

# EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND BURNOUT: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

During the past few decades, research on emotional intelligence and burnout (Bradley, 1981) has been attracting the attention of researchers (Schaufeli et al., 2008a), practitioners and the general public around the world. The phenomenon of burnout, a debilitating stress syndrome, was observed and studied in the US and the European countries in the 1980s when these countries faced globalization (Sharma, 2007a). After its initial emergence in the west, research on burnout has now spread to Africa, China and finally to the Indian Subcontinent (Schaufeli et al., 2008b).

In recent years, the pace of work within organizations, especially in the developing world has increased rapidly. This increase can be attributed to many factors, which include technological advancements, the need to be globally competitive, continually changing economies as well as changes in organizational structures. Consequently, the demands placed on individuals employed in organisations have also increased.

Within the context of workplace demands, the concepts of emotional intelligence and burnout appear to have a certain intuitive relationship. Both represent important elements of human interaction with work. In the past, the effects and consequences of emotional intelligence and burnout was not seen as prominent workplace issues. However, in recent times, more and more researchers as well as organisations realize its impact. Burnout is becoming a major threat to the executives of the world over and more so in a country like India where they are under pressure to produce higher and higher outputs with minimum inputs (Sharma, 2007b).

Current management within a globalized economy proclaims lofty ideas that they fail to support while they focus on the fiscal, policy and political issues required to maintain large organizations or corporations. As individual's struggle to chart a course through complex, contradictory, and sometimes hostile institutional environments, they are vulnerable to the exhaustion, cynicism and inefficiency that define burnout. The burnout phenomenon has grown from a specialized occupational hazard to a pervasive workplace hazard (Schaufeli et al., 2009c).

Emotional intelligence, an important construct among psychological, educational and management research (Law et al., 2004). It is defined as a set of abilities to direct their activity in positive and productive channels. The concept of emotional intelligence has considered the role of emotion related competencies, emotional maturity and emotional sensitivity. Burnout, on the other hand has three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach et.al, 1981).

The concept of emotional intelligence has received extensive attention in both the scientific and practitioner literature in recent years (Van et al., 2005). The increased interest in emotional intelligence is supported by a growing compilation of data that demonstrate that enhanced social interactions improve personal performance in wide range of settings (Bruce et.al, 2006). Over the years there has been much debate on what burnout actually is, its antecedents and how it might be best measured. Studies related to burnout and emotional intelligence help in resolving many issues in the organizations such as employee turnover (Smigla et.al, 2000) and thereby improving teams' performance and productivity in an organization (HBR, 2008).

According to Duran et.al (2004), self reported emotional intelligence, and burnouts are

associated, so emotional clarity was specifically associated with personal accomplishment and dedication. Study by Budnik (2003) finds association between burnout variables such as emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment and emotional intelligence in health sector. Emotional exhaustion, influenced by emotional appraisal and positive regulation, was causally prior to depersonalization and personal accomplishment (Chan, 2006). Perceived emotional intelligence (EI) is significantly related to burnout syndrome according to studies conducted by **Platsidou (2010)**. According to the author personal accomplishment is predicted by emotional intelligence.

Many industries in India are struggling to adapt to the uncertainty and the stressful working conditions within the globalized environment. One such industry acknowledging the rapid and profound transformation is the pharmaceutical industry. Individuals working in the pharmaceutical industry are often exposed to stressful working conditions. Employees are required to work long hours, often when most other people are relaxing, causing stress and burnout.

There have not been many studies linking emotional intelligence and burnout in a pharmaceutical context in India. There is a need to investigate whether variables of emotional intelligence are better predictors of burnout. The article is an attempt in this direction.

## PRESENT STUDY

The article examines the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout within the pharmaceutical industry in India. The components propounded by Sharma Burnout Scale (SBS) are given in the table 1. Operational definition of each of these variables as defined by Sharma is given in the appendix.

