

Research Article

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The role of emotional intelligence in stress management among food delivery executives

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Abstract

Keywords

Stress,
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Technology and fast-paced life has made us adopt an online life, and has made the world a global village. We tend to order a lot of commodities online, of which food remains the most ordered one. Convenience and fast delivery are the most common reasons consumers order food online. but this convenience comes as a cost, we often neglect the stress undergone by the food delivery employees while delivering our food on time. This paper aims to identify the relationship between emotional intelligence and stress management. This study reported a survey of 69 food delivery executives. To go about this research, the random sampling method was used. For analysis of the collected data, metrics like correlation and simple regression were used. Emotional intelligence has an impact on the stress management levels of food delivery executives.

1.0 Introduction

The covid-19 pandemic disrupted all walks of life including that of the lives of frontline workers such as food delivery executives among others. While most of us had the liberty to sit in our homes' comforts and safety net, frontline workers faced considerable stress during the pandemic. Food delivery executives.

Online food delivery makes it easier for people to place orders and have their favorite foods

delivered to their door. It entails using the website or app to browse, choosing from a large range of accessible cuisines, and paying using a number of various methods. The user is informed by the website/application of the anticipated time for food preparation and delivery. These characteristics, together with delivery characteristics like simplicity, speed, and accuracy, are driving up demand for these services in India. Because of the increased availability of high-speed internet services and

rising smartphone sales, the market is currently expanding. This is accelerating the expansion of the online meal delivery business in India along with the expanding working population and rising income levels. Although the majority of the participants are centered in the country's urban areas, with Bangalore, Delhi, and Mumbai serving as the three largest markets, vendors are now focusing on smaller cities since they have a promising future for growth. The demand for online food delivery services in the nation is also increasing due to the rising trend of on-the-go food items and speedy home delivery models that offer convenience, ready-to-eat (RTE), and less expensive meal delivery options. In addition, some of the major businesses, like Zomato, McDonald's Corporation, and Domino's Pizza Inc. have created contactless delivery services in response to the mounting COVID-19 incidents. These services make sure that the food is delivered safely with sufficient social distance and that it does not come into contact with bare hands before reaching the customer.

In the Indian context, the leading food delivery services include Zomato, Swiggy, Amazon Food, FoodPanda, Fasso's, Bundl Technologies, etc. With Indians' changing eating and lifestyle habits, the online meal delivery sector in India is expanding. The market is expanding as a result of more people having access to high-speed internet services and rising smartphone sales. This is driving the expansion of the online meal delivery business in India, especially in metropolitan regions, along with busy work schedules and an increase in people's discretionary cash.

Due to the huge reduction in operational costs, restaurants and cafes also find it economical to offer their meals online.

The demand for online food delivery services is also expanding due to the rising trend of on-the-go food items and speedy home delivery models that provide convenience, ready-to-eat options, and less expensive meal delivery services.

The contactless food delivery services ensure that the food is delivered safely with sufficient social

distance and that it does not come into contact with bare hands before reaching the customer. Instead, many individuals now prefer to order food from their favorite restaurants instead of going out to eat, which has shown to be advantageous for the industry. According to a report by IMARC group, the size of the online meal delivery business in India was anticipated to be around \$300 million or 2,100 crores INR, however, earnings are expected to increase by double digits in FY 2020 and FY 2021 (estimated). Currently, Swiggy and Zomato own about 90% of the market share for meal delivery services. They recorded orders in the range of 1.8 to 2 million per day in January 2021. Following the epidemic, the market expanded and recovered to roughly 75%. However, the expansion is also based on a significant 40% increase in the pricing and order value.

According to Salovey and Sluyter (1997), emotional intelligence allows a person to comprehend his feelings and emotions resulting in directing his actions. Understanding the idea of emotional intelligence and ways to deal with psychological stress is crucial because both have a significant impact on an individual's success, growth, and development.

The level of stress that delivery executives experience at work has a significant impact on their well-being and health. Emotional intelligence (EI) is one of the most important strategies someone could use to deal with the many pressures in their life (Lambert et al., 2007). Using appropriate methods of association and connection with the four emotional intelligence domains of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management, Goleman (2002) defined emotional intelligence as the capacity to recognize and control our emotions as well as those we deal with. We should be more mindful of our own and others' emotions when dealing with extremely difficult circumstances (Jonas, 2013). EI is seen as a distinctive and useful construct in nature (Tamta & Rao, 2017).

The study's discussion of the theoretical underpinnings for conceiving the research variables came after its introduction. The research hypotheses were then constructed in accordance with the thorough literature that is offered on the connection between EI and workplace stress. The discussion of study measurements, population, sample, procedures, and statistical techniques utilized for data analysis is followed in the methodology section.

