

**TO STUDY THE ROLE OF COGNITIVE EMOTION REGULATION IN PREVENTIVE WORK STRESS AMONG EMPLOYEES (CASE STUDY: IMAM KHOMEINI HOSPITAL, ARDABIL CITY)**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the relationship between growth opportunities and leverage of sample firms during 2002 to 2012. The relationship between growth opportunities and company's debt which is considered as a factor for predicting and more importantly for investing and decision making is influenced by complicated aspects of decision making about capital structure of the companies in such a way that there is no consensus among experts in this field. Findings indicate that there is a non-linear relationship between growth opportunities and financial leverage, and real and optimal leverage are close to each other and there is little difference between them. Also, this study calculates the gap between actual and optimal financial leverage which is estimated by partial adjusted model.

**KEYWORDS:** cognitive emotion regulation, preventive work stress, rumination, acceptance

Through using surveying-descriptive method, this research studies the role of cognitive emotion regulation in preventive work stress among employees of Imam Khomeini hospital in Ardabil. The overall goal of present research was to study the impact of cognitive emotion regulation on preventive work stress; data collection is done through document and library method; the required data for hypothesis testing was collected using questionnaire and through a survey of 217 employees of Imam Khomeini hospital in Ardabil city. Data analysis was done through Pearson's correlation coefficients and multi and uni-variant regression analysis. Research findings indicate that there is meaningful relationship between self-blame, acceptance, rumination, refocus on planning, positive reappraisal, catastrophizing, other-blame, positive cognitive regulation and negative cognitive regulation, and preventive work stress. Moreover, the results from uni-variant regression test show that all 9 scales can predict the degree of preventive work stress. And negative cognitive emotion regulation is the most effective variable with regard to preventive work stress.

**INTRODUCTION**

All people with any work they do in the society are in a way under some stress that put pressure on them and prevent them from relaxing. Developments in job condition such as organizational changes, the changes in compensation and wages, job raises, decrease or increase in manpower and social changes put pressure on people and is a source of concern, stress and anxiety for them (Robins, 1998).

Stress is a kind of psychological reaction to venturesome requests and adaptability with the requests that are beyond one's capability. Those requests that cause stress in people are called stress-making factors. Stress is of high importance in organizational behavior management and since work conditions are changing, it is always exist with different levels in an organization. When people face with emotional situations having a good feeling and being optimism are not enough for controlling those situations, but they need to have their best cognitive functions too; in regulating emotion we need an optimal cooperation between cognition and emotion for controlling negative conditions (Auchesner, Gross, 2005). Human beings interpret whatever they face with and it is cognitive interpretation that determines people's reactions with regard to their environment. From Beck's point of view, negative opinions about oneself is a key factor in depression and negative attitudes are considered as the main part of changes in mood (Jimenez, Niles and Park, 2010). On the other hand the changes in different parts of cognitive system function such as memory and consciousness will lead to changes in mood. Therefore, we cannot ignore the role of cognitive emotion regulation in adaptation of people to stress-making events (Kraaij and Garnefski, 2006). In modern approaches the deficiencies in cognitive controls are considered as the reasons for emotional disorders, in a way that disability in controlling negative emotions is considered as the result of negative belief and thoughts about anxiety and using inefficient ways for its controlling (Wells, 2007).

Responding styles include psychological and practical endeavors for controlling innate and environmental requirements and the conflict between them. Hence, the concept of cognitive emotion regulation is exactly related to the concept of responding (Olak, Garnefski and Kraaij, 2007). Responding style can regulate emotion in three dimensions: 1. Cognitive, 2. behavioral interventions, and 3. a combination of cognitive and behavioral dimensions (Parkinson and Totterdell, 1999). Regulating emotion has a significant role in the development of emotional disorders and it includes a broad area of physiological and behavioral consciousness and unconsciousness and cognitive processes as well (Gross and Munoz, 1995). Cognitive emotion regulation is referred to all cognitive styles that everybody uses to increase, decrease or preserve the emotion (Gross, 2001).

The aim of this research is to obtain useful results for the employees in different hospitals and organizations to improve their organizational qualifications in line with organizational goals. Hence we try to elicit information from the population under study for the following question: How is the level of employee stress in the organization? And on the basis of answers to this question, what are the ways in which we can help organization to regulate cognitive emotion among employees and reduce work stress? The overall goal of present research is to answer to this question: What is the relationship among different dimensions of cognitive regulation emotion in causing preventive work stress among employees of Imam Khomeini hospital in Ardabil city?

