

الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية
République Algérienne Démocratique et Populaire

Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur
et de la Recherche Scientifique

Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Management
Koléa



وزارة التعليم العالي و البحث العلمي

المدرسة الوطنية العليا للمناجنت
القلعة

MASTER'S DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for a master's
degree in

“ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT”

OCCUPATIONAL STRESS IMPACT ON INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE AMONG EMPLOYEES: THE MODERATING ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

CASE: NAFTAL

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ACADEMIC YEAR 2021/2022

ABSTRACT

Prior empirical research findings regarding the relationship between job stress and job performance are very inconsistent, although the majority of studies show that occupational stress has a negative influence on employee performance; there are some studies in which a positive impact is found. It is discussed in this study that one explanation for these inconsistent results may be the existence of a moderating effect. The nature of the impact that stress generates on performance is related to the way it is perceived and dealt with, therefore, a factor like emotional intelligence that relates to that perception may play a role; this role is studied on 55 employees of the human resource department of NAFTA. Results of the quantitative study indicate that occupational stress has a positive impact on the performance of employees; results also show that emotional intelligence has a significant positive influence on both occupational stress and employee performance. In this context, employees with a higher level of emotional intelligence are more likely to perceive and transform the potential negative effects of job stress on job performance into positive ones.

Key words: Occupational Stress, Employee Performance, Emotional Intelligence.

Résumé

Les résultats des recherches empiriques antérieures sur la relation entre le stress au travail et la performance des employés sont inconsistants. Bien que la majorité des études montrent que le stress au travail a une influence négative sur la performance des employés, il existe quelques études pour lesquelles un impact positif est trouvé. Dans cette étude, il est discuté que l'une des explications de ces résultats incohérents pourrait être l'existence d'un effet modérateur. La nature de l'impact du stress sur la performance est liée à la façon dont il est perçu et traité, par conséquent, un facteur comme l'intelligence émotionnelle qui se rapporte à cette perception peut jouer un grand rôle ; ceci est étudié sur un échantillon de 55 employés du département des ressources humaines de NAFTA. Les résultats de l'étude quantitative indiquent que le stress au travail a un impact positif sur la performance des employés ; il en ressort également que l'intelligence émotionnelle a une influence positive significative à la fois sur le stress au travail et sur la performance des employés. Dans ce contexte, les employés ayant un niveau élevé d'intelligence émotionnelle sont plus susceptibles de percevoir et de transformer les effets potentiels négatifs du stress sur la performance en effets positifs.

Mots clés : Stress au Travail, Performance des Employés, Intelligence Emotionnelle.

ملخص

النتائج المتحصل عليها من البحوث العلمية السابقة فيما يتعلق بالعلاقة بين ضغوط العمل والأداء الوظيفي متضاربة، على الرغم من أن معظم الدراسات تشير إلى أن ضغوطات العمل تؤثر سلباً على الأداء الوظيفي للعمال، إلا أنه تتواجد بعض الدراسات التي تظهر وجود تأثير إيجابي بين الإثنين. بصدد هذا البحث نناقش أن أحد تفسيرات تواجد تضارب في النتائج يعود إلى احتمال وجود عامل مآثر في العلاقة. طبيعة الأثر الذي يخلفه الضغط على الأداء مرتبطة بالطريقة التي يدرك ويتعامل به هذا الشعور، ولهذا، عامل خارجي مثل الذكاء العاطفي المتعلق بذلك الإدراك قد يلعب دوراً، تمت دراسة هذا الدور على عينة مكونة من 55 عامل من قسم إدارة الموارد البشرية بشركة "نفتال". تشير نتائج الدراسة الكمية أن لضغط العمل تأثير إيجابي على الأداء الوظيفي للعمال، تظهر أيضاً النتائج أن للذكاء العاطفي تأثير إيجابي على كل من الضغط في العمل والأداء الوظيفي. بهذا، يمكن القول أن العاملين الذين يتصفون بمستوى عال في الذكاء العاطفي لهم قدرة على تحويل الآثار السلبية لضغوطات العمل على الأداء الوظيفي إلى آثار إيجابية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ضغط العمل، الأداء الوظيفي، الذكاء العاطفي.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor, **Dr ZEROUTI Messaoud**, for all the guidance, advice and encouragement that he provided me with during this journey and for his sincere interest in my research, it has been a great honour to work with him.

I would like to thank my internship supervisor at NAFTAL, **Dr HAKIKI Nadji**, for his kindness and patience with me during my time at the company, and for his help and contribution to my research survey.

I would like to thank **Dr ZOUAMBI Radja Anais** from the bottom of my heart, for being there for me every step of the way; this work wouldn't be anywhere near complete without her unconditional and endless support.

I would like to thank my parents, sisters, family and EMP2022 family.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EI: Emotional Intelligence

OS: Occupational Stress

EP: Employee Performance

TEIQUE: Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire

PMIQUE: Pressure Management Indicator Questionnaire

STD: Standard Deviation

INTRODUCTION

1. Context of the research

The business and economic world is in constant and swift growth, as a result, organizations and companies are always under pressure of adapting to this rapid and growing rivalry, and taking part in this development may be a hassle for them. Consequently, organizations in the business world constantly try to maintain their performance level steady, some even try to exceed it to stay ahead of the challenging business game (Gerungan, Kindangen, & Saerang, 2022).

In view of the fact that the foundation of the organizations' performance is mainly centred on the blend of individual performance of their employees, the enormous pressure that the organization faces in the business world is directly transferred to its ensemble of workers, given that generating, maintaining and exceeding performance is their main purpose within the company (Batista & Reio, 2019).

These demands could put the employee under a pressuring environment due to the humongous amount of stress that comes along with them, simply because there could be an imbalance between those demands and the employees' abilities or they are tight on the time factor of the tasks in question, this situation is commonly known in the literature as occupational stress (Prasad, Rajesh, & Vaidya, 2020).

Prior empirical findings on the relationship between occupational stress and employee performance are not consistent, although the majority has shown a negative relationship between the two, some other studies that have argued on the contrary, and showed that occupational stress in fact may have a positive influence of the employee individual performance, in a way that would motivate the workers to put out more, so it can be said that literature is not consistent when it comes to the association between OS and EP (Wu, 2011).

In the recent past few years, both research and organizations started associating the inconsistency and variation of the relationship between occupational stress and employee performance may be caused by the existence or inexistence of a moderating effect in that relationship, literature has shown that it is not stressing itself that directly affects performance, the way that stress is perceived and treated is what controls the type of impact it would cause;

the perception of feelings such as stress falls into the dimensions of emotional intelligence (Wu, 2011).

In modern organizations that give importance to their employees' emotions and well-being, employee performance, occupational stress and emotional intelligence act as the Holy Grail, in which emotional intelligence is a core aid that moderates and alters the relationship between the other two by reducing stress and securing work performance (Ramona, 2019).

We present a study where we demonstrate the triple relationship that exists between employee individual performance occupational stress and emotional intelligence, a study that is new of its kind in the Algerian context.

2. Research objectives

The primary objectives of this research are the followings:

- Showcasing the impact that occupational stress has on employee performance.
- Showcasing the influence emotional intelligence has on occupational stress.
- Showcasing the influence emotional intelligence has on employee performance.

By reaching these objectives we will attain the main objective of this study which is:

Unfolding the moderating role of emotional intelligence on the relationship between occupational stress and individual performance of NAFTAL's HR department employees.

3. Research question

Following the various researches that have been conducted on the association between emotional intelligence, occupational stress and employee performance and to attain the objectives of our research and with the aim of knowing whether EI can moderate the relationship between OS and EP, we formed our research question like so:

Does emotional intelligence moderate the impact that occupational stress has on the individual performance of NAFTAL's HR department employees?

To provide answers to the main research question it is deemed necessary to ask secondary questions;

- Does occupational stress affect employee performance?
- Does emotional intelligence have an impact on occupational stress?
- Does emotional intelligence have an impact on employee performance?

4. Research hypotheses

4.1. Research global hypothesis

Relying on the works of (Ramona, 2019), (Sadovyy, Sánchez-Gómez, & Bresó, 2021), (Tennakoon, 2021), a global hypothesis was obtained to answer our research question;

H1: emotional intelligence has a moderating role in the relationship between occupational stress and employee performance (Ramona, 2019; Tennakoon, 2021; Sadovyy, Sánchez-Gómez, & Bresó, 2021).

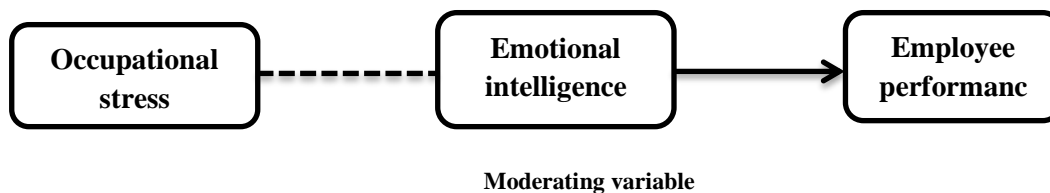


Figure 1: model of the global hypothesis

Source: created by the researcher.

4.2. Research sub-hypotheses

To test our main global hypothesis, and based on our literature review, it was deemed necessary to primarily test three sub-hypotheses that would eventually lead to either the validation or the refutation of the main research hypothesis (Ramona, 2019; Tennakoon, 2021; Sadovyy, Sanchez-Gomez, & Bresó, 2021);

Employee performance and occupational stress

Before attempting to analyze the moderating role of emotional intelligence on the relationship between occupational stress and employee performance (*H1*), we must first verify the impact OS has on EP, for the reason that the moderating role can only be present if there is a significant impact between the dependent and the independent variables (Ramona, 2019;

Tennakoon, 2021; Sadovyy, Sánchez-Gómez, & Bresó, 2021), which leads us to our 1st sub-hypothesis:

H1 (a): occupational stress has a significant negative effect on employee performance (Parasad, Vaidya, & Kumar, 2018; Yeboah-Kordee, Amponsah-Tawiah, Adu, & Ashie, 2018; Sehran Khan & Rasheed, 2019; Asghar Khan, Jabeen, & Manzoor, 2020; Nguyen, Hoang, & Nguyen, 2020; Rasool S. F., Wang, Zhang, & Samma, 2021; Maduwanthi, 2021).

EI-OS and EI-EP

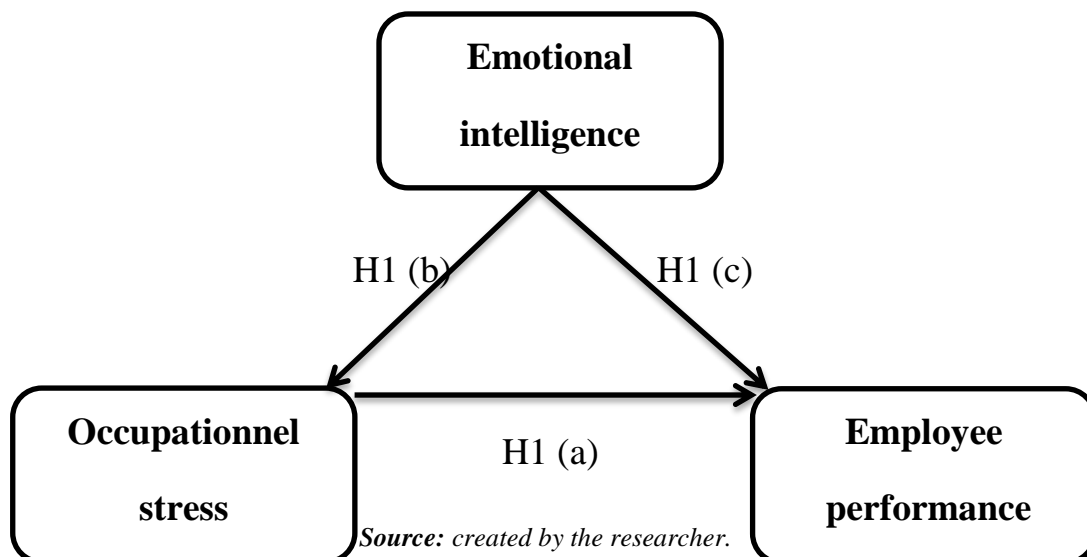
Once the first sub-hypothesis is analyzed, it is also reckoned important to verify the association existing among EI and OS, as well as EI and EP (Ramona, 2019; Sadovyy, Sanchez-Gomez, & Bresó, 2021), which leads us to our 2nd and 3rd sub-hypotheses:

H1 (b): emotional intelligence has a significant positive effect on occupational stress (Kumara & Prashantha, 2021; Valenti, Faraci, & Magnano, 2021; Chakraborty & Saha, 2021; Tennakoon, 2021; Liu, Balamurugan, & Seetharam, 2021);

H1 (c): emotional intelligence has a significant positive effect on employee performance (Chong, Falahat, & Lee, 2020; Barreiro & Treglown, 2020; Satrina, Wardi, & Rasyid, 2021; Supramaniam & Singaravelloo, 2021; Gerungan, Kindangen, & Saerang, 2022).

We can demonstrate our research sub-hypotheses in the model down below;

Figure 2: Research model



5. Research relevance

Our research touches on a topic that usually gets overlooked and passed over, some even consider given importance to such topic taboo, however, if we are talking about modern organizations, such a subject should not be ignored, especially given that the components of our research aid workers and employees in their daily work life. It became apparent that technical competencies and academic intelligence by themselves are not sufficient if not accompanied by interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, therefore having a trait like emotional intelligence has very beneficial use in the workplace, especially when it comes to helping in securing individual performance by beneficially perceiving occupational stress.

6. Internship site

Our internship and survey took place in NAFTAL (SPA), which is the principal company selling petroleum-based fuels for domestic consumption in Algeria; it is a 100% subsidiary of SONATRACH and it employs about 30,000 workers.

