

Emotional Intelligence as an Effective Tool in Improving Performance of Managers

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ABSTRACT

Background: Most psychologists believe that managers who have high emotional intelligence capabilities, use from positive emotions in their decision making (1), have Self-control in the face of stress, they get angry, depression or serve withdrawal fewer than others, they make an effective and constructive relationships with others, and have better performance in their workplace (2).

Objective: The purpose of this study is determination of the relationship between emotional intelligence and stress and definition of management performance of headquarters of the Health and Medical Education Ministry through path analysis.

Methods: This study was a correlation study. Research community is managers of Ministry of Health and Medical education, that in order to do this study, Management Development deputies and resources and departments training were selected by cluster sampling and all base administrators (including groups` presidents, the heads of departments and their deputies), (n =100) were studied. To collect data, Shearing's Emotional Intelligence questionnaire (33 questions) and signs of stress questionnaire (85 questions) was used that were extracted from scientific management scientific resources. The annual performance evaluation form of health ministry was used to measure the performance of managers. Questionnaire was distributed among the considered people. Pearson's correlation coefficient test, and correlation significant testing methods, regression, path analysis and prediction (coefficients, standard and non-standard) were used for data analysis.

Results: among the studied managers, there was a significant and negative correlation between emotional intelligence and stress and also between stress and performance. There was a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and performance. According to the Regression test, there was a statistically significant relationship between performance and emotional intelligence and stress. In fact, Emotional Intelligence has a direct and indirect impact (through the reduction of stress) on the performance, (The direct impact of emotional intelligence was 0.612 and indirect impact was through the stress and equal to 0.73) and stress act as a mediating factor and researcher's proposed model was confirmed.

Results: According to the results of a high emotional intelligence has a directly strong effect on performance, and also indirectly by reducing the stress has influenced the performance. Thereby enhancing the skills of emotional intelligence may lead to managers` domination to conditions, anger and anxiety controlling and their performance improvement, In this regard, in order to enhance the components of emotional intelligence in managers, education is necessary.

KEYWORDS: emotional intelligence, stress, performance, management

INTRODUCTION

Management subject is one of the main topics of discussions at the present time. Pyterdrakr (1974) notes that, "Administrators are the main and most rare resources of any Organization." Health care organizations in addition to common management duty have more important tasks, and they include responding to the community health care demands and trying to save lives and health promotion and this increases importance and sensitivity of administrators` activity in this sector, and this is an exclusive and important responsibility that are not on the shoulders of other executive and production directors (3). Therefore, managers of health care organizations are exposed to stress or tension more than other organizations` managers. Today, one of the reasons that make stress researches very important is stress pervasive (4). According to Davis, unfortunately, many managers do not show signs of pressure sensitivity. He says there are many signs of stress in the organization that they can be realized with a small amount of attention (5).

One of the major priorities in improving Productivity at all organizational levels and to achieve organizational goals is performance (6). Psychological factors have impact on the performance of employee and then organizational Efficiency and effectiveness (7). Some degree of stress can be effective in increasing and improving performance, although high consequences of stress has consequences including high rates of physical

illness, mental exhaustion (8). If stress continues in the long-term people's health can be affected by insecurity and not only they become ill and disabled people also its negative effects are manifested in their performance (9). Studies results in the past two decades shows that emotional intelligence skills are considered a major factor in the effectiveness of leadership and management positions (2). Emotional intelligence can be defined as using emotional features in individual and group behavior to gain maximum results (10).

Emotional intelligence has many applications in every organizational category, but in the management level is critical. Managers who have high emotional intelligence capabilities, make an effective and constructive relationships with others, use from positive emotions in their decision making and have better performance in their workplace (1), have Self-control in the stressful condition, they get angry, depression or serve withdrawal fewer than others, they effort a lot for achieving to the utopian purposes (2). There is no doubt that Low levels of emotional intelligence can make disruption in workplace activities and if continue, it could lead to the collapse (11).

So understanding this phenomenon is essential for Managers who have major role in manpower supervising and guiding and ultimately improving the efficiency and effectiveness of their activities. In the present study the relationship between emotional intelligence and stress management considers to be studied and stress are considered as a mediating factor between performance and emotional intelligence.

METHODS

This study is a solidarity study. This includes administrators, staff of the Ministry of Health and Medical Education. In order to do this study, Management Development deputies and resources and departments training were selected by cluster sampling and all base administrators (including groups' presidents, the heads of departments and their deputies), (n =100) were studied.

