

Perception of Management Faculty towards Occupational Stress

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ABSTRACT:

Background: Stress is an unspecified body response to demand. Stress has now become a part of everybody's lives across professions and countries. Pressure to achieve targets and cope with increasing demands induce stress among individuals. Teaching which was once considered the least stressful job has changed vividly in the last two decades. Teachers experience stress due to varied academic & non-academic tasks performed by them. Apart from performing various academic roles, a faculty is required to take up administrative roles too. Faculty involved in higher education need to be updated, as they act as an intermediary to bridge the gap between the academy and Industry.

Methods: The current study attempts to determine whether Management faculty perceive Occupational Stress and whether demographic variables considered differ with occupational stress. A sample of 124 Management faculty responded to the study. ORS scale developed by Dr. Udai Pareek's (1983) was administered to assess occupational stress.

Results: Although more than 70% of Management faculty reported feeling stressed at work, there was no significant correlation found between demographic variables and perceived occupational stress.

Conclusion: Since stress is subjective in nature, the results indicate the presence of other factors apart from demographic factors that contribute to the occupational stress among management faculty. An extensive further study is recommended for the future.

KEYWORDS: Faculty stress, Occupational Stress, ORS, Management faculty.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The word 'Stress' as a body's response to uncertainty, was coined in 1936 by Dr. Hans Selye, who is also known as 'Father of Stress Research. Dr. Selye defined stress as "the nonspecific response of a body to any demand for change". This non-specific response may be either positive or negative in nature, thus Dr. Selye termed the positive responses or good responses as 'Eustress' and negative response or bad response as 'Distress'. Stress has become as an inevitable aspect of everyone's life across ages and stages of life. Stress occurs due to various stimuli; these stimuli are referred to as 'Stressors'. There are different types of work stressors affecting employees across the world, which can broadly be classified as - Individual stressors, Group stressors, Organisational Stressors and Extra-organisational Stressors. The types of stress and the intensity of their effect differs from person-to-person, place-to-place, time-to-time and situation-to-situation.

The word 'Occupational Stress', has engulfed the minds and lives of the working population across the globe. According to one of the discussion released by World Health Organisation on 'Occupational Health: Stress at Workplace', A healthy job is one where job pressure is proportionate to the abilities of the employees, the resources they receive, the amount of autonomy and control they have on their jobs and the support they receive from the management and peers in the organisation. Lack of these factors, subjected to the proportion of their presence or absence, leads to a situation, where employees sense a feeling of being overburdened, exhausted or disconnected from the jobs, which further leads to work-related stress also known as Occupational Stress. According to American Psychological Association (APA), Occupational Stress is a "physiological and psychological response to events or conditions in the workplace that is detrimental to health and well-being. It is influenced by such factors as autonomy and independence, decision latitude, workload, level of responsibility, job security, physical environment and safety, the nature and pace of work, and relationships with co-workers and supervisors." According to statistics released by a leading research organisation- 'Statista', on the 'biggest threat to workplace health', Work stress contributed to 70% followed by work harassment, overwork and occupational health hazards. An article published in India Today (February, 2020), alarmed about the raising

occupational stress in India, terming stress as a 'silent killer'. The article stated, as per a report on Labour Force Survey (LFS), 2017-18, Low payroll, workload stress, lack of challenging work, lack of social help, conflicting demands and unclear performance expectations contributed as major occupational stress-causing factors. In an article published in Economic times (8 Oct 2020), states that Indian corporates were already stressed out and the abrupt change in the working during the recent pandemic has added more stress.



Exhibit 1: Major stress points
Source: The Economic Times, (October 08, 2020).

Among all the professions, even the teaching profession is assessed to be getting stressful during the present times. Educational institutions are becoming commercial, with a highly competitive market environment with demanding stakeholders (Woodall, Hiller, & Resnick, 2014); this is exerting psychological pressure on faculty members. An academic career that was once viewed as least stressed, over the past 20 years has changed drastically (Willie & Stecklein, 1982). Along with teaching, a faculty member has to perform various other duties like administrative assignments, mentoring, counseling, researcher and others. Changing management and administrative styles, decreasing mobility, financial constraints, increasingly stringent requirements for promotion and tenure, erosion of academic governance, and the pressures of teaching and keeping professionally updated with current standards are having both - direct and an indirect impact on faculty morale, satisfaction, and self-esteem (Hageseth & Atkins, 1988). Substantial growth in student numbers and institutions of higher learning, increased emphasis on research, concerns for equity and social benefits of education, and emphasis on the jobtraining are becoming evaluating standards for faculty. These changes are coupled with constraints imposed by economic pressure and downturns in the economy (Catano et al, 2010), as a result, faculty face stress affecting their psychological well-being.