7. Research structure

This research is organized like so:

An *introduction* to help in giving a general view of our research, including the context, the objectives and the relevance of this study, as well as our research model that was developed based on literature and passed studies to test the mentioned hypotheses and provide an answer for our research question.

Chapter 1 represents the theoretical fragment of our research, divided into two sections; (1) our literature review and (2) our theoretical framework.

Chapter 2 includes (1) the methodology used to conduct our study.

Chapter 3 represents the showcase of our research results, as well as the discussion of said results.

Lastly, a *conclusion* that resumes what was elaborated in our research and our main results, and the contribution of these results, as well as a description of the limitations that faced us and recommendations for possible future research.

**CHAPTER I: LITERATURE REVIEW
AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Section 01: Literature review

The purpose of this literature review is to synthesize the various studies and researches from over the years, especially the recent ones that have been done on the different variables of our current study represented in emotional intelligence, occupational stress and employee performance, as well as the relationships between said variables.

The business world as it is known is in constant and rapid development and progress, and organizations should be able to adapt to this quick growth and even be part of it by maintaining and even exceeding their performance to stay part of this swiftly developing business world (Gerungan, Kindangen, & Saerang, 2022, p. 791).

The humongous pressure in the workplace puts a massive amount of stress on the organization's employees (Batista & Reio, 2019, p. 38), which typically could have a significant negative influence on the employee's overall performance and in the long term would affect the global performance and outcome of the company, however, in some studies, it was argued that occupational stress can have a positive influence of employee performance, in a way that would motivate the workers to put out more (Prasad, Rajesh, & Vaidya, 2020, p. 237).

Over the years, emotion in the workplace has started to attract more and more attention as people started to see its double-sided effects in organizational life (Gardner, 2005, p. 2), which led to the rise of the concept of emotional intelligence as a personality trait or an ability that can be gained and trained as a weapon to fight off negative emotions such as occupational stress, as well as preventing it from negatively affecting the employee performance (Tennakoon, 2021, p. 2).

1.1 Employee performance

Human resource is a system that exists in every organization to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of employees exceeding the expected performance that achieves the company's goals (Daulay & Kurnia, 2021, p. 833), all while maintaining the quality along with the quantity (Siwadi & Lestari, 2021, p. 227).

Human resource management is one of the most important practices inside the organization in which the goal is to manage their HR in a way that maximizes the overall performance (Uraz

& Arhan, 2020, p. 20), meaning that the main purpose of the human capital's existence in the organization is the performance that gets accomplished by it (Gerungan, Kindangen, & Saerang, 2022, p. 792).

Employee performance is a very important asset in the company that is exploited to reach the final goals; performance is greatly reliant on high human resources and the (Siwadi & Lestari, 2021, p. 227).

Performance is usually measured by several criteria, the most common ones being: quantity, quality, punctuality, attendance, and the ability to work together (Febrina, Astuti, & Triatmanto, 2021, p. 286). Performance is the result accomplished by an employee as he carries out the job duties and activities that fall into his or her responsibilities which were carefully assigned by the organization (Uraz & Arhan, 2020, p. 20).

Researchers have divided performance in the organization into three interdependent categories: (1) individual performance, (2) group performance and (3) the company's performance represented its turnover and profit, all three categories work together in harmony and affect one another both positively and negatively (Sadovyy, Sanchez-Gomez, & Bresó, 2021, p. 2)

The organization's success and achievements are determined by employee performance (Daulay & Kurnia, 2021, p. 833), the global performance of the company is affected both positively and negatively by employee's individual performance, employees who accomplish good individual performance positively influence the organization's global performance and those who don't will have a bad impact instead (Gerungan, Kindangen, & Saerang, 2022, p. 791).

The concept of employee performance got divided over the years into two distinguished notions:

- The performance that refers to the behaviors of the individuals judged beneficial for the organization;
- The effectiveness that corresponds to the expected results of these same behaviors. (Achte, Delaflore, Fabre, Magny, & songeur, 2010, p. 41)

Organizations' main interest today is optimizing and improving their performance to gain maximum profit which depends almost completely on the individual performance of its employees that creates the global performance for the company, due to the massive role that performance holds in organizations, numerous studies and research were carried out to understand better what factors influence work performance, the findings indicate that emotional skills in the workplace play a major role on employee performance, influencing it both positively and/or negatively depending on how it's handled in the work environment and how it's managed by the employee himself (Sanchez-Gomez & Bresó, 2020, pp. 1-2).

1.2 Occupational stress

In the face of constant organizational competition, employees are always expected to increase efforts and decrease time and economic resources while doing so, if not so they would face consequences from their superiors, this massive burden triggers increased levels of occupational stress (Batista & Reio, 2019, p. 38).

Workplace stress (occupational stress) is not a new concept it has been brought up over 50 years ago (Batista & Reio, 2019, p. 39), over the years occupational stress gained attention due to its significant negative effects, it is known as a tiring mental state that employees tend to suffer from in their workplace while trying to fulfil the expectations and demands in challenging situations that make the task hard to achieve (Rasool, Wang, Zhang, & Samma, 2020, p. 4).

Studies have proven that stress in the workplace causes organizations economic as well as human costs, however, controlling and tackling this obstacle is still a challenge for organizations (Hasan & Tumah, 2019, p. 1), past research have originated a set of likely reasons to this questioning. Firstly, detecting occupational stress in its early stages before catastrophe strikes can be very tricky and challenging. Secondly, the existence or the application of workplace stress management methods can be poor and insufficient. Thirdly, the concept of occupational stress could be neglected and ignored by the company and not given priority (Shackleton & Gareth, 2021, p. 1).

1.3 Emotions in the workplace

“Every organization is an emotional place because it is a human invention, serving human purposes and dependent on human beings to function”. Reynolds and Vince (2004)

Over the last few decades, there has been a growing draw of attention to the importance of emotions in the workplace (Carminati, 2021, p. 1); Emotions have become an essential part of organizational life that usually gets ignored by companies (Gardner, 2005, p. 2), emotions play a considerable and important role in the individual and collective work-life as individual behaviours affect one’s self as well the others (Alsughayir, 2021, p. 1309).

We step into work-life with the impression that our mental knowledge and academic baggage would be all-sufficient, but many often we have no sense of emotional skills and emotion management in us (Nguyen, White, Hall, Bell, & Ballentine, 2019, p. 58).

At some point it has reached the point where expressing emotions and feelings at work would be considered taboo, some -if not most- employees have heard the saying “don’t get too emotional” at least once during their work life, and it has become the norm to view emotions as an aspect that can only be bad and produce negative outcome only especially on the behaviour and performance (Bierema, 2008, p. 55).

Moreover, organizations themselves could have tend to ignore of emotional factor of their human recourse (Pradhan, 2018, p. 3) despite the fact that emotions influence the company’s global performance by having an impact on employees’ individual job performance, it affects their commitment, creativity, decision making, teamwork, leadership, turnover, work quality and many other performance-related activities, therefore employees in the company or the organization should exhibit no only academic and technical skills but emotional skills and traits because performance is driven by behaviour which itself is driven by emotions (Drigas & Papoutsi, 2019, p. 59).

Robert T. Kiyosaki, the author of the best-selling book *rich dad poor dad*, stated that schools and organizations focus mainly on your mental ability and that if you are book and academically smart then you’re considered ready to thrive in the working world (Kiyosaki, 2017).

In reality, though, mental ability, academic knowledge and technical skills represent only a small segment of a manager's intelligence (Bierema, 2008, p. 55). In order to succeed inside the organization, a manager should focus not only on his educational background and technical skills but also on his emotional abilities and should learn how to use them as well (Kiyosaki, 2017).

Today "emotion" have succeeded in becoming a trend within companies, numerous of them still ignore the concept of emotion and the effect that it has on the general performance is still generally passed over, emotion should be regarded highly because it has a large impact on the employee well-being (Bierema, 2008, p. 57) which itself affects the job performance (Nguyen, White, Hall, Bell, & Ballentine, 2019, p. 58).

Emotionally intelligent organizations started to understand how properly managed emotions can positively impact global performance by winning the cooperation, trust, faith, commitment and productivity of managers and employees and achieving success individually or collectively (Drigas & Papoutsis, 2019, p. 58).

Over the years the growing attention around emotion in the workplace has led to the gain of attention around the concept of emotional intelligence (EI) in organizations (Pradhan, 2018, p. 3); EI was boosted by the various studies and research assessments that reviled the worth of emotions in the improvement of individual and global performance (Nguyen, White, Hall, Bell, & Ballentine, 2019, p. 58).

Various studies showed that employees who put their emotions to positive and beneficial use can expand their individual performance and if that was the case for a big portion of the employees that would lead to a significant increase in the global performance of the company (Dirican, Hatun, Erdil, & Oya, 2019, p. 4).

It is now evident for organizations that in order to stimulate better performance there should be an atmosphere that encourages emotions for the managers and employees, and this is where emotional intelligence comes in (Pradhan, 2018, p. 3).

1.4 Emotional intelligence (EI)

Intelligence was in the beginning commonly based on only the intelligence quotient (IQ) level of the individual, it was believed that if a person had a high 'IQ' level then that would automatically make him be considered a 'highly intelligent' individual (Jayawardena, Liyanarachchi, Nanayakkara, Abeysiri, & Chandana, 2014, p. 24).

Change around the concept of intelligence started when a Harvard psychologist, *Howard Gardner*, went against that common belief and came up with the theory of multiple intelligence (MI), in which he stated that our general view of intelligence is very narrow and limited, he argued that intelligence is not only based on 'IQ' but it's a combination of many bits of intelligences, skills and abilities and that the total dependency on 'IQ' should be trimmed down, intelligence was then divided into many categories, two of them being social skills: interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, and these two together form the concept of emotional intelligence, and this was the real first appearance of anything related to EI (Jayawardena, Liyanarachchi, Nanayakkara, Abeysiri, & Chandana, 2014, pp. 24-27).

Emotional intelligence was born from social intelligence represented by the possession of interpersonal skills –recognizing the feelings of others and interacting with them- as well as intrapersonal skills –recognizing our own emotions- (Varshney & Varshney, 2020, p. 1).

Although the studies of interpersonal and intrapersonal skills gained attention during the early 1990s when it was said that emotions are just as important as 'IQ' if not more important (Varshney & Varshney, 2020, p. 1), the concept of emotional intelligence was originally pioneered in 1990 by *John Mayer*, who is an American psychologist at the University of Hampshire specializing in personality psychology, and *Peter Salovey* who is an American social psychologist and is currently the president of Yale University (Nel, 2019, p. 3).

The concept of emotional intelligence was later popularized to a bigger audience by the American psychologist and science journalist *Daniel Goleman* in 1995 in his bestselling book '*emotional intelligence*' where he argued that this new branch of intelligence should play a key role in the workplace as well as in schools and home, this book has gained him huge popularity due to the big impact it had (Jayawardena, Liyanarachchi, Nanayakkara, Abeysiri, & Chandana, 2014, pp. 26-27).

After the works of Mayer and Salovey, and the support it got from Daniel Goleman in his best-selling book as well as from other well-known researchers such as Richard Boyatzis the Greek American organizational theorist and distinguished university professor and researcher prof Kenneth Rhee, this new phenomenon was brought to the light and gained fast-growing attention as a special skill that could be a strong key to success (Adigüzel & Kuloğlu, 2019, p. 15), that lead to swift growth of interest, research and studies surrounding this topic and before long EI gained big popularity (Jayawardena, Liyanarachchi, Nanayakkara, Abeysiri, & Chandana, 2014, p. 27).

Emotional intelligence, some consider it a trait of the personality by some, others considered it an ability, other times it's also viewed as a mixture of both (Carminati, 2021, p. 3), it is conceived to be about knowing, perceiving, recognizing and comprehending other's emotions as well your own (Sadovyy, Sanchez-Gomez, & Bresó, 2021, p. 2), as well as being able to manage, control and positively use those emotions (Gerungan, Kindangen, & Saerang, 2022, p. 792), it is the skill to understand and use emotions beneficially (Adigüzel & Kuloğlu, 2019, p. 15).

Emotional intelligence is about the capacity to detect, identify, recognize, express and manage emotions (Siwadi & Lestari, 2021, p. 228), using its different components that researchers have put together over the years, they could be summarized as so: 1) self-awareness, 2) self-regulation, 3) self-motivation, 4) empathy with others, 5) social skills (Sahidur, Ferdausy, & Akter, 2020, p. 3).

1.5 Occupational stress and employee performance

Prior empirical findings on the relationship between occupational stress and employee performance are not consistent, although the majority has shown a negative relationship between the two, some other studies that have argued on the contrary and showed that occupational stress has a positive influence of the employee individual performance (Wu, 2011, p. 22), (Mamoona, 2018, p. 181); since the majority of studies argued on the negative relationship, we're going to review said studies as a base for our study.

Stress in the workplace has been argued over the years to have a damaging influence on the employee's well-being, as it harms their mental, physical and psychological shape (Satpathy &

Sabita, 2014, p. 10); however, personal well-being isn't the only thing that gets affected by occupational stress as it also affects their organizational performance by harming the quality and quantity of work (Mosadeghrad, 2014, p. 225). Research has now come to grasp the seriousness of this phenomenon and its effect on employee performance (Prasad, Rajesh, & Vaidya, 2020, p. 237).

