

Impact of Learned optimism over Stress for the Employees in manufacturing sector

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Abstract— the stress rate is increasing day by day for every individual in this world. With lots of pressure people are not able to control their own stress, it is been observed that the employees who are working in the manufacturing sector experience more stress when compared to the people working in other areas. There are lots of factor which can have an impact over stress. This study was done to identify whether the factor called learned optimism has impact over stress for the employees in manufacturing sector or not. For this purpose a conceptual model was developed by reviewing literature in the manufacturing sector. The model was tested using a survey which was taken from the literature and developed according to the changes. The sample size included 200 employees who are working in the manufacturing industry. The data was analyzed using regression. This study identified that learned optimism has huge impact over stress for the employees in the manufacturing field.

Index Terms— Learned optimism, optimism, pessimism, stress, positive thinking, manufacturing sector.

I. INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this research is to higher the optimistic level and lowers the stress level for the employees in the manufacturing sector. The research question is “Does learned optimism level help to mitigate the stress level of an employee in manufacturing sector?” The people who have stress will be pessimistic in nature, and the state of being in the pessimistic state is not permanent, they can grow up and reach the optimistic level. Martin Seligmen, the father of psychology found through his research that the optimistic character can be cultivated by giving proper training. And thus this is termed as learned optimism.

Seeing the employees working in a factory which manufactures agricultural implements which is owned by my father motivated me to take this topic for my research project. It is said that employees working in manufacturing sector face lots of stress when compared to the employees in other sector (eg: service sector).[2]

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Learned optimism:*

Learned optimism is the idea in positive psychology like talent for joy, or any other can be cultivated. Learned optimism was designed by Martin Seligmen, the father of psychology and he published a book in 1990.[1] There are lots of benefits by being optimistic in nature, all the higher achiever will have better health and they will be optimistic. Attitude (the way of thinking) is the only factor which tells whether the person is optimistic or pessimistic, where optimistic person will have a positive attitude and the pessimistic will have the negative attitude when compared to that of an optimistic person.[1]

“Failure is due to unlucky situation”, moreover it is temporary and not permanent this is how the optimist person thinks. And one beautiful thing is that optimistic people get back to their normal state if they face failure. On the other hand pessimistic people think that failure is permanent, failing is one situation means failing in their whole life. If anything happens to fail pessimistic person will blame themselves wherein optimistic person will think in the positive way that the failure is due to some external factors or due to some unlucky situations.

B. *Stress:*

According to Simone Allen, “The harmful physical and emotional response that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of the worker”.[4]

The stress rate is increasing day by day for each and every one right from the small kid to the old. And work related stress is something which one couldn't tolerate easily, it also been said that the employees who are working in manufacturing sector experience more stress.[5] To handle stress we need to have a positive mind set (i.e) optimistic person. And that can be easily adopted by special trainings and workshops which would benefit the organization as well as individual personally.

C. Two concepts of optimism

Generally there are two main concepts which were introduced by Martin Seligman, namely learned helplessness and explanatory style. [9]

C.a. Learned helplessness:

Even though we try working hard to succeed, there are something which cannot be controlled by us, to be simple they are not in our hand like future, we doesn't know what will happen. "Failure is a stepping stone" one should try to learn from that, wherein during the failure kind of situation one should not be giving-up reaction during setbacks. The worst part is that once we are convinced by our helplessness by ourselves then we won't even take steps to improve our situations. This helplessness lies in the pessimism side.

C.b. Explanatory style:

Explanatory style acts as a tool to handle the learned helplessness by frequently using to explain to ourselves about why it went wrong, and what all can be done in order to control it. Explanatory style is a skill which should be learned and practiced. It is has three dimensions namely; permanence, pervasiveness and personalization.

C.b.1. Permanence:

Everyone would have faced bad situations in their life. Are those situations permanent? Do you think the suffering is temporary or permanent?. The way the above questions are answered will describe the motivation level of a person to get back after a setback.

C.b.2. Pervasiveness:

Pervasiveness will tell how far the setback in one area has reflected on the other areas of the individual's life. It is obvious to have ripples when we face bad situations but we should overcome it in such a way that because of one situation the whole life shouldn't go down the drain.

