INNOVATIONS IN EDUCATION MANAGEMENT: IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES ON OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG UNIVERSITY TEACHERS

Abstract. Today emotional intelligence is increasingly relevant to the success of management as well as employees in every respect, be it internal issues like conflict resolution, group dynamics, leadership and motivation or the external issues like customer relationship management, brand loyalty and corporate social responsibility (CSR). There is limited research on the impact of emotional intelligence on job stress and workplace conduct. The objective of the article is to understand the relationship between occupational stress and emotional intelligence. It also attempts to study the impact of some demographic variables (gender, age, work experience) on occupational stress. Simple random sampling was used to collect data from teaching and non-teaching staff working in universities and educational institutions in Uttar Pradesh, India. SPSS 21 was used for data analysis using statistical tools like correlation, Mann-Whitney and Kruskal Wallis tests. Results show a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational stress. The female employees were found to have greater stress levels as compared to their male counterparts. Age is found to have an impact on occupational stress of university teachers. The employees in their forties were found to have higher stress levels than younger employees. Work experience is also found to have an impact on occupational stress of university teachers. It was observed that employees with a work experience of more than 30 years have maximum levels of occupational stress. Based on the findings of this study, the managers should take special measures to take care of female employees and minimize factors which lead to their stress. The policies and work culture of the organization should create a conducive ambience for female employees. The organization should provide support and counselling to employees in their forties to sort out their stress-related issues which would eventually enhance their productivity. The employees with a work experience of more than 30 years (usually older ones) should get support and any stress-causing issues such as post-retirement benefits should be explained and clarified. This study adds to the current body of knowledge from a theoretical perspective. It enriches the understanding of the relationship between emotional intelligence, demographic variables and occupational stress. The top management of the organization can enhance their organization's effectiveness by learning from the findings of this study.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence (EI), occupational stress, work overload, stress management, organization.

Introduction. Emotional intelligence (EI) means the ability to understand self-feelings and that of others, ability to mould negative emotions into a positive direction and the rationale to use the emotions in a manner which is productive and qualitative. It is treated as a soft skill to smoothen the organizational working. The concept and practice of Intelligence quotient (IQ) fell inadequate to manage organizational behaviour and thus came the concept of EQ or emotional intelligence quotient. Today EI is increasingly relevant to the success of management in every respect, be it internal issues like conflict resolution, group dynamics, leadership and motivation or the external issues like customer relationship management, brand loyalty and corporate social responsibility (CSR). The significant attribute of emotionally intelligent individuals is that they are ‘optimistic’ which enables them to focus on the solution, rather than the blame game. Figure 1 shows the different attributes of levels of Emotional intelligence. Occupational stress seems to be the biggest challenge before modern-day organizations (Belias et al., 2013; Wan et al., 2014).
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Figure 1. Attributes of Emotional intelligence levels
Source: developed by the authors based on (Zimmerman, n.d.).