### Theoretical framework

Stress is along with some requests and obligations, which impedes one from acquiring the results that he wants. Two factors are important in realization of stress: first the result of the work must be unknown; second the result must be of high importance. Hence stress exists when there is doubt or uncertainty about something and those who are uncertain about success or failure of something have high levels of stress. In the case when the result is unimportant there will be no stress (Noori, 1998). Moreover, stress is an organic state which is generally accompanied with increase in breathing, blood pressure and heartbeat, paleness, muscular tension and cold forehead sweating and under certain condition can lead to changes in physical function (Azad, 1995).

Role conflict is one of the preventive stress-creating factors, which is related to environment. It is referred to opposing expectancies that others may expect from an individual. The role conflict of information center operators is good example in this case. Operators contact with many people during their work time so the time they assign for each contact must be short. On the other hand callers expect that operators respond all of their questions exactly in shortest time; but since being exact is time-consuming the operator cannot respond to both of these requests at the same time, so the role conflict will be inevitable in this regard (Koll Quate *et al.*, 2010).

Role ambiguity is referred to a lack of knowledge about the manner in which a work is done and to inability to predict the functional results of that role. Sometimes especial projects are given to employees who lack the required knowledge about them. In this case they may lack of exact knowledge about the required time and capital volume for doing the project, and they may even lack of knowledge about final output. Role ambiguity can be observed among new employees who lack enough work experience, training and cooperation with experienced employees. Students can also experience role ambiguity when they lack enough information about teacher's method of teaching and evaluation. In this case since students do not exactly know what score they may assign to teacher's performance they will be under some anxiety and stress (Koll Quate *et al.*, quoted by Feyzi *et al.*, 2011).

Role ambiguity emerged when it is not clear what one's role is, in particular when the goal of a certain job or the limit of its liability is not defined. Generally ambiguity may results from insufficient training, poor communications, or deliberate refusal of giving information or deliberate distortion of information. Role ambiguity is an inevitable issue in most organizations, so organizations need leaders who alleviate ambiguities in the roles assigned to employees. Role ambiguity leads to tension, which prevents employee from progress and decrease productivity. Moreover, as a result of role ambiguity tension emerges when an individual loses his sense of assurance and his ability to predict (Ross and Altmayer, 1998).

Role overloading occurs when the assigned roles and responsibilities to an individual is more than his capacity. In such situation the individual will not be able to perform all or some parts of his responsibility. Role overloading is reported as a common source of stress among employees. For example the workload among authorities and managers who are

engaged in legal and financial sections is normally 80 hours a week. At first glance this may seem normal, but these people believe that their workloads are so high that they cannot do them even when they are given time twice as much as before. On the other hand if they are given enough time their communication will be cut from outside world. The last stress-making and preventive factor is from routine involvements. From routine involvements we mean small and secondary impediments that prevent people from focusing on their duties. Paper chase, technical deficiencies of official equipment, involvement with abnormal employees and unnecessary squabbles with them are examples routine involvements. Although the above cases rarely happen in a work day but these small impediments are time-consuming and are a source of stress. According to statistics about 40 % of managers spend a day or half a day in a week for such unnecessary squabbles (Koll Quate *et al*, 2010).

**Job challenging stress factors:** Job responsibilities are commitments and liabilities that an individual must have with regard to others. All in all more number and high importance of work commitments will lead to high levels of responsibilities. For example the responsibility of a supermarket manager in comparison with a worker in the supermarket is very high. Although the worker's responsibility is important in turn but the manager has more important functions such as focusing on the issues such as profitability, customer satisfaction, and security of employees. As like people's response against previously discussed issues such as time pressure and work complexity, job responsibility is also stressful but on the other hand it has a lot of positive effects (Koll Quate *et al* quoted from Feyzi *et al*, 2011).

**Time shortage (time pressure):** Time shortage is considered as one of the job challenging stress factors. Time shortage is referred to insufficiency of time required for doing a work. Most employees believe that time pressure besides being stressful is more challenging than being preventive. On the other hand, one has to try more for performing his tasks in a defined time limit. Despite stressfulness the results of one's work is satisfactory for him (Koll Quate *et al*, 2011).