The table underneath resumes a revue of previous research that studies the relationship between occupational stress and performance (table1)

Table 1. A review of past research that studied the connection between work-stress and performance

| Author and year | Research | Method | Results |
|--|---|--|--|
| (Maduwanthi, 2021) | Examined the impact of occupational stress on employee performance | A quantitative approach through a survey done within 100 employees | Results showed that work related stress reduces job performance of employees, it was also argues that most companies don't give enough importance to the stress they put their employees under |
| (Rasool S. F., Wang, Zhang, & Samma, 2021) | Analyzed the connection between occupational stress and job performance | A quantitative study among 345 employees | The findings of this study highlight the fact that work performance significantly reduced when employees are exposed to constant occupational stress |
| (Nguyen, Hoang, & Nguyen, 2020) | Demonstrated the impact of occupational stress on job performance | A quantitative study, survey done within 290 workers | The finding evidenced that occupational stress negatively effects job satisfaction which leads to a decrease in employee performance |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| (Asghar Khan, Jabeen, & Manzoor, 2020) | studied the relationship between occupational stress and job performance | Quantitative research method on 170 participants | The results of the study argued that employees who are exposed to work stress also suffer from lacks in their performance |
| (Prasad, Rajesh, & Vaidya, 2020) | Studied the effect of occupational stress factors on employee performance | A quantitative empirical study carried on 400 employees | Findings showed that occupational stress negatively effects performance at work |
| (Sehran Khan & Rasheed, 2019) | The study explored the impact of occupational stress on job performance | A quantitative study within 271 employees | Results have shown that work related stress is a major factor that causes problems that eventually lead to a decrease in employee performance |
| (Yeboah-Kordee, Amponsah-Tawiah, Adu, & Ashie, 2018) | The study was set to discover the possible impact of occupational stress on employee performance | Quantitative method was employed using survey within 320 participants | The study concluded that stress in the workplace has a significant negative relationship with performance of employees |
| (Parasad, Vaidya, & Kumar, 2018) | The study reported the association of occupational stress factors and performance at the workplace | Quantitative study using a questionnaire on 756 employees | Statistical results revealed that the factors of occupational stress negatively affect performance in the workplace |

| | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|--|
| (Mamoona, 2018) | Study of the effect of occupational stress on work performance of employees | A quantitative research carried on 370 employees using questionnaire instrument and statistical methods | Results concluded that stress might be an essential factor in the workplace to keep employees focused but if it's uncontrollable and surpasses the desirable level then it would lead to catastrophic outcomes in employees' performance |
|-----------------|---|---|--|

Source: Table made from the synthesis of our various researches.

Even though numerous studies have argued that stress in the workplace can only have a negative impact on the performance of the employee, some other studies have proven that occupational stress could be a factor that improves performance and have a positive effect on it, as in some cases and within some employees and work environments, OS encourages better and faster performance (Mamoona, 2018, p. 181).

Some employees find occupational stress to be motivating more than challenging, and it boosts their productivity at work. OS could encourage employees to work more effectively and to create better quality results. A significant degree of stress is required for a company to stay on track with its goals. It will assist employees in being active and focused on their jobs (Mamoona, 2018, p. 181).

1.6 Emotional intelligence and employee performance

Emotional intelligence has been proved by numerous researches and studies that it positively correlates with employee performance and plays a big role in it, EI allows employees and managers to achieve their duties and responsibilities easier quicker and more efficiently, it helps them in recognizing their feelings as well as those of others which leads to the motivation and the effective management of emotions (Febrina, Astuti, & Triatmanto, 2021, p. 287).

By knowing how to recognize and manage emotions without negative impact, and by effectively managing work relationships through understanding their feelings and vice versa,

the employee gains the ability of self-motivation to complete his job duties which positively his overall performance in the workplace (Alsughayir, 2021, p. 1311).

Various studies to this day have revealed that employees and managers and managers with higher emotional intelligence tend to generate social and communication skills that lead to better performance in the workplace, whereas those with lower EI tend to encounter more challenges in their work-life (Adigüzel & Kuloğlu, 2019, p. 16). Therefore, employees should be sensitized and pay more care to this phenomenon to perform better in the organization (Veluchamy, Choudhury, Dixit, & Jha, 2021, p. 233).

The following table represents a review of studies that investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and performance (table2).

Table 2. Review of studies that investigate the connection between EI and performance

| Author and year | Research | Method | Results |
|--|--|---|---|
| (Gerungan, Kindangen, & Saerang, 2022) | Studied the relation between emotional intelligence and job insecurity and job performance to determinate whether they have an impact on the performance | A quantitative approach using multiple linear regression analysis within 40 employees | Results showed that emotional intelligence has an impact on employee performance, employees with a higher level of EI tend to generate better performance |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| (Supramaniam & Singaravelloo, 2021) | Studied the impact of emotional intelligence on organizational performance | a quantitative study, a survey distributed to 700 public administrative employees | The results obtained indicated that there is a positive relation between emotional intelligence and organizational performance, EI has a significant positive effect on performance |
| (PUTRA, Sarni, & Syamsir, 2021) | Studied the effect of emotional intelligence on work performance | A quantitative approach done among 40 government officials | Results revealed that emotional intelligence does in fact have an influence on work performance, it was also concluded that in order to seek an improvement in performance emotional intelligence is necessary and crucial |
| (Satrina, Wardi, & Rasyid, 2021) | The study aimed to determine and analyze the effect of emotional intelligence on the performance of employees | A quantitative research using data that was collected by a questionnaire done within 170 employees | Results concluded that performance is positively influenced and improved by emotional intelligence, and that if employees can manage their emotions and have empathy for others' emotions the work performance will increase |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|
| (Barreiro & Treglown, 2020) | Studied whether the factors of emotional intelligence make an engaged employee | A quantitative study, a study done on 306 employees | Results revealed that employees who display a higher level of emotional intelligence are more likely to be engaged at work and generate better performance |
| (Sanchez-Gomez & Breso, 2020) | Studied the connection between emotional intelligence and work performance | A quantitative study on a multi-occupational sample of employees | The results argued that employees with a higher level of emotional intelligence are able to face work demands better than those with lower EI level, and can deliver more and better performance, therefore it is important to create a healthy workplace to help employees reach their best performance ability |
| (Chong, Falahat, & Lee, 2020) | Investigated whether the level of emotional intelligence affects job performance | A quantitative method approach on 368 sample of employees | Results demonstrated the significant utility and use of emotional intelligence on performance |

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| (Sahidur, Ferdausy, & Akter, 2020) | Investigated the link between emotional intelligence and job performance | A quantitative study conducted with a sample of 189 workers and managers | The results of this study report to companies and organization the must and need to focus of their workers and managers' emotional intelligence levels and competencies as the latter effects significantly their performance in the workplace |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|

Source: Table made from the synthesis of our various researches.

1.7 Emotional intelligence and occupational stress

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984) in their *Lazarus stress theory*, it was argued that stress is not only a cognitive function but also an emotional state of being (Durham, 2021, p. 2).

Goleman who was the first to officially come up with the emotional intelligence concept along with Mayer insisted on the connection that the latter had with stress especially when it comes to workplace stress; in his research, he stated that emotional intelligence is an ability that employees can use to regulate occupational stress and try to prevent it by controlling their emotions against stressors (Durham, 2021, p. 7).

The following table represents a review of various past researches that studies the connection between emotional intelligence and stress in the workplace (table3).

Table 3. A review of studies made on the EI-OS relationship

| Author and year | Research | Method | Results |
|--|--|---|--|
| (Azizkhan, Maghami-Mehr, & Nasr, 2021) | The study evaluated the effect of training emotional intelligence skills on reducing work related stress | A quantitative approach | Results showed that training emotional intelligence skills of employees can in fact reduce occupational stress |
| (Liu, Balamurugan, & Seetharam, 2021) | Analyzed the moderating role of emotional intelligence on stress in work environments | Quantitative experiments on several cases and samples | The finding of the various experiments revealed that emotional intelligence plays a significant role in managing stress in the workplace, in a way that EI helps with controlling and reducing negative emotions |
| (Tennakoon, 2021) | Studied the role of emotional intelligence in the stress-performance relationship in the workplace | Quantitative analysis | Results concluded that emotional intelligence helps in governing job stress, moreover, it assists in reducing the effects of occupational stress on performance by moderating the relationship between the two |

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| (Rajan, Thomas, & Vidya, 2021) | The study examined the relationship between job stress and emotional intelligence | A quantitative study using a questionnaire within a sample of 80 workers | Results of this study reported a significant negative relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational stress, it was also found that factors of emotional intelligence predict work stress |
| (Chakraborty & Saha, 2021) | Studied emotional intelligence, occupational stress, their relationship and the impact they have on one another | a descriptive quantitative correlational study on 74 participants | The results of this study revealed a negative relationship between occupational stress and emotional intelligence, it was also promoted developing stress-relieving skills and tools using their emotional intelligence to overcome work-related challenges |
| (Valenti, Faraci, & Magnano, 2021) | evaluated the direct connection between emotional intelligence and occupational stress | A quantitative study using questionnaire instrument among 367 employees | Results indicated that emotional intelligence has an effect on almost all of factors of occupational stress |
| (Kumara & Prashantha, 2021) | This study examined the association between occupational stress and emotional intelligence | A quantitative study within 200 participants | The findings were that occupational stress and emotional intelligence are negatively and significantly connected |

Source: Table made from the synthesis of our various researches.

1.8 Emotional intelligence as a moderator

Over the past decade, interest was gained in emotional intelligence as a moderator rather than just being an independent variable, numerous studies we conducted on EI to see if it could alter the impact that occupational stress has on employees' individual performance.

The moderating role that EI holds has been portrayed by the studies of ([Ramona, 2019](#)), ([Sadovyy, Sánchez-Gómez, & Bresó, 2021](#)) and ([Tennakoon, 2021](#)), in which they all found that emotional intelligence can moderate the impact that OS has on EP; and the model of our current study is based on these researches.

Our research's been brought up to address the theoretical contradictions and inconsistencies underlying the OS-EP-EI relationship, highlighting the existence of the moderating role of Emotional Intelligence. The aim is the develop a study that can allow both literature and managers to understand this relationship better, the first of its kind in the Algerian context.

Section 02: conceptual framework

The main aim of the section ahead is to provide a theoretical framework using already existing relevant information that has been gathered by our various researches on employee performance, occupational stress and emotional intelligence.

2.1. Employee performance

One of the most valuable and strongest assets that organizations could have is people (Jayawardena, Liyanarachchi, Nanayakkara, Abeysiri, & Chandana, 2014, p. 20); Employees are the main key and the major asset that pushes any organization into moving forward continuously along with the competitive world of work (Nassazi, 2013, p. 2).

Employees also play a critical role in the overall performance of the organization (Gerungan, Kindangen, & Saerang, 2022, p. 792).

In the following section we're going to go through the concept of individual employee performance compared to other types of existing performance, as well as the dimensions and indicators of employee performance that go together in harmony;

2.1.1. Human resource and employee performance

There is no doubt that organizations all around the world are striving for success and outperforming their competitors; therefore, organizations must obtain and effectively employ their human resources to accomplish so (Nassazi, 2013, p. 10).

Human resources are a company's most valuable asset that is utilized to extract performance that eventually aids the organization in achieving its goals (Arinanye, 2015, p. 12), employee's job performance as in a performance assessment is the most important part of human resource management (Pradhan & Lalatendu, 2017, p. 69).

Therefore, in order to increase organizational success and ensure the efficient utilization of its human recourse, an effective employee performance system must be a priority within the organization's HRM (Pradhan & Lalatendu, 2017, p. 70).

2.1.2. Employee performance and other performances

Performance within the organization can exist only if it's measurable, meaning that it can be described with the use of a group of indicators, represented in economic, social, systemic and political indicators, the main interest would be the social indicators given that the given area of interest is employees and individual and organizational objectives (Achte, Delaflore, Fabre, Magny, & songeur , 2010, p. 38).

For many years performance in organizations has been always linked to financial results and gains, nowadays, the performance concept has way more to it than just the economic outcome, now it is divided into several types of performance: organizational performance, social performance, adaptive performance and last but not least employee individual performance, which is our area of interest (Achte, Delaflore, Fabre, Magny, & songeur , 2010, p. 39).

It is concluded that employee performance (also known as individual performance) is not an independent concept, but is part of what is known as a *baggage* concept which is “performance” as a whole (Bernard , 2020, p. 67).

2.1.3. Employee performance (EP) definition

Employee performance is critical for the organization since the success of the organization is mostly based on employees' creativity, commitment, innovation and dedication in the workplace, with good employee performance comes success for the organization and vice versa (Keijzers, 2010, p. 13).

Employee performance is completely dependent on the employee himself, his personality, knowledge, experience, skills and abilities, these factors are what help in measuring the employee performance (Keijzers, 2010, p. 14).

The concept of employee performance can be divided into two distinguished notions:

- The performance which refers to the behaviors of the individuals judged beneficial for the organization;
- The effectiveness which corresponds to the expected results of these same behaviors. (Achte, Delaflore, Fabre, Magny, & songeur , 2010, p. 41).

The behaviour here indicates the actions that employees produce in order to achieve their duties that fall into their responsibilities, whereas the effectiveness and outcome are exhibited in the consequences of those actions (Rabindra & Lalatendu, 2017, p. 70).

Employee performance is defined as a set of measurable behaviours and actions that are relevant to an organization's goals and objectives (Bernard , 2020, p. 68), it can also be defined as the work accomplished by the employee after putting in the necessary effort on the job or the task that falls under his responsibility (Pradhan & Lalatendu, 2017, p. 70).

Employee performance can also be referred to as job performance or individual performance which can be defined as the produces that the organization values and expects from its employees and pays them to do, the actions and behaviours that would eventually positively influence the realizations of the organization's objectives directly or indirectly (Achte, Delaflore, Fabre, Magny, & songeur , 2010, p. 40).

