

IDENTIFICATION OF FACTORS CAUSING OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG WORKING WOMEN (MARRIED) IN IT COMPANIES

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ABSTRACT

We know the causes and consequences and impacts of heavy occupational stress on the employees. It is equally important to highlight the ill effects of occupational stress on the organization also. It has been observed that unless and until it is promptly dealt with, stress may have adverse effect on the overall performance of the organization and the society as well. The organizational consequences of occupational stress may have massive adverse effects on the organization's performance. In this paper, the researcher has tried to identify the factors of stress which could lead to occupational stress among working women (married) employees at the workplace. Employees could have been affected by group behavior, lack of information, office politics and conflicts, excessive interruptions, lack of recognition, shortage of required resources, insufficient co-workers, more administration and paper work, continuous and chaotic job demands and shortage of help at work.

Keywords: *Occupational stress, office politics & conflicts, excessive interruptions, chaotic job demands and shortage of help at work*

INTRODUCTION

According to the world Health Organization (WHO) occupational stress is a worldwide epidemic, which has been adversely impacting organizational working women in various countries. More importantly, the problem of occupational stress is not limited to the advanced countries like US, UK, Canada, and other European countries, but also to the working women in various business organizations in developing countries like India. This is especially true for IT organizations. Due to the increasing trends of occupational pressure and severe competition for success, the IT organizations have been recognized as a new business area where the employee stress has become a significant problem. The occupational stress has adverse effects on working women (married) in various ways like resulting in dysfunctional behaviors and contributing towards poor physical and mental health. Occupational stress leaves an adverse impact on the working women who are under excessive pressure of work or other type of demands made on them at the workplace.

In the present day business and corporate world, the problems of occupational stress are impossible to avoid. It has been identified as one of the most common perils of modern times. It is the major issue for the organizations because those organizations that have the employees under high pressure and stress are more likely to be unsuccessful in the market (Suresh Babu and S. Balakrishan, 2017).

As an organization becomes more and more dynamic and problems related to employees' involvement dominate the organization agenda, occupational stress becomes one of the most prominent problems for the management. (Sabbarwal, Singh. and Amiri, 2017).

Many researchers considering occupational stress in the organizations have made great strides in understanding many factors of the stress phenomenon in the area of organizational behavior. Nowadays, majority of the employees working in various sectors, face several challenges and problems in the highly competitive working conditions – lack of time, lack of space, other uncontrollable factors, background distractions, general uncertainty and administrative functions that result in occupational stress. In addition, in today's era of globalization, occupational stress has become significant because of dynamic social factors and changing requirements of lifestyles. In

short, today's business and industrial environment is a highly stressful environment (Kushwaha, 2014).

Increase in workload and diversity of roles in the organization and pressures from outside of the organization have placed every employee under a lot of stress (Kumara, 2016).

This has led to a significant impact on employees' psychological and physical health that inevitably leads to occupational stress and burnout.

IMPACT OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS ON ORGANIZATION

Up till now, we have explained the causes and consequences and impacts of heavy occupational stress on the working women. It is equally important to highlight the ill effects of occupational stress on the organization also. It has been observed that unless and until it is promptly dealt with, stress may have adverse effect on the overall performance of the organization and the society as well. The organizational consequences of occupational stress may have massive adverse effects on the organization's performance. Due to the heavy occupational stress among the working women (married) employees the organizations face many problems which have been elaborated in the following paragraphs.

High expenditure on recruitment process and higher rate of Employee Attrition – This problem is most common problem of organizational consequences of occupational stress. Under heavy work load employees do not want to enjoy their working environment. But some employees have the confidence to take their employer's help to overcome the problem of occupational stress, other employees may feel that they do not have any option but to resign and leave the organization with a view to keep away themselves away from the ill effects of occupational stress. Sometimes it is possible that employees who want help/support from the employer may not receive the help from the employer and they choose to leave the organization. Unfortunately, in several Indian IT organizations, there is no effort made by the management to find out or to identify the actual reasons for an employee's resignation. Therefore, there may be many obstacles in the way of identifying organizational stress issue and problems of occupational stress.