Analyses of the respondent profile's demographics, the effectiveness of the measures, descriptive analysis, and hypothesis testing were all presented in the findings section. The discussion of the research's conclusions and its consequences came next. The final paragraph covered the research's limitations and offered suggestions for further study.

2.0 Review of Literature

Emotional Intelligence

A study conducted by (Jaemin Cha et.al., 2009) found that in service industries, such as vending and coffee service businesses, effectively using emotional intelligence is considered an indicator of personal and organizational success. NAMA industry executives who effectively use EI are capable of assessing how staff members feel and effectively utilize EI to influence the emotions of staff members in service of organizational goals

It was found that Emotional intelligence will correlate negatively with stress and anxiety, and Emotional intelligence will be predicted through levels of Stress and Anxiety in a study conducted by (Kumar Sunil, Rooprai K Y, 2009). The findings of the study indicate that low and high levels of Emotional Intelligence establish a relationship to some extent with stress and anxiety.

Emotional intelligence was shown to moderate the relationship between job stress and job performance. Stress doesn't directly result from the source of the pressure itself, but rather, from

the individual's perception of that pressure as per a study carried out by (Yu-Chi Wu, 2011). Highly emotionally intelligent employees are more likely than employees with low emotional intelligence to reduce or transform the potential negative effects of job stress on job performance, or at least moderate them to an acceptable degree.

(Nyerere K. Joseph et.al., 2015) found that a wide range of interrelated findings connects to the role of emotional intelligence in service delivery. Skills such as communication, teamwork, organization, flexibility, curiosity, and adaptability are important elements of emotional intelligence and are crucial in-service delivery.

Food delivery executives face stress irrespective of the time of work as understood from the study carried out by (K. Meenatchi Somasundari, 2019). The stress-managing (coping) mechanisms are positive (54%) and negative (46%) managing mechanisms.

(Smith Farley Roland et.al, 2020) found that Bank service delivery is strongly tied to employees' emotional intelligence. For banks to remain competitive and remain in business, it is expedient to appreciate the place of emotionally intelligent employees who will deliver services to customers.

EI is positively related to hospitality workers' job performance, the relationship between EI and hospitality workers' job performance is stronger when the percentage of married subjects is low and in feminine cultures; and this relationship does not differ between male-dominated and female-dominated studies, across educational levels, between collectivistic and individualistic cultures, between low and high-power distance cultures, and between low and high uncertainty avoidance cultures, according to the study conducted by (Miao et.al., 2021)

(Jency Baby et. al., 2021) found that with the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, most of the population moved to online modes of food delivery. The reasons behind their contactless delivery include trustworthy electronic payments,

more disposable income, a good range of efficient suppliers, expansion of the internet, and the like.

Stress

According to (Martin S Hagger et. al.) It is quite likely that stress reappraisal and attitude therapies will help with stress management during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is plausible to extrapolate prior findings to other stressful settings, according to research showing that such interventions are highly translatable and have consistent short-to-medium-term impacts on stress in ecologically realistic contexts.

A study by (DeeptiBarghavaet.al., 2018) showed that students are more likely to experience stress and symptoms, which include appetite, depression, and headaches. Relationship, financial, and psychological stress are known to be the key drivers of stress among young people across all determinants. Their next source of stress is work-related. They worry about finding employment and surviving in a cutthroat environment. Young responders were able to name a few methods for reducing stress, including meditation, getting enough sleep, hanging out with friends, and counseling.

As per a study conducted by Deborah Edwards and Philip Burnard, the sources of stress for clinical psychologists included client characteristics, excessive workloads, professional self-doubt and poor management. Coping strategies included talking with colleagues, and other “active” approaches to personal stress management. Up to 40% of UK clinical psychologists participating in studies were found to be experiencing “caseness” levels of distress.

In a study regarding stress management techniques that was carried out by Lawrence Murphy,2009, it showed that Muscle relaxation, meditation, biofeedback, cognitive-behavioral skills, and combinations of these treatments were all employed in worksite research to manage stress. Muscle relaxation, cognitive-behavioral approaches, and combinations of two or more treatments were the most frequently employed

techniques. Somatic complaints, physiologic and psychological evaluations, and job-related metrics were used as outcome indicators to assess the effectiveness of stress therapies.

Tammi F Milliken, Paul T Clements, Harry J Tillman found that in order to prevent burnout and attrition, make the creation and improvement of comprehensive stress-management programming for employees a top priority, there are various stress management techniques, but occasionally the best and most successful ones start with straightforward acknowledgement, validation, and demonstrably sincere attempts on the part of the nursing executive.

Research Gap

The research gap discovered that many studies in this field did not focus on service delivery executives. There was no consensus on the impact of emotional intelligence on stress-coping mechanisms in food delivery executives. This study attempts to fill that void through a survey-based analysis of data collected from food delivery executives in Bangalore who work with food-delivery giants Zomato and Swiggy.

