



The Impact of Emotional Intelligence and Role of Buddha Philosophy for Stress Management in Private Sector Employees: A Case Study of Birgunj Metropolitan

Dipesh Kumar Karn

Assistant Professor, Madhesh University, Birgunj, Nepal

dipeshkarn86@gmail.com

Received: November 19, 2024

Revised & Accepted: December 27, 2024

Copyright: Author(s) (2024)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

Abstract

Background: Emotional intelligence (EI) is often an overlooked topic, particularly in individuals who have a stable financial position and multiple educational degrees but struggle with maintaining healthy relationships. This disconnect leads to heightened stress in personal, family, and social lives.

Objective: The objective of this research is to explore how emotional intelligence can aid individuals in understanding their own emotions, fostering empathy, and managing stress, particularly in the context of employees in the private sector of Birgunj metropolis.

Methods: The study investigated the levels of stress among private sector employees in Birgunj, focusing on factors such as remuneration, job insecurity, inflation, and post-job life pressures. The research utilized interviews and surveys to assess the emotional well-being and stress factors among these employees.

Findings: The research revealed that the most significant stressors were unfair remuneration, job insecurity, high inflation, and a lack of employee benefits. These factors contributed to heightened stress levels, with employees feeling undervalued and overwhelmed by external pressures.

Conclusion: Emotional intelligence, along with teachings from Buddhist philosophy, can help individuals manage emotions such as anger, happiness, sadness, and nervousness. Understanding and controlling emotions play a crucial role in improving relationships and reducing stress.

Novelty: The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the intersection of emotional intelligence and Buddhist philosophy as tools for stress management in the workplace, particularly in the private sector of Birgunj metropolis.



Keywords: Private job stress, Job insecurity and financial Scarcity, Emotions and IQ, Meditation, Buddha technique of stress management

Introduction

Human life is shaped by two fundamental aspects: emotion and intelligence. While individuals often focus on maximizing their intellectual potential, emotional intelligence is frequently neglected. Every person has two dimensions of competence—intellectual and emotional. Studies suggest that in practical life, intellectual achievements contribute only 20%, while emotional intelligence accounts for 80% of success. Unfortunately, in today's fast-paced and competitive world, most of our energy is directed toward intellectual development. As a result, despite achieving education, wealth, and success, many still face tension in relationships and a sense of unrest in their lives. Given its psychological nature, emotional intelligence is crucial for people across all professions, age groups, and especially for managers, administrators, parents, and students to understand and cultivate.

Employees working in the corporate world are often under stress. Getting a job in the corporate world is also quite difficult. That is why employees make themselves qualified to that level. Candidates from Management studies came trade, industry and other service sector to serve the company or organization. Birgunj metropolitan city known as the industrial gateway to Nepal. It is located in Parsa District of Madhesh Province in southern Nepal. It lies 135 km (84 mi) south of the capital Kathmandu, attached in the north to Raxaul on the border of the Indian state of Bihar. Birgunj was one of the first three municipalities formed during the rule of Prime Minister Mohan Shumsher Jang Bahadur Rana. It was declared a Metropolitan City on 22 May 2017 along with Biratnagar and Pokhara. Birgunj is one of the largest cities in Nepal and the largest in Madhesh Province. Birgunj is the fifth most populated metropolis of the nation. The ancient name of Birgunj was Gahawa but the 11th Rana Prime Minister of Nepal Bir Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana changed it to Birgunj in 1897. Before the establishment of Birgunj Bazar, the surrounding villages of Bagahi, Alau, Barewa, Kalaiya, Parsauni, Inaruwa, and Chhapkaiya existed. To establish Birgunj Bazar in a forest covered area, Bir Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana appointed his trusted duo Siddhvir Mathema and Dhadjavir Mathema (two brothers), respectively in Birgunj as the rulers of Mal Ada and Kath Mal Ada. Birgunj is located in the Terai plain which is the northern part of the Indo-Gangetic plain. Birgunj metropolitan city has an elongated shape. According to the 2021 Census, Birgunj had a population of 268,273. It is the second biggest city in Terai and the fifth biggest city in Nepal after Kathmandu, Pokhara, Bharatpur, and Lalitpur. It serves as the headquarters of the Parsa District(<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birgunj>) . Mainly businesses like import-export and industry are run in Birgunj. Birgunj is the only Metropolitan city in Madhesh Province. Big industries are located in Bara district near Birgunj. The people of this denser populated city are mostly employed in private companies. The private companies here take the educational qualification and competence of their employees very seriously. Despite all this, the basic salary of every person has been seen very low. They have to prove them everyday with financial



insufficiency in their family life. The work load, high competition in employment and less remuneration bring them in stress. Such stress become the major factor of multiple stress related diseases and dissatisfied family life.

