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Mitigating Occupational Stress Through Emotional Intelligence: A Study on Self-Efficacy in Manufacturing Sector

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: *In the manufacturing industry, occupational stress is still a major problem that frequently affects workers' performance and well-being. In high-demand settings, emotional intelligence (EI) is becoming more widely acknowledged as a crucial component of stress management and self-efficacy enhancement.*

Objective: *The purpose of this study is to investigate how emotional intelligence functions as a mediator in the relationship between self-efficacy and occupational stress in workers in the manufacturing sector. It looks at how emotional intelligence might reduce stress and boost workers' confidence in their capacity to do their jobs well.*

Methodology: *The study used a descriptive, quantitative design. 230 employees' responses on a standardised Likert-scale questionnaire were gathered. Using SPSS, the study used multiple regression analysis and correlation to assess the connections between self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and occupational stress.*

Results: *The findings indicate a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy ($r = 0.682$, $p < 0.001$) and a moderately negative correlation between emotional intelligence and occupational stress ($r = 0.355$, $p < 0.001$). However, occupational stress had a statistically insignificant effect on self-efficacy. The relationship between self-efficacy and stress was significantly influenced by emotional intelligence.*

Discussion: *The findings support previous research (e.g., Anand, 2019; Ariyaratne & Tennakoon, 2021), which indicates that emotional intelligence improves coping skills, lessens the negative impacts of stress at work, and boosts self-esteem. The idea that emotionally intelligent people are more robust and confident in high-stress situations is supported by this.*

Conclusions: *Emotional intelligence is essential for lowering work-related stress and raising self-efficacy in the manufacturing industry. Programmes for emotional intelligence (EI) development should be given top priority by organisations in order to increase employee performance, psychological well-being, and resilience. Longitudinal impacts of such therapies could be investigated in future studies. at most. There are no footnotes, bibliographic references, abbreviations, or references to the primary text.*

Keywords : *Occupational Stress, Self-Efficacy, Emotional Intelligence Coping Stress*

INTRODUCTION

Occupational stress is a growing concern in high-pressure industries such as manufacturing, where employees are routinely exposed to demanding workloads, rigid timelines, and hazardous environments. Prolonged exposure to such stressors can negatively impact employees' psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and overall performance (Kumar & Lalitha, 2014). In this context, Emotional Intelligence, (EI) has emerged as a vital psychological resource that can help individuals manage workplace stress more effectively. Emotional Intelligence encompasses a set of emotional and social competencies that enable individuals to perceive, regulate, and utilize emotions constructively in challenging situations (Goleman, 1995; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Simultaneously, Self-Efficacythe belief in one's ability to execute tasks and handle difficulties—is a key determinant of how individuals respond to stressful work environments (Bandura, 1997). Research indicates that individuals with high EI tend to exhibit higher levels of Self-Efficacy, making them more resilient and adaptable in occupational settings (Mouton et al., 2013). As

workplace demands evolve with technological changes and productivity pressures, especially in the manufacturing sector, understanding the interplay between these psychological constructs becomes crucial for sustaining workforce well-being and organizational efficiency. Empirical studies demonstrate that emotional intelligence (EI) and self-efficacy boost psychological resources including psychological capital and resilience, which reduce stress and boost engagement and work satisfaction. According to a 2024 study, self-efficacy among vocational workers explained 16.6% of the variance in resilience and had an indirect impact through emotional intelligence. Furthermore, according to a 2025 study grounded in resilience theory, emotional intelligence (EI) improves job satisfaction by lowering stress and boosting resilience in teaching professionals.

These results bolster the applicability of EI in high-demand industries like manufacturing, where comparable stressors are present. When combined, these studies support the inclusion of emotional intelligence (EI) models—particularly Mayer & Salovey's four-branch framework—in industrial training programmes because they foster the development of emotion-perception, regulation, and application competencies that are essential for raising self-efficacy and lowering occupational stress in manufacturing environments. Emotional intelligence is a crucial mediator in the relationship between industrial workforceself-efficacy and occupational stress, according to recent data. A 2022 study conducted in Nigeria's electrical manufacturing sector, for example, found that Emotional Intelligence (EI) both directly predicts and modifies employee productivity. Workers with higher EI maintained higher output despite higher stress levels, confirming the important relationship between EI and stress in technical settings. Wapaño (2021) used regression and mediation analyses to show that self-efficacy fully mediates the effect of EI on stress in educational contexts. They found that EI increases one's belief in coping abilities, which in turn lowers stress by about 29% (R2 = 0.287). researchgate.net. These results imply that developing employees' emotional intelligence is likely to improve self-efficacy and reduce stress more successfully than focusing on either element alone in manufacturing settings, where performance standards are high.