Work-related stress is a cognitive and functional occurrence, which is caused as a reaction to numerous outside influences (Hellhammer and Hellhammer, 2008; Ganster and Rosen, 2013). The main reasons of work-related stress are problematic to recognize, and they span from under-developed decisions to the fright of job-loss. However, it is easy to identify the effects of job-stress on personnel as well as the organization where they work. Stress has been known to produce the advent of reduced concentration, impulsive conduct, and poor attention on employees (Burdus et al., 1996; Johns, 2011). At the organizational level, stress has been found to be the key reason for absenteeism (Johns, 2011), less production (Irawanto and Primasari, 2015), and decreased organizational loyalty (Burdus et al., 1996). To minimize these undesirable effects, the managers need to deal with the sources of stress at both individual and organizational level. The executives in modern business organizations need to develop and sustain a positive emotional culture which ensures employees’ mental health and creates a well-organized work ambience (Ashkanasy, 2003). In this context, emotional intelligence (EI) is a vital means for increasing success of an organization and controlling the communication between executives and subordinates (Brackett and Sakovey, 2006; Drozdowski, 2017). The managers possessing a higher level of emotional intelligence are found to be highly organized, competitive and able to use emotions to make better decisions and motivate their employees (Abraham, 2000; Watkin, 2000). In their study, Extremera, Fernandez-Berrocal, and Ramos (2007) and Bellàs et al. (2013) posit that employees can use EI as a coping strategy to deal with stress. The previous scholars have established that the employees possessing a higher level of EI prove to be highly effective in dealing with stress and are more efficient at work (Hong and Lee, 2016; O’Connor et al., 2017). Thus, employees who possess higher levels of emotional restraint and flexibility can develop several emotional mechanisms which enable them to deal with stress. Alternatively, employees having a lower level of EI wish to avoid circumstances that present stress, and due to this, they may refuse important assignments which can create organizational level problems. Numerous scholars at the International level (Ioannis and Ioannis, 2002; Shukla and Srivastava, 2016) underline the association between EI and occupational stress, whereas contradictory findings are also established in specific countries. According to Chinese managers, EI has a constructive influence on employees’ welfare and company’s ambience and therefore, EI is highly significant for employees, managers and organizations (Cheung et al., 2016; Li et al., 2016). There is limited research on the impact
of EI on job stress and workplace conduct. There is also a lack of empirical studies on occupational stress in the setting of emerging economies like India. Therefore, this paper attempts to look at occupational stress concerning emotional intelligence levels and demographical characteristics of individuals.

**Literature Review.** Many scholars have tried to define emotional intelligence, but we can simply define emotional intelligence as the rational use of emotions (Weissinger, 1998). Thorndike’s social intelligence idea has served as the basis of emotional intelligence, which attempts to comprehend and manage individuals based on their social conduct (Dogan and Demiral, 2007). In contrast, Payne (1985) was first to use the phrase emotional intelligence. The researcher defined it as an individual’s ability to associate with fear, pain and desire. Salovey and Mayer (1990) are credited with one of the well-known definitions of emotional intelligence where they related it to their Four Branch Model. In this model, the «four branches» are those elements that produce emotional intelligence: utilizing emotions, observing emotions, emotional management and social fitness (Salovey and Mayer, 1990). They described emotional intelligence as a type of social intelligence that comprises the capability to examine one’s own emotions as well as others’ emotions, and also the capacity to utilize these analyses to manage the actions of oneself as well as others. The «four branches» include four factors that form emotional intelligence (Salovey and Mayer, 1990): the use of emotions, perceiving emotions, emotional management and social fitness. There are numerous other definitions of emotional intelligence in addition to the definitions given by these researchers. Emotional intelligence has been defined as the capability of an individual to utilize correct perception about others as well as his own emotions, and also the capacity to enable this understanding to augment better decision-making (Martinez, 1997). Chapman (2001) adds the concept of organization’s work environment when he defines emotional intelligence as the employee agreeing with company’s ethics, feeling good about others and themselves, and having the urge for selling their goods.