Higher rate of Absenteeism of women (married) employees – Employees under high occupational stress tend to experience serious illness and therefore take longer period of time to be away from their job. Absenteeism is an indicator of their inability to cope up with their work. So they try to escape from the stressful condition by staying at their home. Sometimes these women will report for work but will not be able to contribute much. Such types of working women are physically present at workplace but psychologically they are elsewhere. All these factors are just attributed to poor discipline on the employer's part. If IT organizations recognize that the absenteeism and presentism are the organizational consequences of occupational stress it may be easy for the management to take corrective action against the issue of employee's absenteeism. It may be beneficial to the employees as well as the organization.

Reduction in the level of Productivity – If any employee faces prolonged and chronic fatigue due to heavy occupational stress; it becomes more difficult for the employee to work to an optimum level. If employee faces severe level of fatigue, his/her concentration ability and motivation level may reach at a minimum level. This leads to mistakes creeping in the work process of employees. It also takes a long time to complete the work. The quality of work begins to suffer; and it causes the lowering of the productivity levels of the organization.

Growth in Health and safety related problems – This is also more common in the organizations. This problem is more physical in nature. In IT organizations working women employees tend to take more risks and suffer low level of concentration ability when they are under

the occupational stress. This causes increased accidents, which results in increasing litigation, insurance and medical expenditure for the organization.

Litigation – There is a legal obligation of the organizations to provide safety to the working women employees and a safe work conditions for them. This legal obligation includes adequate training and education, safe work practices and favoritism free and harassment free work place. If any organization fails to meet these obligations and employees experience occupational stress due to the failure, the employee may seek a legal remedy. This may be result in increased legal expenditure and it may damage the reputation of organization. The threat of litigation may motivate organizations to take actions to overcome the organizational consequences of occupational stress.

Damage of Reputation – The reputation of the organization is damaged by the culture of occupational stress which can develop as a result of the failure to manage stress at organizational and at individual level. Reduction in productivity levels of the organization and decreased performance of the employees can further lead to the development of poor customer service.

Growth in Training Education expenditure – Due to higher rate of attrition or higher staff turnover, more induction courses are needed; it increases the expenditure on training and education for the new employees. Apart from this, the organization may also have to spend more on interpersonal skills, health and safety and stress management training and education.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

R. G. Ratnawat and P. C. Jha (2014) found improving stress management strategies at workplace would help employees to be free from stress. Due to prevention of stress, the work performance of employees would also increase. They identified 35 occupational stress inducers through articles and reports published in various journals for the period of 15 years i.e. from 1990-2014. In their opinion, it is important to recognize various types of occupational stress and their effects on the work performance of employees. They have pointed out that occupational stress among employees would lead to resignation, addiction, depression, anxiety etc.

Ali M. Mosadeghard (2014) has studied the condition of stress among employees in the Iranian hospital. He has mentioned the negative impacts of occupational stress on employees' physical and psychological condition. The research found out that working conditions along with organizational and individual factors were responsible for occupational stress. He has observed that majority of workers were working under high rate of occupational stress. The main causes of work stress were lower income, inequality at work, higher workload, shortage of staff, lack of recognition and promotion, pressure of time schedule, insecurity of job, lack of management support etc. He has also pointed out that due to high level of occupational stress, employees faced physical and psychological problems such as backache, high blood pressure, heart problem, anxiety, and depression as well.

Priyasha Jain and Akhil Batra (2015) surveyed the employees of the Quincy to identify the level of work stress for corporate individuals and to point out the distressing factor that affect of the persons. Through the study, they have focused on the areas explored by the workers, managers and those who were able to change the situation, so that the factors of stress would be reduced. The main aims of the research were to identify the root cause of the work-related stress and analyze the factors related to the workplace, to delve into the inadequacy of the managers and employers of the organization in dealing with issues, to study the yardsticks at workplace and at times the role of HR officials in it. They have observed that repeated heavy workload, unfair work distribution, work monotony, pressure of deadlines underutilization of skills and working relationships are some of the major causes of work stress, which have impact on mental or emotional well-being of Indian

workers. They have further opined that friendly atmosphere would decrease stress caused due to work overload.

Subhangini & Vandana (2015) studied the role stress among the IT professional in Delhi-NCR and analysed the various factors that contribute to the organizational stress and role of demographic factors on role stress. They found that the demographic factors had significant impact on the role stress of IT professionals.

Suresh Kumar (2016) has focused on the occupational stress among BPO workers. Through the study he has identified the main kinds of stress such as distress, Hypo-Stress, Eu-stress. Main purposes of the research were to recognize the occupational stress level between BPO workers and to know the difference in occupational stress among male and female BPO workers. He has pointed out that, BPO employees have moderate occupational stress. He has also observed that occupational stress contributed not only to the physical disorder but also to the emotional problems.

