

Relationship among Occupational Stress, Job Performance and Emotional Intelligence among Nursing Faculty Staff

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Abstract: *Emotional Intelligence has been associated with positive outcome process in varied professions.*

Aim of the stud: *was to investigate the relationship among occupational stress , job performance and emotional intelligence among nursing faculty staff in Assiut University.*

Research design: *The study used a correlational descriptive design.*

Setting :*The study was conducted at the Faculty of Nursing, Assiut University, Egypt. A study subject consisted of 85 which represent all faculty members working in the Faculty of Nursing, Assiut University,*

Tools of the study: *Self- administered questionnaire which consisted of four tools: socio-demographic characteristics questionnaire, Emotional Intelligence questionnaire, Occupational stress questionnaire, and Job performance questionnaire.*

Results: *Displayed that there were negative correlations between occupational stress and job performance and emotional intelligence. While, there was positive correlation between emotional intelligence and job performance with a statistically significant difference.*

Conclusion: *The findings of current study confirm that occupational stress has negative relationships with the faculty members' emotional intelligence and job performance.*

Recommendations: *The nursing faculty members should be given regular training for developing strong emotional competencies which will ultimately help them to boost up their performance and combat stress in proactive way.*

Keywords: *Occupational Stress, Job Performance, Emotional Intelligence, Nursing Faculty Staff.*

I. Introduction

University teachers face problems either with the institutional or governmental side, which have negative effects on their effectiveness in teaching and learning process. The institutional problems include: poor management , excessive work hours, rigid institutional policies, heavy workload, poor student behavior , poor working conditions that include diminishing resources and poor physical features of school buildings, lack of reward, and role ambiguity. On the other side, the governmental problems include: ever changing higher reforms and policies, inadequate budget for higher education sector, quality control and accreditation concerns. These constitute potential sources of stress of university teachers (**Kauts & Saroj, 2010; Eres & Atanasoska , 2011; safaria & Othman, 2011**).

In recent years, emotional intelligence (EI) has been a popular topic of debate in the field of management. It has been praised as a successful predictor of job performance and occupational stress. In an occupational stress model, several scholars believe that the ability of employees to properly control and manage their physiological and psychological stresses in performing job may lead to higher job performance in organizations (**Adler et al., 2006, Hourani et al., 2006, Wetzel et al., 2006, Zhong et al., 2006**).

Emotional intelligence is the ability to identify, use, understand, and manage emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges, and defuse conflict. Emotional intelligence impacts many different aspects of your daily life, such as the way you behave and the way you interact with others. If you have high emotional intelligence you are able to recognize your own emotional state and the emotional states of others, and engage with people in a way that draws them to you. You can use this understanding of emotions to relate better to other people, form healthier relationships, achieve greater success at work, and lead a more fulfilling life (**Segal and Smith, 2013**).

Surprisingly, a thorough review of such relationships reveals that effect of occupational stress on job performance is not consistent when emotional intelligence is present in organizations (**Diggins, 2004, Lyons, Schneider, 2005, Lopes et al., 2006**). Many scholars, such as **Goleman, (2003) and Manna et al., (2009)**, state that emotional intelligence has two major dimensions: interpersonal competency (how well we manage ourselves) and intrapersonal competency (how well we interact with others).

Significance of the study

The importance of occupational stress on efficiency of organizations, on one hand, and evidence showing that improving emotional intelligence through training is possible, on the other hand, make the study of the relationship between occupational stress and emotional intelligence a useful and interesting subject matter with this probability in the mind that a person may be able to improve his knowledge and awareness about his/her emotions , promote his/her related skills and total job performance .

Aim of the study

The present study aimed to investigate the relationship among occupational stress , job performance and emotional intelligence among nursing faculty staff in Assiut University

Research questions

1. Are there relationships among occupational stress , job performance and emotional intelligence among nursing faculty staff in Assiut University?
2. Are there relationships between occupational stress and , job performance and emotional intelligence and socio-demographic nursing faculty staff in Assiut University?

II. Subjects And Methods

Research design

The study used a correlational descriptive design.

Setting

The study was conducted at the Faculty of Nursing, Assiut University, Egypt. Assiut University was founded in 1957 as a state university to create and transfer knowledge that will enable to make useful contributions to their communities and provide professional leadership at global level.

