of bank employees. Subsequently, the study finishes up that a speculation in the EI training system to build up the EI level of employees may present the most compensation and advantage not just to advance the individual job satisfaction, capacity to handle stress at work and execution, moreover build the organizational performance.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND JOB STRESS

Recently studies have shown great researchers' interest in the study of the relationship between EI and stress in the light of organizational performance and several studies investigated the impact of EI competencies on stress, which report the existence of positive relationship (Gardner, 2005, Spector and Goh, 2001, Ciarrochi, Chan, & Bajgar, 2001). The EI competencies play a role to create the abilities in an individual's to better control the stress in the workplace. The previous studies reveal that the EI individuals have strong emotions and attitude to deal stressful events in a positive way. The EI competencies generate the skill in individual to choose various courses of action to deal stress without collapsing, to be positive to solve a problem, and feel that one can control the situation (Slaski and Cartwright, 2002). The employees having EI competencies manage their negative emotions in the workplace and report fewer psychological problems with high levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Gardner, 2005).

People may react emotionally to stressful events at work. Sometimes the reaction will be positive. Other times the emotions may be characterized as anger, anxiety and depression. A person's ability to perceive and manage their own emotions may influence reactions to stress in a more positive way. Carson & Carson (1998) found EC to be related to career commitment. In their study, individuals most likely to be committed to their career also tended to be more emotionally competent. Stress in the workplace increases management pressures, reduces productivity and makes individuals ill in numerous ways, evidences of which is still growing. Organizational stress affects the brain performance, together with functions of work performance; learning, memory, and concentration. Workplace stress also provides a serious risk of litigation for all organizations and employer's, carrying significant liabilities for bad publicity, loss of reputation, and damages. It is here that emotional intelligence comes to our rescue and guides us to respond appropriately to different stressors. EI 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. Sehgal (1997) assessed the effect of role stress on the level of involvement a person has in the job & alienation and the coping mechanism used to deal with stress. It was found that resource inadequacy, role erosion and inter-role distance were dominating contributors of role stress. Avoidance style of coping was used more frequently than approach styles of coping.

Spector and Goh (2001) in their theoretical paper examined the role of emotion in occupational stress. They employed a narrow definition of job stress as —any condition or situation that elicits a negative emotional response, such as anger / anxiety or frustration / tension in an attempt to overcome the broadness of previous definitions and focus on negative emotional responses. The authors suggested that emotions influence how the work environment is perceived, that is, whether a particular condition is appraised as a job stressor or not. They further suggested that these appraising emotions may lead to psychological and physical strains. Psychological strain might result from continual negative emotional experiences and may lead to decreases in job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Duran and Extremera (2004) in their findings including professionals employed in institutions for people with intellectual disabilities, revealed a significant relationship between burnout syndrome and emotional intelligence, and personal accomplishment in particular. The data clearly indicated that emotional intelligence expressed in the ability to recognize, express, and control emotions may have impact on the perceived job stress and the consequences of experienced stress. Darolia and Darolia (2005) examined the role of emotional intelligence in coping with stress and emotional control behavior. The study clearly established that emotionally intelligent people who are able to understand and recognize their emotions, manage themselves appropriately so that their impulsiveness and aggression is kept under control in stressful situations.

FACTORS CAUSING JOB STRESS IN A WORK PLACE

The workplace is an important source of both demands and pressures causing stress, and structural and social resources to counteract stress. The workplace factors that have been found to be associated with stress and health risks can be categorised as those to do with the content of work and those to do with the social and organisational context of work (fig 1). Those that are intrinsic to the job include long hours, work overload, time pressure, difficult or complex tasks, lack of breaks, lack of variety, and poor physical work conditions (for example, space, temperature, light).

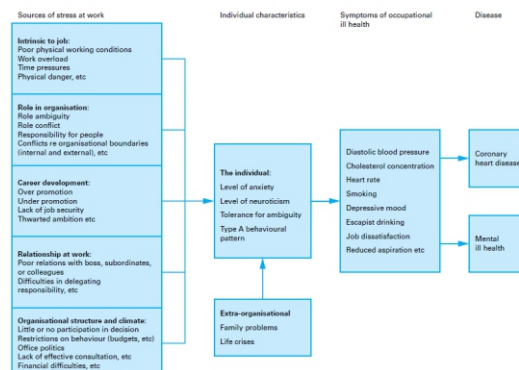


Figure 1 A model of stress at work.

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Unclear work or conflicting roles and boundaries can cause stress, as can having responsibility for people. The possibilities for job development are important buffers against current stress, with under promotion, lack of training, and job insecurity being stressful. There are two other sources of stress, or buffers against stress: relationships at work, and the organisational culture. Managers who are critical, demanding, unsupportive or bullying create stress, whereas a positive social dimension of work and good team working reduces it.

An organisational culture of unpaid overtime or “presenteeism” causes stress. On the other hand, a culture of involving people in decisions, keeping them informed about what is happening in the organisation, and providing good amenities and recreation facilities reduce stress. Organisational change, especially when consultation has been inadequate, is a huge source of stress. Such changes include mergers, relocation, restructuring or “downsizing”, individual contracts, and redundancies within the organisation.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study is to investigate role of emotional intelligence and work life balance of career women in job stress. Besides the occupational stress, Emotional Intelligence in the light of working

organisation at work place is dealt in depth. Attempt will be made to look into the factors contributing stress in relation with EI and what variables in terms of roles are responsible for increasing the stress among employees. A rationale is provided for the role of emotion in occupational stress and the need to explore these relationships more thoroughly. In this background, this study was undertaken to highlight the role of emotional intelligence in work-life balance of Indian working women. Organization have realised that IQ alone cannot predict the success of an individual, EQ/EI is also important for an individual to be success in both work life and also in personal life.

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