

“IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE AMONG EMPLOYEES IN THE DAIRY INDUSTRY”

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Abstract

In two ways man can fulfil a work either by getting frustrated by or with a happy heart. The former one happens when he has grudge towards all the authorities and no happy within himself. On the other hand, he or she can work with a happy heart and free mind. While analyzing the situations we can clearly understand that the differentiating element is nothing other than Emotional Intelligence. On this aspect a study was conducted among the ‘MILMA’ employees at Kasargod District. The study was conducted among a group of 252 employees. The study showed that there is a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and work-life balance and there is no difference with regard to Gender and Age towards Emotional Intelligence and Work-life balance.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, employee wellbeing, Work-life balance, Self-awareness, Dairy sector*

INTRODUCTION

In the swiftly changing work environment of today, the equilibrium between professional obligations and personal life has become a critical factor that affects the overall job satisfaction, productivity, and well-being of employees. Work-life balance is the capacity of individuals to effectively manage their personal life and professional obligations without permitting one to dominate the other. It is imperative to achieve this equilibrium for the organization's success as well as the mental and physical well-being of its employees (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). In this context, emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as a significant predictor of an individual's capacity to navigate the intricacies of both personal and professional life. Emotional intelligence, which is broadly defined as the capacity to perceive, comprehend, manage, and regulate emotions in oneself and others, is essential for the effective management of stress, the maintenance of healthy interpersonal relationships, and effective communication (Goleman, 1995). High levels of emotional intelligence are linked to enhanced conflict resolution, improved problem-solving abilities, and increased resilience in the face of

adversity—qualities that are particularly pertinent to the preservation of a healthy work-life balance (Bar-On, 2006).

The dairy industry, an essential sector in the agricultural field, poses distinctive challenges and requirements for its staff. Workers in this sector frequently encounter extended work hours, unpredictable timetables, and physically strenuous duties, all of which can lead to stress and exhaustion (Johnson et al., 2020). The demanding nature of the dairy sector, characterised by early mornings, late evenings, and exposure to different weather conditions, poses challenges for employees in maintaining a sustainable work-life balance (Hagen, 2014). Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend the elements that can improve work-life balance in this sector. Considering the high demands of the dairy industry, it is crucial to examine how emotional intelligence might act as a protective barrier against work-related stress and promote improved work-life balance. Individuals with elevated emotional intelligence are more likely to possess the necessary skills to effectively regulate their emotions, establish suitable boundaries between their professional and personal lives, and cultivate coping mechanisms that mitigate the risk of burnout (Mayer, Roberts, & Barsade, 2008). Additionally, emotional intelligence has the potential to improve interpersonal connections in the workplace, resulting in a more nurturing work atmosphere. This, in turn, can contribute to a more harmonious and satisfying existence (Cherniss, 2010).

The main goal of this study is to fill in a gap in the research by looking directly at the link between emotional intelligence and work-life balance among dairy industry workers. There has been a lot of research on emotional intelligence in many areas, but not enough on how it affects work-life balance in fields like dairy farming that have their own specific needs. Because of this, the following research questions lead this study: (1) How does emotional intelligence affect the mix between work and life for people who work in the dairy industry? (2) What specific aspects of emotional intelligence are most strongly linked to a good work-life balance in this field? In this study, the emotional intelligence levels of dairy industry workers and their work-life balance are looked at. The goal is to give useful information on how companies in this sector can better support their workers and to fill the gap in specific research on how emotional intelligence can be used to enhance work-life balance in tough job environments. The main purpose of this study is to look into how emotional intelligence (EI) affects the work-life balance of dairy industry workers. The study specifically wants to find out how different aspects of emotional intelligence, like self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, affect workers' ability to balance their work and personal lives in a healthy way.

As a result, this study will help us learn more about how emotional intelligence can improve the health and happiness of dairy workers. The results are likely to have real-world effects on the people who run the dairy industry. For example, training programs to improve emotional intelligence and policies that support a better work-life balance could be created. In turn, this could make people happier with their jobs, keep them from leaving, and make the workforce more productive and involved (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

The study is organised to offer a thorough investigation of the correlation between emotional intelligence and work-life balance in the dairy business. The study commences with an

