



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AT WORKPLACE

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ABSTRACT

Nursing is a very important profession as it is one of most trusted health care professions. Nurses are with patients throughout the continuum of life. They are teachers, advocates, caregivers, innovators and most of all they are critical thinkers because a lot of critical thinking is involved in their work. And critical thinking is interrelated with emotional intelligence. How nurses will react in the stressful situations or how quickly will they make correct decisions totally depends upon the levels of emotional intelligence they possess. The researcher wanted to investigate the role of Emotional Intelligence in conflict management at work place. In the present study researcher has selected nursing profession from work place. The current study has examined the challenges faced by senior and middle level experienced nurses in their profession and the role of Emotional Intelligence in overcoming those challenges. The researcher has applied the explanatory method, a cross-sectional study to deeply understand the importance of emotional intelligence in the nursing profession. And has applied all four dimensions of EI as the measuring scale of emotional intelligence. The data has been collected through the questionnaire based on simple random sampling technique from nurses working at private tertiary hospitals in the region of Karachi. The sample size consisted 400 male and female nurses. The data has been analyzed through the

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statistical package for social sciences. The findings of the study has revealed the importance of Emotional Intelligence on the performance of nurses for e.g. conflict management strategies, relation management skills, emotional stability etc.

Keywords: Conflict Management, Emotional Intelligence, Emotional Stability, Job Performances, Occupational Burnout, Others' Emotional Appraisal, Regulation of Emotion,

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Golman (2020), defined Emotional Intelligence as a competency of managing yourself and your relationships with others, making effective teamwork, leading others, and forecasting the future. Each of these displays positive effects in terms of productivity and performance. Training in Emotional Intelligence is essential for employees to display organizationally desired emotions. According to Mathews, Zeidner & Roberts (2004) the capacity to recognize, convey, perceive and regulate feelings within self and other people is known as emotional intelligence. The ability to think, found in any person, is the result of Emotional Intelligence. Surprisingly, in most of the high-profile businesses, the employees, workers and managers who are all trained, smart and clever have high levels of IQ but have low levels of emotional intelligence. Whether it is about achieving high positions in business or regulating personal life, emotional intelligence has been playing an important role in both situations. Despite, of having high grades if IQ, defeat, disappointment and highly unsuccessful personal lives have been observed among people with low level of emotional intelligence (Rekha, 2016).

Emotional Intelligence can be seen as the fragment of societal brilliance that demands the capacity to observe your and others feelings and emotions; to counsel people's reasoning and activities and

to distinguish between them (Mayer and Salovey, 1990).

Bar-On (1997) assessed that Emotional Intelligence can greatly affect one's performance mostly mental, social and emotional at school and in workplace. Emotional Intelligence is a capacity to understand precisely and to show feelings; the capability to develop emotions whenever thinking about someone and something; the capacity to perceive feelings; and lastly the capacity to manage feelings to promote psychological and mental development.

It is a concept that challenges the assumption that the Intelligence Quotient (IQ) is the best predictor of professional success. Unlike IQ, which proposes to be a measurement of innate potential that is relatively stable, the proponents of EI maintain that it is a continuously developing ability, competency, or skill (Segal, 1997).

Cleverly and smartly using feelings and emotions in any situation which results in great consequences is known as emotional intelligence (Golmen, 1995). Most researchers found out that emotional intelligence has a negative impact on aberrant behavior of employees (Martin & Kuiper, 1999) and workers having high levels of emotional intelligence will have more satisfactory ethical and social behavior than those with low level of emotional intelligence.

Wong and Law (2002) introduced a Scale named Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) which is to determine the four dimensions of Emotional Intelligence: Self- Emotional Appraisal (SEA); Other's Emotional Appraisal (OEA); Regulation of Emotion (ROE), and Use of Emotions (UOE).

Self- Emotional Appraisal (SEA): In SEA people get aware of their feelings and emotions before other people. This is the ability which makes people understand their emotional state perfectly.

Other's Emotional Appraisal (OEA): This is an ability which helps people to the better understanding of other's emotions and sometimes results in reading their minds.