In present-days, young teaching professionals are increasingly challenged with the problem of conflict between work role and demanding role at home correspondingly. Tytherleigh, Webb, Cooper, & Ricketts (2005), in their study, mentioned that a number of stressors are emerging. Academic salaries lag behind other professions; positions are increasingly untenured or contract status; workloads have increased; career advancement is often slow; and pressure to obtain external funding and publish, has increased. Some pieces of evidence suggest that academic stress is increasing over time. Winefield, Boyd, Saebel, & Pignata (2008) conducted a follow-up survey with a subgroup of Australian respondents three years after their initial study. In the follow-up study found that psychological strain and work-home conflict had increased and job satisfaction had decreased, even though the universities had implemented changes in response to the initial survey.

Management/Business courses like BBA (Bachelors of Business Administration)& MBA (Bachelors of Business Administration) are dynamic in nature and hence the faculty engaged in imparting such courses are expected to be dynamic and have good knowledge of inter-disciplinary streams. Hence an attempt is made to assess the perception of faculty handling Management courses (BBA & MBA) towards Occupational stress with respect to their age, gender, marital status, years of experience, course/stream they handle and hierarchy in the institute they are currently at.

II. LITERATURE AT A GLANCE

Escalating stress and pressures, along with organisational change in universities has led to research in the domain of perceived occupational stress, work-life balance and work-life conflict, employee efficacy,

teacher performance and many more amongst academicians. There are a number of researches undertaken to assess stress faced by academicians in UK, USA & Australian universities, as they house a large number of universities, but comparatively lesser research is undertaken on occupational stress among faculty in the other parts of the globe.

Demographic variables, tenure, discipline and medium of teaching were noted to influence stress among business faculty, with Assistant professors, faculty with 16 to 20 years expressing relatively more stress than the other personal factors taken up for the study (Murphy et al., 1995). In 2008, Schuldt & Totten, did exploratory research on 'Business faculty and faculty stress index', in which gender, 'course handling' and years of experience of the faculty showed a significant difference with female faculty reported to have higher stress levels; Faculty handling online courses, faculty with lesser years of experience were noted to experience higher stress. Moderate stress was observed across the age groups considered for the study. Sharma in 2014, studied on 'stressors' as a challenge for faculty of higher education institutions on 108 faculty. Occupational Role Stress (ORS) scale developed by Dr. Udai Pareek, measuring ten dimensions of ORS, namely – Inter-Role Distance, Role stagnation, Role Expectation Conflict, Role Erosion, Role overload, Role Isolation, Personal Inadequacy, Self-Role Distance, Role Ambiguity and Resource Inadequacy was used for the study. Gender was observed to have significant differences with Role stagnation, Role Expectation Conflict, Role Erosion, Personal Inadequacy, Self-Role Distance and Role Ambiguity. Faculty employed in both - Government and private institutions, showed a significant difference in their perceptions towards all the 10 dimensions of stress considered for the study. With respect to years of experience, except Role Stagnation, a significant variance was observed across all the other 9 dimensions of ORS. Sabherwal et al., (2015) took up a study to assess stress among 200 faculty of higher education institutions in Pune. The relationship between age, gender and marital status was evaluated as one of the hypotheses for the study. The results indicated gender and marital status to have significant differences with occupational stress.

Tan, in 2017 researched on 100 faculty of public universities in the Philippines and noted that part-time and full-time faculty status, age, job satisfaction and negative religious coping as significant indicators of stress among faculty. A study was undertaken to find the differences in career satisfaction, work-life balance and stress with respect to gender among pharmacy faculty by Ip et al., in 2018. Results showed female faculty expressing being more stressed compared to male faculty. Studying on 'influences on personal and professional stress on higher education faculty', Berebitsky & Ellis (2018), stated personal dimensions to have a greater influence. Unmarried faculty and faculty with children under the age of 18, opined of being less stressed. Faculty with higher qualifications (Doctorate) expressed more stress than faculty with masters. Meng & Wang (2018) researched on 240 university faculty of a Chinese university to identify various sources and intensity of occupational stress. Considering Gender, age, degree (level of education), major (course: liberal arts, science & engineering), professional ranking, length of teaching (years of experience) were considered as personal variables. Factor analysis helped figure out 5 factors that contribute to stress of which scientific research, professional development and administrative affairs were proven to be contributors of occupational stress among university faculty. The responses did differ with the Personal variables, of which age, hierarchy and years of service were noted to be major influencers. Higher stress levels were noted with higher age and years of experience, whereas stress was seen to decrease as the hierarchy raised. Assessing occupational stress factors among 400 faculty of Autonomous colleges in Madhya Pradesh, Shrivastava (2020) measured occupational stress across 5 factors and concluded that Work-related stressors followed by personal and professional development stressors, techno stressors, interaction stressors and organisational climate stressors (descending order of their influence) contributed to occupational stress.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data Source and Sampling method

A population of Management faculty, i.e., faculty handling BBA (Bachelor of Business Administration) and MBA (Masters of Business Administration) of North Karnataka were considered for the study. A stratified disproportionate random sampling was considered, with faculty of BBA and MBA colleges as strata for classification. Primary data was collected through a questionnaire, administered via printed questionnaires and via google forms. A total of 124 filled in questionnaires are considered for the analysis.