Abraham (1999) posits that emotionally intelligent employees do not blame their organization for each feeling of frustration because they are skilled at putting themselves in optimistic states of dysfunctional emotions (Salovey and Mayer, 1990). This finding really holds true for senior-level executives who always face the problem of reuniting the feelings of frustration of contradictory interest groups inside and outside of the organization. On the ground level, people are inspired by the extent to which contents of rational exchange approach provides them with experiences like delight, exhilaration, amazement and frustration (Ashforth and Humphrey, 1995). Singh (2007) suggested that it has become vital to appreciate and leverage emotional intelligence to augment the employee capacity in organizations. Their result proposes that the personal competencies of personnel affects emotional intelligence, and the personal competency determinants of individual’s accomplishment and organization’s achievement have an expected association with emotional intelligence. Turner (2006) surveyed the associations between workers’ emotional intelligence, their supervisor’s emotional intelligence, workers’ work contentment, and workers’ performance from various franchise locations of the same restaurant. They found that workers’ emotional intelligence was directly connected to their professional contentment and performance. Moreover, the emotional intelligence of supervisors was more directly correlated with professional contentment of subordinates with comparatively low emotional intelligence. Brown et. al (2006) has presented a model for emotional intelligence and elaborate on the skills assumed to help in precise assessment, expression and effective control of emotion in oneself and others. They further explore how the employees use their feelings for planning, motivation and achievement in their life. The modern working life is filled with change, competition, and adversities due to work overload and technological advancements, and these lead to stress for individuals. However, the concept of stress is not new. It is only recently that scholars have started to look at it scientifically, and they found that the idea of stress necessitates interdisciplinary research (Ozbay and Senyuz, 1998). The word «stress» originates from «estrica» which is a Latin verb. Even though stress referred to pain, misery and sorrow in earlier times, its meanings have evolved in recent times to pressurize and to apply force (Guney, 2000). Various researchers (Stora, 1992; Agma,
2007) have studied stress in numerous streams of science. Selye (1955) adopted a mental and physical viewpoint in his attempt to examine stress from the individual's reaction to any additional task or assignment given to him. He looked at stress as a mental and physical phenomenon and acknowledged stress as the struggle of a person beyond the limits of his own physical and mental capabilities due to uneasy situations arising in his surroundings. According to Schermerhorn (1989), stress can be defined as the pressure felt by a person when he/she faces unexpected situations, assignment or requests. (Rogers, 2007) defined stress as a condition which comprises of pressure, and is determined by numerous issues like experiencing change, reticence, struggle, and other distinctive individual traits. Based on various stress definitions, we can deduce that the idea of stress should not always be studied in a negative light. According to Allen (1983), the reaction of the human body to stress is similar in both negative as well as positive situations, since our body is incapable of differentiating between the impact of delightful and bitter situations. Some studies (Sahin, 2010) have intriguingly proposed that a specific amount of stress is good for individuals to remain competent and well-organized.

As suggested by Lazarus (1999), there is a strong association established between emotional intelligence and work-related stress. Lazarus found in his study that stress is dependent on emotions and both of them co-exist. Therefore, a person with high emotional intelligence can change his negative emotions into positive emotions and is more productive in a stressful environment. Thus, emotional intelligence competencies enable stress management in an organization. Kaloncu et al. (2012) examined the association between emotional intelligence and stress in Turkish nurses working in private and government hospitals. They found that although the average emotional intelligence of female nurses was higher than male nurses, there was no substantial difference in the stress levels of emotional intelligence between the male and female nurses. They found that there was a significant connection between age and emotional intelligence and that emotional intelligence improved with an individual's age. Leon and Tanasescu (2018) surveyed the association between emotional intelligence and work-related stress in the banks of Romania. Their findings indicate that the four components of emotional intelligence display a positive effect on decreasing the level of stress, which is felt by bank employees. The employees who possessed a higher level of emotional intelligence were found to have lower stress levels because of the reason that they succeeded to comprehend and manage the emotions of others colleagues as well as their own. Furthermore, their higher emotional intelligence helped them to be more focused and result-driven. In another research, Tanasescu and Leon (2019) studied the connections between emotional intelligence, job-related stress and worker performance in the bank employees. Their results indicated that the emotional intelligence and work-related stress of employees are negatively related, whereas the emotional intelligence and job performance are positively related to each other. Many researchers found that executives with high emotional intelligence suffer from less stress (Slaski and Cartwright, 2002; Ciarrochi et al. 2002; Gardner and Stough, 2003; Furnell, 2008; Darvish and Nasrollahi, 2011). Another study by Krishankumar and Lalita (2014) established a definite connection between work-related stress and emotional intelligence. Research by Cooper and Sawaf (1997) shows that employees with high EI levels can identify the causes of stress, minimize stress and encourage a constructive work environment. Mahmood and Yadav (2017) claim that there is an insignificant relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational stress. These findings are supported by Leon and Tanasescu (2018), who surveyed the banks in Romania. They established that all four aspects of emotional intelligence (own emotions, the emotions of others, optimism and the use of emotions) have a direct effect on decreasing occupational stress felt by workers. The employees with high emotional intelligence feel less stress at the workplace because they can recognize and control their own and others’ emotions. Rahim and Malik (2010) examined the impact of demographic factors (age, education, experience, gender and marital status) on EI, which results in organizational performance among male and female staffs. They found that female staff is more emotionally intelligent than their male counterparts in the bank sector, and the age of
employees is inversely related to the level of their EI. They also found that higher the education level, higher the EI level of employees and vice versa. Employee contentment also determines its performance. Belias et al. (2013) found that there was a possibility of occupational stress to be affected by demographic factors like age and gender. They conclude that employees who can manage the feelings and emotions of themselves and others can effectively deal with work stress and therefore, display better job performance. Jick and Mitz (1985) claim that gender has a significant role in understanding stress. McDonald and Korabik (1991) expressed that although men and women have some common stressors, there are some exclusive stressors faced by women. Many researchers concluded that there was no significant difference in occupational stress levels of males and females (Martocchio and O’Leary, 1989; Fontana and Abouserie, 1993; Spielberger and Reheiser, 1994; Di Salvo et al. 1995). In contrast, Galanakis et al. (2009) claim that women experience higher levels of occupational stress than men. Several researchers claim that women are more susceptible to higher levels of occupational stress than men (Jick and Mitzi; 1985; Ganster and Schaubroek, 1991; Sharpley et al. 1996; Fotinatos-Ventouratos and Cooper, 2005; Antoniou et al. 2006; Mahmood and Yadav, 2017). Bolhari et al. (2012) established a significant relationship between age and organizational stress. Sager (1990) found that stress and the capability to deal with stress increases with age among people. Several researchers concluded that younger employees went through more stress than older employees in the organization (Dua, 1994; Ben-Bakr et al. 1995; Sharpley et al. 1996). However, a different group of independent researchers claim that older employees experienced more stress as compared to younger ones (Darmody and Smyth, 2010; Bolhari et al. 2012).