Regulation of Emotion (ROE): It focuses on how one person is regulating or monitoring his/her emotions. The higher the ability is, the quicker the person will recover from emotional stress or problems.

Use of Emotions (UOE): It involves the ability to understand one's emotions and then take advantage or make a way for them which results in the betterment of personal performance.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND NURSING

Nursing encompasses autonomous and collaborative care of individuals of all ages, families, groups and communities, sick or well and in all settings (Kooker, 2007). Nursing includes the promotion of health, prevention of illness, and the care of ill, disabled and dying people. Advocacy, promotion of a safe environment, research, participation in shaping health policy and in patient and health systems management, and education are also key nursing roles. (ICN, 2002) Nurses is one of the health service providers and members in health system who are responsible for giving care to the clients and patients based on ethical issues. (Johnstone, 2009). Emotional intelligence (EI) has become important not only for achievements in personal life but also in improving performance at work (Naseer et al., 2011). Emotional intelligence is an important trait that helps one to build-up good relationships in family and at professional level too.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To find out the association between emotional intelligence and senior level and middle level experienced nurses.

2. To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and gender of nurses.
3. To investigate how emotional intelligence will affect the conflict management strategies among nurses.
4. To identify the relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational burnout among nurses.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

RELATED RESEARCHES:

The Institute of Health and Human Potential (2020), describes emotional intelligence as 'being aware that emotions can drive our behavior and impact people (positively and negatively), and learning how to manage those emotions — both our own and others — especially when we are under pressure'. Goleman (2020), listed the major components of emotional intelligence that include Self-awareness, Emotional control, Motivation, Empathy and Relationships. These five elements of emotional intelligence in nursing can determine a nurse's success and health, as well as affect the well-being of patients and coworkers.

The ability of individuals to make use of their emotions by directing them towards constructive activities and personal performance.

According to Mayer and Salovey (1990), Emotional Intelligence can be seen as the fragment of societal brilliance that demands the capacity to observe your and others feelings and emotions; to counsel people's reasoning and activities and to distinguish between them. Afterwards, these researchers reanalyze Emotional Intelligence as a capacity to understand precisely and to show feelings; the capability to develop emotions whenever thinking about someone and something; the capacity to perceive feelings; and lastly the capacity to manage feelings to promote psychological and mental development. Bar-On (1997) assessed that Emotional Intelligence can greatly affect

one's performance mostly mental, social and emotional at school and in workplace.

According to Salovey and Mayer (1990), Emotional Intelligence is the capacity to merge perception and feelings with a view to increase reasoning, interpreting and behaving in a way that argue with the societal stressors. In both social networking agencies and the working world, Emotional Intelligence is achieving high acceptance. If messages are conveyed through feelings and greatly and accurately understood and problems dealt successfully then emotions are called to be useful and in operation (Bracket, Rivers, and Salovey, 2011). According to Ediger (1997) sentiments, sensations, one's own and societal ethics are very important for providing an individual with a sense of pride and happiness. Emotional Intelligence can be a ground or can work as a causal agent in the development of one's persona (Robbins and Judge, 2009).

Nelis, Quoidbach, Mikolajezak and Hansenne (2009) investigated through research that trainings, knowledge of emotional intelligence, interpretation and application of emotional knowledge have a significant and positive impact on the growth of EI. The members of the study were divided in two groups. One group was having training and sessions on EI and the other group was to remain set in a controlled environment normally. The researchers observed that the group who was under training has shown improvement in emotional capacities and better understanding of psychology dealing capabilities. On the other hand, no change was witnessed in the control group. Therefore, it was suggested that significant changes can be brought in EI.

RELATED MODELS

Mayer, Salovey and Caruso's EI Ability Model (Faltas, 2017)

This model suggests that information from the perceived understanding of emotions and managing emotions is used to facilitate thinking and guide our decision making. This EI framework emphasizes the four-branch model of EI.

Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2004) developed the four-branch ability model of EI. They suggest that the abilities and skills of EI can be divided into 4 areas:

The first branch, emotional perception, is the ability to be self-aware of emotions and to express emotions and emotional needs accurately to others. Emotional perception also includes the ability to distinguish between honest and dishonest expressions of emotion. The second branch, emotional integration, is the ability to distinguish among the different emotions one is feeling and to identify those that are influencing their thought processes. The third branch, emotional understanding, is the ability to understand complex emotions (such as feeling two emotions at once) and the ability to recognize transitions from one to the other. Lastly, the fourth branch, emotional management, is the ability to connect or disconnect from an emotion depending on its usefulness in a given situation (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN:

In the present study, the researcher wanted to explore the effects and importance of emotional intelligence on conflict management among middle (5 years) and senior (10 years) level experienced nurses at tertiary hospitals in Karachi. Through the scientific methodology, data was collected from primary sources. The type of research is explanatory to illuminate the theme of study. It is a cross-sectional study because the researcher has used a questionnaire to investigate the importance of emotional intelligence with reference to gender and experience levels of nurses.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING:

A total of 400 responses were collected in which senior and middle level experienced nurses with the design effect of Simple Random Sampling were taken from the tertiary private hospitals. The data has been collected equally form all hospitals.

UNIVERSE:

The universe for the present study was Agha Khan Hospital, South City Hospital, Medicare Hospital, Ziauddin Hospital and Altamash General Hospital.

INSTRUMENT OF DATA COLLECTION:

The questionnaire was developed through using all the variables from the hypotheses. All the statements of these scales were used to investigate the role and effects of emotional intelligence. The questionnaire was based on Likert scale and divided among three parts consisting demographic, dependent and independent variables respectively. The nature of questions was close-ended.

SCALES:**Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale:**

The researcher has applied Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale in the respective study. The Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS, Wong & Law, 2002) is a popular self-report measure of EI. This scale is derived from Mayer, Salovey and Caruso's EI Ability Model discussed in the Review of Literature of the study. As noted above, the WLEIS was designed to be used for self and other ratings. This EI scale is based on Davies et al.'s (1998) four-dimensional definition of EI. The WLEIS consists of 16 items with each subscale measured with 4 items.

The Self Emotion Appraisal (SEA) dimension assesses individuals' ability to understand and express their own emotions. A sample item is "I really understand what I feel." The Others' Emotion Appraisal (OEA) dimension measures peoples' ability to perceive and understand the emotions of others. A sample item is "I always know my friends' emotions from their behavior."

The Use of Emotion (UOE) dimension denotes individuals' ability to use their emotions effectively by directing them toward constructive activities and personal performance. A sample

item is “I always tell myself I am a competent person.” The Regulation of Emotion (ROE) dimension refers to individuals’ ability to manage their own emotions. A sample item from this dimension is “I have good control of my own emotions.” The WLEIS was measured with a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree). The WLEIS scores have also shown validity for predicting life satisfaction, academic performance, job performance, and job satisfaction (Song et al., 2010; Law et al., 2008; Wong & Law, 2002).

Conflict Handling Style Scale:

In the present study, researcher has also applied Conflict Handling Style Scale that is designed to help you identify your preferred conflict management style. This scale is derived from Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann conflict resolution strategies that are discussed in the Review of Literature of the study. It evaluates how one can handle conflicts. The scaling goes as **Rarely/ Never, Seldom, Sometimes, Often Almost, Always**. This instrument measures your preference and use of the five conflict handling dimensions:

Yielding: Yielding involves giving in completely to the other side’s wishes, or at least cooperating with little or no attention to your own interests. This style involves making unilateral concessions, unconditional promises, and offering help with no expectation of reciprocal help.

Compromising: Compromising involves looking for a position in which your losses are offset by equally valued gains. It involves matching the other party’s concessions, making conditional promises or threats, and actively searching for a middle ground between the interests of the two parties.

Avoiding: Avoiding tries to smooth over or avoid conflict situations altogether. It represents a low concern for both self and the other party. In other words, avoiders try to suppress thinking about the conflict.

Forcing: Forcing tries to win the conflict at the other's expense. It includes "hard" influence tactics, particularly assertiveness, to get one's own way.