**Work complexity:** Work complexity is referred to a degree of required knowledge, skills and capabilities for a job, which is beyond one's capacity. For example, the nature of educations that organizations use for training future organizational managers and leaders presents clearly the concept of work complexity.

**Job responsibility:** As it is said challenging stressful factors are desirable opportunities that will lead to learning, growth and progress an individual. Despite their tiresome nature, such factors will cause positive feelings such as pride, emotion and enthusiasm.

**Cognitive regulation of emotion:** Managing emotions is internal and external processes, which is responsible for controlling, evaluating and changing of an individual's affective responses in line with his goals and any deficiency in regulation of emotions may lead to vulnerability of the individual against psychological disorders such as anxiety and depression (Garnefski and Kraaij, 2006). Researchers believe that the manner in which an individual's cognitive system is evaluated when he confronts with a negative event is very important. Psychological health results from bilateral cooperation between utilizing some especial approaches of emotion cognitive regulation and sound appraisal of tense situation (Garnefski *et al*, 2001). Regulating emotion is a set of controlling processes, which aims to manage when, where, and how our emotions are experienced or stated. Emotion regulation may include a set of cognitive processes which are occurred automatically or through effort. Such processes allow people to take pleasure from most of their positive events in their lives and avoid from negative ones and to increase or decrease the intensity of each or even form the facial expression of emotions with regard to norms of society (Gross, 2008). Emotion regulation is the internal aspect of emotional responses. In fact it is referred to the actions that are applied to change or modify an emotional state. In psychological texts this concept is usually applied for describing the process of modifying (alleviating) negative emotions. Although emotion regulation can involve conscious processes it does not necessarily need consciousness and defined approaches (Amestadter, 2008). Emotion regulation, which plays an important role in controlling and managing emotions, is an especial form of self-regulation (Tess and Brats Lusky, 2002; quoted from Zoghi Shishvan, 2011).

## Previous research

In their research titled "The relationship between different approaches of cognitive regulation of emotion, emotional creativity and educational performance, and psychological well-being of students", Eisazadegan *et al* (2010) show that psychological well-being is defined by different dimensions of inefficient strategies of cognitive emotion regulation, self-blame, catastrophizing and other-blame. In their research "The relationship between different strategies of cognitive regulation emotion and emotional disorders with regard to individual and family results" Salehi *et al* (2011) suggest the removal of inefficient strategies and training efficient strategies of cognitive emotion regulation as a part of

intervention in emotional disorders. In their research Ardakani *et al.* (2012) conclude that the impact of parameters like social consciousness and self-consciousness on stress control factors is significant. The result of covariance analysis of research conducted by Moazedian *et al.*, (2011) titled “The efficacy of stress management training through behavioral-cognitive method on the decrease of anxiety among addicts suffering from anxiety disorder” indicate the efficacy of stress management training through behavioral-cognitive method in decreasing anxiety and pervasive anxiety of text group in comparison to control group.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research method

**a) Research method:** This research is applied by goal but in terms of method it is descriptive-surveying and of correlation kind.

**b) Population:** It includes all employees of Imam Khomeini Hospital in Ardabil city who are nearly about 500 people.

**c) Sample volume and sampling method:** Sampling is a set of measures taken for selecting individuals from a population in way that represent that population. The sampling was done randomly, and for defining sample volume we used Morgan’s table according which sample volume was 217 people.

**d) Tools of data collection:** Questionnaire is used as the tool of data collection. For data collection two questionnaires have been used:

**1<sup>st</sup> Questionnaire:** It includes questions special for cognitive emotion regulation; in this section with regard to parameters under study, 36 questions about independent variable or research hypotheses have been designed.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Questionnaire:** It includes questions special for work stress; in this section 33 questions about dependent variable have been designed.

**Validity and reliability:** Validity is referred to the fact that measuring tools measure what is supposed to measure. Validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by some authorities and experts in the field of management and behavioral science; the obtained reliability has been proven to be high with Cronbach’s alpha coefficients well over 0.92.

**Method of data collection:** At the present research we have used SPSS software for data mining and analysis.

### Findings

**Main hypothesis:** There is a relationship between scales of cognitive emotion regulation and preventive work stress among employees of Imam Khomeini Hospital in Ardabil city.

