

Openness to experiences/ Curiosity helps people handle stress better? An empirical study among emergency services workers in Gujarat

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ABSTRACT--Emergency workers have to be available 24 x 7 to provide help to victims in crisis. They work round the **clock** in order to provide the best possible help to victims in all possible and traumatic situations. Being on call 24x7 these workers hardly have any 'me' time let alone any social or family time. This paper aims to explore the relationship between 'Openness to experience' factor of the 'Big Five' personality model and stress that the women at emergency services undergo at Women Helpline (WHL) across Gujarat. Data was collected using the Organizational Role Stress (ORS) Scale by Pareek (1983) and Big Five Questionnaire was administered to check the personality type of the employees. Big five comprises of five factors but for the purpose of this study only 'Sociability' (Extraversion) and its effect on stress levels was used. To analyze the results Chi-Square was run. Results revealed that openness to experience is associated with four out of ten role stress factors.

Keywords-- Women Helpline; Occupational Stress; Personality; Sociability; Job Performance; openness to experience

I. INTRODUCTION

Violence and abuse could happen to anyone anytime. It is not limited by age, sex, caste color creed or nationality. It happens across the world and at any hour of the day. Irrespective of the economic background you belong to, it could happen from the richest to the poorest for reasons galore. Abuse happens in same sex relationships as well as heterosexual relationships. Though there are more cases of women being victimized but nonetheless men too suffer from emotional and verbal abuse. Abuse always works on a continuum.... Starting from verbal assault, intimidating threats to physical violence.. People suffering from such scars are a problem for the family as well as the society. Not only they themselves suffer but along with them the other members of the family too face grave challenges. Though physical assault poses the most threat, but the psychological and emotional consequence of violence are also very grave and if not addressed in time it could damage the psyche of an individual permanently, recovering from which would be a herculean task.

The perpetrators of violence mostly have a sense of entitlement and justification of their deeds and the victims take it as their destiny. Mostly they are too shy of reporting because of social stigma and fear and continue to bear the brunt silently. People do not wish to seek help for multiple reasons. But over the years there has been a lot of effort on the part of the Government and some social organizations working for the welfare of the victims. They

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have made a lot of effort to create awareness among the victims to seek help. Several Non-governmental organizations too are working towards the welfare of the sufferers and providing support. One of the organizations providing help to victims of any kind of abuse is GVK EMRI that was set up in association with Government of Gujarat and Government of Uttar Pradesh to operate 181 Women Helpline Services. This 24*7 helpline known as Abhayam in the state of Gujarat is supported by rescue vans with counselors and lady constable. Till date it has responded to 1.75 lakh calls out of which more than 1.0 lakh beneficiaries have received counseling.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHEME AND THE TARGET GROUP

- To provide toll-free 24-hours telecom service to women affected by violence seeking support and information.
- To facilitate crisis and non-crisis intervention through referral to the appropriate agencies such as police/Hospitals/Ambulance services/District Legal Service Authority (DLSA)/Protection Officer (PO)/OSC.
- To provide information about the appropriate support services, government schemes and programs available to the woman affected by violence, in her particular situation within the local area in which she resides or is employed.

Information about women related programs or schemes

III. OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

1. To assess the stress levels of working women in the 181 helpline emergency toll free number national service.
2. To study the association between the personality (incentive and curious people) and stress levels of the employees.

For the purpose of this study out of the five factors only “Openness to experience- Inventive, Curiosity” as a personality dimension was taken. It is also described as the extent to which a person is imaginative or independent and depicts a personal preference for a variety of activities over a strict routine. High openness can be perceived as unpredictability or lack of focus, and more likely to engage in risky behavior or drug taking. Moreover, individuals with high openness are said to pursue self-actualization specifically by seeking out intense, euphoric experiences. Conversely, those with low openness seeks to gain fulfillment through perseverance and are characterized as pragmatic and data-driven sometimes even perceived to be dogmatic and closed-minded

People who are high in this trait also tend to have a broad range of interests. They are curious about the world and other people and eager to learn new things and enjoy new experiences. People who are high in this trait tend to be more adventurous and creative. These people generally have greater appreciation for art, emotion, imagination and variety of experiences. They tend to believe that they are good with ideas, can understand and handle situations better and are more aware of their feelings. Keeping this in mind for the purpose of this paper only curiosity/ openness to experience as a personality dimension was considered for discussion for this paper

IV. METHODOLOGY

The quantitative data was collected by using the **Organizational Role Stress (ORS) Scale** by Pareek (1983). And personality was measured using Big 5 scale.

