COMPETENCE BUILDING IN MANAGEMENT GRADUATES

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ABSTRACT

21st century is an era of transformation where the youth transcend themselves into scientific minds with abundance of success stored for them. Students in higher educational institutions are viewed as leaders of tomorrow. They have academic success as their major goal. But an important question that comes to mind is whether Intelligence quotient (IQ) is the only measure of success or some other factors also contribute to the success in their life. One of the factors that have been focused is the 'emotion' which drastically effects students life. For their goal to be achieved, it requires dedication, sacrifices, self-discipline, motivation and cordial relationship between students themselves and students and teachers. Students being more at competitive edge, are usually preoccupied with stress, which make them emotionally weak and when unsuccessful in meeting their targets, deteriorates their academic performance. That is students level of achievement is highly related to their emotions as it is observed that the more is the balance of emotions, the greater is the success experienced by the students.

INTRODUCTION

The term 'Emotional Intelligence' was coined by Peter Salovey and John Mayer (1990) and defined EQ 'as the ability to monitor one's own and other emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions. Further this concept was popularized by Daniel Goleman in 1995. Emotional Intelligence includes self-awareness, impulse control, persistence, zeal and motivation, empathy and social adequacy. Robort Cooper and Ayman Swaf (1997) defined EQ as 'the ability to sense, understand and effectively apply the power and acumen of emotions as a source of human energy, information, connection and influence. He proposed 'Four corner stone' model of EQ for success in business and the general life, i.e. Emotional literacy, Emotional fitness, Emotional Depth and Emotional Alchemy as four pillars of this model. EQ competencies that correlate to work place success are :

(a)   Social competencies, i.e., competencies that determine how we handle relationships. It includes intuition and empathy, understanding others, customer service orientation, people development and leveraging diversity.

(b)   Political Acumen & Social Skills, i.e., an aptness at inducing desirable responses in others. It includes influencing, communication, leadership, conflict resolution, collaboration and cooperation and team capabilities.

(c)   Personal competencies, i.e., how we manage ourselves. It encompasses emotional awareness, self-confidence, accurate self-assessment, self-regulation, trustworthiness and conscientiousness.

It has been related to several factors such as life satisfaction, psychological well being, occupational successes and job performance (Adeymo & Adeleye, 2008; Bar-on, 1997 and 2005; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). EI has also been found related to student's academic achievements, attitudes and behaviour (Salami, 2004, Wong, Wong & Chau, 2001). It is likely that EI and self-efficacy are important resources for enhancing students learning, success and quality in education. Both of these competencies are likely to assist students in developing appropriate behaviours and attitude in respect of their academic and extracademic tasks.

Self-efficacy refers to a person's belief in his/her ability to organize and execute a required course of action to achieve a desired result (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy beliefs include cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes. A strong sense of efficacy enhances human accomplishment and personal well-being in many ways. People with high assurance of their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided. On the other hand, people who doubt their capabilities shy away from difficult tasks which they view as personal threats. They have low aspirations and weak commitments to goals. Such people fall easy victim to stress and depression. According to Bandura (1992), there are four major sources of self-efficacy :-

(1) Master Experiences : Bandura (1994) stated the most effective way of developing a strong sense of efficacy is through mastery experience. Performing a task successfully strengthens our sense of self-efficacy. However, failing to adequately deal with a task or challenge can undermine and weaken self-efficacy.

(2) Social Modeling : Witnessing other people successfully in completing a task is another important source of self-efficacy. According to Bandura, "Seeing people similar to oneself succeed by sustained effort raises observers' beliefs that they too possess the capabilities, master comparable activities to succeed" (1994).

(3) Social Persuasion : Bandura also asserted that people could be persuaded to behave that they have the skills and capabilities to succeed. Getting verbal encouragement from others help people overcome self-doubt and instead focus on giving their best effort to the task at hand.

(4) Psychological Responses : Our own responses and emotional reactions to situations also play an important role in self-efficacy. Moods, emotional states, physical reactions, and stress levels can all impact how a person feels about their personal abilities in a particular situation. A person who becomes extremely nervous before speaking in public may develop a weak sense of self-efficacy in these situations. However, Bandura also notes "it is not the sheer intensity of emotional and physical reactions that is important but rather how they are perceived and interpreted" (1994). By learning how to minimize stress and elevate mood when facing difficult or challenging tasks, people can improve their sense of self-efficacy.