2.1.4. Dimensions of employee performance

Individual performance at work is a concept that includes many notions (Achte, Delaflore, Fabre, Magny, & songeur , 2010, p. 42), three dimensions for individual employee performance were distinguished:

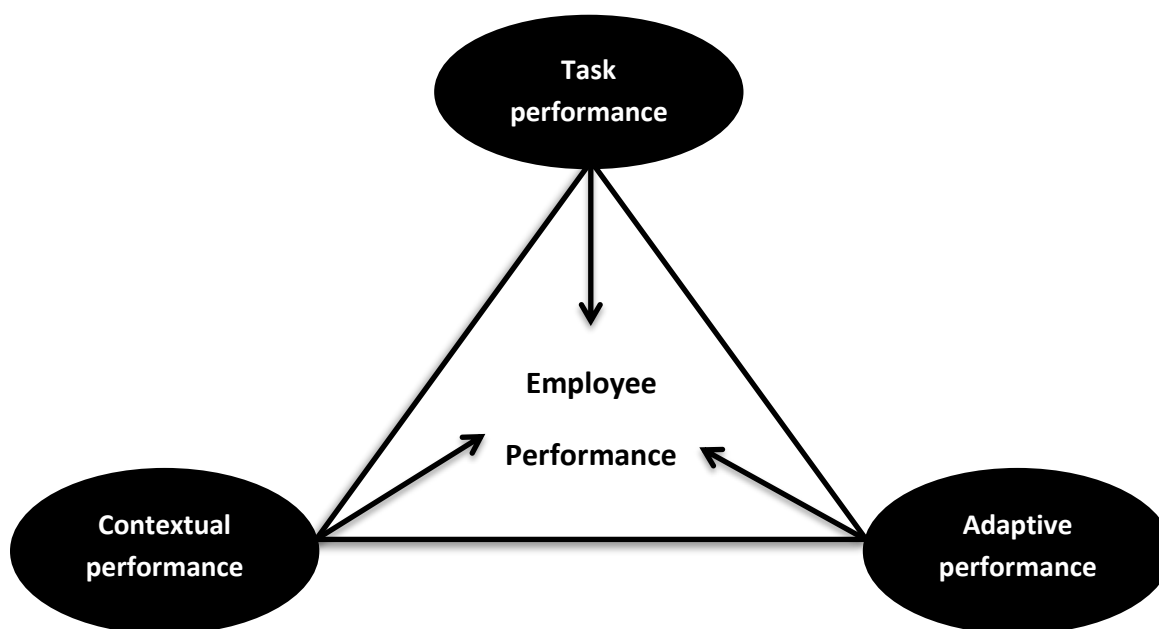
- task performance (in-role performance): it varies from one job to another, it refers to daily or repetitive activities, tasks and duties that are related to employees' formal role requirements, it is the effectiveness with which job incumbents carry out activities that fall into the employees' responsibilities and that would eventually contribute to the organization's technical core in a direct manner (Achte, Delaflore, Fabre, Magny, & songeur , 2010, p. 42);
- Contextual performance (extra-role performance): the set of behaviors which contribute to the organizational effectiveness by their effects on the psychological and organizational context of work, in another manner, they are the activities and behaviors performed by the employees that don't necessarily fall into their area of responsibilities and duties but contribute indirectly into the organization's performance, for example, the act of helping other individuals with defusing conflicts between colleagues and

solving work problems, the positive attitude even during hard times and putting in extra work voluntarily (Achte, Delaflore, Fabre, Magny, & songeur , 2010, p. 43);

- Adaptive performance: is defined as the capacity and flexibility of employees to adapt to new or sudden work conditions or crisis situations (Achte, Delaflore, Fabre, Magny, & songeur , 2010, p. 44).

The individual performance of an employee gets measured based on these three aspects of the general concept (Achte, Delaflore, Fabre, Magny, & songeur , 2010, p. 43).

Figure 3. The dimensions of employee performance



Source: adapted from (Achte, Delaflore, Fabre, Magny, & songeur , 2010), (Pradhan & Lalatendu, 2017).

2.1.5. Indicators of employee performance

The dimensions of employee performance that were previously mentioned have certain indicators that signify their presence that is commonly known as key performance indicators (KPI);

- Quantity: which highlights the total sum that gets produced by the employee whether be it product or service as supposed to the expected of him in the norm (NKEMAKOLAM, 2020, p. 14);

- Quality: it signifies the degree of the match level between what has been produced with what was originally desired by the organization as a standard to be maintained (NKEMAKOLAM, 2020, p. 14);
- Timeliness: measurement for the rapidity and swiftness of the tasks' accomplishment (NKEMAKOLAM, 2020, p. 14);
- Cost-effectiveness: this indicator is used to evaluate the cost-efficiency of the employee, meaning if he is able to produce good results without costing a ton of money (NKEMAKOLAM, 2020, p. 14);
- Absenteeism: this indicator simply means that the employee's performance would be negatively impacted by his absenteeism since he won't be carrying out his duties on time, the same goes for repetitive tardiness (NKEMAKOLAM, 2020, p. 14).

2.2. Occupational stress (OS)

In the face of the competitive nature of the current business world, the work environment could compel employees to produce and generate more; moreover, they are expected to do so in a short amount of time also by wasting as few resources as possible (Batista & Reio, 2019, p. 38); this demanding and tough work environment can and would put employees through what is known as occupational stress (Batista & Reio, 2019, p. 38).

2.2.1. Stress definition

The concept was first brought up by the Hungarian endocrinologist *Hans Selye*, who is known as the *father of stress*, by which he gave the first general definition of this phenomenon: "Stress is the nonspecific response of the body to any demand" (Antonova, 2016, p. 9); Selye has characterized the concept of stress by three stages: alarm, resistance, and exhaustion (Antonova, 2016, p. 9).

Stress can be defined as a mental state represented by harmful and negative pressure and tension in response to the demanding circumstances and requirements that do not match the abilities of the individual or capabilities (Arrman & Björk, 2017, p. 6).

Behavioural sciences perceive the concept of stress as the anxiety, emotional tension and discomfort caused by the feeling of threat (Antonova, 2016, p. 10).

Some researchers argued that stress itself is negative but its outcomes are not always bad and damaging, it is believed that stress can lead to better outcomes for the one that suffered from it (Arrman & Björk, 2017, p. 7).

2.2.2. Types of stress

There are mainly 4 types of occupational stress (Chikumbindi, 2017, p. 20); the different types are cited in the table below:

Table 4. Types of stress

| Type of stress | Symptoms |
|-----------------------|---|
| Acute stress | The most frequent type, has clear reasons, easy to diagnose, easy to express, easy to handle and easy to recover from. |
| Traumatic stress | Very critical and severe, it's usually based on extreme traumatic event, recovery is usually slow and hard. |
| Chronic stress | This type is an inseparable part for the individual work life, especially for managers, it can cause damaging outcomes. |
| Acute episodic stress | Usually experienced by workaholic individuals, they tend to over work themselves and be competitive, they're also easy to irritate; these individuals can cause stress to their co-workers. |

Source: adapted from (Chikumbindi, 2017).

It can be concluded from the table above that some types of stress particularly affect workers

2.2.3. Occupational stress definition

Occupational stress is a concept with a lot of concern around, as it can affect the employees' both physical and mental health as well as their emotional state, which would eventually lead to problems and shortcomings especially in their performance and productivity (Chikumbindi, 2017, p. 18).

Work is a must in this world that comes with a great deal of positive and satisfying impact on one's life; however, it can have negative turnovers as well, and stress in the workplace could

be one of them (Arrman & Björk, 2017, p. 7). Occupational stress is employees' reaction when pressured by their company and their supervisors, especially when the demands asked of them exceed their abilities and knowledge, also when the schedules or workgroup conditions are tough and problematic (Arrman & Björk, 2017, p. 7).

Occupational stress all in all is a work situation that challenges the employee's ability to cope with hardships related to the work and the workplace conditions and the pressures in that environment (Chikumbindi, 2017, p. 18).

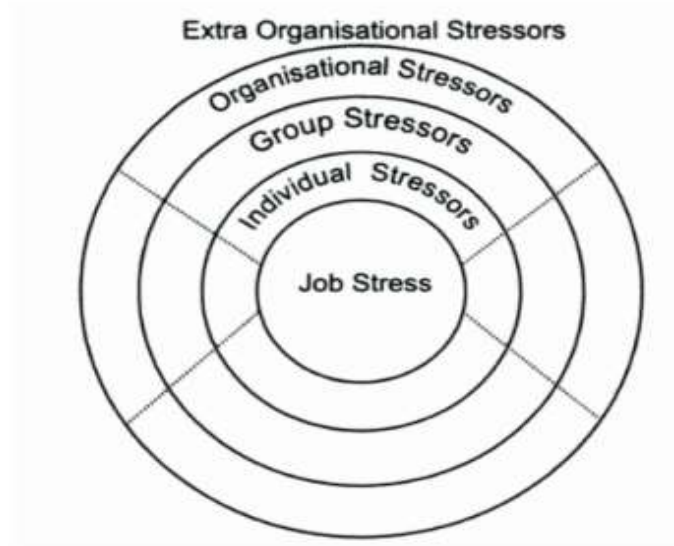
Occupational stress is more often located among workers of lower levels as supposed, given that they typically have little to no control and freedom in their work and the way they perform it, also from the constant fear of losing their job, it also can be obtained from the condition of having too much to do and having too little time to do it (Chikumbindi, 2017, p. 22).

2.2.4. Causes of occupational stress (stressors)

Generally speaking, stressors are the reasons and causes that produce occupational stress, stressors can be internal as well as external (Antonova, 2016, p. 27); the internal ones are those that grow within the individual himself based on his personality and his behaviours, whereas external stressors are those that are not self-induced and are out of the worker's control, in other words, the work environment (Antonova, 2016, p. 28).

The causes of occupational stress (stressors) are showed in the figure bellow;

Figure 4. Causes of occupation stress (stressors)



Source: (Arrman & Björk, 2017)

- Individual stressors: this type of stressor are highly related to the individual personality traits and their behaviors (Arrman & Björk, 2017, p. 8); the types of individual stressors are defined in the following table;

Table 5. Types of individual stressors

| Individual stressor | Definition |
|-------------------------|--|
| Life and career changes | In which stress is related to life events, as well as the differentiation in the individual career changes. |
| Personality type | Related to individual personality traits and characteristics, in which workers with higher work ethics tend to multi task and get placed under pressure. |
| Role characteristics | It occurs when the worker has a role conflict, or in other words when the individual has more than one main role (work, family...), that could leads to incompatibility and complications due to the conflicting demands of the different roles. |

Source: (Arrman & Björk, 2017)

- Group stressors: work groups can also be a source for occupational stress (Antonova, 2016, p. 14), group stressors are the following;

Table 6. Types of group stressors

| Group stressor | Definition |
|------------------------|---|
| Group cohesiveness | Cohesiveness is a key element for group success, for better interactions and communication between the co-workers, its absence may result stress. |
| Lack of social support | Receiving social support from the group members to feed one's social battery, the lack of such support may cause stress. |
| Conflicts | Conflicts that occur within work groups are one of the most common reasons that cause significant stress. |

Source: (Arrman & Björk, 2017)

- Organizational stressors: this type of stressors is produced from within the organization (Antonova, 2016, p. 14), this type of stressors is cited down below;

Table 7. Types of organizational stressors

| Organizational stressor | Definition |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Policies | Organizational policies may cause stress if they are unrealistic, harsh and too demanding. |
| Structure | And defect or flaw in the organizational structure may cause stress for the individuals affected by said structure. |
| Processes | Insufficient and ineffective communication within the organizational process can be stressful. |
| Conditions | Poor work condition, especially physical conditions, can be very stressful for employees. |

Source: (Arrman & Björk, 2017)

- Extra organizational stressors: since the organization itself is effected by external factors then its' employees also get effected by said factors (Arrman & Björk, 2017, p. 9); occupational stress does not only come from within the employee and his

organizational environment, there are in addition external factors that may cause stress for the employee, such as family and financial conditions (Antonova, 2016, p. 15).

2.2.5. Effects of occupational stress

The higher level of stress the more bad influence it would have on the organization as well as the employees themselves (Arrman & Björk, 2017, p. 10);

Table 8. effects of occupation stress on individuals

| |
|--|
| Employees who suffer from occupational stress tend to: |
| Be distressed and get irritated easily; |
| Relaxing and concentrating becomes increasingly tougher; |
| Have difficulties when it comes to making decisions; |
| Be less committed to their work; |
| As well as physical problems (tiredness, headaches, blood pressure, sleep difficulties). |

Source: (Mosadeghrad, 2014)

As for the organizational level employees who suffer from a higher level tend to have a decrease in their individual performance which leads to poor performance that would affect the group and organizational global performance in the long term (Antonova, 2016, p. 24), this damage would impact the organization just as much as it does to the employee, both on an internal and external level (Antonova, 2016, p. 24).

2.2.6. Managing occupational stress

Due to the damaging impact of occupation stress, it's deemed important to try to manage it in the attempt of avoiding the consequences, because although most of these consequences harm the employees themselves, the long-term effect would harm the organization s well, therefore, organizations should engage into policies, measures and actions to try to prevent occupational stress and manage it properly to avoid the negative results (Antonova, 2016, p. 24).

Occupational stress management can be achieved by sparring the employee some freedom in his work and the way he performs it, improving the work conditions, providing social support for the employee, especially from co-workers within work groups, the positive feedback from the employee's supervisor can also minimize the appearance of occupational stress and enrich their motivation and enhance their creativity at work, as well as improved communication

within the groups and between the employees and their supervisors, lastly, organizations' management should try to pay attention to their employees' need, a satisfied employee is less likely to be stressed at work (Antonova, 2016, p. 25).

2.3. Emotional intelligence

Ever since the concept of emotional intelligence got popularized by professors Mayer Salovey and Daniel Goleman back in the 90s, it gained fast-growing attention in the area of research and studies, the concept has grown to be remarkably prevalent in the organizational world during the past decade (Carter, 2015, p. 23); EI nowadays is a quite relevant element in the working environment for employees and managers (Minakshi, 2016, p. 13).