C.b.3. Personalization:

This dimension tells how we take those bad situations personally, like do we blame ourselves or others for the bad instances that has happened. It is good to be optimistic, but always we cannot blame others, and we should try to take responsibility and find out where it went wrong.

D. Advantages of being optimistic:

Person who is optimistic will have lot of advantages like they end up in having a better life, because they will never give up easily; and especially in sports, the sportsman should be optimistic in order to make his team perform better; and if we take things easily, then our life will also be fruitful as in, it will enhance the health and immune system.

It is very important to note that it has not only advantages, like a coin it has two sides. Pessimists will be more realistic about the future outcomes, whereas optimist will have a unrealistic view on world. But the optimistic people will try really hard till their last moment without thinking about their failure. On the whole we need to be both optimistic and pessimistic based on the situations. Now there may arise a question when to be optimistic and when not to be optimistic.

D.a. Time to use optimism:

During any achievement, like how a salesperson will be given a target and he needs to reach the target in a given time.[10][11].

When we are depressed and down, we should think in positive way. When we want to inspire someone, or when we are a team leader, where the others would think ourselves as a role model.

III. HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Based on an extensive review of the literature, this study proposes the conceptual model to help understand the influence of learned optimism over the stress for the employees in the manufacturing sector.

FIGURE I: CONCEPTUAL MODEL



Hypothesis(H1) : Higher the learned optimism score, lower the stress experienced by the employee in manufacturing sector.

The statement of hypothesis was framed after having more idea about the learned optimism and stress through the literature review. And also it is known that optimistic person will experience less stress when compared to pessimistic person, and pessimism is also not permanent, it can also be changed by giving proper training. As the literature says stress is factor which will be faced by an individual only when he is depressed, the people who have positive thinking (i.e) being optimistic will not get into depression. Hence the objective of this research project is to make the employees think positively, which will automatically reduce their stress as in benefits their personnel life too. And this can be achieved by conducting workshops, and many training programs in the organizations.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Questionnaire Development and Measures

A questionnaire was developed and online survey was conducted to understand this study. The survey contains two questionnaire, one for learned optimism which was adapted from Dr. Martin Seligman's book, "*Learned Optimism*" [10]. and the another questionnaire was for stress which was adapted from Imc stress scorecard, and later the questionnaire was translated to the local language(Tamil), as the employees would feel comfortable in answering because the data was collected from the non-English speaking employees also. The questions measured the level of optimism and stress for the employees in the manufacturing sector. Few questions were adapted from the existing information quality literature due to no previous research done to the best of our knowledge for learned optimism impact towards the stress. The target segments were the employees working in the manufacturing sector.

B. Data Description

For the purpose of this study data was collected from a sample of 200 people, across various age groups and working in the manufacturing field.

The data was collected during the months of January and February 2017. The sample was collected from employees in manufacturing firms in Tamil.nadu including Tier I, Tier II and Tier III cities. The following describes the sample collected across the organizations

TABLE I: SAMPLE DESCRIPTION (ACROSS CITIES)

Type of the City	No of Respondents
Tier I	127
Tier II	40
Tier III	33

V. RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study was done through the regression model. This has two variables, namely the learned optimism score and stress score where learned optimism is an independent variable and stress is the dependent variable. The R squared value determines whether the model is efficient or not, here the value of r-square was 0.24, which tells the model is efficient. The result out of the analysis was For every one unit increase in learned optimism score, the stress decreases by 2 units. This is significant at 1% level of significance. And hence learned optimism has an impact over stress for the employees working in the manufacturing sector.

VI. LIMITATIONS

The study focuses on the factor - Learned optimism which impact on the stress only for the employees in manufacturing sector.

Further study could focus on the other area like service sector. Also how the impact varies across different sectors in different locations.

VII. CONCLUSION

The study indicates that learned optimism has huge impact over stress for the employees in manufacturing sector. And if the person is pessimistic in nature, he/she can be given proper training by means of workshops and other training activities. The person who has positive thinking is said to be optimistic in nature, and they will never put themselves down, which tells they will not have depression and hence their stress will be easily controlled. So we should come up with some training methods and make the employees to think in an optimistic way, so that the employee will be benefited by handling his stress and leading a colourful life, and also the organization will be benefited by increasing its production level

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