The major processes of Self-Efficacy Beliefs are :-

(a) Cognitive Processes : The effects of self-efficacy beliefs on cognitive processes take a variety of forms. Much human behaviour, being purposive, is regulated by 'forethought embodying valued goals. Personal goal setting is influenced by self-appraisal of capabilities. The stronger the perceived self-efficacy, the higher the goal challenges people set for themselves and the firmer is their commitment to them. Most courses of action are initially organized in thought. People's beliefs in their efficacy shape the types of anticipatory scenarios they construct and rehearse. Those who have a high sense of efficacy, visualize success scenarios that provide positive guides and supports for performance.

(b) Motivational Processes : Self-beliefs of efficacy play a key role in the self-regulation of motivation. Most human motivation is cognitively generated. People motivate themselves and guide their actions anticipatorily by the exercise of forethought. They form beliefs about what they can do. They anticipate likely outcomes of prospective actions. They set goals for themselves and plan courses of action designed to realize value futures. There are three different forms of cognitive motivators around which different theories have been built. They include causal attributions, outcome expectancies, and cognized goals with corresponding theories as attribution theory, expectancy-value theory and goal theory, respectively. Self-efficacy beliefs operate in each of these types of cognitive motivation. Self-efficacy beliefs influence causal attributions. People who regard themselves as highly efficacious attribute their failures to insufficient effort, those who regard themselves as inefficacious attribute their failures to low ability. Causal attributions affect motivation, performance and affective reactions mainly through beliefs of self-efficacy.

(c) Affective Processes : People's beliefs in their coping capabilities affect how much stress and depression they experience in threatening or difficult situations, as well as their level of motivation. Perceived self-efficacy to exercise control over stressors plays a central role in anxiety arousal. People who believe they can exercise control over threats do not conjure up disturbing thought patterns. But those who believe they cannot manage threats experience high anxiety arousal. They dwell on their coping deficiencies. They view many aspects of their environment as fraught with danger. They magnify the severity of possible threats and worry about things that rarely happen. Through such inefficacious thinking they distress themselves and impair their level of functioning. Perceived coping self-efficacy regulates avoidance behaviour as well as anxiety arousal. The stronger the senses of self-efficacy the bolder people are in taking on taxing and threatening activities.

(d) Selection Processes : People are partly the product of their environment. Therefore, beliefs of personal efficacy can shape the course of lives people take by influencing them types of activities and environments they choose. People avoid activities and situations they believe exceed their coping capabilities. But they readily undertake challenging activities and select situations they judge themselves capable of handling. By the choices they make, people cultivate different competencies, interests and social networks that determine life courses. Any factor that influences choice behaviour can profoundly affect the direction of personal development. This is because the social influences operating in selected environments continue to promote certain competencies, values, and interests long after the efficacy decisional determinant has rendered its inaugurating effect.

Self-efficacy has been found to be related to academic achievement, behaviours and attitudes (Faulkner & Reeves, 2009). However, there is scarcity of research that examined the self-efficacy of stressed students in relation to their attitudes.

Self-efficacy determines an individual's resiliency to adversity and his/her vulnerability to stress and depression (Bandura, Capara, Gerbino and Pastrorelli, 2003). Perhaps for an individual who has low happiness, life satisfaction and high depression, having high self-efficacy will help him/her in displaying appropriate behaviours and positive attitudes regarding his/her academic output. Therefore it is expected that high emotional intelligence and self-efficacy will help to meet the stress of life effectively. Stress is a commonly found phenomenon nowadays. Everyone experience it. It can occur all of a sudden or over a period of time. Many factors such

as life traumas, physical health, psychological states, and social support are some of the factors that affect stress. Stress has both positive and negative influence. As positive influence, stress can help us to compel for an action, resulting in new and exciting perspective. As a negative influence, it can lead to distrust, rejection, anger and depression. Therefore the major issue is how we 'perceive stress'. Stress occurs when people perceive that events are placing excessive demands on them. The quality of one's perceptions determines the degree of stress. Perceptions infact determine whether a given situation is experienced as an 'excessive demand' or as an 'opportunity'. These perceptions depend upon Individual's 'Interpretative habits' or some specific thought patterns. Therefore the more the interpretative style is positive or optimistic, the more the individual is resilient to stress.