Stress is built up in the concept of role. Whenever there is conflict between the self and the roles that the person occupies, there is a potential for role stress. A role stress has been defined as ‘anything about an organizational role that produces adverse consequences for the individual’ (Kahn & Quinn, 1970:41). The concept of role and its two related aspects, role space and role set, have a built-in potential for conflict and stress. Therefore, role is an obligational concept in which there are expectation from both the sender’s side and occupant’s side.

The ORS was used to measure 10 role dimensions, i.e.,

1. Inter Role Distance (IRD)
2. Role Stagnation (RS)
3. Role Expectation Conflict (REC)
4. Role Erosion (RE)
5. Role Overload (RO)
6. Role Isolation (RI)
7. Personal Inadequacy (PI)
8. Self-Role Distance (SRD)
9. Role Ambiguity(RA)
10. Resource Inadequacy (RIn)

1. **Inter Role Distance:** When an individual occupies more than one role there are bound to be conflicts between them. And with individuals occupying multiple roles in various groups etc. inter role conflicts are quite common.

2. **Role Stagnation:** When an individual has held on to a role for quite a considerable amount of time, is very comfortably settled, and after that he is asked to take on to a new role he/she may experience this stress of role stagnation when they are promoted.

3. **Role Expectation Conflict:** When there are conflicting expectations from different people e.g. Boss, subordinates, peers etc., and then the role occupant may experience this type of stress.

4. **Role Erosion:** When an organization redefines and creates certain new roles and individual is supposed to adjust to it then he/she may have a feeling of his old role being eroded.

5. **Role Overload:** Too much of expectations from an individual by significant others in the role set leads to role overload. It is more likely to occur where role occupants lack power and there are large variations in the expected output and when delegation or assistance cannot procure more time.

6. **Role Isolation:** An individual may feel that certain roles are psychologically closer to him while others are at much distance (The criterion for which is the frequency and ease of interaction. It is basically a gap between existing and desired linkages.

7. **Personal Inadequacy:** In case a person is not competent in terms of skills required for a particular job or has had no time or training to prepare for the desired role he may experience stress and thus feel inadequate or incompetent for the job

8. **Self-Role Distance:** When the expectations from the role and self-concept do not match then stress arises. e.g. An introvert given the job of a salesman

9. **Role Ambiguity:** Role ambiguity is usually experienced when the roles may be newly created and are not well defined. The individual is not clear about the various expectation people have from his role. It may be due to lack of information available or lack of available cues.

10. **Resource Inadequacy:** When resources such as information, people, material, finance or facilities are not available to a role occupant resource inadequacy is experienced.

ORS is a 5 point Likert scale (0 to 4), containing five items for each role stress dimensions. Thus, the scale contains 50 items under these 10 dimensions.

The **Big Five Locator Questionnaire** was also used to check the personality type of the employees and interpret if the individual stress dimension was dependent or independent to the individual personality type. The test measured five factors namely,

1. Adjustment (A)
2. Sociability (S)
3. Openness to Experience (O)
4. Agreeableness (Ag)
5. Conscientiousness (C)

1. **Adjustment** (*sensitive/nervous* vs. *secure/confident*). The tendency to experience unpleasant emotions easily, such as anger, anxiety, depression, and vulnerability. Adjustment also refers to the degree of emotional stability and impulse control and is sometimes referred to by its low pole, "emotional stability".

2. **Sociability** (*outgoing/energetic* vs. *solitary/reserved*). Energy, positive emotions, surgency, assertiveness, sociability and the tendency to seek stimulation in the company of others, and talkativeness.

3. **Agreeableness** (*friendly/compassionate* vs. *challenging/detached*). A tendency to be compassionate and cooperative rather than suspicious and antagonistic towards others. It is also a measure of one's trusting and helpful nature, and whether a person is generally well-tempered or not.