According to Buddhism the human life is full of sufferings. Stress is the state of either body or spirit or both facing depression caused by various problems like finance, relationship, sadness, disappointment, health problem, economic problem, societal problem etc. The depression bring us in to anger, nervousness, moodiness. When the people are in anger they normally take wrong decision. Buddhism believes that the root of all anger and frustration is a person's expectations. Being positive and staying in sustainable mind with the help of medication can help people live happy in available resources.

Objectives

The main objective of this research is to clarify the concept of Emotional intelligence, stress management and the components of buddhism for stress management in private sector employees in Birgunj metropolis. Emotional intelligence is an important psychological topic discussed in Management related research and studies but less noticed. The executives in company live in hyper organizational pressure which cause stress and due to lack of emotional management such successful managers are helpless to live in unhappy and dissatisfied personal as well as family life. The researcher is trying to clarify the meaning of success and importance of emotions in an corporate employees. Even if it is for the employees working in the company, but wherever emotions are involved, Buddha's principles of peaceful life and stress management are discussed.

Materials and Methodology

This research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative techniques such as interviews and surveys with various secondary data sources. The major secondary sources include documents, field visits, expert opinions, published papers, and books. To gather primary data, the researcher conducted interviews with 156 private sector employees to explore their perspectives on emotional management and the level of stress in their work lives. Additionally, 21 private firm/company owners were interviewed to understand their methods of personnel management and validate the employees' perspectives. Key concepts in the study are derived from Daniel Goleman's book *Emotional Intelligence*, while Buddhist philosophy is incorporated through insights from various Buddha-related documentaries, journals, and other sources.

Result and Suggestions

Theoretical conceptualisation of Intelligence quotient and Emotional quotient

Intelligence quotient is the measurement of person's cognitive capacity relative to his/her peer groups. It is measured in numbers and calculated on the basis of Stanford binet scale. Whereas the measurement of emotions in human being is considered by emotional quotient. There are widespread exceptions to the myth that IQ predicts success many (or more) exceptions than cases that fit the rule. At best, IQ contributes about 20 percent to the factors



that determine life success, which leaves 80 percent to other forces. As one observer notes, “The vast majority of one’s ultimate niche in society is determined by non-IQ factors, ranging from social class to luck.”(Goleman,D.(2006). Emotional Intelligence, Bantam Dell 10th edition). IQ consists of logic, memory, language, hyperactivity, concentration, comprehension etc. EQ consists of Intuition, empathy, arts/music, creativity, awareness, motivation etc. Generally IQ is given more importance in our society. Even educational qualifications are also valued on the basis of it’s social recognition. Example, a doctor having masters degree in medical science is more valued than anyother stream post graduate professional because it is considered as doctors have more sharp brain than other stream post graduate. Researches say that the people having appropriate balance on IQ and EQ can easily achieve success in their life. Success means the achievement which provide them optimum satisfaction and not becoming the reason of anyone’s difficulties. Education, Work experiences, seminars can increase someone’s intelligence but that can not be the base for a happy and satisfied individual as well as family and social life. A person who can channelise his/her emotions and can infuse emotions with values can have a level of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence also means understanding how we behave with our family, friends, employees and seniors a work, so that we can maintain a good relationship.

Way to develop and maintain emotional intelligence

A research inspired by the published book Emotional Intelligence of Daniel Goleman says that there are some certain ways to develop and maintain emotional intelligence. They are:

- i. Practicing self awareness where regular excise and meditation are also included. Self awareness also teaches that a person should take out some time for himself everyday. Discipline in lifestyle must be considered.
- ii. Channelising emotions to beneficial way is the second way to maintain emotional intelligence. A person need to overcome from the good or bad feelings.
- iii. Motivating yourself by ignoring negative thoughts while on work comes under third step of maintaining emotional intelligence. We know ourself better than others that is why we are our best motivator. We need to keep ourself busy in productive works it can provide further motivation.
- iv. Listening others help developing empathy. When we start understanding other’s emotion then we start building good public relations.