Problem Solving: Problem solving tries to find a mutually beneficial solution for both parties. Information sharing is an important feature of this style, because both parties need to identify common ground and potential solutions that satisfy both (or all) of them. Scores on the five Conflict Handling Scale dimensions range from 4 to 20. Higher scores indicate that the person has a higher preference for and use of that particular conflict handling style.

DATA ANALYSIS

SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) was applied to interpret and analyze the data. The results were interpreted through different tables, charts, and graphs in the SPSS. Chi-square test has been applied by researcher to investigate the relation between variables. And for comparison between variables, independent t-test (two samples) was applied.

DATA ANALYSIS AND HYPOTHESIS TESTING:

FREQUENCY TABLES:

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of respondents according to their Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	216	54.0	54.0	54.0
	Male	184	46.0	46.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

The above table shows that (54 %) respondents were female and (46%) respondents were male.

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of respondents according to their Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-30	369	92.3	92.3	92.3
	31-40	31	7.8	7.8	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

The above table shows that (92.3 %) respondents belonged to age group of 20-30 and (7.8%) respondents belonged to age group of 31-40.

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of respondents according to their Marital Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Married	93	23.3	23.3	23.3
	Unmarried	307	76.8	76.8	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

The above table shows that (23.3 %) respondents were married and (76.8%) respondents were unmarried.

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of respondents according to their Experience Level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Middle Level (1-5 years)	307	76.8	76.8	76.8
	Senior Level (6-10 years)	93	23.3	23.3	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

The above table shows that (76.8 %) respondents belonged to middle level experience and (23.3%) respondents belonged to senior level experience.

CONTINGENCY TABLES:

Hypotheses No. 1

H₀: There is no significant association between emotional intelligence and senior level and middle level experienced nurses.

H_A: There is a significant association between emotional intelligence and senior level and middle level experienced nurses.

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
EI Score	Equal variances assumed	23.951	.000	2.442	398	.015	3.547	1.453	.691	6.403
	Equal variances not assumed			3.582	351.635	.000	3.547	.990	1.600	5.495

Table No.2

Interpretation:

Calculated Value of T-test = 2.442

Level of Significance = 0.05

Degree of Freedom = 398

P-value = 0.000

Table No.1 contains descriptive statistics for the Levels of Experience and Emotional Intelligence.

The Means of Emotion Intelligence score for the Middle Level Experienced & Senior Level

Experienced nurses are 89.55 and 86.00 respectively. So, suggesting that Emotional Intelligence in Middle Level Experienced nurses is greater than Senior Level Experienced nurses.

Data from Table No.2 reveals that the P-value of the Independent t- test is 0.015 for (equal variances assumed) and 0.000 for (equal variances not assumed), which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected that the relationship between emotional intelligence and experience level of nurses is not statistically significant.

Hypotheses No. 2

H₀: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and gender of nurses.

H_A: There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and gender of nurses.

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
EI Scores	Equal variances assumed	73.699	.000	-8.269	398	.000	11.502	1.391	14.237	8.767
	Equal variances not assumed			-8.269	398	.000	11.502	1.447	14.351	8.653

Table No.2

Interpretation:

Calculated Value of T-test = -8.269

Level of Significance = 0.05

Degree of Freedom = 398

P-value = 0.000

Table No.2 contains descriptive statistics for the Gender of Experience and Emotional Intelligence. It is evident that the Means of Emotion Intelligence score for the male and female nurses are 80.42 and 91.93 respectively. So, suggesting that Emotional Intelligence in female nurses is greater than male nurses.

Data from Table No. 2 reveals that the P-value of the Independent t- test is 0.000 for (equal variances assumed) and 0.000 for (equal variances not assumed), which is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected that the relationship between emotional intelligence and gender of nurses is not statistically significant.

Hypotheses No. 3

H₀: Emotional intelligence has no significant relation with conflict management strategies among nurses.

H_A: Emotional intelligence has a significant relation with conflict management strategies among nurses.