H. Jadeja and M. Verma (2016) have pointed out that, occupational stress at workplace is generally caused by various factors such as – work overload, workplace condition, organizational behavior, organizational culture, lack of participation etc. They have also pinpointed stress management strategies to control and decrease occupational stress among employees which include training program, meditation, time management etc.

M. M. Kinstone and M. Ngonidzashe (2016) have sought to find out the various effective techniques of managing stress as perceived by employees in Zimbabwe. Case study method was used for the purposes of study. The study was concerned with industrial area of Zimbabwe. As per the opinion, it is not healthy for the employees to have stress and it leads to demotivation at workplace. In their opinion, counseling is one such technique that provides solution and improves coping capacity of affected employees. They are of the view that prevention and management of occupational stress requires organizational level interventions, because stress is generally created by the organization itself. Apart from this they have also suggested that, the organization should also have a stress management policy and it should facilitate the establishment of employees' committee with a view to improve communication within the organization. Frequent workshops on safety trainings should be held and interactive sessions with new employees should be carried out frequently. Findings of the study revealed that the employees are actively following the concept of counseling, body exercise and sports as techniques for managing stress at work place.

J. S. Narban, B.P.S.Narban and Jitendra Singh (2016) have presented an exploratory study on occupational stress, to bring out its causative factors and impacts. Through the study they have focused on the concept of stressors. They have pointed out that job stress affects job satisfaction negatively and there is a significant relation between these two concepts. Through the study, they have observed that, occupational stress results in decreased performance, absenteeism, low turnover and employee misalignment with the organization. They have concluded that the exploration on occupational stress has been relatively a neglected area of research among the industrial psychologists. They have also suggested that an empirical research in the area of employee health should consider and map the effects and influences of various factors like environmental and personal process along with, human consequences and organizational consequences. In the opinion of Narban et al. occupational stress needs to be constantly harnessed and minimized to provide conducive work environment at the workplace.

K.V.D Prasad, R. Vaidya and V.A. Kumar (2016) have focused on occupational stress on work performance of international agricultural research institute employees and IT sector

employees. Through the study they have observed that there is a higher effect of occupational stress on work performance of IT employees as compared to IARI employees. They found that the effect of stress on work performance of IARI employees was moderate. The result of study indicated that higher stress among IT employees caused physical problems.

J. M. Jani (2016) has focused on the factor of work stress and the stress management techniques adopted by the smart employers in India. In his opinion it was the responsibility of both the employer and the employee to check stress at workplace. Through the study he has focused on stress management activities implemented by Google India, Accenture, Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys and Larsen and Toubro. According to him, stress arises where the job in the organization demands the work beyond the capacity and capability of the workers. He has pointed out that, stress is a state of mental or emotional tension which occurs due to adverse circumstances. In his opinion the nature of work is responsible for stress which is changing rapidly maybe now more than ever before.

Shalini & Brindha (2018) examined various factors related to the stress in women in Coimbatore city and found that stress was high because of excessive work load and imperfect time schedules due to which they face severe back pain and unhealthy relationships with their family as well.

Prasada et al. (2020) particularly focused on women working remotely in the IT sector and tested occupational stress. The result of this study proved that a relationship exists between occupational stress and the psychological well-being of women in the IT industries.

Moreno et al. (2020) in their study examined the relationship between occupational stress and mental health. In contrast to the previous study, this article found no significant relationship between occupational stress and mental health. Only a moderate relationship existed between both variables. The researchers concluded that there are various strategies to manage burnout resulting from occupational stress; therefore, there is no such relationship.

Hosseini Z, Yarelahi M, Rahimi S F, Salmani F. (2023) aimed to find the factors related to work-family conflicts befallen women working.

Methods: All scientific articles published on the subject from June 2000 until June 2021 were searched in five databases (Science Direct, Web of Science, PubMed, Embase, Scopus, and Google Scholar) using the Keywords of factor, female, working, work-life balance, life-work imbalance. They found 3967 articles in the databases mentioned. After removing duplicate items, the titles and abstracts of 2573 articles were screened, 34 full-texts of which were reviewed, leading to the final selection of 31 articles (13 qualitative studies and 17 quantitative studies). Then they searched for the documents that cited any of the initially included studies, as well as the references of the primarily included studies; however, no additional articles were found in this step. We categorized the factors related to work-life conflicts into four categories and 22 sub-categories. The first category was individual factors (e.g., individual capacities and skills); the second category was interpersonal factors (e.g., spousal support and lack of family support); the third category was organizational factors (e.g., organizational policies and working hours), and the fourth category was cultural factors (e.g., patriarchal hegemony in society and family-friendly culture).