The Faculty of Nursing consists of eight academic departments: Nursing Administration, Community Health Nursing, Pediatric Nursing, Adult Nursing, Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing, Obstetric and Gynecological Nursing , Critical Care Nursing , and Geriatric Nursing . Over 1500 undergraduate students are currently enrolled in the four year nursing program.

Subject

A study subject consisted of 85 faculty members working in the Faculty of Nursing, Assiut University, Egypt, during the academic year 2015-2016. From which 51 teaching staff (3 professors, 17 assistant professors & 31 lecturers) and 34 assistants teaching staff (11 assistant lecturers & 23 demonstrators). There were no exclusion criteria.

Tools of the study:

Self-administered questionnaire which consisted of four tools:

- ***The first tool:*** related to socio-demographic characteristics of the studied nursing faculty staff as: Age , marital status , level of education , job title , years of experience, number of children, and department.
- ***The second tool :*** Emotional Intelligence questionnaire which developed by **Goleman, (2004)**. It consisted of 25 items totally t, five items for each domain (self awareness, self-management, motivation, empathy, and relational management).
- ***The third tool :*** Occupational stress questionnaire which developed by **Seaward , (2005)**. It included 13 items classified into two factors, physiological (5 items) and psychological (8 items).
- ***The fourth tool :*** Job performance questionnaire which developed by **AbuAlRub, (2004)**. It included 15 items.

- Scoring system

All items used in the three questionnaires were measured using a 5- item scale ranging from “almost never” scored (0) to “almost always” scored (4).

- Their reliability was assessed in a pilot study by measuring their internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha coefficient method. This turned to be 0.80 for emotional intelligence , 0.92 for occupational stress, and 0.86 for job performance, thus indicating a high degree of reliability .The validity was measured by five experts in the field of Nursing Administration.

Ethical considerations

The researchers obtained the official permission to conduct the study from the Dean of the Faculty of Nursing, Assiut University, Egypt. An informed consent was obtained from each participant after full explanation of the study nature and its' aim . Participants were reassured that participation is totally voluntary, that the information provided by them will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Administrative design

An official permission was obtained from the ethical committee of research and from

Operational design

This design explains the steps of actual implementation of the study, including the pilot and the field work.

Pilot study

After translation of the study tool. A pilot study was conducted to test both the clarity and understandability of the study tool, and detect the obstacles and problems that may be encountered during data collection. It was carried out on 10 nursing faculty staff from different departments. Data collected from the pilot study were reviewed and not needed any modifications then the final application of the study tool was started.

Field work

The actual data collection from studied nursing faculty staff at Faculty of Nursing- Assiut University was started from October 2015 to November 2015 by using the self administered questionnaire. Data collection was administered by the researchers with every nursing faculty staff individually in their workplace in the faculty. An explanation of the aim of the study was provided by the researchers to the participant. The questionnaire filled by participant took about 15-20 min by each participant. The duration of data collection was two months.

Statistical design

Upon completion of data collection, data entry was done using Epi-Info 6.04 computer software package, while statistical analysis was done using SPSS 16.0 statistical software packages. Data were presented using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies, and percentages for qualitative variables, means and standard deviations , range for quantitative variables, one way of variance test (ANOVA) , Pearson correlation was used. For all the tests, statistical significance was considered at $p \leq 0.001^{**}$

III. Results

Table (1): Distribution of socio-demographic characteristics among studied subjects at Faculty of Nursing – Assiut University

Characteristics	No. (n= 85)	%
Age: (years)		
< 30	29	34.1
30 – 40	32	37.6
> 40	24	28.2
Mean \pm SD (Range)	35.33 \pm 9.58 (23.0 – 53.0)	
Marital status:		
Single	14	16.5
Married	66	77.6
Widow	2	2.4
Divorced	3	3.5
Level of education:		
Bachelor of nursing science	25	29.4
Master degree in nursing	13	15.3
Doctorate degree in nursing	47	55.3
Job:		
Demonstrator	23	27.1
Assistant Lecturer	11	12.9
Lecturer	31	36.5
Assistant Professor	17	20.0
Professor	3	3.5
Years of experience:		