Further study demonstrates that self-efficacy and emotional intelligence (EI) boost psychological resources like psychological capital and resilience, which reduce stress and raise engagement and job satisfaction. According to the study, self-efficacy among vocational workers explained 16.6% of the variance in resilience, both directly and indirectly through emotional intelligence. The findings also support the relevance of emotional intelligence (EI) in high-demand industries like manufacturing, where similar stressors coexist. A 2025 study based on resilience theory also found that EI increases job satisfaction by reducing stress and enhancing resilience among teaching professionals. These studies advocate for the integration of EI models, particularly Mayer & Salovey's four-branch framework, into industrial training programmes because they develop emotion-perception, regulation, and application competencies that are essential for improving self-efficacy and lowering occupational stress in factory settings.

METHOD

Participants

The survey was carried out among workers in a variety of southern Indian manufacturing facilities. Non-probability purposive sampling was used to pick 230 participants in total, guaranteeing representation from a range of functional roles in the manufacturing industry. Participants had to have worked in the manufacturing sector for at least a year in order to meet the inclusion requirements. A diverse range of educational backgrounds and employment functions were represented among the respondents, with the majority being male (96.67%) and between the ages of 30 and 40 (54.17%). About 35.83% of the participants had fewer than five years of job experience, and 70.83% of them were married.

Procedure

The research followed a quantitative, descriptive, and correlational design, aiming to assess the relationships between occupational stress, emotional intelligence, and self-efficacy. The purpose of the explanatory study was to ascertain if emotional intelligence mediated the association between self-efficacy and occupational stress. Participants were told of the study's goal and given their informed consent before any data was collected. To guarantee confidentiality and voluntary participation, a structured questionnaire was sent in both digital and physical versions. Over the course of two months, the data was collected.

Instrument

A systematic Likert-scale questionnaire, which was created based on validated scales from earlier research, was used to gather the primary data. Three main constructs were measured by the questionnaire's items: self-efficacy (SE), emotional intelligence (EI), and occupational stress (OS). Factors like role conflict, role overload, job characteristics, working hours, and work environment were used to measure occupational stress. Dimensions such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills were used to quantify emotional intelligence. Subscales including mastery experience, verbal persuasion, social self-efficacy, positive attitude, and confidence were used to measure self-efficacy. Cronbach's Alpha, which produced a result of 0.864, indicating high internal consistency, was used to certify the instrument's reliability.

Physical Activity Quiz

This study did not include any physical activity quiz or interventions related to physical exercise. The focus was solely on psychological constructs related to workplace behavior and stress. This section is therefore not applicable to the current research.

Data Analysis

RESULTS

OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY:

1. To examine the relationship between Occupational Stress, Self-Efficacy and Emotional Intelligence.
2. To investigate the effect of Occupational Stress on Self-Efficacy.
3. To examine the role of Emotional Intelligence on Occupational Stress and Self-Efficacy.

Hypothesis:

- $H1_0$: There is no relationship between Occupational Stress, Self-Efficacy and Emotional Intelligence.
- $H1_1$: There is a significant relationship between Occupational Stress, Self-Efficacy and Emotional Intelligence
- $H2_0$: There is no effect of Occupational Stress on Self-Efficacy.
- $H2_1$: There is a significant effect of Occupational Stress on Self-Efficacy
- $H3_0$: There is no role of Emotional Intelligence on Occupational Stress and Self-Efficacy.
- $H3_1$: There is a significant role of Emotional Intelligence on Occupational Stress and Self-Efficacy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Research methodology systematically addressed the research problem and is defined as the art of studying how research is conducted logically and methodically. The present study followed a descriptive and correlational research design, aiming to explore the relationship between occupational stress, emotional intelligence, and self-efficacy among employees in the manufacturing sector.

Data were collected from 230 respondents working in various manufacturing units. A non-probability sampling method was used, specifically employing the purposive sampling technique, to select participants with relevant industry experience. The data collection process was carried out through a structured Likert scale questionnaire, which was designed to ensure clarity and ease of understanding for respondents. The questionnaire covered key variables including occupational stress, emotional intelligence, and self-efficacy. To ensure the quality and validity of the findings, the survey was administered both physically and digitally, depending on accessibility. Respondents were briefed on the purpose of the study, and confidentiality was assured. Informed consent was obtained before participation. The primary data were supported by secondary sources, including published journal articles, academic papers, and company documents relevant to the manufacturing sector.