Research Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are framed as follows,

1. To study the emotional intelligence and stress levels of food delivery executives.
2. To study the influence of stress coping mechanisms on Online food delivery executives.
3. To study the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Stress Management
4. To assess the impact of emotional intelligence on the stress level of food delivery executives

3.0 Methodology

This research was carried out using surveys. The study used measuring tools that could measure the elements that were associated in order to quantitatively evaluate the hypothesis that there is a substantial association between emotional intelligence and stress management.

After receiving the response from food delivery executives, the data were analyzed using mean, correlation and simple regression tools.

3.1 Sample selection:

In Mega Cities like Bangalore, food delivery apps like Zomato and Swiggy are used by a majority of the population on a day-to-day basis. The usage of food delivery apps has increased recently, especially with the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic. It hampered the stress levels that these delivery persons go through. A convenient sampling method was for selecting the sample for this particular research aimed at understanding the impact of emotional intelligence on stress management. The research focused on employees living in Bangalore and other parts of the country.

Reliability Test

Table 1 - Cronbach’s Alpha value

Cronbach’s Alpha	N of items
0.716	10

The reliability test is conducted in order to determine the consistency of collected data. This test is conducted using SPSS. Based on the analysis, it is found that Cronbach’s Alpha value

is 0.716, which means there is consistency in the data that was collected and it can be used for further analysis.

4.0 Results and Discussion

Table 2 - Demographic profile of your respondents

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
15-20	2	2.9%
20-25	30	43.5%
25-30	23	33.3%
30 and above	14	20.3%
Living (Stays with)		
Alone	5	7.2%
With Family	59	85.5%
With friends	5	7.3%
Type of Residence		
Urban	42	60.9%
Semi Urban	25	36.2%
Rural	2	2.9%

The above chart gives us an overview of demographic factors like age, living with, and type of residence of the samples used for the research purpose. The maximum percentage, 43.5% of the overall sample is of the age group from 25 to 30 years. Most of the sample i.e 85.5% of them live with their family, and the least of them are living with their friends or are living alone. Most of them are from the urban area of the

city while very few are from rural i.e 2.9 %. The demographic factors mentioned above are showing that different workers are coming from different places and are working in delivery companies and are staying away from their families. Food delivery sector people coming from their hometowns to work for the company. They are trained to work as food delivery executives.

Give a write up based on the above table

Objective 1: To study the Emotional Intelligence and stress Level of food delivery executives

Table 3: Frequency and percentage of people on EI and Stress levels.

Particulars	High		Moderate		Low	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
EI	45	65.22	20	28.99	4	5.8
Stress Level	5	7.25	31	44.93	33	47.83

From this, it is concluded that food delivery executives in the taken demographics have a high Emotional Intelligence level, with around 65.22% having a High EI level. While only 5.8% of executives had low Emotional Intelligence. Regarding stress levels, it can be concluded that most of the food delivery executives are having low-stress levels, with around 47.83% having low-stress levels. while only 7.25 % of them were marked on higher stress levels. More percentage

of food delivery executives are having high EI whereas less percentage of food delivery executives are having high-stress levels. According to Nikoo Yamani (et.al.), Pearson correlation coefficients revealed an inverse significant relationship between total emotional intelligence score and stress level. In other words, as emotional intelligence improves, job stress decreases.

Objective 2: To identify the stress coping mechanisms among the Online food delivery executives.

Table 4: Frequency and percentage of different stress coping mechanisms practiced by food delivery executives.

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Take ample breaks in between deliveries	37	53.6%
Organise a schedule	20	29%
Wim Hoff breathing technique	1	1.5%
Indulge in unhealthy practices (stress eating, smoking, drinking etc)	11	15.9%

Source: Primary data

From this table it can be inferred that a high 53.6% percentage of food delivery executives take ample breaks in between deliveries to avoid significant burnout and manage their stress efficiently. 29% of executives follow an organised schedule, whereas 15.9% of people indulge in unhealthy practices like smoking, drinking and stress-eating in order to manage their stress and carry out their duties. More people are opting for taking breaks in between deliveries whenever possible as they feel it might as well

reduce their stress levels. some of them even organise their schedules for deliveries and feel less stressed. Less number of people, which is around 15.9% in the survey, admitted that they indulge in unhealthy practices to cope up with the stress that they are facing in their profession. Whereas only 1.5% of them practice WimHoff Breathing technique. This technique might be of less known technique to reduce stress. Taking breaks being the most common of all, is practiced by large percent of people.

Objective 3: To assess the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and stress management among online food delivery executives

		EI	Stress Management
EI	Pearson Correlation	1	0.581
	Sig. (2- Tailed)		0
	N	69	69

Source: Primary data

H1: There is a relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Stress Management

Correlation is used to assess the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Stress Management. The study shows that there is a positive correlation between EI and Stress Management. Since the Correlation is at the level 0.581, which is moderate as range of moderate is

in between 0.5 to 0.7 (According to Hinkle DE et.al.), it signifies a direct relationship. As EI is more, stress management levels are also seen to be high, that infers low stress levels which validates the outcome of first objective.