2.3.1. Emotions

Emotion is an important element of our lives since it influences all aspects of our lives, whether professional or personal, being that they are the ingredient that leads to the act of feeling which itself acts as a motivator and influencer of one's behaviour, they also play a key in "social survival" in life in general as well as in work-life (Minakshi, 2016, p. 13).

Emotions were once considered taboo in the workplace and lurked in the background, however, researchers have come to show that without proper management of emotions, decisions may not be in the best interest, today the ability to manage one's emotions in the workplace is highly cared for as they can influence one's performance negatively if not managed properly (Gryn, 2010, p. 14), this requires the ability to understand and regulate emotions both in oneself and in others, which is foundational to the development of the concept "Emotional Intelligence" (Kathungu, 2010, p. 18).

2.3.2. Intelligence

Intelligence is described as "the ability to profit from experience, acquire knowledge, think abstractly, act purposefully, or adapt to changes in the environment" (Gryn, 2010, p. 14), in the beginning, intelligence was only related to "Intelligence Quotient", people's mental ability was the representative of their intelligence, today high IQ may be enough for academic performance (Minakshi, 2016, p. 17), however, IQ alone is not enough when it comes to work-life and work performance, the work environment is based on the concept of "multiple

intelligence” that consists of several skills, abilities, traits and competencies (Minakshi, 2016, p. 18).

The multiple intelligences concept consists of intelligence quotient, practical intelligence, spiritual intelligence, successful intelligence and last but not least emotional intelligence (Kathungu, 2010, p. 18; Minakshi, 2016, p. 18).

2.3.3. Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence has added a new dimension to our knowledge of human intelligence; it has expanded the horizon of basic intelligence and stressed a few other abilities and skills that are essential for people’s existence in society (Minakshi, 2016, p. 21).

Emotional intelligence has been defined by different researchers according to their understanding of the concept of EI;

Salovey and Mayer (1990), first defined the concept of emotional intelligence when they came up with it as *“the part of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and other’s feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions”*;

Salovey and Mayer (1997), refined their original definition of emotional intelligence and defined EI as *“a set of abilities to perceive emotions, to access and generate feelings so as to aid thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth”*;

Goleman (1998), defined emotional intelligence as *“the ability to understand one’s emotions and those of people around us, to motivate ourselves and to manage emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships”*;

Bar-on (1997), defined emotional intelligence as *“an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies and skills that influence one’s ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures”*;

Cooper and Sawef (1997), defined emotional intelligence as *“the ability to sense, understand, and effectively apply the power and acumen of emotions as a source of human energy, information, connection, and influence”*;

Weinsinger (1998), defined emotional intelligence as *“the intelligent use of emotions: you intentionally make your emotions work for you by using them to help guide your behavior and thinking in ways that enhance your results”*;

Singh (2004), defined emotional intelligence as *“an ability of an individual to appropriately and successfully respond to a variety of emotional stimuli educed from the inner self and the immediate environment, and that EI constitutes three psychological dimensions: emotional competence, emotional maturity and emotional sensitivity. These dimensions motivate an individual to recognize truthfully, interpret honestly, and handle tactfully the dynamics of human behavior”*;

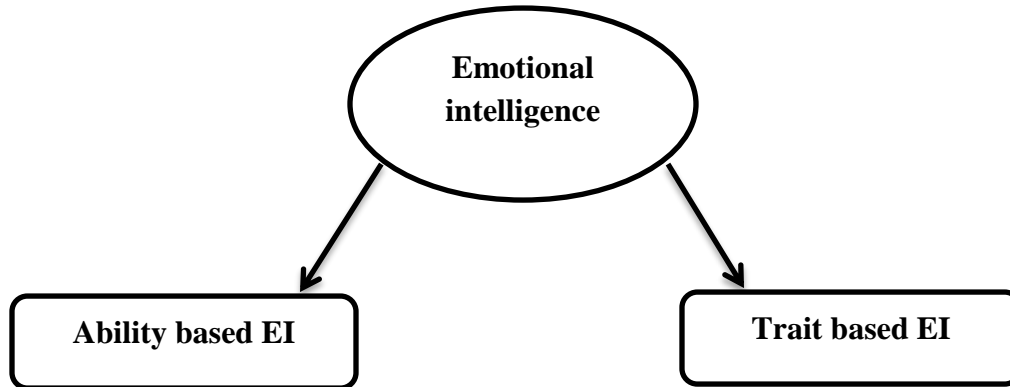
Shanwal (2004), defined emotional intelligence as *“the awareness of use of emotions and their utilization within the parameters of individual cognitive styles to cope with situations and problems”*;

Kunnanatt (2004), defined emotional intelligence as *“the ability of an individual to use emotions as a guiding tool for interpersonal effectiveness in his or her social environment to produce win-win relationships and outcomes for him or her and others”*.

2.3.4. Models of emotional intelligence

There are two main models known for emotional intelligence;

Figure 5. models of emotional intelligence



Source: adapted from (Gryn, 2010).

- Ability-based EI: this is the model that Salovey and Mayer came up with when they first brought up the concept of emotional intelligence in the 90s, they viewed EI as an ability to process emotions efficiently and being able to use the processed information for oneself and to help one understand and deal with others (Gryn, 2010, p. 18), this model defines EI as the ability to perceive, understand, manage and use emotions to facilitate thinking (Minakshi, 2016, p. 30).
- Trait-based EI: which is the model of Goleman and Bar-on, they think that emotional intelligence includes not only mental abilities related to intelligence and emotion but also other personality dispositions and traits such as motives and sociability (Gryn, 2010, p. 19), therefore the trait-based model views EI as a wide array of emotional and social competencies and skills that drive managerial performance and facilitate intelligent behaviors (Minakshi, 2016, p. 30).

2.3.5. Intrapersonal and interpersonal skills

Emotional intelligence consists of two main categories of skills, interpersonal skills and intrapersonal skills;

- Interpersonal skills: is the ability to understand other people, they are the behaviors and tactics a person uses to interact with others effectively. In the business world, the term refers to an employee's ability to work well with others, especially his co-workers and

colleagues. Interpersonal skills range from communication and listening to attitude and deportment (Minakshi, 2016, p. 26);

- Intrapersonal skills: it is the ability to understand oneself and to operate effectively in one's environment, they are the internal abilities and behaviors that help you manage emotions and cope with challenges (Minakshi, 2016, p. 26).

2.3.6. Importance of EI in the workplace

Emotional intelligence has been proven to help people succeed in life in general as well as in the workplace; studies showed that job performance is very highly affected by emotional intelligence as the employee with a higher rate of EI tend to perform better due to the set of interpersonal skills and intrapersonal skills that those with lower EI don't have (Kathungu, 2010).

CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

In the following chapter, we shall present the methodological approach used in order to treat our research problem, and we clarify the instrument used for our data collection.

The research approach

In the following section, we present and justify the research model, the methodology and the instruments used in our study.

1. The conceptual model of the research

This research aims to study the association between emotional intelligence, occupational stress and employee performance, for a better understanding of how these 3 concepts function with one another in today's work environment; by doing so we, therefore, try to bring to light the moderating role held by emotional intelligence in the relationship between occupational stress and employee performance;

Our study is in the mission of verifying phenomenon that has been already studied and previously proven by research and literature in the intention of proving them right or debunking said beliefs ([Ramona, 2019](#)), ([Sadovyy, Sanchez-Gomez, & Bresó, 2021](#)), ([Tennakoon, 2021](#)).

On the whole, this study aims to test the causality of assumed relationships, it involved testing the hypotheses developed based on the existing literature, our global research hypothesis (and our sub-hypotheses) would be tested to be validated or debunked, and eventually provide a valid answer for our research question and attain our research objective; therefore, our research is explanatory ([Ramona, 2019](#)).

2. Research methodology

In order to answer our research question and verify our hypotheses we conducted a quantitative research using the questionnaire instrument, we employed a quantitative instrument for data collection.

The choice of our research methodology approach has been based on our review of the literature and various past studies and researches, in which more than 60 recent articles were explored, the big majority of the articles selected to back our research model have all opted for a quantitative method to measure our variables (EI, OS and EP) as well as to prove the

association among said variables; therefore, our research selected methodology is justified by numerous previously conducted studies conducted on our topic (Ramona, 2019), (Tennakoon, 2021)(Maduwanthi, 2021), (Kumara & Prashantha, 2021), (Sadovyy, Sánchez-Gómez, & Bresó, 2021), (Gerungan, Kindangen, & Saerang, 2022).

The goal of the study at hand was to provide statistical results that would help us prove the credibility of our sub hypotheses, by doing so we will be able to deliver the relationship between all three of our variables and expectantly verifies our global hypothesis.

3. Population and sampling

3.1. Research population

The population of our research is represented by the 55 employees of the Human Resource Department of NAFTAL; the choice of the population was based on the simple fact that our topic applies to employees only, moreover, based on several consulted articles (Ramona, 2019), (Sadovyy, Sanchez-Gomez, & Bresó, 2021), (Tennakoon, 2021), it was judged preferable if the set of employees that represent our population experienced similar work environments and conditions, for the reason that those factors can affect our research variables (emotional intelligence, occupational stress and employee performance), for that reasoning we opted for the employees of a singular department to obtain valid results.

3.2. Sample

Since the volume of the investigated population is reduced, the research sample is identical to the research population; therefore, our sample consists of all 55 of the HR department of NAFTAL, so our sample is 100% representative of the research population.

4. Measurement tool

We conducted a survey relying on the questionnaire instrument as a method of collecting the data needed to measure and analyse our variables and to carry out our quantitative study (Ramona, 2019), (Sadovyy, Sanchez-Gomez, & Bresó, COVID-19: How the stress generated by the pandemic may affect work performance through the moderating role of emotional intelligence, 2021), (Tennakoon, 2021), (Satrina, Wardi, & Rasyid, 2021), (Liu, Balamurugan, & Seetharam, 2021), (Gerungan, Kindangen, & Saerang, 2022).

5. Survey structure

5.1. Administration modes of the survey

The questionnaire was administered online using the Google Forms platform in the English language; it was later on translated into French and Arabic to facilitate the exchange for both parties, and the results were then translated back into the research language (English).

The administration of our questionnaire took several modes; it had first been distributed online within the human resource department of NAFTAL employees, aside from the online method, a face to face method was used on a small number of employees.

5.2 Survey components

Our questionnaire is organized around 04 sections; the first section has been dedicated to basic multiple-choice questions to gather data that would serve us in describing the employees of our sample, the information gathered involved their gender, age, family situation and position within the company and their experience level.

The remaining 03 sections of the survey have been dedicated to measuring our research variables (EI, OS and EP); each variable had 01 section assigned to it including a dozen of questions in which the 5-point Likert scale was employed to rank the responses. ([Ramona, 2019](#)), ([Sadovyy, Sánchez-Gómez, & Bresó, 2021](#)), ([Tennakoon, 2021](#)).

5.3 Measures

The 1st measured variable was emotional intelligence, since it's a complex concept several methods and scales were developed to measure it, however, they all go around the fact that in order to be able to measure the emotional intelligence level in an individual, the questions asked should surround the two types of skills that found the general concept: Intrapersonal skills and interpersonal skills; both have been already discussed in our review of literature as well as our conceptual framework ([Minakshi, 2016](#); [Ramona, 2019](#); [Tennakoon, 2021](#); [Varshney & Varshney, 2020](#)).

In order to measure employees' emotional intelligence, we opted for the short version of the frequently used TEIQue model ([Petrides, 2009](#)); the content of this questionnaire is presented in the table down below:

Table 9. *Content of the emotional intelligence questionnaire*

| Variable | Measuring scale | Author |
|------------------------|--|------------------|
| Emotional intelligence | <p>The scale used for this variable is a 5items Likert scale;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -I can easily express and communicate my emotions. -I find it easy to stand up for my rights. -I'm a highly motivated person. -I find it easy to regulate my feelings and emotions. -I have a positive perspective on most things. -I can effectively communicate with people easily. -I adapt easily to new circumstances and new environments. | (Petrides, 2009) |

Source: created by the researcher

The 2nd measured variable was occupational stress, the occupational stress questionnaire that was employed revolved around the dimensions of stress that were previously discussed in our first chapter, which are work overload, time pressure, social distress and home-work balance (Antonova, 2016), (Arrman & Björk, 2017), (Ramona, 2019).

Occupational stress was measured using a simplified form of the PMI model (Pressure Management Indicator Questionnaire) (Williams & Cooper, 1998); the later surrounded all the different dimensions that form the foundation of occupational stress, the content of the questionnaire is presented in the table down below:

Table 10. Content of the occupational stress questionnaire

| Variable | Measuring scale | Author |
|---------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Occupational stress | <p>The scale used for this variable is a 5items Likert scale;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - My duties and responsibilities at work are very clear to me. - If work gets difficult, my colleagues help me. - I have to work under time pressure. - Conflicts and problems are very common between colleagues. - I'm able to take sufficient breaks from work. - I am respected at work. - I feel pressured in work. - I think about work even outside working hours. | (Williams & Cooper, 1998) |

Source: created by the researcher.