Once the data were collected, they were coded and enteredSPSS software for statistical analysis. Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the strength and direction of relationships among variables, and multiple regression analysis was used to determine the predictive power of emotional intelligence in mitigating occupational stress and enhancing self-efficacy.

Analysis:

Cronbach's Alpha is 0.864 so there is internal consistency in data collection. It says the collected is consistent for furtherstudy. (table 1)

Correlation of Occupational StressEmotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy (Table 2.1)

		Mean_OS	Mean_EI	Mean_SE
Mean_OS	Pearson Correlation	1	.355**	0.162
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.078
	N	230	230	230
Mean_EI	Pearson Correlation	.355**	1	.682**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000
	N	230	230	230

Table 1

Here we can observe that significant value between Occupational Stress and Self -Efficacy is more than 0.05, that is 0.078 which represents correlation is not significant. The significant value between Occupational Stress and Emotional intelligence is less than 0.05, that is 0.00 this implies that there is a strong connection between these variables. The significant value between Self-Efficacy and Emotional intelligence is less than 0.05 that is 0.00 which indicates that there exists a strategically significant relationship. Pearson correlation coefficient value between Occupational Stress and dependent variable Self-Efficacy value is positive, and it is 0.162 which says that these variables are positively small or negligibly correlated. Pearson correlation coefficient value between Occupational Stress and mediating variable as Emotional intelligence is positive, and it is 0.355 which says that these variables are positively moderately correlated. Pearson correlation coefficient value between Self-Efficacy and mediating variable Emotional intelligence is positive, and it is 0.682 which says that these variables are positively strongly correlated.

Correlation of factors of Emotional Intelligence and Occupational Stress

		Mean_EI_SR	Mean_EI_SA	Mean_EI_EM	Mean_EI_SS	Mean_EI_MO
Mean_OS	Pearson Correlation	.221*	.200*	.278**	.290**	.312**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.015	0.029	0.002	0.001	0.001
	N	230	230	230	230	230

Table 2

There is a substantial correlation between the Emotional Intelligence components, with the significant value for each being less than 0.05 as shown in the table with Occupational Stress. The factors of Emotional Intelligence and Occupational Stress are positively weakly correlated, according to the Pearson correlation coefficient values for the factors self-awareness is 0.221, self-regulation is 0.2, motivation is 0.278, empathy is 0.29, and social skills is 0.312

Regression analysis of Occupational Stress with Self-Efficacy

Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Sig.	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)
Occupational Stress → Self-Efficacy	0.162	0.026	0.018	0.31557	0.078	0.133
Emotional Intelligence → Occupational Stress	0.355	0.126	0.119	0.364	<0.001	0.383
Emotional Intelligence → Self-Efficacy	0.682	0.466	0.461	0.23378	<0.001	0.604

The significance value is not less than 0.05, there is meager impact of Occupational Stress on Self-Efficacy. Self-Efficacy is 1.8% impacted by Occupational Stress and the correlation value is 0.162. For every 1-unit change of Occupational Stress 13.3 times of Self-Efficacy is changed.

Factors of Occupational Stress → Self-Efficacy (Detailed Breakdown)	
Factors	**Value**
Mean_OS_RC (Role Conflict)	0.021
Mean_OS_RO (Role Overload)	0.019
Mean_OS_JT (Job Tension)	0.571
Mean_OS_WH (Work Hours)	0.373
Mean_OS_WE (Work Environment)	0.051

Table 3

Regression analysis of Emotional Intelligence and Occupational Stress.

The significance value is less than 0.05, there is a considerable impact of Emotional Intelligence on Occupational Stress. Occupational Stress is 11.9% impacted by Emotional Intelligence and the correlation value is 0.355. For every 1-unit change of Emotional Intelligence 38.3% of Occupational Stress is changed.

Regression analysis of Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy.

As per the regression table the significance level is smaller than 0.05, Emotional Intelligence significantly affects self-efficacy. Self-Efficacy is 46.10% of that impacted by Emotional Intelligence and the correlation value is 0.682. For every 1-unit change of Emotional Intelligence 60.4% of Self-Efficacy is changed.

Regression analysis of factors of Occupational Stress and Self-Efficacy.