Objectives

The Objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To assess if Management faculty perceive Occupational Role Stress.
2. To evaluate if perception towards Occupational Role Stress differs across demographic (personal) variables considered for the study.

Hypothesis

Based on the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses need to be addressed

[1]. H_{n1}: Management faculty do not feel stressed with the current role.

H_{a1}: Management faculty feel stressed with the current role.

[2]. H_{n2}: Faculty perception towards Occupational Role Stress does not differ with demographic variables.

H_{a2}: Faculty perception towards Occupational Role Stress differs with demographic variables.

Instrument Used

Occupational Role Stress (ORS) Instrument developed by Dr. Udai Pareek in 1983 is considered for the study. The instrument measures Occupational Role Stress across ten dimensions namely – (1) Inter-Role Distance, (2) Role stagnation, (3) Role Expectation Conflict, (4) Role Erosion, (5) Role overload, (6) Role Isolation, (7) Personal Inadequacy, (8) Self-Role Distance, (9) Role Ambiguity and (10) Resource Inadequacy. Each dimension is assessed with the help of five items across a 5-point Likert scale.

For the present study, (which is a part of an on-going study), nine dimensions (excluding ‘Role Expectation Conflict’) are considered.

IV. RESULTS& INTERPRETATION

The study is evaluated on a sample of 124 responses received from faculty across the two courses (/streams) of Management studies.

Table 1: Demographic profiling of respondents

Demographic Variables		Frequency	Percent
Age	21-30	30	23.8
	31-40	65	51.6
	41-50	19	15.1
	51-60	10	7.9
Gender	Male	77	61.1
	Female	47	37.3
Marital Status	Unmarried	31	24.6
	Married	91	72.2
	Others	2	1.6
Years experience of	<5	37	29.4
	6-15	62	49.2
	16-25	20	15.9
	26-35	4	3.2
	>35	1	0.8
Course	BBA	44	34.9
	MBA	80	63.5
Hierarchy	Lecturer	44	34.9
	Asst. Prof	54	42.9
	Sr. Lecturer	3	2.4
	Asso. Prof	9	7.1
	Professor	14	11.1

Demographic representation (Table 1) show a larger percentage of responses received from the age group of 31-40 years, Male faculty members, Married respondents, having 6-15 years of experience, who are in the hierarchical bracket of Lecturer/Assistant Professor and a larger percentage of response was received from MBA staff across the area under consideration.

The Occupational Role Stress (ORS) scale assesses the ten dimensions of ORS with 5 items per dimension making it a 50-item scale. For the present study, 3 item per dimension is considered, making the total to 27 items. Hence, to assess the validity and reliability of the instrument used for the present study, ‘Cronbach alpha’ is calculated.

Table 2: Cronbach Alpha

Test of Reliability		
	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
ORS scale	0.937	27
Questionnaire	0.921	33

The Cronbach's Alpha calculation (Table 2) shows a score above 0.9, indicating the instrument used as ‘highly reliable’(Taber, 2018) .

Evaluating the question on whether the “faculty feel the current occupational role, stressful?”, the following result is seen:

Table 3: Perception towards occupational Stress

No.		Frequency		Percentage	
1	Not stressful	-	11	-	9
2	Slightly stressful	50	95	40	77
	Stressful	38		31	
	Very Stressful	7		6	
3	Can't say	-	18	-	14
Total		95	124	77	100