**Table 1: BURNOUT AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

<b>Burnout</b>	<b>Emotional Intelligence</b>
Inadequacy	Emotional Competence (EC)
Ambiguity	Emotional Maturity (EM)
Dissatisfaction and Powerlessness	Emotional Sensitivity (ES)
Depersonalization	
Physical and Emotional Exhaustion	

**Source: Sharma (2007)**

## RESEARCH ISSUES

The article addresses three research issues.

1. What sort of relationship between burnout and emotional intelligence?
2. How far each component of burnout significantly related to the components of emotional intelligence?
3. Which are the variables of emotional intelligence are better predictors of burnout?

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To study the relationships between burnout and emotional intelligence in pharmaceutical industry.

## METHODOLOGY

The study has been conducted among the employees of pharmaceutical industry. Sample of 175 were selected through purposive sampling method. At most care has been given during for the selection of samples. For data collection, 10 pharmaceutical companies were identified and details of employees were collected. Few employees from each company were selected randomly as sample respondents and establish rapport with them over a period of time. Internet is the major source of communication. Prior to data collection official confirmation from the employees about their interest in taking part in the survey were assured. A pilot study was also initiated to understand the relevance of the problem in the pharmacy sector. Questionnaires were sent to 500 employees by mail, out of which 200 were responded. After scrutiny 175 were considered for the study. The co-operation of the respondents has been encouraging throughout the study.

Composition of questions which reflect the burnout and emotional intelligence were framed and applied. All the questions were administered in a five rating likert scale where one is considered as 'highly disagreed' and five as 'highly agreed'. The internal consistency of data is tested through Cronbach alpha. Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) test shows that data is significant. Reliability coefficient is .8346. Considered variables are tested with appropriate statistical tools. Bivariate correlation analysis provides information about degree of relationship between each of variables in burnout and emotional intelligence. Step-wise regression analysis details the information about the predicted emotional intelligence variables.

Apart from this, curve estimation (liner model) of regression analysis signifies the linier relationship of selected variable.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

One sample 't' test shows that all the selected variables are significance ( $p < .05$ ). Bivariate correlation analysis between the variables of burnout and emotional intelligence is given in the table 2. Table reveals that emotional competency is significantly correlated with depersonalization (.375,  $p < .01$ ) and with burnout (avg.) (.235,  $p < .01$ ). On the other hand, emotional maturity is negatively correlated to dissatisfaction and powerlessness (-.149,  $p < .05$ ) and physical emotional exhaustion (-.168,  $p < .05$ ). Emotional sensitivity is significantly correlated with burnout variables such as ambiguity (.259,  $p < .01$ ), dissatisfaction and powerlessness (.239), physical and emotional exhaustion (.211,  $p < .01$ ) and burnout (avg.) (.291,  $p < .01$ ).

Step-wise regression analysis shows the predictor variables of burnout (Table 3). Predictor variables of burnout (avg.) are 'emotional sensitivity' and 'emotional competency'. The adjusted  $R^2$  value are .079 and .123 and standardized co-efficient values are .280 and .221 respectively. Predictor variable of ambiguity is 'emotional sensitivity' (the adjusted  $R^2$  value is .067 and standardized co-efficient of .259). It is noted that there is no predictor variables of 'inadequacy'. Predictor variables of 'dissatisfaction' and 'powerlessness' are 'emotional sensitivity' and 'emotional maturity'. The  $R^2$  values are .051 and .069 and standard co-efficient are .239 and -.150. The predictor variable of 'depersonalisation' is emotional competencies (adjusted  $R^2$  value is .136 and standard coefficient value is .375). 'Emotional sensitivity' and 'emotional maturity' are the predictor variables of 'physical' and 'emotional exhaustion'. The adjusted  $R^2$  values are .039 and .062 and co-efficient values are .211 and -.168.

Curve estimation (liner model) of regression analysis is performed for the selected independent variables of emotional intelligence and the dependent variable (burnout). Figure one, two and three represent that the relationship is linier between 'burnout' (avg.) with 'emotional competencies' and 'emotional sensitivity'. ANOVA test also establishes its significance of linier model ( $p < .005$ ). On the other hand the linier relationship between 'burnout' (avg.) and 'emotional maturity' is not significance ( $p > .005$ ).