**Table 1- The results of Pearson’s correlation coefficients between scales of cognitive emotions and preventive work stress.**

	Statistics	
Self-blame	Correlation coefficient	<b>0/481</b>
	Significant level	<b>0/000</b>
Acceptance	Correlation coefficient	<b>-0/302</b>
	Significant level	<b>0/001</b>
Rumination	Correlation coefficient	<b>0/633</b>
	Significant level	<b>0/001</b>
Refocus on planning	Correlation coefficient	<b>-0/422</b>
	Significant level	<b>0/000</b>
Positive reappraisal	Correlation coefficient	<b>-0/364</b>
	Significant level	<b>0/000</b>
Catastrophizing	Correlation coefficient	<b>0/507</b>
	Significant level	<b>0/001</b>
Other-blame	Correlation coefficient	<b>0/259</b>
	Significant level	<b>0/001</b>
Positive cognitive regulation	Correlation coefficient	<b>-0/339</b>
	Significant level	<b>0/000</b>
Negative cognitive regulation	Correlation coefficient	<b>0/180</b>
	Significant level	<b>0/040</b>

According to the results of table one and with regard to the fact that the significant level of test error is smaller than 0.01 for confidence level of 0.99, hence we can say that hypotheses one to nine are accepted and there is a meaningful relationship between all scales of cognitive emotions and preventive work stress. Moreover, the correlation coefficients of self-blame, acceptance, rumination, planning refocus, positive reappraisal, catastrophizing, other-blame, positive cognitive regulation, and negative cognitive regulation with the variable of preventive work stress are 0.481, - 0.302, - 0.442, - 0.422, - 0.364, 0.507, 0.259, -0.339 and 0.180, respectively.

**Table 2- Regression analysis of different scales of cognitive emotion regulation and preventive work stress**

Independent variables	Unstandardized coefficients	Standardized coefficients	T-value	Significant level
	B	Beta	T	
Positive cognitive emotion regulation	-1.939	-.468	-3.711	.000
Negative cognitive emotion regulation	1.022	.818	2.070	.004
Planning refocus	-1.503	-.743	-2.626	.009
Positive reappraisal	-3.069	-.640	-6.047	.000
Self-blame	1.065	.632	2.604	.010
Other-blame	1.175	.300	2.880	.004
Rumination	1.066	.716	2.166	.008
Catastrophizing	1.317	.411	2.750	.004
Acceptance	-1.089	-.525	-3.226	.001

From these nine variables, negative cognitive regulation with the coefficient of 0.81 is of highest capacity to predict preventive work stress. All in all planning refocus (with coefficient of -0.74), rumination (0.71), positive reappraisal (-0.64), self-blame (0.63), acceptance (-0.52), positive cognitive regulation (-0.46), catastrophizing (0.41), other-blame (0.30) predict and defined dependent variable of preventive work stress.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Findings of present research indicate that there is meaningful relationship between scales of cognitive emotion regulation and preventive work stress; there is negative meaningful relationship between variables of planning refocus (-0.74), positive reappraisal (-0.64), positive cognitive regulation (-0.46) and acceptance (-0.52), and preventive work stress; on the other hand there is positive meaningful relationship between variables of negative cognitive regulation (0.81), rumination (0.71), self-blame (0.63), catastrophizing (0.41) and other blame (0.30), and the dependent variable, i.e., preventive work stress. The obtained results are in line with the results from Butler et al (1991), Crosk and Barlow (1990), Linderzi et al (1987), Salehi et al (2011), Moazedian et al (2012), Linden et al (2005), Saloway (2002), Kraaij et al (2000). Throughout the research it is indicated that there is meaningful relationship between scales of cognitive emotion regulation and preventive work stress.

### Suggestions based on hypothesis testing

1. The results indicate that job stress-making factors are more related to cognitive emotion regulation; hence we suggest managers of this hospital for focusing on this issue.
2. The results show that self and other-blame are effective on preventive work stress and with the increase in these blames the level of employee stress will increase; it is suggested to improve employee performance through holding council meetings and classes for them.
3. The results indicate that rumination is effective on preventive work stress; it is suggested for managers to have a codified plan for psychological health of employees and to provide an organizational atmosphere in which employees have a sense of calmness.
4. Managers must give more freedom and independence to employees so that they gain more confidence in facing with work issues.

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