Methodology and research methods. The human mind is the concoction of various kinds of feelings resulting into a vast range of expressions ranging from stress to high morale, anger to ecstasy and liveliness to dullness; eventually affecting the productivity of the individual and that of the organization as well. Today emotional intelligence is increasingly relevant to the success of management as well as employees in every respect, be it internal issues like conflict resolution, group dynamics, leadership and motivation or the external issues like customer relationship management, brand loyalty and corporate social responsibility (CSR). Earlier studies focused on the impact of emotional stress on job stress among bank employees (Belias et al. 2003); IT sector professionals (Bolhari, 2012); real estate agents (Cheung et al. 2016); primary school teachers (Darmody and Smyth, 2010); nurses (Kalyoncu, 2012), etc. However, studies on the impact of emotional stress on job stress among university teachers are comparatively scarce. There is also limited research on the impact of EI on job stress and workplace conduct (Shah Hosseini et al., 2012). The present study is intended to focus on the association between emotional intelligence and occupational stress as well as the impact of various demographic variables on stress among university teachers. Objectives of the study. The objectives of this study are:

1. To study the relationship between occupational stress and emotional intelligence.
2. To study the impact of demographic factors like gender, age and work experience on occupational stress.

Hypothesis. The hypotheses of the study are:

H1: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational stress.
H2: There is no significant impact of gender on occupational stress of university teachers.
H3: There is no significant impact of age on occupational stress of university teachers.
H4: There is no significant impact of work experience on occupational stress of university teachers.

Measurement instrument. Occupational Stress was measured using the Occupational Stress Index (OSI) by Srivastava and Singh (1981). This scale has 46 items which are evaluated on a Likert scale. Those items are related to the relevant stress-causing components of professional life. Herewith, they measure role conflict, role overload, role vagueness, irrational group and political pressure, powerlessness, poor peer relations, responsibility for persons, under participation, intrinsic
impoverishment, low status, strenuous working situations, unprofitability. Out of a total of 46 items, 28 items are true-keyed, and the remaining 18 are false-keyed. Odd-even methods were used to determine the index of split reliability of the scale which was calculated to be 0.94. The scale reliability (Cronbach Alpha) was 0.90. Emotional intelligence of the respondents was measured with the Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI) scale developed by Boyatzis et al. (1999). The ECI measures «emotional competencies» which is associated with EI. It has two forms (self-report and 360 degrees). The ECI has 20 competencies which are further separated into self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skills. The response from employees was collected on a five-point Likert-scale. Sample and data collection. The respondents comprised of faculty members working in universities and higher education institutes in Uttar Pradesh, India. The empirical study was a descriptive cross-sectional. The cross-sectional analysis avoids several complicating facets of the use of data which is collected at different points in time. Moreover, the data analysis in cross-sectional design does not require an assumption that the variables have a stable relationship among themselves over time. An online questionnaire developed through Google Docs application was sent to respondents through e-mail and social media channels. This method has been successfully used in previous studies (Bian and Forsythe, 2012; Rehman, 2017; Rehman, 2020). The questionnaires were distributed to 485 respondents using simple random sampling. In turn, 237 valid responses were received. The data collection was from December 2019 to March 2020. The data was entered in SPSS version 21 to obtain results. Correlation, Mann-Whitney and Kruskal Wallis tests were the statistical tools used for the analysis of data.

