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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND STRESS COPING STRATEGIES AMONG EMPLOYESS IN INSURANCE SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the paper is emotional intelligence stress coping strategies among employees in insurance sector in Tamil Nadu. When employee feels he is over burdened or pressurized by his job, then occupational stress occurs. Employees are undergone different body conditions due to their work pressure and it spoils their health. For the current study 371 insurance employees were met and their responses recorded. Researchers found that proper implementation of coping strategies may increase the EI level of the employees and they can reduce or deflect their job stress in the initial stage itself.

Key words: Emotional Intelligence, Job involvement, coping Strategies, insurance

1. INTRODUCTION

Insurance sector is a very big economy to the country. Insurance agents or consultants are working very hard to achieve their targets every month. Due to that, insurance sector has high level of attrition.

Job stress can occur to any level of employees in any organization. Stress makes the men into health disorders. Stress creates lot of health related issues such as heart diseases,

depression, diabetics, ulcer, drug addiction and alcoholism. Diseased worker's output is gradually decreased and his work performance & job satisfaction comes down. The increased stress reduces the growth of the organization. According to Ganster (2008) Stress is defined as a "set of environmental demands.... or set of physiological or emotional reactions displayed by someone facing such environmental conditions".

According to Raghavan (2010) proper training, flexible work timings and proper communication among the superior and subordinates reduce the stress level drastically. Supervisors must cross check the employee's role ambiguity and role overload. Good work environment reduce work-related stress. This paper tried to find out how the EI can help the insurance employees to overcome their stress situation in their job

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence is an ability to distinguish, evaluate, and handle the emotions of one's self or others. According to Goleman (1995), emotional intelligence consists of four skills:

1. Self-Awareness - emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment, self-confidence.

2. Social Awareness - empathy, organizational awareness, service orientation.

3. Self-Management - self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, achievement orientation, initiative.

4. Social Skills - developing others, leadership, influence, communication, change catalyst, conflict management, building bonds, teamwork.

According to Platsidou (2010), high level of EI reduced stress level, resulting in less burnout.

2.2. Coping Strategies

Effective use of coping strategies could helps to prevent work-related stress and burnout (Shibe Rimo et al, 2015). Coping with stress is the effort to deal with stress. Professional counseling may be introduced to reduce stress. Miller (1982) recommended that relaxation, breathing exercises, time management, nutritional foods, recreational actions help the employees to relieve from their stress. There are three major stress coping styles used in the past decades:

(i) Problem focused coping style - attention to reducing pressure or stress skills;

(ii) Avoidant-focused coping style – attention on tackling stress

(iii) Emotional-focused coping – applying cognitive strategies to remove stress factor.

Today, there are four coping styles followed mainly to reduce stress.

They are

(i) Logical coping - Problem-focused strategy

(ii) Detached coping - Individual's leaning to get far away from the problem to face it and

(iii) Emotional coping - Reduce the potential influence of emotions

(iv) Avoidant coping – Avoid the problem to face it

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study is descriptive in nature. The methodology is based on the primary data and secondary data. The primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire. Systematic Random Sampling Method was used. A total of 400 questionnaires have been distributed and out of which 386 were received.

After analyzing these questionnaires, 15 questionnaires were rejected due to incomplete responses. Finally, 371 completed questionnaires were used. The questions were in five point Likert scale. The Cronbach's alpha is 0.873. The study was conducted in the period of November 2018 to January 2019.

4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Table 4.1 Socio economic variables

S.No	Profile variables (N = 371)		No of respondents	Percent
1	Age	Less than 25	81	21.8
		26-40	152	41.0
		41-55	85	22.9
		55 and above	53	14.3
2	Gender	Male	255	68.7
		Female	116	31.3
3	Marital status	Married	119	32.1
		Unmarried	252	67.9
4	Education	+2	12	3.2
		Degree	161	43.4
		Post graduate	123	33.2
		Diploma	56	15.1
		Others	19	5.1
5	Monthly income	Below 20000	68	18.3
		20001-30000	82	22.1
		30001-40000	120	32.3
		40000 and above	101	27.2

Source: Primary data

The table 4.1 shows the socio economic variables of the respondents. 41 % of the respondents are in the age group of 26-40 years. 68.7 % of the respondents are Male. 67.9 % of the respondents are Unmarried. 43.4 % of the respondents are in the Degree holders. 32.3 % of the respondents are in the 30001-40000 rupees monthly income group.