## DISCUSSIONS

Many variables of emotional intelligence are better predictors of burnout and are having effective correlation. Employees with emotional competency are high performers and they are able to handle emotional upset and handle situations tactfully. Their personality characters are significantly correlated with depersonalization. These executives are basically show indifference, apathy, and alienation from others. However negative significance correlation between emotional maturity and dissatisfaction and powerlessness show that the employees who poses the behavioural pattern of self awareness, developing others, adaptability and sensitivity are negatively correlated with discontent, lacking of influencing ability, and feeling of worthlessness and depression. This means that emotionally matured employees are able to influence others and cannot be remain unhappy. The negative correlation between emotional maturity and physical and emotional exhaustion also exhibits that symptom of loss of energy, fatigue, headache, anxiety, and irritability never exhibits by emotionally matured executives.

However this is not true in the case of emotionally sensitive executives. They do not have clarity of job role (role ambiguity), dissatisfaction and powerlessness, and physical emotional exhaustion. The result of the correlation of average of emotional intelligence with ambiguity, dissatisfaction and powerlessness and depersonalization and burnout (avg.) is positively significant. This means that even managers with high emotional intelligence are not completely exempted from burnout, though there are differences with respect to individual variables. In short, emotionally critical aspects are central to employees in an organization for managing different situation.

## ARGUMENTS

Based on the above discussions the following arguments are developed for further discussions in terms of its implications.

1. Employees with emotional competency are high performers. There is a growing need for improving emotional competency of the employees in the organization. The direct link between emotional competency and job prosperous is evident from many

literatures. There has been a consistent demand for improving emotional competency of the employees for strengthening their skills (Yildirim, 2007). The study points out that emotionally competent people are able to handle various situations tactfully. The findings of the study are also more or less substantiating the studies conducted by Daniel Goleman and Richard Boyatzis in collaboration with Hay groups about the relationship between emotional competence and performance (Boyatzis, 1999). According to Jayan (2006) high managerial performers have more emotional competencies. High performing managers always poses the dominant characteristics of emotional intelligence (Cavallo, 2006). Job performance is more graded by emotional competency (Ryan, 2009).

The results of the study indicate that lack of emotional competency will lead to depersonalization. Such situation leads to indifference, apathy and alienation from others. So it is necessary that emotional competency is an essential component of employees in the organization.

2. Emotionally matured employees are satisfied employees. An important argument generated is that emotionally matured employees have clear objectives of their future and able to manage emotionally challenging situation. They are considered as mostly satisfied employees. They follow group norms easily and able to influence team members (Zadel, 2008). Now a day's the trends is such a way that many Corporate are interested in attracting and retain emotionally matured employees (Hochgraft, 2004). The studies by Chiva et.al (2008), reveals that organizational learning capacity (OLC) plays a significant role in determining the effect of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction. This means that emotionally intelligence people are more likely to be satisfied. The results of this study confirm that emotional maturity is negatively related to dissatisfaction and powerlessness (discontentment, lacking influencing ability, and feeling of worthlessness and depression) and depersonalization (indifference, apathy, and alienation from others).

3. Emotionally sensitive employees do not have role clarity. Emotionally sensitive

employees do not have any clarity on their job. They are mostly always at the risk of burnout (Verbeke, 1988). Steps to reduce such stress are inevitable in any organization (Behrman, 1984). Turnover intentions of these employees are very high (Babakus, 2008; Karatepe, 2010). Emotional clarity reduces anger and they have a better controlling power (Wilkowski, 2008). Role clarity creates better autonomy, participation in organizational activities (Mukherjee et.al, 2006). Literature substantiating these arguments is scanty. Otherwise this study tries to extent a new dimension in the literature on the consequences of emotional sensitivity on job performance. However one must explore more concrete evidences to substantiate this argument.

The above arguments place before us two aspects of emotional intelligence related to burnout.

