

# Exploration of a professional journal article in psychology

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The paper by Galanakis, Galanopoulou and Stalikas looks closely into the findings of a survey conducted among 2775 Greek professionals to determine whether overall positive emotions decrease strain levels, and whether gender, age, profession, smoking habits, residence, tenure, medical history, role in organization, and trait optimism, affect this relationship. The participants, aged between 23 - 47 years old, included medical doctors, lawyers, military personnel, psychologists, and self-employed individuals. Measuring tools used were Differential Emotion Scale-Modified (DES-MOD), which assess the experiencing of certain positive and negative emotions during a two weeks period, and Occupational Stress Inventory, a 92-item survey that measures occupational strain levels and working environment stressors. Analysis of variance, post hoc analyses and hierarchical regression analyses were used to evaluate positive emotions in terms of their impact on work stress. The effects of demographics were determined using a partial correlation analysis and MANOVA.

Results of the survey showed that there was significant negative correlation between overall positive emotions and occupational strain ( $r = 0.33$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). In fact, compared to interest, amusement, awe, contentment, gratitude, hope, love, pride and sexual desire, joy and tranquility had the most impact in decreasing occupational strain. This is in accordance to the Fredrickson's Broaden-and Build Theory, which states that the benefits of positive emotions are translated to the future. This is because positive emotions broaden attention and cognition by encouraging new lines of thought or action. Other advantages include decreased negative emotions elicited, heightened psychological flexibility and overall well-being. By confirming

such relations, the study was able to affirm the common notion of positive emotions being an effective means of stress coping.

On the other hand, the results of partial correlation analysis showed that trait optimism is the greatest intervening variable magnifying the negative relation between positive emotion and strain. In contrast, profession did not cause significant changes in the relation between positive emotion and occupational strain. However, profession independently influence stress levels at work. There was no specific profession identified to provide the best or worst occupational strain.

Finally, the study had determined through hierarchical regression analysis that job stressors (16%), trait optimism (27.90%), gender (31.30%), recent serious past medical history (33.10%), smoking (34.10%), age (34.40%), and overall positive emotions (42.70%) can predict one's occupational strain levels. In contrast, residence and profession did not have any predictive power.

Since the study have identified optimism, joy and tranquility to provide the most effect on decreasing occupational stress, employers can focus on promoting recreational activities, relaxation, and spiritual counseling to lessen occupational stress of their employees. Subsequently, this can promote efficiency and productivity. In addition, through these results it can be deduced that the employees' biopsychosocial well-being affects their susceptibility to occupational stress. It is, thus, important for companies to ensure that their employees are physically and psychologically healthy if they are to expect optimal function from their employees. Thus, in addition to promoting optimism, they can also initiate annual physical health

examination and no smoking rule to lessen occupational stress.

#### Reference

Galanakis, M., Galanopoulou, F. & Stalikas, A. (2011). Do positive emotions help us cope with occupational stress? *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 7(2), pp. 221-240.