Data collecting tool in this study were questionnaires that were extracted from scientific reliable management source. The first questionnaire was Shearing's Emotional Intelligence (11) in 5 dimensions (including: self-awareness, self-management, spontaneous, social awareness and relationship management). Mansory 1380 in his research titled Standardization used from Shearing's test. In order to determine the structure validity, 33 question Shearing's test was used simultaneously. According to the obtained results, this correlation was significant ($0.1 < P < 0.63 = r$). Mansory 1380 declare that Shearing's emotional intelligence test has enough validity. Mansouri (1380) calculated the dimensions of Shearing's emotional intelligence questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha approach (which is indicator coefficient reliability). Cronbach's alpha values for the dimensions of Shearing's test are reported between 50% and 64%, and internal consistency coefficient of the test is 84% which is an acceptable value. Salehi (1381), Mehmanian Khamenei (1382) also reported internal consistency coefficient of test respectively, 87% and 83% by using Cronbach's alpha test. According to the information obtained can be said that emotional intelligence test used in the study have acceptable stability.

Second questionnaire was Stress Questionnaire (12) consists of 85 questions in six sections (signs of physical, emotional, spiritual, mental, relationships, and environment). For measuring performance, Health Ministry performance evaluation form was used. In Each designed questionnaire, measuring standard base was the Likert scale. Emotional intelligence has ordered in 5 levels (always, often, sometimes, rarely or never) and was valued from number 1-5, stress has ordered in 4 levels (no problem, I've had many times, I've had constantly) and was valued from number 0-3.

Stress Symptoms questionnaire adapted from the book of Job Stress, authored by Ross and Elizabeth Randall Altmayr, and is translated by Khajehpour GR. Considering that this Questionnaire only examines signs of stress, to ensure the validity of it; several professors of psychology and psychiatry were surveyed (n=5) Some of the questions which were vague and irrelevant were eliminated. To determine the internal consistency coefficient of the stress questionnaire, many experts were asked to complete it and after giving feedback through Kendall approach, consistency of their Comments about Each dimension questions and general stress was calculated and their consistency were approved.(0.760)

The conceptual model of this study is based on the Lorenzo et al (2008) and Joseph et al (2001) studies results, however in models introduced by mentioned researchers, the emotional intelligence was introduced as a mediating factor. In the present study, emotional intelligence was introduced as a direct effective factor and stress as a mediating factor, and relationship between emotional intelligence and performance was measured directly and indirectly.

Data analysis was conducted in two parts: The first section is data description that descriptive statistics were used to calculate central indexes (mean) and dispersion index (standard deviation) and frequency tables and statistical graphs (histograms, bar, line) was used to display the data. For data analyzing, correlation significance test methods, Regression, path analysis, Prediction (coefficients, standard and non-standard) in SPSS software (PASW Statistics18) was used.

RESULTS

Table 1: Results related to the demographic characteristics

Frequency	Levels	Variable
53	Woman	Sex
47	Man	
24	Single	Marital
76	Married	
9	Diploma	Education
42	Bachelor	
34	MA	
15	PhD	
52	Official	Employment Type
28	Contractual	
20	Contractual	
7	Less than 5 years	Experience
27	5-10 years	
27	10-15 years	
23	15-20 years	
16	More than 20 years	

Findings related to stress and its dimensions:

The highest average stress is related to the physical dimension (0.62) and minimum average stress is related to relationships dimension (38/0). It should be noted that stress at workplace has the highest standard deviation, thus, the dispersion in this dimensions is more than other dimensions. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all components were higher than 0.7 and this shows that questions in each component have homogeneity. Average score of Management Stress was 0.48 based on 4 options Likert scale which is fewer than 0.5 and indicating low stress levels in the managers.

Findings about emotional intelligence and its dimensions:

In the present study, highest average related to the relationship management dimension (4.1) and self-spontaneous dimensions was fewer than other dimensions, with the average of (3.1). In self-Consciousness dimension the standard deviation was fewer and the relationships management dimension it was higher. Thus, heterogeneity in the relations management is the highest, compared to other dimensions. Overall score average of emotional intelligence was 3.7 on a five options Likert scale. Generally, managers' emotional intelligence was slightly higher than average level. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all components were higher than 0.7, which indicates homogeneity of the questions in each component.

Findings of the research about performance:

Findings of this study showed that the average performance score of studied directors was 98.6. Obtained Standard deviation was 4.85 and minimum performance score was 88 and maximum score was equal to 110. It should be mentioned that in the field of management performance evaluation, scores range was considered 110-0 of Ministry.