4. **Conscientiousness** (*efficient/organized* vs. *easy-going/careless*). A tendency to be organized and dependable, show self-discipline, act dutifully, aim for achievement, and prefer planned rather than spontaneous behavior.

5. **Openness to experience** (*inventive/curious* vs. *consistent/cautious*). Appreciation for art, emotion, adventure, unusual ideas, curiosity, and variety of experience. Openness reflects the degree of intellectual curiosity, creativity and a preference for novelty and variety a person has.

V. SAMPLE

In this study, sample of 150 women working at 181 Women Helpline Center was taken. Data from 33 places at state, division, and district level namely Surat, Bharuch, Dahod, Vadodara, Valsad, Bhavnagar, Rajkot,

Jamnagar, Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar etc was collected. The target respondents were the women employees of 181 Women Helpline center of two categories, Call Receivers and Outreach Counsellors.

VI. TESTS APPLIED

To analyze the quantitative data, statistical techniques of mean, ANOVA and chi-square were employed. ANOVA was applied to check if there is any significant difference between the stress caused and the age of the individual. ANOVA was also applied on the stress factors and the personality types. Furthermore, chi-square tests were applied to check the dependence of individual stress dimension with individual personality type.

VII. DATA ANALYSIS

The quantitative data analysis was done using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

H1: There is significant difference between the age group and Openness to experience.

Ho: There is no significant difference between the age group and Openness to experience.

ANOVA

Openness

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	917.53	12	76.46	.96	.48
Within Groups	9072.76	115	78.89		
Total	9990.30	127			

Interpretation: here significant value is 0.48 which is greater than 0.05. So null hypothesis is accepted which says there is no significant difference between age group and Openness to experience.

Inter Role Distance and Openness to Experience

H2: Inter Role Distance and Openness to Experience factors are dependent of each other.

Ho: Inter Role Distance and Openness to Experience factors are independent of each other.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	396.11 ^a	252	.00
Likelihood Ratio	233.00	252	.79
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.32	1	.25
N of Valid Cases	129		

a. 285 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

Interpretation: here significant value is 0.00 which is smaller than 0.05. So null hypothesis is rejected and alternate is accepted. This means that Inter Role Distance and Openness to Experience factors are dependent of each other

Role Stagnation and Openness to Experience

H3: Role Stagnation and Openness to Experience factors are dependent of each other.

Ho: Role Stagnation and Openness to Experience factors are independent of each other.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	282.59 ^a	238	.02
Likelihood Ratio	203.54	238	.94
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.10	1	.29
N of Valid Cases	129		

a. 270 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

Interpretation: here significant value is 0.02 which is smaller than 0.05. So null hypothesis is rejected and alternate is accepted. This means that Role Stagnation and Openness to Experience factors are dependent of each other

Role Expectation Conflict and Openness to Experience

H4: Role Expectation Conflict and Openness to Experience factors are dependent of each other.

Ho: Role Expectation Conflict and Openness to Experience factors are independent of each other.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	360.97 ^a	210	.00
Likelihood Ratio	172.50	210	.97
Linear-by-Linear Association	.28	1	.59
N of Valid Cases	129		

a. 240 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

Interpretation: here significant value is 0.000 which is smaller than 0.05. So null hypothesis is rejected and alternate is accepted. This means that Role Expectation Conflict and Openness to Experience factors are dependent of each other

Role Erosion and Openness to Experience

H5: Role Erosion and Openness to Experience factors are dependent of each other.

Ho: Role Erosion and Openness to Experience factors are independent of each other.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	259.65 ^a	224	.05
Likelihood Ratio	187.42	224	.96
Linear-by-Linear Association	.39	1	.52

N of Valid Cases	129		
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a. 255 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

Interpretation: here significant value is 0.05 which is greater than 0.05. So null hypothesis is accepted. This means that Role Erosion and Openness to Experience factors are independent of each other

Role Overload and Openness to Experience

H6: Role Overload and Openness to Experience factors are dependent of each other.