The term 'Resiliency' is derived from latin roots which means 'to jump' or 'bounce back'. It has been described as a universal capacity which allows a person, group or community to prevent, minimize or overcome damaging effects of adversity (Newman, 2004). Resiliency is unique from the other three components of Psychological Capital in that it is reactive rather than proactive. In other words, resiliency is a response to events, specifically negative setbacks. When individuals and groups have a setback in accomplishing their tasks or goals, the extent to which they "bounce back" quickly and effectively is the outworking of resiliency. Luthans, Youssef and Avolio (2007) argued that resiliency would be positively related to employee performance using two assumptions : (a) that setbacks are inevitable during in-role performances and (b) that the extent to which an individual responded favourably to those setbacks would be associated with performance. Thus, through the mechanisms of responding favourably to setbacks, we anticipate resiliency will be positively associated with performance. The commonly synonyms used for it are 'psychological resilience', 'emotional resilience', 'hardiness' and 'resourcefulness. It is not just about reforming but about the possibility of growth. It is the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences especially highly traumatic events and involves not only resisting failure under extreme circumstances but also positively recovering from those experiences.

Therefore, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and stress resiliency enable students to find out solutions to imperfections and interpret the opportunities that promote high well being, hope and optimism in their attitude. Taking this perspective into mind, the present study is an attempt to measure the significant of difference in emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and resilience amongst management and humanities students. The second objective is to assess the relationship and to predict ways we can incorporate these competencies among these students.

Hypotheses

To fulfill the above objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated :

(1)   There would be significant difference in students of Management and Humanities in relation to Emotional Intelligence (EI), Self-Efficacy and Resilience.

(2)   There would be a positive relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Self-efficacy and Resilience.

METHOD

Design : It is a two-group design study where both the groups were compared and assessed on the variables of emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and resilience.
Sample : The sample of present study consists of 200 students. 100 students were from management course (M.B.A. 4th Sem.) and 100 students were from Humanities (M.A. 4th Sem.). All students were males, pursuing P.G. course belonging to an age group of 21-23 years. The MBA graduates were from Institute of Management, Gurgaon and M.A. students were from D.C. College, Gurgaon. The $\overline{X}$ and σ of the ages were 21.5 years and 2.72 years respectively for both groups.
Tools :
(1)	Emotional Intelligence (EI) tested by Chadha and Singh (1998) was used to measure EI of students. It has 15 items which are related to three dimensions, i.e. emotional competency, emotional sensitivity and emotional maturity. The higher the score, the higher is the Emotional Intelligence.
(2)	General Self-Efficacy Scale (G.S.E.) by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1993) was used to assess a general sense of perceived self-efficacy with the aim in mind to predict coping with daily hassles as well as adaptation after experiencing all kinds of stressful life events. It is a self-administering 4 point scale having 10 items. All the 10 items yield the final composite score with a range from 10 to 40.
(3)	A variable of psychological resilience, i.e. the capacity to withstand life stressors, thrive and make meaning from challenges was measured with the help of shorter version of original resilience scale (Wagnild & Youhs, 1993). The shorter version was of 10 item scale by Neil & Dias (2001). All the 10 items were scored on seven point scale (10-70). The higher the score, the higher is the resilience.
Procedure : After establishing a proper rapport with the subjects, all the three questionnaires were given to the subjects. The answered questionnaires were collected and scored as per manual. Regarding the Resilience Questionnaire, the subjects were assured that their scores would be kept confidential. Further, the scores were statistically analyzed in the light of descriptive statistics and correlation co-efficient to test the proposed hypotheses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

TABLE NO. 1   SHOWING MEAN, STANDARD DEVIATION AND VALUE OF MANAGEMENT & HUMANITIES P.G. STUDENTS

Variable	N	Group	$\overline{X}$	σ	T
EI	100 100	I II	14.00 7.9	4 3.6	2.80**
S. Efficacy	100 100	I II	28.34 23.36	5.10 6.28	2.48**
Resilience	100 100	I II	24.40 19.50	7.34 5.30	2.14**

** p<0.01   Group I – Management Students
* p<0.05   Group II – Humanities Students

Table No. 1 clearly indicates that the obtained mean values on the measures of Emotional Intelligence, Self-Efficacy and Resilience is high i.e. 14.00, 28.34 and 24.40 in case of management students as compared to students from Humanities having $\overline{X}$ values of 7.9, 23.36 and 19.50 respectively. Their t-values are also found significant at 0.01 level. The proposed hypothesis is supported. These results are not surprising because in management course, the students are trained not only theoretically but also imparted upon various competencies such as team work, interpersonal relationships, group dynamics etc. By the nature of the construct of emotional intelligence, it is expected that an understanding of one's and other people's emotions and one's ability to regulate and manage them will have a buffering effect on work performance. The present findings are in the lines of Ciarrochi, Chan & Caputi (2001) who stated that in a workplace like Education Industry where success is dependent upon team work, collaboration and congenial interpersonal relationships, the importance of emotional intelligence which focuses upon one's ability to interact with others effectively can not be over emphasized. At the same time, management students have been found to have high self-efficacy which means that these students have a strong sense of human accomplishment and personal well being in many ways including the ability to cope with stress. At the same time, these subjects have been found to have high resilience which means that persons have broader vision to look at the things in reality and how best to tackle them. Lent (2002) indicated that individuals with high self-efficacy have higher resilient mechanism, i.e. they tend to use active coping strategies. On the other hand, students from humanities group have lack of these competencies. It may be due to the lack of practical exposure, real field setting situations and the prevailing current social practices. Students from this discipline need to inculcate various competencies such as leadership, emotional facilitation of thinking, understanding and analyzing emotions and employing emotional knowledge in their course curriculum to meet the current's cut throat competitive demands and pressures.