First both emotional competency and emotional maturity are essential for employees to avoid burnout. Second, emotionally sensitive employees find themselves to adjust with routine work due to lack of job clarity. Training and counseling sessions must be organized to transform them to emotionally competent and emotionally matured. Otherwise such situations roll on to burnout.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that emotional intelligence is closely associated with burnout. Emotional competency and emotional maturity are the two aspects of emotional intelligence help the employees to perform their job. Emotionally sensitive employees are always subject to burnout problems. Organization must take special interest to identify these employees and transform them to be more emotionally competent and matured.

### One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Emotional competencies	48.272	174	.000	3.6343	3.4857	3.7829
Emotional maturity	63.005	174	.000	4.3829	4.2456	4.5202
Emotional sensitivity	39.252	174	.000	3.2514	3.0879	3.4149
Inadequacy	57.951	174	.000	3.7829	3.6540	3.9117
Ambiguity	50.414	174	.000	3.6514	3.5085	3.7944
Emotional intelligence(Avg)	83.494	174	.000	3.7562	3.6674	3.8450
Dissatisfaction and powerlessness	54.667	174	.000	3.7086	3.5747	3.8425
Depersonalisation	67.232	174	.000	3.8857	3.7716	3.9998
Physical and emotional exhaustion	46.743	174	.000	3.7543	3.5958	3.9128
Burnout (Avg)	89.071	174	.000	3.7571	3.6739	3.8404

**Table 2: Bivariate Correlation Analysis**

<b>Burnout/</b>	<b>Emotional Competence (EC)</b>	<b>Emotional Maturity (EM)</b>	<b>Emotional Sensitivity (ES)</b>
Inadequacy	.068	.026	.125
Ambiguity	.052	-.076	.259**
Dissatisfaction and Powerlessness	.144	-.149*	.239**
Depersonalization	.375**	.014	.103
Physical and Emotional Exhaustion	.116	-.168*	.211**
Burnout (average)	.235**	-.078	.291**

\*\*Co-relation is significant at .01 levels (2-tailed).

\*Co-relation is significant at .05 (2-tailed).

**Table 3: Predictor Variables of Burnout**

<b>Predictors of</b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> Coefficient beta</b>	<b>Standardized of F change</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>Dimensions of Executive Burnout</b>
Emotional Sensitivity	.079	.280	.000	<b>Burnout (Avg.)</b>
Emotional Competency	.123	.221	.002	
Emotional sensitivity	.067	.259	.001	<b>Ambiguity Inadequacy</b>
No predictor variable	-	-	-	
Emotional Sensitivity	.051	.239	.01	<b>Dissatisfaction and Powerlessness</b>
Emotional Maturity	.069	-.150	.01	
Emotional Competencies	.136	.375	.000	
Emotional sensitivity	.039	.211	.004	<b>Depersonalization</b>
Emotional maturity	.062	-.168	.001	

**Table 4**

<b>Emotional Intelligence Variables</b>	<b>F Value</b>	<b>Significance F</b>	<b>P value</b>
Emotional Competency	10.09601	.0018	P<.005
Emotional Maturity	1.06185	.3042	P>.005
Emotional sensitivity	15.97663	.0001	P<.005



## **Burnout (Sharma Burnout Scale)**

**Inadequacy:** Feeling of insufficiency and inability to meet deadlines.

**Ambiguity:** Persistent lack of clarity about one's role and responsibilities.

**Dissatisfaction and powerlessness:** Discontentment, lacking influencing ability, and feeling of worthlessness and depression.

**Depersonalization:** Indifference, apathy, and alienation from others.

**Physical and emotional exhaustion:** Manifestation of symptoms of loss of energy, fatigue, headache, anxiety, and irritability.

### III. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

1. Emotional competence (EC): A learned capability that results in outstanding performance at work involving the ability to handle emotional upsets, high self-esteem, tactful response to emotional stimuli and handling egoism.
2. Emotional maturity (EM): Behavioural pattern exhibited by the managers while dealing with inner self and the immediate environment. It includes self awareness, developing others, delaying gratification, and adaptability and sensitivity.
3. Emotional sensitivity (ES): Characteristic of being peculiarly sensitive and understanding threshold of emotional arousal, empathy, improving interpersonal relations, and communicability of emotions.

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