< 5	25	30.9
5 – 10	15	18.5
> 10	41	50.6
Mean ± SD (Range)	10.34 ± 7.50 (6 months – 30 years)	
No. of children:		
No children	6	8.3
1 – 2	28	38.9
3 or more	38	52.8
Mean ± SD (Range)	2.50 ± 1.45 (0 – 8)	
Department:		
Nursing Administration	13	15.3
Adult Nursing	18	21.2
Community Health Nursing	12	14.1
Critical Care Nursing	4	4.7
Geriatric Nursing	6	7.1
Obstetric & Gynecological Nursing	12	14.1
Pediatric Nursing	10	11.8
Psychiatry Nursing	10	11.8

Table (2): Distribution of occupational stress domains among studied subjects at Faculty of Nursing – Assiut University

Occupational stress factors	No. (n= 85)	%
Physiological stress:		
Low (< 60%)	57	67.1
High (≥ 60%)	28	32.9
Psychological stress:		
Low (< 60%)	48	56.5
High (≥ 60%)	37	43.5
Total Occupational stress:		
Low (< 60%)	55	64.7
High (≥ 60%)	30	35.3

Table (3): Distribution of job performance Level among studied subjects at Faculty of Nursing – Assiut University

Job performance Level	No. (n= 85)	%
▪ Low (< 60%)	10	11.8
▪ High (≥ 60%)	75	88.2

Table (4): Distribution of emotional intelligence domains among studied subjects at Faculty of Nursing – Assiut University

Emotional intelligence domains	No. (n= 85)	%
Self-awareness:		
Low (< 60%)	24	28.2
High (≥ 60%)	61	71.8
Self-management:		

Low (< 60%)	59	69.4
High (≥ 60%)	26	30.6
Motivation:		
Low (< 60%)	26	30.6
High (≥ 60%)	59	69.4
Empathy:		
Low (< 60%)	43	50.6
High (≥ 60%)	42	49.4
Relational management:		
Low (< 60%)	74	87.1
High (≥ 60%)	11	12.9
Total emotional intelligence:		
Low (< 60%)	54	63.5
High (≥ 60%)	31	36.5

Table (5): Correlation matrix of the scores of occupational stress, job performance and emotional intelligence among studied subjects at Faculty of Nursing – Assiut University

Variables	Pearson correlation coefficient		
	Scores		
	Occupational stress	Job performance	Emotional intelligence
Occupational stress		-0.126	-0.127
Job performance	-0.162		0.262*
Emotional intelligence	-0.127	0.262*	

* < 0.05 statistical significant

Table (6): Correlation between occupational stress, job performance and emotional intelligence and socio-demographic characteristics of the studied subjects at Faculty of Nursing – Assiut University

Variables	Age		Years of experience		No. of children	
	r-value	P-value	r-value	P-value	r-value	P-value
▪ Occupational stress	-0.099	0.366	-0.003	0.975	-0.139	0.244
▪ Job performance	0.281	0.009*	0.227	0.037*	0.307	0.009*
▪ Emotional intelligence	0.275	0.011*	0.196	.073	0.223	0.059

* < 0.05 statistical significant

Table (1): Showed that more than one third of the study subjects were aged from 30 to 40 years (37.6%) . While, majority of them were married (77.6%) , having doctorate degree with more than 10 years of experience (55,3% and 50.6%) respectively. In addition, more than half of the studied subjects having more than three children and less than one quarter were from adult nursing department(52.8% & 21.2%) .

Table (2): Illustrated that about one third had high physiological stress (32.9%) and (43.5%) had high psychological stress. While, more than one third of the studied subjects had high occupational stress(35.3%).

Table (3): Displayed that majority of the studied subjects had high job performance (88.2%).

Table (4): Shows that more than two thirds had high self-awareness and motivation (71.8% & 69.4%) respectively. While, half of the studied subjects had low empathy (50.6%), and majority of them had low relational management and self-management (87.1% & 69.4%).

Table (5): Displayed that there were negative correlations between occupational stress and job performance and emotional intelligence ($r = -0.162$, $r = -0.127$). While, there was positive correlation between emotional intelligence and job performance with a statistically significant difference ($r = 0.262^*$).