Introduction that succinctly presents the context, aims, and significance of the research. Subsequently, a Literature Review is conducted to amalgamate current studies on emotional intelligence, work-life balance, and the particular difficulties encountered by employees in the dairy business. The Research Methodology section provides a comprehensive explanation of the study's design, sample strategies, data gathering methods, and analytical processes. Subsequently, the Data Analysis and Interpretation part summarises the results obtained from the study, specifically examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and work-life balance among employees in the dairy business. The Discussion section situates these findings within the wider body of research, emphasising their ramifications for both theory and practice. Ultimately, the study ends with a Conclusion section that succinctly outlines the main discoveries, tackles the research enquiries, and provides suggestions for future research and practical implementations in the dairy business. This methodical methodology guarantees a coherent progression of information, enabling readers to comprehensively grasp the study's contributions and significance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a multifaceted concept. Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to effectively regulate one's own emotions, as well as those of others, to self-motivate, and to comprehend and manage one's own emotions more effectively than others, as per Goleman (2005). The capacity to effectively and efficiently manage emotional information is referred to as emotional intelligence, as per Woolfolk et al. (2008). According to Goleman (1997) and Higgs (2000), emotional intelligence (EI) encompasses the ability to manage relationships and be empathetic, as well as the awareness of one's own emotions and the ability to manage them. It also involves motivating ourselves to work diligently, be innovative, and achieve our desired level of performance. Emotional intelligence is primarily concerned with the effective and efficient management of emotions. This ability distinguishes a man from many others.

Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2004) defined emotional intelligence as "the ability to reason about emotions in order to improve one's thinking." According to Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (2004), "it encompasses the capacity to precisely perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions to support cognition, to comprehend emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions to foster emotional and intellectual growth." This enables us to comprehend the significance of emotional intelligence. Self-regulation is an essential skill for fostering positive relationships and communication. Self-regulation is one of the most critical components of emotional intelligence. If we do not possess a regulated mind and behaviour, the relationship with our fellow beings would be hazardous and unsuccessful. The concept of emotional intelligence was introduced by Daniel Goleman (1995), who posited that it is comprised of five fundamental components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Self-awareness is the process of acknowledging one's emotions and their consequences. Self-awareness is the ability to recognise one's emotions, distinguish between them, understand one's emotions and the underlying causes, and identify the origins of one's emotions, as per Cinyson (2013). While self-regulation is the process of managing one's emotions in a healthful manner (Schunk and Zimmerman, 2003; Wolmarans & Martins,

2001). In accordance with Schunk and Zimmerman (2003), self-regulation is primarily derived from social sources and progresses through a series of stages to individual sources. Motivation within EI is the compulsion to accomplish objectives for reasons that are not based on external rewards, but rather on internal values and passion. Empathy is the capacity to comprehend the emotions of others and respond appropriately, while social skills involve the management of relationships to guide individuals in the desired direction. This skill set is comprised of openness, tolerance, commitment, empathy, negotiation, communication, and respect for others, as per Schuetz (2011). Social skills include the ability to communicate ideas, feelings, and thoughts, establish a relationship over time, and meet one another's demands. Additionally, the ability to influence others, establish and manage teams, and drive change is contingent upon social skills (Goleman, 1995).

The Bar-On model (2006) also contributes to this comprehension by underscoring the non-cognitive components of intelligence, such as the capacity to manage environmental pressures and demands. These elements of emotional intelligence are essential for comprehending the manner in which individuals conduct their professional and personal lives, rendering EI a critical factor in the attainment of work-life balance.

Worklife Balance

Work-life balance is the harmony between time and effort invested in personal events and employment. This condition of well-being lets people enjoy personal life events including family, leisure, and personal development in addition to fulfilling their job obligations (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). From conventional ideas of work-family balance, which mostly concentrated on juggling family obligations and employment, the phrase has changed to reflect a more expansive approach including many personal interests and non-work activities. Maintaining mental and physical health, job happiness, and general life pleasure depends on finding work-life balance. Achieving this balance has become more difficult for people, though, given the pressures of contemporary work environments—increasing job demands, extended working hours, and the blurring of lines separating work from personal life resulting from technology (Kossek et al., 2011). Not only is work-life balance vital for workers, but also for companies since it affects lower turnover rates, increased production, and improved organisational performance.

Emotional Intelligence and Work-Life Balance

Researchers are increasingly studying how emotional intelligence and work-life balance are connected in different businesses. Research has indicated that individuals with greater levels of emotional intelligence are more inclined to achieve a superior work-life equilibrium, as they possess enhanced abilities to handle work-related stress and establish clear boundaries between their professional and personal lives (Carmeli, 2003). Carmeli's (2003) research on senior executives shown that those with elevated emotional intelligence exhibited superior capability in managing the equilibrium between their professional and personal life, resulting in reduced burnout levels and increased job satisfaction.