The significance value is not less than 0.05 which stipulates that there is a meagre impact of work-related stress and its factors on an overall with Self-Efficacy. The overall impact value of Occupational Stress and its factor on Self-Efficacy is 0.088,that is 8.8%. The significance value of role conflict is less than 0.05, consequently it affects self-efficacy. Role conflict has an impact on self-efficacy to the extent of 25%, or 0.25 value. For every 1-unit change of role conflict 0.086 times of Self-Efficacy gets changed in inverse direction. Role overload influences self-efficacy because its significance value is smaller than 0.05. Self-Efficacy is impacted by 0.263 value that is 26.3% of role overload. For every 1-unit change of role conflict 0.113 times of Self-Efficacy gets changed. Study included 54.17% respondents are in the age group 30-40 years.96.67% respondents are male.7.67% respondents are graduates.70.83% respondents are married.35.83% respondents have less than 5 years' experience.

DISCUSSION

The results reveal a complex interplay between occupational stress, emotional intelligence, and self-efficacy. Notably, the correlation between occupational stress and self-efficacy (0.162, $p > 0.05$) suggests a negligible yet positive relationship, indicating that as occupational stress increases, self-efficacy tends to rise slightly, although this relationship is not statistically significant. This could imply that while stressors are present, they may not significantly detract from self-efficacy levels, possibly due to individual coping mechanisms or the nature of the work environment. The correlation between emotional intelligence and occupational stress, on the other hand, is substantial (0.355, $p < 0.05$), indicating that a higher level of emotional intelligence is linked to a lower level of occupational stress. This result is in line with previous research that highlights the importance of emotional intelligence in stress management. Likewise, the robust association (0.682, $p < 0.05$) between self-efficacy and emotional intelligence implies that those with higher emotional intelligence are probably more confident in their skills. This relationship supports the notion that emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in raising self-efficacy, which in turn can result in better job performance and stress tolerance.

The regression analysis results further elucidate these relationships. Emotional intelligence was shown to significantly impact occupational stress (11.9%), indicating that interventions aimed at enhancing emotional intelligence could reduce occupational stress levels. The substantial impact of emotional intelligence on self-efficacy (46.10%) emphasizes the importance of fostering emotional skills among

employees to enhance their self-belief and overall performance. Conversely, the meager impact of occupational stress on self-efficacy (1.8%) suggests that other factors, potentially including personal resilience or support systems, might play more substantial roles in shaping self-efficacy.

Given these insights, several recommendations can be made to improve workplace dynamics in the manufacturing sector. Organizations should prioritize training programs that enhance emotional intelligence among employees. Such training can prepare employees with the necessary skills to manage their emotions effectively, thereby reducing occupational stress and increasing self-efficacy. Regular workshops and interactive sessions focusing on self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills could be beneficial.

Organizations should implement comprehensive stress management programs that could include mindfulness training, stress reduction workshops, and counseling services that enable employees to manage stress proactively. Leaders play a vital role in shaping organizational culture and employee well-being. Training leaders in emotional intelligence can help them better support their teams, recognize signs of stress, and foster an environment that promotes psychological safety and open communication.

Regular assessments of occupational stress levels and self-efficacy through surveys or feedback mechanisms can help organizations identify trends and areas for improvement. The data collected can guide interventions and measure their effectiveness over time. Creating a culture that encourages collaboration and peer support can enhance emotional intelligence and self-efficacy among employees. Programs that promote teamwork and open dialogue about challenges can help employees feel more supported and valued.

Given the impact of role conflict and role overload on self-efficacy, organizations should strive to clearly define job roles and responsibilities. Regularly reviewing workloads and ensuring that employees are not overburdened can mitigate stress and improve job satisfaction. By focusing on these areas, organizations in the manufacturing sector can enhance emotional intelligence, reduce occupational stress, and improve self-efficacy, ultimately leading to a more productive and engaged workforce. Future research could explore longitudinal effects of emotional intelligence training on stress and self-efficacy over time, providing deeper insights into their long-term benefits.

CONCLUSIONS

Emotional Intelligence must be reconsidered as a significant component of Occupational Stress, as individuals with high EI can cope with stress well. Additionally, the organization should take steps to decrease role conflict and role overload, which will increase employee's Self-Efficacy. Developing a strategy to boost Emotional Intelligence and Self-Efficacy to enhance organizational performance is required to reduce Occupational Stress. High EI performers are better equipped to comprehend and manage difficult circumstances. Consequently, emotionally intelligent people can manage conflict more successfully than those with lower EI scores. EI also contributes to a person's increased self-confidence in their ability to achieve their goals with high self-efficacy.

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