Finding related to correlation between test variables:

The findings of this study represent the correlation coefficient between variables:

In this study, there was a significant and negative correlation between emotional intelligence and stress and also between stress and performance. (Refer to Table 2)

Table 2: Results related to correlation coefficient test between variables

Significance level	correlation coefficient	Variable
0.001	-0.230	Emotional intelligence and stress
0.001	-0.319	Stress and Performance
0.001	0.612	Emotional intelligence and performance

Findings related to the relationship between emotional intelligence and stress and performance (pattern matching):

To determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and stress and performance, univariate and multivariate regression analyzes were performed as follows:

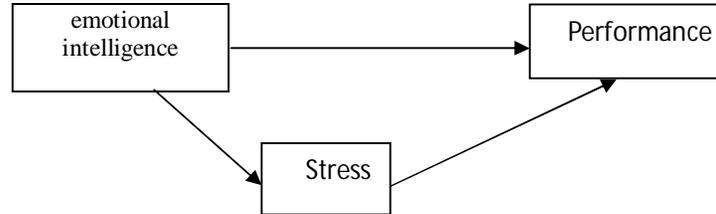
Performance prediction based on emotional intelligence and stress: In the breakdown of total square regression analysis, $F(97.2) = 33.43$, $P < 0.001$ was obtained.

Performance prediction based on emotional intelligence: In the breakdown of total square regression analysis, $F(98.1) = 58.65$, $P < 0.001$ was obtained.

Performance prediction based on stress: In the breakdown of total square regression analysis, $F(98.1) = 11.121$, $P < 0.001$ was obtained.

Prediction of stress based on emotional intelligence: In the breakdown of total square regression analysis, $F(98.1) = 5.5$, $P < 0.05$ was obtained.

From all of above function can be inferred that, there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and stress and also performance and researcher proposed model was confirmed. Emotional intelligence directly has effect on performance and also indirectly through the stress reduction effects on performance. So stress acts as a mediator factor between the two variables of emotional intelligence and performance. The direct impact of emotional intelligence on performance was 0.612 and indirect impact was 0.73. (Figure 1)



DISCUSSION

In this study, managers who have had high emotional intelligence had less stress that in this area consistent with the Gilman's views. In the present study there was a significant negative correlation between stress and performance, Lorenzo (2008) (13) showed that high stress can decrease the performance, which was consistent with the results of the present study. Alzar and Abvlab (2008) (14) showed that the relationship between stress and performance was negative but not significant, which was not consistent with the results of this study. Most and least stress indication was related to the physical and relations dimension, which did not match with the findings of Ezatabadi (9) and Bazarnuy (15). Symptoms and effects of stress are not the same for everyone and so the people reaction to stress is vary.

In this study, a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and executive function were observed. The results of the present study matches with Ptrydz's (2004) (16). In 1994 Catholic Health Association in the study on Managers emotional intelligence and its impact on the performance of health care organizations health revealed that health organization administrators, who have had high emotional intelligence, have positive effects on organizational performance, which is consistent with our results. Golman showed that nearly 90 percent of results of the difference between top Administrators and ordinary manager's performance depend on their emotional intelligence. In the present study, a significant relationship was found between stress and performance, and emotional intelligence and stress act as a mediator factor and researcher proposed model was confirmed. In the path analysis, there was 3 variables; Emotional Intelligence, stress and performance. Relationship Between these three variables, mediating role of stress, direct impact of Emotional intelligence on performance, and indirect impact on performance through stress reduction were examined. In this regard, Joseph, Frank and Stephen (2001) (17) showed that in the relationship between emotional intelligence and stress and mental health, emotional intelligence act as a mediator factor. Lorenzo (13) in a research among maternity experts in the hospital showed that emotional intelligence can decrease stress effects as a mediator factor of on performance and emotional intelligence act as a mediating factor. Siaroochi, Pidinze and Andreson in a research in the field of emotional intelligence and its relationship with stress and mental health in a sample of 302 people showed that, emotional intelligence can protect people from stress, and resulting in better compatibility to them. According to the findings it seems that, increasing emotional intelligence skills leading to domination on possible condition, self-confidence enhancement, controlling Anger and Anxiety and has sought to improve their performance. So considering the importance of stress and its role in management performance, we suggest that:

- 1- To enhance the performance of management, training course be held to promote the skills of emotional intelligence.
- 2- Try to hold the training workshop about stress and how its control way.
- 3- According to the relationship between emotional intelligence and performance it is recommended to determine the mangers' occupational areas appropriate with the level of emotional intelligence capabilities.

Given health care organizations managers more than others are under stress. So it is recommended that administrators and managers do some measures think to reduce stress in the workplace, and reduce stress factor

through proper management practices and social support from personnel, improving working environment through proper planning and facility enhancements.

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