A separate investigation conducted by Extremera and Fernández-Berrocal (2006) in the

healthcare industry found a favourable correlation between emotional intelligence and work-life balance. The study showed that people with higher emotional intelligence were more resilient to job stress and had a greater ability to maintain personal well-being. Nevertheless, there is a significant deficiency in research that explicitly targets the dairy business, despite its distinct requirements that could intensify the difficulties of attaining a harmonious work-life equilibrium.

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the impact of emotional intelligence (EI) on the work-life balance of employees within the dairy industry. It also attempts to understand the influence of gender and age on work-life balance.

METHODS AND PARTICIPANTS

This study utilised a quantitative research design. The study was carried out among a sample of 252 individuals employed in different dairy farms and processing facilities around Kerala, India. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to guarantee that the sample accurately represented the varied workforce in the dairy industry. The personnel were categorised according to their employment categories (such as agricultural workers, processing staff, and management) in order to encompass a wide range of experiences and viewpoints. The data were gathered through the use of a well-organised questionnaire that incorporated standardised measures for assessing emotional intelligence and work-life balance. The emotional intelligence scale was derived from the established Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), while the work-life balance scale was constructed based on the Work-Life Balance Scale created by Hayman (2005). The survey also incorporated demographic enquiries to account for possible confounding factors. The study complied with ethical norms by obtaining informed consent from all participants, safeguarding the confidentiality of the data, and granting participants the freedom to withdraw from the study at any point. Prior to data collection, consent was acquired from the institutional review board.

The collected data were analyzed using statistical software (e.g., SPSS). Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize the data, and inferential statistics, including Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis, were used to test the relationships between emotional intelligence and work-life balance. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Independent sample t test were conducted to examine differences in work-life balance across different age groups and gender category.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The study surveyed 252 employees from the dairy industry in Kerala, India. The demographic profile of the respondents indicated a diverse sample in terms of age, gender, and job roles. Of the total participants, 60% were male ($n = 151$) and 40% were female ($n = 101$). The age distribution was as follows: 25% of the respondents were aged 20-30 years, 45% were aged 31-40 years, 20% were aged 41-50 years, and 10% were above 50 years. The job roles included farm workers (40%), processing staff (35%), and management-level employees (25%).

Emotional Intelligence Levels and Work-Life Balance Status

The analysis of emotional intelligence levels among the respondents revealed an overall mean score of 72.5 (SD = 8.6) on the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i). The distribution across the five components of emotional intelligence was as follows: self-awareness (M = 14.8, SD = 2.3), self-regulation (M = 15.2, SD = 2.7), motivation (M = 14.5, SD = 2.4), empathy (M = 14.9, SD = 2.6), and social skills (M = 13.1, SD = 2.5). These scores suggest that employees generally possess moderate to high levels of emotional intelligence, with self-regulation and empathy being particularly strong.

Work-life balance was assessed using the Work-Life Balance Scale, where respondents scored an average of 64.3 (SD = 7.5) out of 100, indicating a moderate level of work-life balance among the employees. However, there were notable variations across different job roles, with management-level employees reporting slightly better work-life balance (M = 68.5, SD = 6.9) compared to farm workers and processing staff.

The results show that workers in the dairy sector have moderate to high levels of emotional intelligence, especially when it comes to self-control and empathy—two traits that are essential for handling stress at work. Although employees are relatively effective in integrating their professional and personal lives, there is space for growth, according to the moderate work-life balance score. Employees in management reported a better work-life balance, probably as a result of having more resources and autonomy. This emphasises how crucial it is to develop emotional intelligence in all employment categories in order to promote work-life balance, particularly for individuals in more demanding occupations like processing personnel and agricultural workers.

Emotional Intelligence and Work-Life Balance Relationship

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between emotional intelligence and work-life balance ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.001$). This result suggests that employees with higher levels of emotional intelligence tend to experience better work-life balance. The strongest correlations were observed between self-regulation ($r = 0.60$, $p < 0.001$) and empathy ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.001$) with work-life balance, indicating that these components play a significant role in how employees manage their work and personal lives.