Our 3rd variable to be measured was employee performance, it has been previously explained in our literature review and conceptual framework that the dimensions of employees' individual performance are task performance, contextual performance and adaptive performance (Achte, Delaflore, Fabre, Magny, & songeur, 2010), (Pradhan & Lalatendu, 2017); it was also previously discussed in the first chapter that employee individual performance indicators are: quantity of the performance, its' quality, its' timeliness, its' cost-effectiveness and the employee's absenteeism level (NKEMAKOLAM, 2020)

Therefore, to measure this variable we opted for a model that was developed to surround the dimensions and factors that was mentioned (Koopmans, Bernaards, Hildebrandt, de Vet, & van der Beek, 2014); the content of the questionnaire is illustrated down below:

Table 11. *Content of the employee performance questionnaire*

| Variable | Measuring scale | Author |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Employee performance | <p>The scale used for this variable is a 5items Likert scale;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I achieve the tasks and duties related to my work easily and efficiently. - I'm satisfied with the work I achieve. - I'm able to achieve a large number of tasks at work. - I take part in solving problems at work. - The quality of my work always meets the expectations. - I make extra efforts when the company goes through hard times. - I don't make a lot of absentees from work. - I'm capable of finishing my tasks and duties on time. - I think that my personal efforts add to achievement of the company's objectives. | (Koopmans, Bernaards, Hildebrandt, de Vet, & van der Beek, 2014) |

Source: created by the researcher

5.4. Data analysis

Statistical analysis and treatments are the core of quantitative research, the used types of analysis in our study are the followings:

- Descriptive stats: to provide a simple description of our research sample's characteristics.
- Validity and reliability test: our variables' measurement model was valuated using Cronbach's alpha test (Ramona, 2019), (Sadovyy, Sánchez-Gómez, & Bresó, 2021), (Tennakoon, 2021).
- Correlation analysis: to analyze the association among our variables.
- Simple regression test: to analyze the impacts between our variables and test our hypotheses (Sadovyy, Sánchez-Gómez, & Bresó, 2021), (Tennakoon, 2021).

The testing of our research hypotheses among our variables took the path represented down below:

Table 12. hypotheses testing

| Hypothesis test | Independent variable | Dependent variable |
|-----------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| H1(a) | Occupational stress | Employee performance |
| H1 (b) | Emotional intelligence | Occupational stress |
| H1 (c) | Emotional intelligence | Employee performance |

Source: created by the researcher

The testing of the research hypotheses as well as the validity and reliability testing were achieved with the aid of Microsoft excel and SPSS.

Results and discussion

1. Results

1.1. Demographic characteristics of the sample

The selected sample size was fifty-five (55) participants, the table below showcases the demographic characteristics of our research sample

Table 13. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

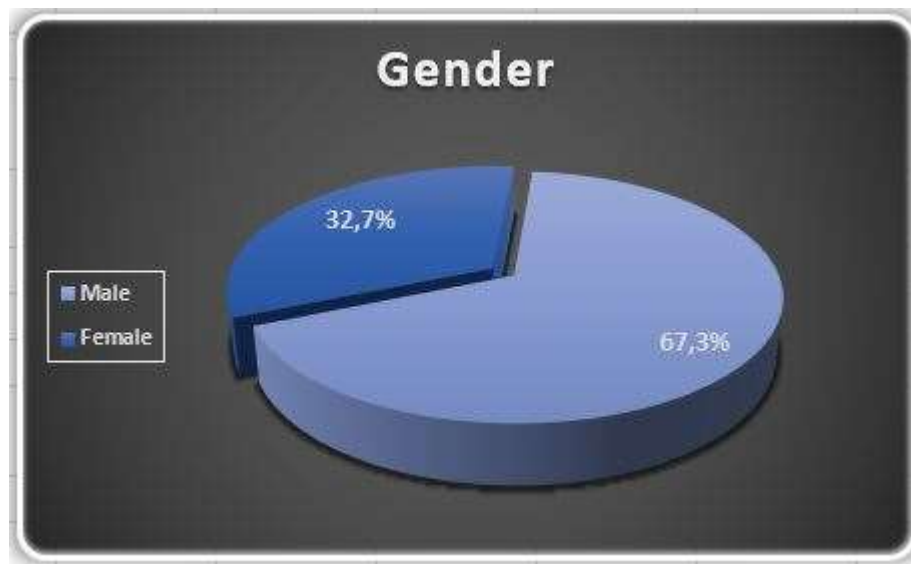
| Variable | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Gender | Gender | Frequency | Percentage |
| | Male | 37 | 67,3% |
| | Female | 18 | 32,7% |
| | Total | 55 | 100% |
| Age | Range | Frequency | Percentage |
| | Less than 20 | 05 | 09,1% |
| | 21-30 | 19 | 34,4% |
| | 31-40 | 22 | 40% |
| | 41-50 | 09 | 16,4% |
| | More than 50 | 05 | 09,1% |
| | Total | 55 | 100% |
| Marital status | Status | Frequency | Percentage |
| | Single | 14 | 25,5% |
| | Married without kids | 34 | 61,7% |
| | Married with kids | 3 | 05,5% |
| | Divorced with kids | 4 | 07,3% |
| | Total | 55 | 100% |
| Position in the company | Rank | Frequency | Percentage |
| | Superior senior | 17 | 30,9% |
| | Senior | 27 | 49,1% |
| | Manager/supervisor | 05 | 9,1% |
| | Worker | 06 | 10,9% |
| | Total | 55 | 100% |

| Professional experience level | Range | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|-------------|
| | Less than 1 year | 03 | 05,5% |
| | 1-5 years | 04 | 07,3% |
| | 6-10 years | 04 | 07,3% |
| | 11-15 years | 15 | 27,3% |
| | 16-20 years | 12 | 21,7% |
| | More than 20 years | 17 | 30,9% |
| | Total | 55 | 100% |

The table above demonstrates the demographic characteristics of the studied sample; it shows that the majority of our sample are men, ranging between 31 and 40 years old, married without kids, seniors within the company with a range of more than 20 years of experience.

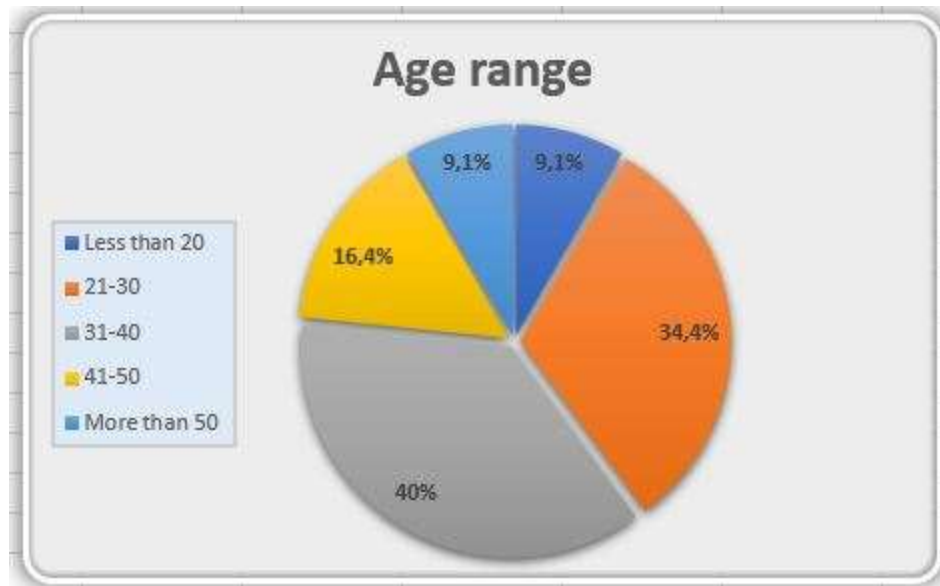
1.2 Graphical representations of the sample demographic characteristics

Figure 6. Graphical representation of the sample according to their gender



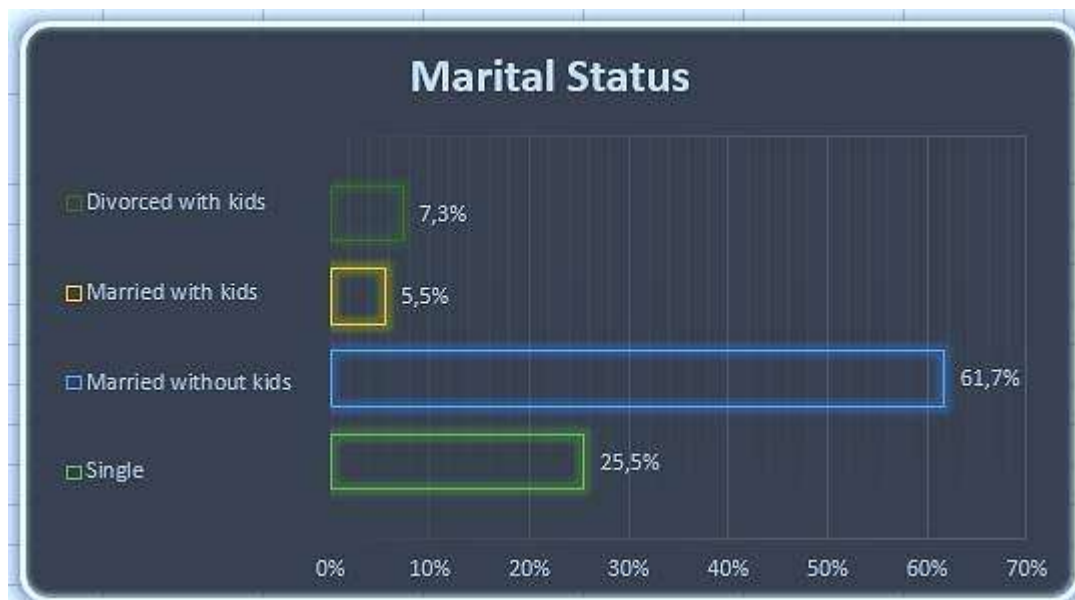
The figure above shows that the majority of our sample consists of males with 67,3% of the respondents.

Figure 7. Graphical representation of the sample according to their age range



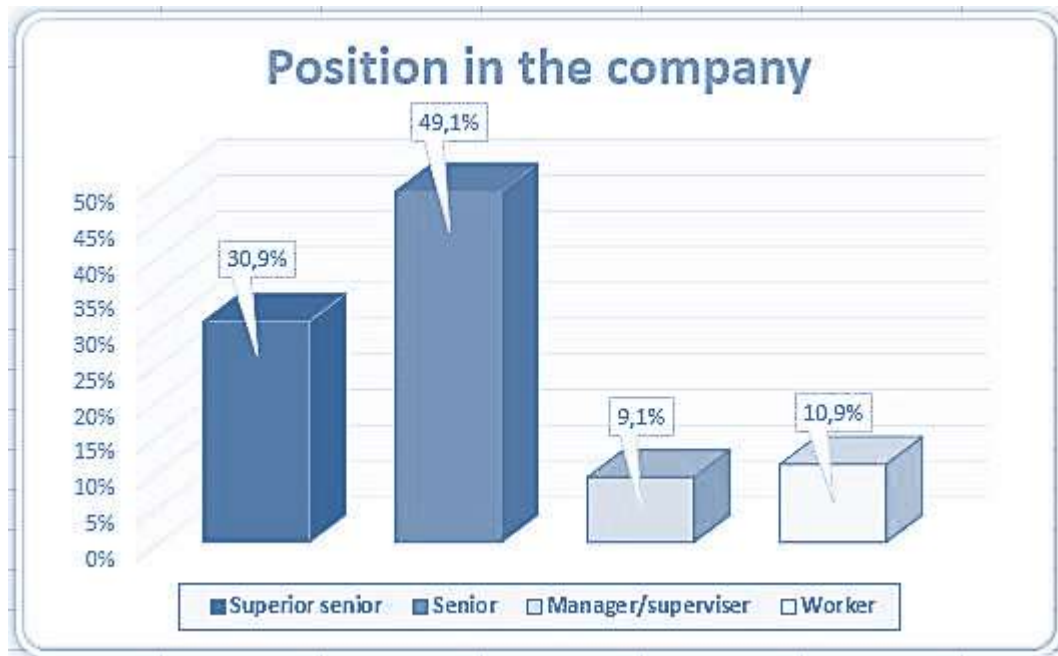
From the figure above it can be deduced that those within the age range of 31- 40 years constituted the highest percentage of our sample with of 40%, followed by those within the range of 21-30 years constituted of 34,4%.

Figure 8. Graphical representation of the sample according to their marital status



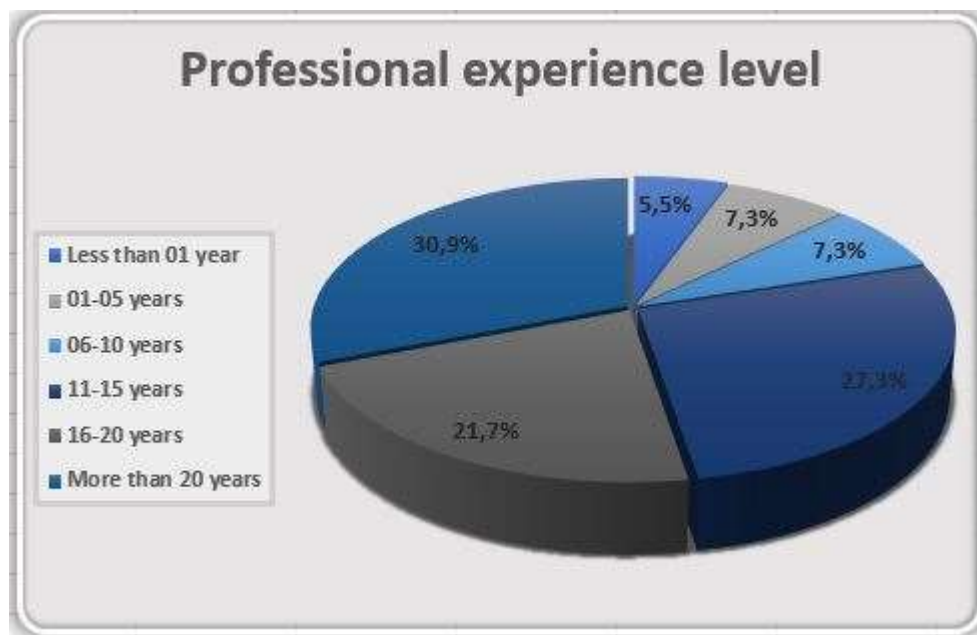
We see that 61,7% of the total respondents are married without kids, 25,9% are single; therefore, it can be concluded that the majority of the sample are married without kids.