Table 4.2 Reliability and Validity

S.No	Factors	No. of Variables	Cronbach Alpha	Mean	F-statistics
1.	Self-Awareness	3	0.871	3.774	7.114
2.	Self-confidence	3	0.883	3.865	6.004
3.	Self-Management	6	0.898	3.941	7.109
4.	Social Skills	8	0.826	3.912	11.432
5.	Coping strategies	4	0.871	3.885	5.367
	Overall	24		3.875	5.5941

Source: Primary Data

The result in Table 4.2 indicates that the Cronbach's Alpha for the 24 items is between the ranges of 0.826 to 0.898. Hence the internal consistency and reliability of the variables are inacceptable limit.

Table 4.3 Correlation between EI and Coping strategies (N=371)

Insurance employees	Self-Awareness	Self-confidence	Self-Management	Social Skills	Coping strategies
Self-Awareness	1				
Self-confidence	.679*	1			
Self-Management	.366*	.389*	1		
Social Skills	.691*	.417*	.269*	1	
Coping strategies	.481*	.615*	.367*	.523*	1

*p<0.01 significant at 1 percent level of significant

From table 4.3 above, Self-Awareness significantly correlated with Self-confidence (r=0.679, p<0.01); Self-Management (r=.366, p<0.01); Social Skills (r=.691, p<0.01) and Coping strategies (r=0.481, p<0.01). Similarly, Self-confidence has a positive and significant influence on Self-Management (r=.389, p<0.01); Social Skills (r=.417, p<0.01) and Coping strategies (r=0.615, p<0.01). Self-Management significantly correlated with Social Skills (r=.269, p<0.05) and Coping strategies (r=0.367, p<0.01). Finally, Social Skills significantly correlated with Coping strategies (r=0.523, p<0.01).

Table 4.4 Association between profile of employees and their view on EI and Coping strategies

S.No	Profile variables	'F' statistics				
		Self-Awareness	Self-confidence	Self-Management	Social Skills	Coping strategies
1	Age	5.119*	3.605*	4.113*	6.937*	4.554*
2	Gender	3.167*	4.014*	7.212*	3.379*	5.003*
3	Marital status	1.148	4.291*	1.324	4.0531*	4.289*
4	Education	6.055*	9.178*	7.316*	7.095*	4.673*
5	Monthly income	3.906*	8.849*	8.053*	6.062*	6.978*

*Significant at five per cent level

The significantly associating profile variables with the view on Self-Awareness are age, Gender, Education and Monthly income since their respective 'F' statistics are significant at five per cent level. Regarding their view on the Self-confidence, the significantly associating profile variables are Age, Gender, Marital status, Education and Monthly income whereas for Self-Management, the significantly associating profile variables are age, Gender, Education and Monthly income since their respective 'F' statistics are significant at five per cent level. The significantly associating profile variables with Social Skills are Age, Gender, Marital status, Education and Monthly income whereas regarding their view on Coping strategies, the significantly associating profile variables are Age, Gender, Marital status, Education and Monthly income since their respective 'F' statistics are significant at five per cent level.

Figure 4.1 depicts the full model. Out of the 6 paths hypothesized model, three paths were not significant at p < 0.05 and thirteen paths are significant
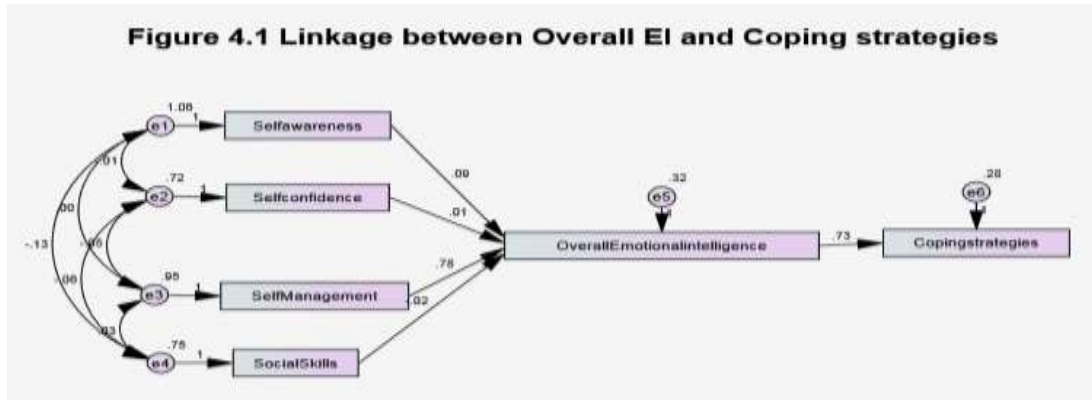
Figure 4.1 – Linkage between overall EI and Coping strategies