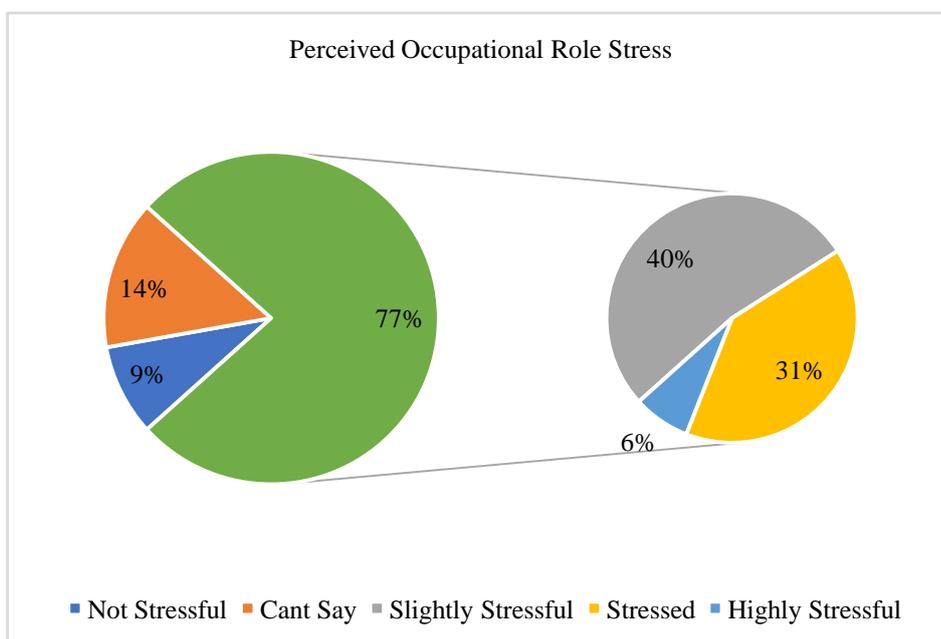


Fig 1: Perception towards occupational Stress

Of the 124 respondents, 11 respondents (9% of the sample) stated that they do not feel the current role stressful and 18 respondents (14%) expressed their inability to conclude of the role being stressful; the Rest 95 respondents amounting to a total of 77% opined of being stressed. Further, the analysis of the 77% respondents who expressed being stressed;40% opined of the role being ‘Slightly stressful’, 31% just say ‘stressful’ and 6% express- the faculty role in management course ‘Highly stressful’.

The analysis (Table 3) evidences the existence of stress among management faculty, leading to the acceptance of alternate hypothesis, i.e., Ha₁: Management faculty feel stressed with the current role.

Further, testing the homogeneity of variance and ANOVA across the demographic variables considered for the study – Age, Gender, Marital Status, Years of Experience as management faculty, Course (/stream) handled by the faculty and the hierarchy the faculty is presently in, across Occupational Role Stress, give the following results:

Table 4: Test of Homogeneity & ANOVA

Demographic Variables	Levene's Sig.	ANOVA		Partial Eta Squared
		F	Sig.	
Age	0.943	0.443	0.723	0.039
Gender	0.668	0.062	0.804	0.006
Marital Status	0.272	0.26	0.772	0.019
Years of Experience	0.986	1.903	0.114	0.080
Course	0.448	1.027	0.313	0.020
Hierarchy	0.936	0.971	0.426	0.143

Levene’s test (Test for homogeneity) across variables show significant value much higher than 0.05, demonstrating no significant variance across the demographic variables and ORS. The significance value of ANOVA across the demographic variables under study are all calculated to be higher than the $\alpha=0.05$, stating no significant difference was noted across the demographic variables with respect to Occupational Role Stress (Table 4). This signifies, acceptance of null hypothesis i.e., H_{n2} : Faculty perception towards Occupational Role Stress do not differ with demographic variables. The partial eta square value shows a low percentage of variance between the demographic variables and ORS.

V. DISCUSSION

Referring to Table 3, the study concluded that management faculty perceive the existence of occupational role stress; this result is found to be in congruence with works of Berebitsky & Ellis (2018); Ip et al., (2018); Meng & Wang (2018); Murphy et al., (1995); Sabherwal et al., (2015); Schuldt & Totten (2008); Sharma (2014); Shrivastava (2020); and Tan (2017). Further testing the ANOVA (Table 4), revealed that for the present sample of 124 management faculty, age did not show a significant difference with ORS, which is similar to the results of Sabherwal et al., (2015). The results of the other dimensions were in contrary with the research works of Berebitsky & Ellis (2018), Meng & Wang (2018), Murphy et al., (1995), Schuldt & Totten (2008) and Tan (2017), stating no significant difference observed between demographic variables and ORS. The partial eta square ($\eta^2 = 4\%$, $\eta^2 = 1\%$, $\eta^2 = 2\%$, $\eta^2 = 8\%$, $\eta^2 = 2\%$, $\eta^2 = 14\%$ respectively) for age, gender, marital status, years of experience, Course & Hierarchy are low, signifying the need for a larger sample size for the study to demonstrate significant difference between demographic variables and Occupational Role Stress.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study was able to reveal the perception of management faculty about occupational role stress and the existence of occupational role stress among management faculty handling BBA and MBA courses, but the study may not have been sufficient to determine the significant difference between groups owing to comparatively lower sample size. The concept of stress itself is more subjective in nature and differs from person-to-person, place-to-place, time-to-time and situation-to-situation, hence a larger sample size and a need to assess other intrinsic and extrinsic variables may help to justify the findings in the future and also contribute to further studies.

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