Figure 9. Graphical representation of the sample according to their company position



We note from the figure that 49,1% of the total respondents are Seniors, 30,9% are Superior Seniors; It can be concluded therefore that the majority of the respondents are seniors.

Figure 10. Graphical representation of the sample according to their professional experience level



We note from the previous figure that those with a professional experience that exceeds 20 years constituted the highest percentage with 30,9% of the total studied sample, followed by those within the experience range of 11-15 years constituting of 27,3%.

1.2. Reliability measures

1.2.1. Global reliability

The Cronbach's Alpha test for reliability was done on full dimensions without any data being excluded.

Table 14. Global Cronbach's Alpha

| Fiability statistics | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Alpha Cronbach | Number of items |
| 0,926 | 23 |

According to the results of Table N°16 the value of Cronbach's Alpha of all the measures was 0.926 which is excellent.

1.2.2 Reliability test of variables

Table 15. Reliability testing of variables

| Variables | Cronbach's Alpha Value | Number of items |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Emotional intelligence | 0,876 | 07 |
| Occupational stress | 0,658 | 07 |
| Employee performance | 0,924 | 09 |

We notice from the table above that the value of Cronbach's Alpha of Emotional intelligence was 0.876, the Cronbach's Alpha value of Occupational stress was 0.658 and the Cronbach's Alpha value of Employee performance was 0.924, which are acceptable values (Ramona, 2019).

1.3. Descriptive statistic and Correlation of the study variables

1.3.1. Descriptive statistics of the variables

We have computed our three variables by regrouping items of the different dimensions that were mentioned in the previous chapter of each of our main variables (emotional intelligence, Occupational stress and Employee performance) to calculate the global mean & the standard deviation of each variable, and measure where the agreement & the disagreement comes from as:

Emotional intelligence=MEAN (work_emotion1 TO work_emotion7)

Occupational stress=MEAN (work_stress1 TO work_stress7)

Employee performance=MEAN (performane_employee1 TO performane_employee9)

Table 16. Descriptive statistics of variables

| Variables | Mean | Std. |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Emotional intelligence | 3,88 | 0,920 |
| Occupational stress | 3,64 | 0,444 |
| Employee performance | 4,28 | 0,787 |

In descriptive statistic include mean and standard deviations of all variables of the study are presented in Table N°18. The mean of emotional intelligence 3.88 (SD=0.920), the mean of occupational stress 3.64 (SD=0.444) and the mean of Employee performance 4.28 (SD=0.787).

1.3.2. Bi-Correlation analysis

Table 17. Descriptive statistics of variables

| Variables | Correlation | Emotional intelligence | Occupational stress | Employee performance |
|--|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Emotional intelligence | Spearman Correlation | 1 | ,375** | ,823** |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | / | ,005 | ,000 |
| | N | 55 | 55 | 55 |
| Occupational stress | Spearman Correlation | ,375** | 1 | ,327* |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,005 | / | ,015 |
| | N | 55 | 55 | 55 |
| Employee performance | Spearman Correlation | ,823** | ,327* | 1 |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,000 | ,015 | / |
| | N | 55 | 55 | 55 |
| ** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 (1%) level | | | | |
| * . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 (5%) level | | | | |

According to the results on the table above, we can determine that all variables (EI, OS and EP) are significantly and positively correlated with one another.

Emotional intelligence is correlated very strongly with employee performance ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.823$). Emotional intelligence correlated averagely with occupational stress ($p < 0.01$, $r = 0.375$) and also occupational stress correlated averagely with employee performance ($p < 0.05$, $r = 0.327$).

1.3.3. Spearman Correlation of the items of Emotional intelligence

Table 18. Emotional intelligence Inter Item's correlation

| Items | Correlation | Emotional intelligence |
|---|----------------------|------------------------|
| 01-I can easily express and communicate my emotions | Spearman Correlation | ,799** |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,000 |
| | N | 55 |
| 02-I find it easy to stand up for my rights | Spearman Correlation | ,819** |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,000 |
| | N | 55 |
| 03-I'm a highly motivated person | Spearman Correlation | ,748** |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,000 |
| | N | 55 |
| 04-I find it easy to regulate my feelings and emotions | Spearman Correlation | ,667** |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,000 |
| | N | 55 |
| 05-I have a positive perspective on most things | Spearman Correlation | ,784** |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,000 |
| | N | 55 |
| 06-I can effectively communicate with people easily | Spearman Correlation | ,790** |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,000 |
| | N | 55 |
| 07-I find it easy to adjust and adapt to different circumstances and new environments | Spearman Correlation | ,709** |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,000 |
| | N | 55 |
| ** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 (1%) level | | |

We notice from the table above that the item number (02) is very strongly correlated, the others items (01, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07) are strongly correlated.

1.3.4 Spearman Correlation of the items of occupational stress

Table 19. Occupational stress Inter Item's correlation

| Items | Correlation | Occupational stress |
|--|----------------------|---------------------|
| 01-My duties and responsibilities at work are very clear to me | Spearman Correlation | ,405** |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,002 |
| | N | 55 |
| 02-if work gets difficult, my colleagues help me | Spearman Correlation | ,405** |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,002 |
| | N | 55 |
| 03-I have to work under time pressure | Spearman Correlation | ,551** |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,000 |
| | N | 55 |
| 04-Conflicts and problems are very common between colleagues | Spearman Correlation | ,726** |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,000 |
| | N | 55 |
| 05-I'm able to take sufficient breaks from work | Spearman Correlation | ,655** |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,000 |
| | N | 55 |
| 06-I am respected at work | Spearman Correlation | ,545** |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,000 |
| | N | 55 |
| 07-I feel pressured in work | Spearman Correlation | ,780** |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,000 |
| | N | 55 |
| **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 (1%) level | | |

We notice from the table above that the items number (04, 05, 07) are strongly correlated, the others items (01, 03, 04, 06) are averagely correlated.

1.3.5 Correlation of the items of Employee performance:

Table 20. Employee performance Inter Item's correlation

| Items | Correlation | Employee performance |
|--|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 01-I achieve the tasks and duties related to my work easily and efficiently | Spearman Correlation | ,880^{**} |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,000 |
| | N | 55 |
| 02-I'm satisfied with the work I achieve | Spearman Correlation | ,792^{**} |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,000 |
| | N | 55 |
| 03-I'm able to achieve a large number of tasks at work | Spearman Correlation | ,860^{**} |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,000 |
| | N | 55 |
| 04-I take part in solving problems and conflicts at work | Spearman Correlation | ,765^{**} |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,000 |
| | N | 55 |
| 05-The quality of my work always meets the expectations | Spearman Correlation | ,768^{**} |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,000 |
| | N | 55 |
| 06-I make extra efforts when the company goes through hard times | Spearman Correlation | ,846^{**} |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,000 |
| | N | 55 |
| 07-I don't make a lot of absentees from work | Spearman Correlation | ,765^{**} |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,000 |
| | N | 55 |
| 08-I'm capable of finishing my tasks and duties on time | Spearman Correlation | ,760^{**} |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,000 |
| | N | 55 |
| 09-I think that my personal efforts add to achievement of the company's objectives | Spearman Correlation | ,740^{**} |
| | Sig.(bilateral) | ,000 |
| | N | 55 |
| ** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 (1%) level | | |

According to the table above the items number (01, 03, 06) are very strongly correlated, the others items (02, 04, 05, 07, 08, 09) are strongly correlated.

1.4. Normality distribution of variables (Q-Q Plot)

The charts down below demonstrate the Q-Q normal trace of the distribution graphs of our variables, (Emotional intelligence, Occupational stress and Employee's performance), though we notice a slight aberration, most of the points are close to the charts which proves that the residuals are normally distributed.

Figure 11. Trace Q-Q normal of Occupational stress

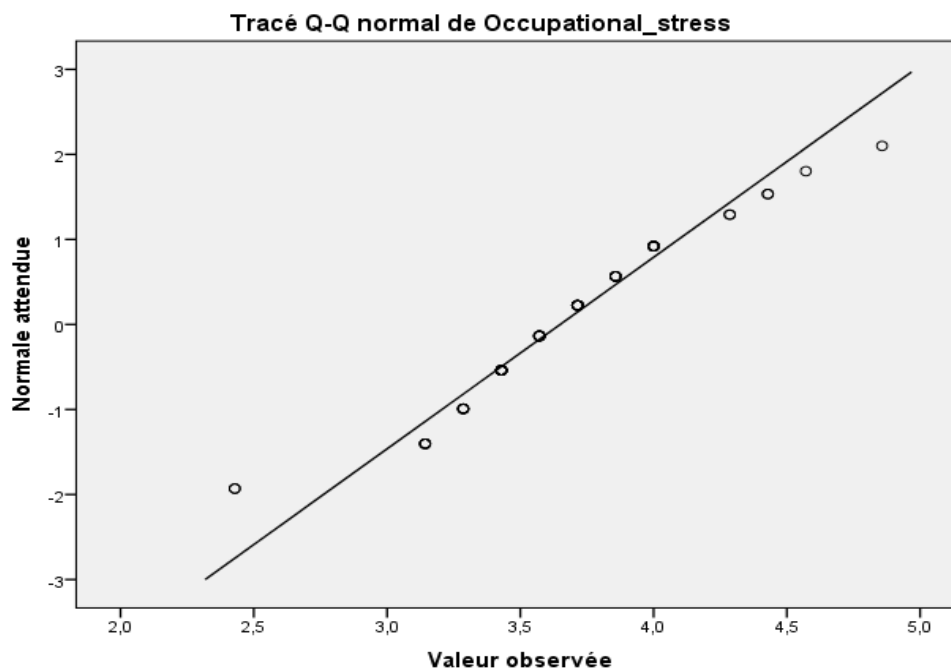


Figure 12. Q-Q normal of Employee performance

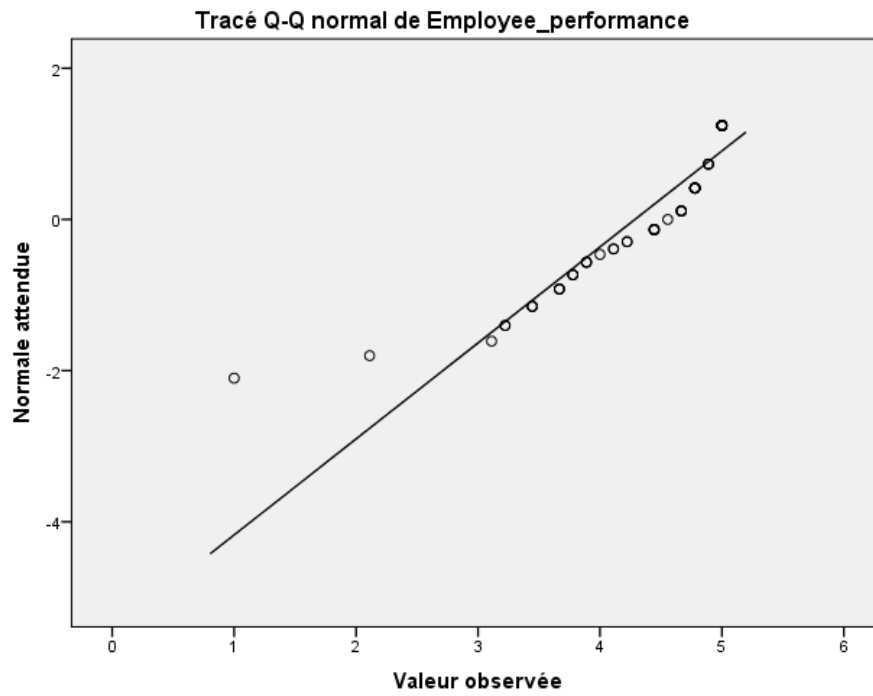
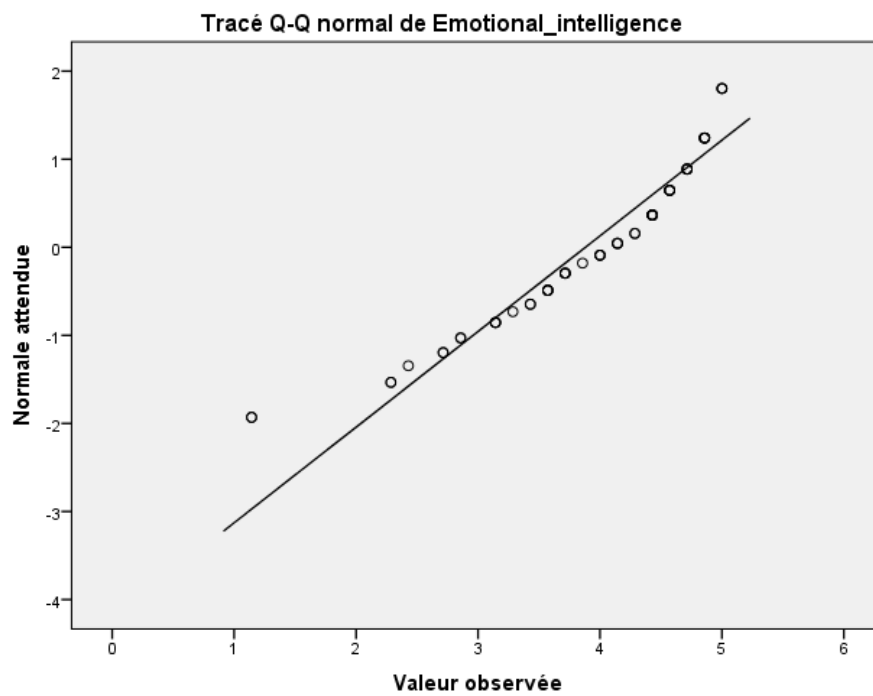


Figure 13. Q-Q normal of Emotional intelligence



1.5 Hypotheses testing

As mentioned previously in our research model, in order to provide an answer for the research question and confirm or refute our global hypothesis, we need to test our sub hypotheses; we will implement simple linear regression to test our three sub hypotheses.