Objective 4: To assess the impact of emotional intelligence on the stress management of food delivery executives

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.581 ^a	.337	.327	.44198	.337	34.107	1	67	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), EI

ANOVA^a

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6.663	1	6.663	34.107	.000 ^b
	Residual	13.088	67	.195		
	Total	19.751	68			

a. Dependent Variable: Stress Management

b. Predictors: (Constant), EI

Coefficients^a

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	2.492	.254		9.795	.000
	EI	.492	.084	.581	5.840	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Stress

Source: Primary data

Linear regression analysis is used to predict the value of a variable based on the value of another variable. The variable you want to predict is called the dependent variable. The variable you are using to predict the other variable's value is called the independent variable. Here in the table R square value is 0.337 i.e. 33.7 %, which implies that there is 34% impact of emotional intelligence on stress management in online food delivery executives. The remaining 67% does not show the impact of emotional intelligence on stress management. There might be other impacting reasons on stress management. As sigma is .000, ANOVA model is fit. From the above table it is evident that EI significantly influences stress management as the p-value is less than 0.05. for each .492 unit increase in EI, the stress management increases by 1 unit. For food delivery executives, stress management is very vital as they deal with the end consumers in the majority of instances. This entire model shows the moderate impact of emotional intelligence and stress management levels in food delivery executives. There might be other moderating factors than emotional intelligence on stress management levels.

5.0 Findings

-) According to the research results, emotional intelligence of the majority of the sample was on the higher side. Since 65.22% of the sample have ranked themselves high on EI.
-) According to the study, 7.25% of the sample marked themselves high on stress levels, therefore, their stress management levels were high.
-) There is a positive relationship between EI and stress management levels. When emotional intelligence is high it is found that stress management levels are high. That shows that EI does have an impact on stress management.
-) There is a moderate relationship of emotional intelligence and stress management levels on online food delivery executives.

Managerial implications

We can suggest some managerial implications for food delivery sector companies based on the findings and conclusion of this research. Such businesses should hire the best food delivery executives.

They can take their Emotional Intelligence test and choose them based on the results. Executives with high emotional intelligence can effectively manage stress. Managers can organize training programmes for executives to help them improve their EI, which has a direct impact on stress management. With a high EI, the service quality could be improved.

-) Selecting the right food delivery executive
-) Managers can train executives to improvise their EI, as it directly impacts stress management. With high EI, the service quality rendered could also be improved
-) Training can be given on managing stress levels, Such as wimhoff breathing techniques etc.

6.0 Conclusion

The purpose of the current experiment was to determine how emotional intelligence functions in reducing stress and anxiety at work. The present study's hypotheses, that emotional intelligence would correlate negatively with stress and anxiety, and that emotional intelligence will be predicted through levels of stress and anxiety, are partially supported by the results. The results of the current study suggest that stress and anxiety are somewhat correlated with emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence will prove to be a useful tool in managing stress and anxiety at work, according to the negative link between emotional intelligence and stress and anxiety.

Employees who are emotionally intelligent are wonderful additions to their organizations because they exhibit traits that make them highly desirable, including flexibility, openness, adaptation, adjustment, perseverance, communication and teamwork abilities, and an open mentality to new ideas. Although it can be difficult to find workers with the necessary tacit knowledge, practical experience, and emotional intelligence, it is possible that training could improve the aforementioned necessary competencies. Since firms depend in some way

on international clients, whose requirements and wants to set the trend for the development of products and services, emotionally intelligent personnel assist organizations in understanding, adjusting to, and communicating with other stakeholders. Employees' success is directly impacted by their capacity to comprehend consumer wants. Therefore, in order to improve positive interactions with their stakeholders, firms need to be able to use emotionally intelligent employees.

Employee emotional intelligence aids in expediting effective communication, resulting in more efficient information exchanges. Emotional intelligence also improves interactions between coworkers, resulting in a solid team at work and peaceful internal and external relations. Finally, it can be claimed that if employees in firms demonstrate the five fundamental components of emotional intelligence, self-management, social awareness, social skills, self-awareness, and empathy, an organization will be better able to deliver services.

Limitations

-) Limited ability to gain access to the appropriate sample type
-) Absence of previous studies in the concerned domain.


Scope for future research

Increase the number of samples collected from across India for future research. The sample size for this study was 69 people, and it was limited to Bangalore and two food delivery service companies. In future projects, samples from various food delivery service companies can be used for surveys. Stress management levels in trained and untrained executives can be compared, and this study can aid in the development of stress management training and development sessions for food delivery executives.

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