Both the public and academia remained mostly unaware of emotional intelligence until 1995, when Daniel Goleman popularised the construct in his trade book, Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ. Emotional intelligence quickly captured the interest of the media, general public and researchers (Salovey, Brackett & Mayer, 2004).

Impact of Emotional Intelligence for stress management in private sector employees in Birgunj Metropolis

After conducting interview after field visit it is found that the private sector employees in Birgunj metropolis are commonly working in mederate turnover companies. Such company or



firm have limited access in market . Due less turnover and openborder challenges the financial facility to the employees are less considered.

Table 1

S.N.	Job Area	Working percentage
1.	Industry	18
2.	Trading Company	30
3.	Transport Company	15
4.	School/ Colleges	17
5.	Restaurant/Café/Hotels	20

As it shown in Table 1 the interogation with respondents 18% of private employees are working in various nature industries in Birgunj and nearby Birgunj city, 30% are working in small-moderate-large nature trading based firm/companies.15% private job holders are employed in transport company, 17% are working in boarding schools and colleges,20% are working in Restaurants/café/Hotels on various positions. Generally the employees are paid very minimum salary in comparison to Kathmandu and other developed cities of Nepal. Some of the university graduates and post graduate employees are working on 25000 Nrs.per month since 5 years without any social security fund or gratuity and any other medical and leave facility. No public holidays are allowed to them. Most of the trading company employees shared that they have to come office on Dipawali(a hindu festival). Nepal Labor Act,2075 and the guidelines of International Labor Organization for employees welfare are less seen on ground level. Employees are paid aggregate of 12 month salary annually . No bonus, incentives and dearness allowances are provided in such private sector employees. Despite this inflation remains the same as in Birgunj. Those low earnig private sector employees have to bear all the necessary expenses of medical, education, household expenses with same financial resource. Such status bring depression and depression drive stress in them. Despite all this COVID-19 took aways jobs of many. Most of the respondents are paying EMIs of bank in the form of various loans like home loan, personal loan etc. Such stress is disturbing their mentle peace and healthy family as well as social relations. When stress arises it overlap emotions and decision making ability. In a survey conducted at an international hotel chain, it was found that interactions with superiors led to most feelings of frustration, disappointment, anger, sadness, disgust or stress.The art of emotional leadership includes the completion of real work demands without unduly upsetting others (Goleman et al.,2002). One of the oldest laws in psychology holds that, beyond a moderate level, increases in anxiety and worry erode mental abilities. Distress not only wears away at mental abilities butalso makes people less emotionally intelligent (Yang & Gu,2007). People who are upset thus have trouble reading emotions in others accurately, thereby decreasing their social skills. Another consideration is that, according to a new finding on job satisfaction, the emotions that people feel while they work reflect their quality of work – when people feel good, they work at their best with increased levels of mental efficiency and hence demonstrate a more positive outlook. In a sense, managers who spread bad moods are



no good for business, while managers who spread good moods enhance productivity and hence business success (Jamali, Sidani & Abu-Zaki, 2008; Mikolajczak, Menil & Luminet, 2007a). In the context of Birgunj emotionally weak private sector employees are weak in their relationship and social life also. Due to hectic lifestyle they are unable to spare time for their child, wife, husband and the relatives. They are missing their festivals also where family need them most. Those people started speaking angrily to the family members. It is found that due to excessive workload at job and fear of losing job, they have stopped giving time to themselves or even understanding themselves .