Table (6): Illustrated that occupational stress had negative relations with age, years of experience , and number of children($r = -0.099$, $r = -0.003$ & $r = -0.139$) respectively with no statistical significance differences. In addition, there were positive relations among job performance and age, years of experience and number of children with statistical significance differences ($r = 0.281$, $r = 0.227$ & $r = 0.307$) respectively. Moreover, there were positive relations among emotional intelligence and age, years of experience and number of children with a statistical significance difference with the age ($r = 0.275$, $r = 0.196$ & $r = 0.223$) respectively.

IV. Discussion

In the workplace stress studies several researchers presume that stress, job performance and emotional intelligence are dissimilar but strongly interconnected constructs. Such as, an employee with good ability to manage his and other colleagues emotions can easily cope with psychophysiological job stressors, which will turn out in higher job performance (**Adler et al., 2006, Hourani et al., 2006, Wetzel et al., 2006, Zhong et al., 2006**).

The present study showed that about one third had high physiological stress and psychological stress. While, more than one third of the studied subjects had high occupational stress (table, 2) these results were consistent with **Mehta, (2013)** who study the occupational stress among employees from different careers of Chandigarh” and found that doctors and teachers are highly stressed as compared to the employees from other professions. It also revealed female teachers experienced significantly higher level of occupational stress, specifically with regard to interaction with students and colleagues, workload, students’ progress and emotional exhaustion.

The findings of the current study demonstrate that nearly to two thirds of participants had a low emotional intelligence (table, 4). This may be due to many factors as; forty percent of the participants are demonstrators and assistant lecturers who had limited experience in teaching with inadequate resources that hinder them to find better instructional strategies to improve their teaching performance over time, lack of constructive feedback in which a faculty members receive verbal comments about their capabilities to master given tasks.

The current study findings showed that there were negative correlations between occupational stress and job performance and emotional intelligence (table, 5). These might attributed that the ability of teaching staff to properly manage emotions will increase their capabilities to cope with physiological and psychological stresses and may lead to higher job performance that will achieve the goal of the educational organization.

The results of the current study are in contrast with the findings of **Jude, (2011)** who contended that emotional intelligence has an influence on perceived occupational stress and there is a significant difference between occupational stresses of school teachers with high and low level of

emotional intelligence. In addition, This findings is in line with the findings of **Sunil & Rooprai , (2009)** who concerning that there is a negative correlation between stress and emotional intelligence.

Fariselli et al., (2008) studied emotional intelligence, stress and performance in healthcare environment. He reported emotional intelligence as a predictor of high performance: where stress decreases the performance level and emotional intelligence decreases the effect of stress.

The findings of the current study demonstrate that there are significant positive correlations between emotional intelligence, job performance, and personal characteristics of faculty members with reference to age, years of experience in teaching nursing and number of children and negative correlation among occupational stress and the previous personal characteristics (table 6). This may be due to the faculty members who attained a higher level of qualification (teaching staff), the greater the age and length of teaching experience the higher the amount of maturation which ultimately leads to posses emotional and social competences and tend to improve their teaching performance over time. These results were against what has been reported in other previous studies for instance that of **Fako, (2010)** who demonstrated that there was no correlation between occupational stress and personal characteristics of faculty members. While, in contrast with the present study findings other studies done by **Akbar & Akhter, (2011)** and **Mohammed , (2012)** found a positive relationship between occupational stress and personal characteristics of faculty members.

V. Conclusions

- The findings of current study confirm that occupational stress has negative relationships with the faculty members' emotional intelligence and job performance
- Occupational stress had negative relations with age, years of experience , and number of children with no statistical significance differences.
- In addition, there were positive relations among job performance and age, years of experience and number of children with statistical significance differences.
- Moreover, there were positive relations among emotional intelligence and age, years of experience and number of children with a statistical significance difference with the age.

VI. Recommendations

The present study recommended the following:

- The nursing faculty staff members should be given regular training for developing strong emotional competencies which will ultimately help them to boost up their performance and combat stress in proactive way.
- Further studies should investigate the relationship between occupational stress, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and the performance of nurse educators.

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