H1 (a): Occupational stress has a significant negative effect on employee's performance.

The linear regression model for this hypothesis is showcased in the following outputs:

Table 21. Model 1 overview of H1 (a)

| Model | R | R ² | R ² adjusted | Erreur standard deviation |
|-------|-------|----------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | 0,327 | 0,107 | 0,090 | 0,751 |

Table 22. Significance test of R2 of H1 (a)

| ANOVA | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|-----|-------|--------------|
| | Sum of squares | DDL | F | Sig. |
| Regression | 3,591 | 1 | 6,365 | 0,015 |
| Residual | 29,907 | 53 | / | / |
| Total | 33,498 | 54 | / | / |

Table 23. Regression coefficients of H1 (a)

| | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | Sig. |
|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| Constant (β_0) | 2,804 | / | 0,013 |
| Occupational stress (β_{01}) | 0,581 | 0,327 | 0,015 |

According to the outputs above, we notice that the variable has a significant value (0.015) which is less than the decision rule value of 0.05, therefore, our model is significant, and the constant has a value of 2.804 and the correlation's Pearson between the occupational stress & employee performance lead to establishing a positive relationship between the independent variable & the dependent one.

According to the statistical results, we can say that the H1 (a) is not validated; in our sample it is found that occupational stress has a significant positive effect on employee's performance.

The relationship between occupational stress and employee's performance was captured using the unstandardized coefficients:

$$EP = 2,804 + (0,581 * OC)$$

H1 (b): Emotional intelligence has a significant positive effect on occupational stress.

The linear regression model for this hypothesis is represented by the following outputs:

Table 24. Model 1 overview of H1 (b)

| Model | R | R ² | R ² adjusted | Erreur standard deviation |
|-------|-------|----------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | 0,375 | 0,141 | 0,125 | 0,005 |

Table 25. Significance test of R2 of H1 (b)

| ANOVA | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|-----|-------|--------------|
| | Sum of squares | DDL | F | Sig. |
| Regression | 1,500 | 1 | 8,693 | 0,005 |
| Residual | 9,146 | 53 | / | / |
| Total | 10,646 | 54 | / | / |

Table 26. Regression coefficients of H1 (b)

| | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | Sig. |
|---|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Constant (β_0) | 2,947 | / | 0,000 |
| Emotional intelligence (β_{02}) | 0,181 | 0,375 | 0,005 |

From the summary above of hypothesis H1 (b) analysis testing, we notice that the variable of emotional intelligence positively impacts occupational stress with 14,1% of variation (**R^2 adjusted = 0,141**).

The β_{02} regression coefficient is of **0,181**, indicating the influence of emotional intelligence on occupational stress, which means the β_{02} value is significant.

The regression had a value of 0.005, which is less than the decision rule value of 0.05, so it is significant.

The results above confirm the hypothesis H1 (b), emotional intelligence has a significant positive effect on occupational stress.

The relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational stress was captured using the unstandardized coefficients:

$$OC=2,947+(0,181*EI)$$

H1 (c): Emotional intelligence has a significant positive effect on employee's performance.

The linear regression model for this hypothesis is showcased by the following outputs:

Table 27. Model 1 overview of H1 (c)

| Model | R | R ² | R ² adjusted | Erreur standard deviation |
|-------|-------|----------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | 0,823 | 0,677 | 0,671 | 0,000 |

Table 28. Significance test of R2 of H1 (c)

| ANOVA | | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|-----|---------|--------------|
| | Sum of squares | DDL | F | Sig. |
| Regression | 22,694 | 1 | 111,315 | 0,000 |
| Residual | 10,805 | 53 | / | / |
| Total | 33,499 | 54 | / | / |

Table 29. Regression coefficients of H1 (c)

| | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | Sig. |
|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| Constant (β_0) | 1,555 | / | 0,000 |
| Emotional intelligence (β_{03}) | 0,704 | 0,823 | 0,000 |

According to the summary above of hypothesis H1 (c) analysis testing, we notice that the variable of emotional intelligence positively impacts employees' performance with 67,1% of variation (**R² adjusted = 0,671**).

The β_{03} regression coefficient is of **0,704** indicating the influence of emotional intelligence on employee's performance, which means the β_{03} value is significant.

The regression had a value of 0.000 which is less than the decision rule value of 0.05, so our model is significant.

The results above confirm the hypothesis H1 (c), Emotional intelligence has a significant positive effect on employee's performance.

The relationship between emotional intelligence and employee's performance was captured using the unstandardized coefficients:

$$EP=1,555+(0,704*EI)$$

2. Discussion of the results

Our empirical study was conducted to answer our research question by testing three sub hypotheses that together would lead to confirming or refuting our global research hypothesis and provide an answer to our research question.

| Hypothesis | Result |
|--|---------------------|
| H1 (a): occupational stress has a significant negative effect on employee performance. | Not confirmed |
| H1 (b): emotional intelligence has a significant positive effect on occupational stress. | confirmed |
| H1 (c): emotional intelligence has a significant positive effect on employee performance. | confirmed |
| Global hypothesis: emotional intelligence has a moderating role on the relationship between occupational stress and employee performance. | Partially confirmed |

Source : created by the researcher

As for our first sub hypothesis "H1 (a)", which is the hypothesis that controls the global hypothesis to a large extent, results of the analysis have showed that occupational stress does in fact significantly effects employee performance, however that impact is positive unlike what our hypothesis predicted, which goes against the results of numerous other studies that were listed in our literature review (Parasad, Vaidya, & Kumar, 2018; Yeboah-Kordee, Amponsah-Tawiah, Adu, & Ashie, 2018; Sehran Khan & Rasheed, 2019; Asghar Khan,

Jabeen, & Manzoor, 2020; Nguyen, Hoang, & Nguyen, 2020; Rasool S. F., Wang, Zhang, & Samma, 2021; Maduwanthi, 2021).

Although our first sub hypothesis was not validated, this was still an expected result and many researchers found the same exact result as ours (Mamoona, 2018); as it was mentioned in the beginning of this research; results are very inconsistent and unpredictable when it comes to the association between occupational stress and employee performance, as some employees find occupational stress to be an obstacle that reduces their performance capacities, while other employees see occupational stress as a motivator that pushes them to do better and increases their performance (Wu, 2011); therefore, this hypothesis had a 50% chance of not being validated.

The impact that occupational stress has employee performance all comes down to the way that occupational stress is perceived and dealt with by the employees, that is the key aspect that would determine the nature of influence it would cause upon their individual performance, which is an aspect that gets thoroughly controlled by their emotional intelligence level (Wu, 2011, p. 21), therefore the results from our two other hypotheses are crucial for this research.

As for our second sub hypothesis “H1 (b)”, it was confirmed that emotional intelligence positively influences occupational stress, a result that is supported by numerous past studies (Kumara & Prashantha, 2021; Valenti, Faraci, & Magnano, 2021; Chakraborty & Saha, 2021; Tennakoon, 2021; Liu, Balamurugan, & Seetharam, 2021), this ascertains that what was mentioned in the theoretical chapter isn’t just words or presumptions and that employees with a higher level of emotional intelligence do in fact perceive, manage and deal with occupational stress in the workplace better than those with lower levels of emotional intelligence as argued by (Liu, Balamurugan, & Seetharam, 2021; Tennakoon, 2021; Valenti, Faraci, & Magnano, 2021; Kumara & Prashantha, 2021; Chakraborty & Saha, 2021).

As for our third and last sub hypothesis “H1 (c)”, results of the analysis confirmed that emotional intelligence has a significant positive influence on employee performance, a result that is similar to numerous past studies (Chong, Falahat, & Lee, 2020; Barreiro & Treglown, 2020; Satrina, Wardi, & Rasyid, 2021; Supramaniam & Singaravelloo, 2021; Gerungan, Kindangen, & Saerang, 2022), so we can settle on the verity that the skills of emotional

intelligence aid employees with securing their work performance as claimed by many researchers (PUTRA, Sarni, & Syamsir, 2021; Satrina, Wardi, & Rasyid, 2021; Chong, Falahat, & Lee, 2020).

From the results that were obtained from our sub hypotheses we can say that our global hypothesis is partially confirmed, for the simple fact that 1/3 of its components was not valid.

The verdict of occupational stress not negatively influencing employee performance in our research sample does not disqualify emotional intelligence as a moderator among them two, on the contrary it makes its role and its moderating effect even more interesting and apparent, especially after confirming that it positively and significantly impacts occupational stress and employee performance separately; since the employees that constitute our research sample have a high level of emotional intelligence that helps them in maintaining both a good work performance and also in perceiving and dealing with stress generated by work, then employees are using their emotional intelligence to moderate the relationship between the two at the same time, this leads us to the assumption that these employees are emotionally intelligent enough to put their stress at work into good use instead of letting it deflate their performance; we can make another assumption by saying that the majority of our research sample are seniors who have long years of experience, these factors could mean that their emotional intelligence is well trained at this point of their career to the point where it can convert their occupational stress into a motivator that boosts their performance, or they just maintain their performance by necessity due to their sensitive position (Wu, 2011, p. 25), this opens doors for more research opportunities to take off from here.

Conclusion

Social behaviors and skills once were overlooked when it comes to the desired and expected qualities of an employee; however, in today's dynamic organizations, those skills are believed to be key competencies that lead to success in this challenging business world.

Through this research, we tried to showcase the importance of one of these social skills from a managerial point of view; the skill in question was emotional intelligence, we tried to illustrate the importance of this easily overlooked skill, by exploring its role in a relationship that is very inconsistent in results of past studies, that is of occupational stress and individual performance among employees; and this was the main objective of our research.

The quantitative study that was conducted on 55 employees that represent the human resource department of *NAFTAL*, have aided us in providing an answer for our research question “*Does emotional intelligence moderate the impact that occupational stress has on employee individual performance?*”. The analysis has led us to these results:

- The first sub hypothesis H1 (a) has been non confirmed, meaning that occupational stress experienced by the employees of our sample impacts their individual performance in a positive way rather than a negative manner, even though this was not our hypothesis, but it was still an expected result,
- The second sub hypothesis H1 (b) has been validated, meaning that emotionally intelligent employees are able to decrease their level of stress due to the positive influence it has,
- Our third sub hypothesis H1 (c) has been confirmed as well, meaning that employees with a higher level of emotional intelligence are better at securing their individual performance at work;

The results obtained above suggest that our global hypothesis is partially confirmed, even though occupational stress influences performance in a positive manner that does not eliminate the role that emotional intelligence holds as a skill that helps these employees with perceiving and dealing with the pressure that is generated from occupational stress in a manner that would transform it into a motivator that encourages and increases their job performance.

As an answer for our research question, we can adopt the indication that employees with a high emotional intelligence level may use this social skill and ability to transform a

phenomenon that is typically considered an obstacle, into a driving force that pushes them into performing even better.

Our research was limited by the time aspect, this limitation however opens doors for future possible researches to take off from where our research has stopped, and conduct a qualitative study to further explore these research results.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

1.

Your gender *

female

Male

2.

Your age *

less than 20

20-30

30-40

40-50

more than 50

3.

family situation *

single

married without kids

married with kids

divorced with kids

4.

position within the company? *

- Superior senior
- senior
- manager/supervisor
- worker

5.

professional experience level *

- less than 1year
- 1-5 years
- 5-10years
- 10-15years
- 15-20years
- more than 20years

Emotions in the work-place

1.

I can easily express and communicate my emotions *

1 2 3 4 5

strongly disagree strongly agree

2.

I find it easy to stand up for my rights

1 2 3 4 5

—strongly disagree —strongly agree

3.

I'm a highly motivated person *

1 2 3 4 5

—strongly disagree —strongly agree

4.

i find it easy to regulate my feelings and emotions *

1 2 3 4 5

—strongly disagree —strongly agree

5.

I have a positive perspective on most things *

1 2 3 4 5

strongly disagree strongly agree

6.

I can effectively communicate with people easily

1 2 3 4 5

strongly disagree strongly agree

7.

**I find it easy to adjust and adapt to different circumstances and new *
environments**

1 2 3 4 5

strongly disagree strongly agree

stress in
the
work-place

1.

My duties and responsibilities at work are very clear to me *

1 2 3 4 5

strongly disagree strongly agree

2.

if work gets difficult, my colleagues help me *

1 2 3 4 5

—strongly disagree —strongly agree—

3.

I have to work under time pressure *

1 2 3 4 5

—strongly disagree —strongly agree—

4.

Conflicts and problems are very commune between colleagues *

1 2 3 4 5

—strongly disagree —strongly agree—

5.

I'm able to take sufficient breaks from work *

1 2 3 4 5

—strongly disagree —strongly agree—

6.

I am respected at work *

1 2 3 4 5

strongly disagree strongly agree

7.

I think about work even outside working hours *

1 2 3 4 5

strongly disagree strongly agree

Employee
performance

1.

I achieve the tasks and duties related to my work easily and efficiently *

1 2 3 4 5

strongly disagree strongly agree

6.

I make extra efforts when the company goes through hard times *

1 2 3 4 5

—strongly disagree —strongly agree

7.

I don't make a lot of absentees from work *

1 2 3 4 5

—strongly disagree —strongly agree

8.

I'm capable of finishing my tasks and duties on time *

1 2 3 4 5

—strongly disagree —strongly agree

9.

I think that my personal efforts add to achievement of the company's objectives *

1 2 3 4 5

—strongly disagree —strongly agree