Results. A brief profile of the sample is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Sample Profile

| Demography | N | %   |
|------------|---|-----|
| Gender     |   |     |
| Male       | 132| 55.7%|
| Female     | 105| 44.3%|
| Total      | 237| 100% |
| Work experience | |     |
| Less than 5 | 68 | 28.69% |
| 5-10       | 83 | 35.02% |
| 11-20      | 37 | 15.61% |
| 21-30      | 29 | 12.24% |
| More than 30 | 20 | 8.44% |
| Total      | 237| 100% |

Source: developed by the authors based on SPSS output.

For testing H01, a Spearman’s correlation was run to establish the relationship between Occupational Stress and Emotional Intelligence. As shown in Table 2, the p-value for this test is 0.002. Therefore, there is very strong evidence to reject H01, i.e. evidence to believe that occupational stress and emotional intelligence are correlated in the population. Therefore, a moderate, negative correlation has been found among occupational stress and emotional intelligence (rs=-0.418, n = 237, p < 0.001). Thus, hypothesis H01 is rejected.

Table 2. Correlation between Occupational Stress and Emotional Intelligence

| Spearman’s Rho |   |
|----------------|---|
| Sig            | 0.002 |
| N              | 237 |

Source: developed by the authors based on SPSS output.

Then, the relationship between occupational stress and the demographic variables of gender, age and work experience were studied. For testing the second null-hypothesis H02, a Mann-Whitney’s U test was performed (Table 3 and Table 4).
Table 3. Ranking of Respondents according to Gender

| Gender | N   | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks |
|--------|-----|-----------|--------------|
| Male   | 132 | 158.48    | 20,919.36    |
| Female | 105 | 79.20     | 8,316        |

Source: developed by the authors based on SPSS output.

Table 4. Relationship between Gender and Occupational Stress

| Test              | Output |
|-------------------|--------|
| Mann-Whitney U    | 3,256  |
| Wilcoxon W        | 8,316  |
| Z                 | -1.136 |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.032 |

Source: developed by the authors based on SPSS output.

As seen in Table 3, 4, the p-value for this test is 0.032. Therefore, it is possible to reject hypothesis H02. The rank of females (79.20) was higher than males (158.48). Besides, the occupational stress levels among females were more as compared to their male colleagues. It concludes that the data provides statistical evidence of the significant impact of gender on occupational stress of university teachers (Mann Whitney U= 3256, z = -1.136, p = 0.032).

The effect of age and work experience on occupational stress was tested using the Kruskal Wallis test (since both variables have more than two groups within themselves). Table 5 shows that the p-value (Asymp. Sig. 2-tailed) is less than 0.05 for both age and experience.

Table 5. Relationship between Age, Experience and Occupational Stress

| Occupational Stress | Variable | Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | Chi-Square |
|---------------------|----------|-----------------------|------------|
|                     | Age      | 0.021                 | 17.78      |
|                     | Experience| 0.001                | 53.12      |

Source: developed by the authors based on SPSS output.