TABLE NO. 2 INTERCORRELATIONS BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, SELF-EFFICACY AND RESILIENCE

Variables	EI	SE	R
EI	1.00	0.78**	0.62*
SE			0.68**
R			

EI = Emotional Intelligence
SE = Self-Efficacy   ** p<0.01
R = Resilience   * p<0.05

Table No. 2 clearly shows that there is a higher positive relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy i.e. 0.78** which is significant at 0.01 level of significance. The obtained findings are in line of Faulkner & Reeves (2009), Yalcinalp (2005) and Hagger & Biddle (2001) who found that the students having high Emotional Intelligence, i.e. could comprehend and manage their as well as own emotions well, developed more positive attitude toward their education. Students with high Emotional Intelligence have high self-efficacy which helps them to interpret academic problems as opportunities to succeed and to attain more skills and proficiency to reach at the next level to solve any academic problem that might come on their way. Such students are more likely to perform well in their academics and to develop more positive attitude toward learning. Further, the obtained correlation

between Self Efficacy and Resilience and Emotional Intelligence Resilience has come out to be 0.68 and 0.62 respectively. Both the values are significant at 0.01 and 0.05 level of significance respectively. It states that the students high on the parameters of Emotional Intelligence along with high self-efficiency have the ability to recognize and reinforce those step which can strengthen and enhance the performance of students. Such students have healthy interactions with the faculty as well as their peers, leading to more dissemination of knowledge, self-development and self-motivation i.e. high intrinsic motivation (Garg and Rastogi, 2009).

Therefore the present findings clearly indicate that there is a significant difference in Emotional Intelligence, Self-Efficacy and Resilience among different professional course students. The need of an hour is to build and develop various attributes of positive psychological capital i.e. hope, optimism, resilience, self-efficacy in the students at college level.

Conclusion :

With this, it can be concluded that fostering stress resiliency among students will help them to cope with stress actively, help in accumulation of intellectual and social capital and counteract emotional decay. Faculty members must recognize the psychological needs of students so as to reduce their stress level, render optimal human functioning, blended with matured understanding as well as high levels of psychological adaptations and effective coping mechanisms.

Implications :

A number of implications have emerged from the results of the present study. When a stressful situation arises at work place, preventive strategies could include the employee's to acquire EI and self-efficacy e.g. (1) Helping students as well as motivating Institutes to impart training on emotional intelligence competencies i.e. perception, appraisal and expression of emotion, emotional facilitation of thinking, analyzing emotions and employing emotional knowledge.

(2)   Improving students self-efficacy via vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, active domain and anxiety management, may have a therapeutic effect on their stress coping mechanism.

(3)   With the growth of interest in emotions, social and emotional programmes (SEL) must be initiated time to time in work set up with difficult nomenclatures, i.e., 'Resiliency Prog.', Lifeskills Training Programmes etc.

(4)   Open Educational Approach, instead of conventional teaching methods must be encouraged which promotes new ideas and unravels anxieties and prompting 'why not' mindset as it would promote humility and tolerance for adverse life situations.

It means that developing resilience among students of various professions has become mandatory in a number of sense; so as to reduce the disparity among the aspirations and existent opportunities for the students.

(5)   Transformative learning must be encouraged empowering students to

(i)   Develop strong healthy group dynamics.

(ii)   Solving problems and making good decisions.

(iii)   Managing self in achieving goals.

(iv)   Behaving wisely and making students a responsible and effective person.

Such skills would help the students to have a protean career (Hall & Homss, 1988), involving high level of self-knowledge, self-awareness, personal responsibility and self-correcting in response to changing demands from the environment and transforming the student as an effective person. Thus, transformative learning train students to face the adversities which involve strategies related to emotional

management and consequently moulding students to overcome stress by becoming resilient to stress along with constructive and creative thinking.

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