Emotional Intelligence * Conflict Management Cross tabulation					
		Conflict Management			Total
		Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	
Emotional Intelligence	Agree	41	56	56	153
	Neither Agree nor disagree	5	9	47	61
	Slightly agree	6	29	28	63
	Strongly Agree	59	7	57	123
Total		111	101	189	400

Table No.1

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	108.167 ^a	6	<.001
Likelihood Ratio	123.785	6	<.001
N of Valid Cases	400		
a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 15.25.			

Table No.2

Interpretation:

Calculated Value of Chi-square= 108.167

Level of Significance = 0.05

Degree of Freedom = 6

Table Value of Chi-square= 12.592

P-value = 0.001

According to the results of Table No.2, the calculated value of chi-square at 6 df on the level of significance 0.05 is 108.167 which is greater than the table value of chi-square that is 12.592.

Therefore, the null hypothesis H_0 is rejected and alternate hypothesis H_A is accepted. Coefficient of correlation is 0.944 which shows a very strong positive relationship among variables.

Hypotheses No. 4

H_0 : There is no significant association between emotional intelligence and occupational burnout.

H_A : There is a significant association between the mean of emotional intelligence and occupational burnout.

Emotional Intelligence * Occupational Burnout Cross tabulation		
	Occupational Burnout	Total

		Neither Accurate nor Inaccurate	Somewhat Accurate	Very Accurate	
Emotional Intelligence	Agree	31	92	30	153
	Neither Agree nor disagree	8	20	33	61
	Slightly agree	14	29	20	63
	Strongly Agree	31	48	44	123
Total		84	189	127	400

Table No.1

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	30.107 ^a	6	<.001
Likelihood Ratio	29.753	6	<.001
N of Valid Cases	400		
a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 12.81.			

Table No.2

Interpretation:**Calculated Value of Chi-square = 30.107****Level of Significance = 0.05****Degree of Freedom = 6****Table Value of Chi-square= 12.592****P-value = 0.001**

According to the results of Table No.2, the calculated value of chi-square at 6 df on the level of significance 0.05 is 30.107 which is greater than the table value of chi-square that is 12.592. Therefore, the null hypothesis H_0 is rejected and alternate hypothesis H_A is accepted. Coefficient of correlation is 0.839 which shows a very strong positive relationship among variables.

CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

CONCLUSION:

Above report evidently shows that emotional intelligence is important in every workplace but plays core role in nursing profession. As nurses work on front line so they deal with psychological and physical issue of patients. And if, they are not emotionally intelligent, it would lead them towards many problems such as professional burnout and turnovers. Females are shown more emotionally intelligent than males. And if given more opportunities, they can excel in the respective profession that will result in the betterment of medical industry of Pakistan.

The relationship with supervisors has resulted in managing conflicts efficiently. Moreover, the nurses with high levels of emotional intelligence have low level of occupational burnout. Therefore, it has been concluded that EI has strong impact on all the variables used in this study so it is recommended to the nurses to focus on these variables and that they should be given trainings to become emotionally intelligent before entering in the profession.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Educational planners and academicians should include specially designed Emotional Intelligence developing courses that should be taught by experts of the field at nursing school. Here, nurses should be trained to make them emotionally intelligent and stable.
- Hospitals should provide training courses for nurses about counterproductive behavior and team work.

- Future researchers are directed to explore the same study by using longitudinal study and are also advised to focus on a comparative study of private and public hospitals.
- This study takes a snapshot of the situation and only future researchers may draw results by taking nationwide illustrative sample.
- The impact of Emotional Intelligence ought to be investigated on distinct sort of occupational problems i.e., teamwork, leadership, retention, and so forth.
- It would be gainful to supplement the information obtained through psychological tests by interview so that the investigator can have more reliable data for analysis.

LIMITATIONS:

- The study was only conducted with a small sample of nurses working at tertiary private hospitals of Karachi.
- Sample size was petite so the findings cannot be generalized to the entire population.
- It was difficult to collect data from more hospitals due to the policies of the management of the hospitals.
- Sample was taken from Karachi which is not illustrative for the number of inhabitants in different urban communities or regions.

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