Therefore, we have to reject the null hypotheses H03 and H04. Thus, we have statistical evidence to believe that there is a significant impact of age on occupational stress of university teachers (X2= 17.78, p=0.021). Similarly, we have statistical evidence to believe that work experience has a significant impact on occupational stress of university teachers (X2= 53.12, p=0.001). According to the current study, there is a significant negative correlation between emotional intelligence and occupational stress among employees working in universities and educational institutions. It implies that high emotional intelligence in these employees results in lower occupational stress and vice versa. This finding is supported by the work of other researchers who reported a negative relationship between emotional intelligence and job-related stress (Slaski and Cartwright, 2002; Ciarrochi et al. 2002; Gardner and Stough, 2003; Furnell, 2008; Darvish and Nasrollahi, 2011). Female employees had higher occupational stress levels than male employees. The reason could be because of their more responsibility for the family, and the extra effort to balance family and professional life might lead to their higher job stress. This finding is supported by numerous studies worldwide who found higher occupational stress level in female employees (Jick and Mitzi,1985; Ganster and Schaubroeck, 1991; Sharpley et al. 1996; Fotinatos-Ventouratos and Cooper, 2005; Antoniou et al. 2006; Galanakis et al. 2009; Mahmood and Yadav, 2017).

The results showed that age had an impact on occupational stress of university teachers. The employees in their forties had higher stress levels than younger employees which are also supported by
the findings of Darmordy and Smyth (2010). Besides, work experience had an impact on occupational stress of university teachers. It was observed that employees with a work experience of more than 30 years have maximum levels of occupational stress.

**Conclusions.** This paper attempted to explore and measure the association between occupational stress and emotional intelligence. There is limited research on the impact of EI on job stress and workplace conduct (Shah Hosseini et al., 2012). There is also a lack of empirical studies on occupational stress in the setting of emerging economies like India. The findings of this study suggest that there exists a negative correlation between emotional intelligence and job-related stress. Moreover, the stress level of female employees is higher in comparison to male employees. Age and work experience has a significant impact on occupational stress levels. This paper adds to the existing literature on occupational stress and emotional intelligence from a theoretical perspective. It enriches the understanding of the relationship between emotional intelligence, demographic variables and occupational stress. However, the results of this study could not be generalized in the context of employees from other organizational sectors and countries. Further studies would be required in different sectors and countries to validate the results of this study. The top management of the organization can enhance their organization’s effectiveness by learning from the findings of this study. Managers should take special measures to take care of female employees and minimize factors which lead to their stress. The policies and work culture of the organization should create a conducive ambience for female employees. The organization should provide support and counselling to employees in their forties to sort out their stress related issues which would eventually enhance their productivity. The employees with a work experience of more than 30 years (usually older ones) should get support and any stress-causing issues such as post-retirement benefits should be explained and clarified. This study had its limitations. The linkage between components should be analyzed with caution due to the cross-sectional nature of the study. The measurement of EI has always been complicated and problematic. There is no consensus over the issue of whether EI can be taught.

There is a need to carry out related studies on employees of various other professions across India to get a clear picture. There is also a need to study the impact of other demographic variables (like educational qualification, annual income, and designation level in the organization) on occupational stress. The impact of various demographic variables on emotional intelligence should also be explored.

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Інновації в управлінні освітою: вплив емоційного інтелекту та демографічних факторів на рівень стресостійкості викладачів університету

У статті висвітлено особливості управління емоційним інтелектом у сучасних ринкових умовах. Автором визначено вплив емоційного інтелекту на швидкість та ефективність виконання внутрішніх (кіфіфікації, психологічна поведінка в контексті, лідерство та мотивація) та зовнішніх проблем організації (управління відповідь на критерій Манна-Уотті та тесту Крукгра-Уолліса. Отримані результати свідчать про статистичну значущість впливу емоційного інтелекту на рівень стресостійкості на роботі. Встановлено, що рівень стресостійкості значно впливає на статі, вік та професійний стаж. Автор вважає, що емоційний інтелект є важливою ознакою, яка впливає на рівень стресу на роботі. Результати впливу таких факторів на рівень стресостійкості на роботі. Встановлено, що рівень стресостійкості значно впливає на статі, вік та професійний стаж.

Ключові слова: емоційний інтелект (EI), професійний стрес, робоче перевантаження, управління стресом, організація.

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