Table 4.4-Model Fit Indices

Fit Indices	Results	Suggested values
Chi-square	8.156 (df): 4	P-value >0.05
Chi-square/degree of freedom (x2/d.f.)	2.39	≤ 5.00 (Hair et al., 1998)
Comparative Fit index (CFI)	0.983	>0.90 (Hu and Bentler, 1999)
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	0.957	>0.90 (Hair et al. 2006)
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)	0.965	> 0.90 (Daire et al., 2008)
Normated Fit Index (NFI)	0.951	≥ 0.90 (Hu and Bentler, 1999)
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.942	Approaches 1
Tucker Lewis Index (TLI)	0.977	≥ 0.90 (Hair et al., 1998)
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	0.043	< 0.08 (Hair et al., 1998)
Parsimony goodness-of-fit index (PGFI)	0.128	Within 0.5 (Mulaik et al., 1989)

Source: Primary Data

Table 4.4 shows the estimates of the model fit indices from AMOS structural modeling. The GFI of this study was 0.957 more than the recommended value of 0.90; the other measures fitted satisfactorily; AGFI=0.965, CFI=0.983, TLI=0.977, IFI=0.942 and NFI=0.951 with x2/DF < 5 at 2.39 and RMSEA=0.043 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988) indicate a good absolute fit of the model. Goodness of fit indices supports the model and these emphasized indices indicate the acceptability of this structural model.

Table 4.5- Model fit assessment -Standard Estimation of the Model

Path analysis			Unstandardized coefficient	S.E.	Standardized coefficient	't' value	P	Hypothesis
Overall Emotional intelligence	<--	Self awareness	.088	.029	.095	3.062	.001	H₀₁: Rejected
Overall Emotional intelligence	<--	Social Skills	-.016	.034	-.014	-.452	.651	H₀₂: Accepted
Overall Emotional intelligence	<--	Self Management	.781	.030	.800	25.927	.001	H₀₃: Rejected
Overall	<--	Self	.007	.035	.007	.212	.832	H₀₄:

Path analysis			Unstandardized coefficient	S.E.	Standardized coefficient	't' value	P	Hypothesis
Emotional intelligence		confidence						Accepted
Coping strategies	<--	Overall Emotional intelligence	.734	.029	.796	25.336	.001	H_{05}: Rejected

Source: Primary Data

The coefficient of Self awareness is 0.088, represents the partial effect of Self awareness in Overall Emotional intelligence, holding the other variables as constant. The estimated positive sign implied that such effect is positive that Overall Emotional intelligence of insurance employees would increase by 0.088 for every unit increase in Self awareness and the coefficient value is significant at 1% level.

The coefficient of Social Skills is -0.016, represents the partial effect of Social Skills in Overall Emotional intelligence, holding the other variables as constant. The estimated negative sign implied that such effect is negative that Overall Emotional intelligence of insurance employees would decrease by -0.016 for every unit increase in Social Skills and the coefficient value is significant at 1% level.

The coefficient of Self Management is 0.781, represents the partial effect of Self Management in Overall Emotional intelligence, holding the other variables as constant. The estimated positive sign implied that such effect is positive that Overall Emotional intelligence of insurance employees would increase by 0.781for every unit increase in Self Management and the coefficient value is significant at 1% level.

The coefficient of Self confidence is 0.007, represents the partial effect of Self confidence in Overall Emotional intelligence, holding the other variables as constant. The estimated positive sign implied that such effect is positive that Overall Emotional intelligence of insurance employees would increase by 0.0078 for every unit increase in Self confidence and the coefficient value is significant at 1% level.

The coefficient of Overall Emotional intelligence is 0.734, represents the partial effect of Overall Emotional intelligence in coping strategies, holding the other variables as constant. The estimated positive sign implied that such effect is positive that coping strategies of insurance employees would increase by 0.734 for every unit increase in Overall Emotional intelligence and the coefficient value is significant at 1% level.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study is to find out the emotional intelligence stress coping strategies among employees in insurance sector in Tamil Nadu. The analysis has proven that the   Self-awareness of the insurance employees significantly correlated with Self-confidence, Self-Management, Social Skills and Coping strategies. Similarly, Self-confidence of the insurance employees has a positive and significant influence on Self-Management, Social Skills and Coping strategies. Self-Management is also significantly correlated with Social Skills and Coping strategies. Finally, Social Skills of the insurance employees significantly correlated with coping strategies. It clearly indicates that overall EI is correlate with coping strategies.

Mikolajczak & Lumminet, 2008; Mikolajczak, Nelis,Hansenne & Quoidbach, 2008; Petrides, Perez-Gonzalez, & Furnham 2007; Ramos, Fernandez-Berrocal, & Extrema, 2007; Saklofske, Austin, Galloway & Davidson 2007) The coefficient of Self awareness, Self Management, Self confidence, Overall Emotional intelligence is significant at 1% level. Hence the present study clearly indicates that the proper implementation of coping strategies

may increase the EI level of the employees and they can reduce or deflect their job stress in the initial stage itself (Baker&Berenbaum, 2007 and Alumran & Punamaki, 2008).

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