Role of Buddha philosophy in stress management

The peace philosophy of lord Gautam Buddha has always promoted non-violence and peace. Human beings do not want to experience stress and suffering, they want to have happiness, mental wellbeing and peace in their lives. They consider happiness as their utmost desirable goal. People want more treasure, esteem and reputation because they expect that those things can eventually give them happiness, but the real happiness depends on how they are satisfied with things they possessed. If they are not satisfied with what they possessed, those things cannot provide them any happiness (Dalai Lama, 2001). Breathing meditation is one of the most popular meditation in Buddha philosophy. This meditation is easy to practice where one's concentration is centralized to his/her breath in and out. This type of meditation provide physical and mental relaxation. Moreover, mindfulness can help employees to improve their ability and efficiency in the workplace, and provide useful tool for organization to increase performance through training programs (Kitbumrung and Sooraksa, 2018). People need to manage time effectively and face challenges peacefully instead of being worried about it. Employee need to discuss his/her problem either financial or any other directly to the management without worrying about job security. Employees will have to stop worrying about the future and learn to live in the present. Buddha always taught to live life above worldly desires. Buddha's philosophy teaches us to always speak the truth because the truth does not have to be remembered and lead one's life always stress free. One should learn to live within the existing resources, leaving behind excessive greed. To live a happy life one should learn to distinguish real problem and imagined problem. Success and happiness in life always belong to people who understand the ways to cope with stress, implement them appropriately, accept the reality, and view situations in a positive manner. Moreover, they must be able to calm their mind and make it stable when facing unexpected and unsatisfied situations. The aim of practicing meditation in Buddhism is to control and calm the mind, which everyone can reach the state of calmness and inner peace through tranquility meditation. In addition, everyone can purify the mind with wisdom through insight meditation, as this kind of meditation is the best method to create wisdom within (Channuwong , S. , Ruksat, S. and Ploychum, S.(2018).

Conclusion

This research primarily focused on qualitative methods, utilizing available data through multiple interviews, research papers, and media-published newspaper articles. In the context of Birgunj metropolis, private sector employees experience a restless lifestyle, marked by



minimal financial support and limited psychological relief, leading to high stress levels. The study suggests that emotional intelligence and Buddhist philosophy, particularly through meditation, offer valuable guidelines for developing empathy and understanding various aspects of human emotions. By learning to better understand themselves, employees can enhance their creativity, improve self-confidence, and ultimately achieve greater emotional well-being.

Acknowledgments

The author sincerely wants to thank all the other researchers whose research papers provide a huge range of guidelines. The author thanks to Prof.Dr.Anjay K.Mishra and Dr.Mayanath Ghimire for their valuable support and guidance in this research writing.

References

1. Karn, D.K.(2023). Stress Management and Emotional Intelligence, Arthik Abhiyan, Page 4. <https://abhiyandaily.com/epaperswipe/1230>
2. Channuwong , S. , Ruksat, S. and Ploychum, S.(2018). An Integration of Buddhist Teachings in Stress Management. *Journal of Community Development Research(Humanities and social sciences)* 2018; 11(4),148-158
3. Goleman,D.(2006). *Emotional Intelligence*, Bantam Dell 10th edition edition.
4. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birgunj> (2024)
5. Ramesar, S., Koortzen, P.,& Oosthuizen, R.M. (2009).The relationship between emotional intelligenceand stress management.SA *Journal of Industrial Psychology/ SA Tydskrif vir Bedryfsielkunde*, 35(1), Art. #443, 10 pages.
6. Salovey, P., Brackett, M.A., & Mayer, J.D. (2004). *Emotional intelligence: Key readings on the Mayer and Salovey model*. New York: Dude Publishing.
7. Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., & McKee, A. (2002). *The new leaders:Transforming the art of leadership into the science of results*. London: Time Warner Paperbacks.
8. Jamali, D., Sidani, Y., & Abu-Zaki, D. (2008). Emotional intelligence and manement development implications: Insights from the Lebanese context. *Journal of Management Development*, 27(3), 348-360.
9. Mikolajczak, M., Menil, C., & Luminet, O. (2007a). Explaining the protective effect of trait emotional intelligence regarding occupational stress: Exploration of emotional labour processes. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 41(5), 1107-1117.
10. Nyaupane, N. P., Thapa, B., & Neupane, D. K. (2024). Exploring the Knowledge and Practices of Buddhist Ethical Principles among High School Students. *NPRC Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 1(8), 119-132.
11. Thapa, B., Gurung, A. K., Neupane, D. K., Timalsena, C., Neupane, A., Nyaupane, N. P., & Chalise, B. N. (2024). Mindfulness at Work: A Bibliometric Analysis of Key Authors, Themes, and Trends. *NPRC Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 1(5), 15-29.



12. Yang, H., & Gu, J. (2007). Research on the emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and achievement motivation of business managers. *Psychological Science*, 30(3), 719-722.
13. Dalai Lama, H. H. (2001). *An Open Heart: Practicing Compassion in Everyday Life*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.
14. Kitbumrung, M., & Sooraksa, N. (2018). The Development and Validation of Mindfulness Measurement among Thai Buddhist Employees. *Journal of Community Development Research (Humanities and Social Sciences)*, 11(1), 1-13.