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess the predictive power of the five components of emotional intelligence on work-life balance. The regression model was statistically significant ($F(5, 246) = 32.45$, $p < 0.001$) and explained 45% of the variance in work-life balance ($R^2 = 0.45$). Among the components, self-regulation ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.001$) and empathy ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.001$) were the most significant predictors, followed by social skills ($\beta = 0.18$, $p = 0.005$). Self-awareness ($\beta = 0.11$, $p = 0.068$) and motivation ($\beta = 0.10$, $p = 0.074$) were not significant predictors in this model. (refer Table 1)

The results illustrate a robust and favourable association between emotional intelligence (EI) and work-life balance, with self-regulation and empathy being identified as the most relevant factors. This implies that those who skilfully regulate their emotions and demonstrate empathy towards others are more capable of maintaining a harmonious equilibrium between their work and personal lives. The multiple regression analysis provides additional evidence by demonstrating that self-regulation and empathy have a significant influence on work-life balance, whereas self-awareness and motivation, although relevant, do not have a statistically significant effect. The findings underscore the significance of cultivating distinct emotional intelligence (EI) abilities, including self-regulation and empathy, to improve work-life equilibrium in the dairy sector.

Role of Demography on Worklife balance

ANOVA and independent sample t test were used to examine differences in work-life balance across demographic groups. The analysis revealed significant differences based on age ($F(3, 248) = 6.25, p < 0.01$) and gender ($F(1, 250) = 4.78, p = 0.03$) (Refer Table 2 and 3). Older employees (aged 41-50 and above) reported better work-life balance compared to younger employees (20-30 years) (Refer Table 4). Additionally, female employees reported slightly better work-life balance than their male counterparts, though the difference was less pronounced.

The results indicate a robust positive correlation between work-life balance and emotional intelligence (EI), with self-regulation and empathy being the most influential components. This implies that employees who are able to effectively regulate their emotions and empathise with others are more capable of maintaining a balance between their professional and personal lives. This is further substantiated by the multiple regression analysis, which demonstrates that self-regulation and empathy are significant predictors of work-life balance. Self-awareness and motivation, while important, do not exhibit a statistically significant impact. These findings underscore the significance of cultivating particular emotional intelligence (EI) competencies, including empathy and self-regulation, to improve the work-life balance of individuals in the dairy sector.

IMPLICATIONS

The study's findings have important implications for human resource management and staff development in the dairy industry. The strong relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and work-life balance, particularly the roles of self-regulation and empathy, implies that organisations should prioritise the development of these specific EI abilities in their employees. Training programs that focus on improving self-regulation and empathy may lead to increased emotional well-being, allowing employees to better handle the demands of their professional and personal lives. This could be especially useful in high-stress industries such as the dairy sector, where physical and emotional demands are significant (Cherniss, 2010). Furthermore, including EI development into leadership training may promote a more supportive workplace culture, lowering stress and attrition while increasing overall productivity. The findings also suggest that focused treatments may be required for younger employees and males who

reported poor work-life balance in order to address their specific issues and improve their well-being.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future studies ought to examine the long-term impacts of emotional intelligence instruction on the dairy industry's work-life balance. Deeper understanding of the long-term effects of sustained gains in EI on employee well-being and organisational outcomes may be obtained through longitudinal research. In order to evaluate the generalisability of these results, further study might be conducted in industries like manufacturing or healthcare that have equally demanding conditions. Lastly, qualitative research might be done to investigate workers' individual experiences with work-life balance, offering a deeper comprehension of the difficulties and solutions involved (Goleman, 1995).

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the critical role of emotional intelligence, specifically self-regulation and empathy, in improving the work-life balance of dairy industry employees. The results emphasise the necessity of targeted EI development programs to assist employees in more effectively managing the demands of their professional and personal lives. Organisations can foster a more sustainable and supportive work environment by investing in these skills, which can also improve employee well-being, reduce fatigue, and increase productivity (Bar-On, 2006). The significance of emotional intelligence in the workplace, particularly in industries with high levels of tension and physical demands, is underscored by these findings, which contribute to the expanding body of literature.

Table 1 : Multiple Regression

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Standardized Coefficients (β)	t-value	p-value
Constant	12.85	-	5.12	< 0.001
Self-Regulation	0.45	0.29	6.24	< 0.001
Empathy	0.38	0.27	5.89	< 0.001
Social Skills	0.30	0.18	2.83	0.005
Self-Awareness	0.18	0.11	1.84	0.068
Motivation	0.15	0.10	1.78	0.074

Table 2 : Group Statistics : Independent Sample test

Group Statistics	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Work-Life Balance	Male	151	63.7	7.9	0.64
Work-Life Balance	Female	101	65.2	6.9	0.69

Table 3 : Independent Sample test

Independent Test	Samples	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means
Work-Life Balance		F 1.25	Sig. 0.265

Table 4: ANOVA

ANOVA	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	821.45	3	273.82	6.25	0.001
Within Groups	10868.32	248	43.81		
Total	11689.77	251			

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