Ho: Role Overload and Openness to Experience factors are independent of each other.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	304.60 ^a	238	.00
Likelihood Ratio	175.54	238	.99
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.18	1	.07
N of Valid Cases	129		

a. 270 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

Interpretation: here significant value is 0.00 which is smaller than 0.05. So null hypothesis is rejected and alternate is accepted. This means that Role Overload and Openness to Experience factors are dependent of each other

Role Isolation and Openness to Experience

H7: Role Isolation and Openness to Experience factors are dependent of each other.

Ho: Role Isolation and Openness to Experience factors are independent of each other.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	230.61 ^a	224	.36

Likelihood Ratio	184.29	224	.97
Linear-by-Linear Association	.86	1	.35
N of Valid Cases	129		

a. 255 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

Interpretation: here significant value is 0.36 which is greater than 0.05. So null hypothesis is accepted. This means that Role Isolation and Openness to Experience factors are independent of each other

Planning Inadequacy and Openness to Experience

H8: Planning Inadequacy and Openness to Experience factors are dependent of each other.

Ho: Planning Inadequacy and Openness to Experience factors are independent of each other.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	272.74 ^a	210	.00
Likelihood Ratio	180.68	210	.92
Linear-by-Linear Association	.01	1	.89
N of Valid Cases	129		

a. 240 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .02.

Interpretation: here significant value is 0.00 which is smaller than 0.05. So null hypothesis is rejected and alternate is accepted. This means that Planning Inadequacy and Openness to Experience factors are dependent of each other

Self-Role Distance and Openness to Experience

H9: Self Role Distance and Openness to Experience factors are dependent of each other.

Ho: Self Role Distance and Openness to Experience factors are independent of each other.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	228.42 ^a	210	.18
Likelihood Ratio	161.35	210	.99
Linear-by-Linear Association	.00	1	.97
N of Valid Cases	129		

a. 240 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

Interpretation: here significant value is 0.18 which is greater than 0.05. So null hypothesis is accepted. This means that Self Role Distance and Openness to Experience factors are independent of each other.

Role Ambiguity and Openness to Experience

H10: Role Ambiguity and Openness to Experience factors are dependent of each other.

Ho: Role Ambiguity and Openness to Experience factors are independent of each other.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	208.62 ^a	196	.25
Likelihood Ratio	175.21	196	.85
Linear-by-Linear Association	.00	1	.99
N of Valid Cases	129		

a. 225 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

Interpretation: here significant value is 0.25 which is greater than 0.05. So null hypothesis is accepted. This means that Role Ambiguity and Openness to Experience factors are independent of each other.

Role Inadequacy and Openness to Experience

H64: Role Inadequacy and Openness to Experience factors are dependent of each other.

Ho: Role Inadequacy and Openness to Experience factors are independent of each other.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	272.39 ^a	238	.06
Likelihood Ratio	180.24	238	.99
Linear-by-Linear Association	.47	1	.49
N of Valid Cases	129		

a. 270 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

Interpretation: here significant value is 0.06 which is greater than 0.05. So null hypothesis is accepted. This means that Role Inadequacy and Openness to Experience factors are independent of each other

VIII. CONCLUSION

More often than not people working in emergency services would be stressed it is assumed because of the demands of the job. But people come from varying backgrounds with multiple dimensions to their personalities. Though the job demands are very critical still these people fight all odds to try and manage the situations to their best. Emergency workers are constantly working with victims and handling cases of physical, mental, sexual and emotional abuse. These workers are 24 x 7 dealing with multiple challenges at their workplace and when interviewed they also mentioned that most of the times it becomes difficult to forget the victims and their nature of abuse and even after work they are haunted with the images and memories. Under such trying circumstances it is very imperative that these people would have adjustment issues both at work and home. But the results reveal that mostly the staff are able to manage themselves and their lives. They do not tend to get ruffled easily and manage their work in a professional manner. Though there are times when they do tend to get ruffled but generally they do not let the demand of the workplace get into their performance both at workplace and at home. They are inquisitive, love to find their ways and chart out a path for themselves in order to perform their best. Despite lack of clarity and loads of work at times they are able to adjust and give their best.

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