Che Noordin, N. A. binti, Syed Ahmad, S. F., Mohamed Razali, M. Z., Ahmad, M. F., & Ma'amor, H. (2023) aims to identify the factors that contribute to job stress in the private sector, specifically at the management level, which is vital for ensuring smooth daily operations. Private sector employees have the most control over occupational stress. The study focuses on conflict at

work, job requirements, and job environment as contributing factors. A self-administered survey questionnaire was used to gather data, with 201 sets distributed to employees in food manufacturing at Selangor. The analysis of 190 valid questionnaires using the latest version of Statistic Packages for Social Science (SPSS) revealed that there is a significant influence of occupational stress on employees' work-life balance in the manufacturing industry with the work environment as the most influential factor. Conflict at work is the second most influential factor, while job requirements do not significantly contribute to job stress. The findings of this study can help managers and business owners in the manufacturing industry to understand the factors that cause employee, and job stress and encourage them to focus on implementing strategies to reduce stress in the workplace.

OBJECTIVES THE STUDY

To identify the factors causing occupational stress among working women (married) in IT companies

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research design were used for this study. The proposed study is based on the research which would be carried out in Delhi-NCR which is known as an IT hub. Occupational stress can be found among the members of organizations of all sizes. However, it is usually presumed that larger the organization, greater the stress level that is why most of the studies done in this area focus primarily on large scale organizations. However, the interest of the reasons lies in studying the nature and extent of occupational stress in small scale organizations which have by and large been neglected by organizational studies. The total sample comprised of 300 respondents from study area.

FACTORS LEADING TO DIFFICULTY IN WORK AT THE WORKPLACE

Table 1 Group behavior

Occurrence	N	Percentage
Always	146	48.70
Sometimes	78	26.00
Never	76	25.30
Total	300	100.00

Table 1 reveals that where group behavior is concerned, of the total 300 respondents 146 (48.70%) indicate that they always find difficulty in their jobs, 78 (26.00%) face job related difficulties sometimes and there are 76 (25.30%) employees who have never faced any major difficulty while doing their job. Thus, it appears that a large proportion of our respondents working in the IT organizations have faced difficulties sometime or the other.

Table 2: Lack of information

Occurrence	N	Percentage
Always	91	30.30
Sometimes	122	40.70
Never	87	29.00
Total	300	100.00

Table 2 indicates that where lack of information is concerned, of the total 300 respondents 91 (30.30%) indicate that they always feel lack of information in their jobs, 122 (40.70%) face lack of information in their job sometimes and there are 87 (29.00%) employees who have never felt lack of information while doing their job. Thus, it appears that a large proportion of our respondents working in the IT organizations have faced the problem of lack of information sometime or the other.

Table 3: Office politics and conflicts

Occurrence	N	Percentage
Always	124	41.30
Sometimes	89	29.70
Never	87	29.00
Total	300	100.00

The above Table 3: shows that where office politics and conflicts is concerned, of the total 300 respondents 124 (41.30%) indicate that they always find difficulty in their jobs, 89 (29.70%) face job related difficulties sometimes and there are 87 (29.00%) employees who have never faced any major difficulty while doing their job. Thus, it appears that the largest proportion of our respondents working in the IT organizations have faced difficulties always in this regard.

Table 4 Excessive interruptions

Occurrence	N	Percentage
Always	119	39.70
Sometimes	87	29.00
Never	94	31.30
Total	300	100.00

The above Table 4 shows that where excessive interruptions are concerned, of the total 300 respondents 119 (39.70%) indicate that they always find difficulty in their jobs, 87 (29.00%) face job related difficulties sometimes and there are 94 (31.30%) employees who have never faced any major difficulty while doing their job. Thus, it appears that the largest proportion of our respondents working in the IT organizations have faced difficulties always in this regard.

Table 5 Lack of recognition

Occurrence	N	Percentage
Always	107	35.70
Sometimes	99	33.00
Never	94	31.30
Total	300	100.00

The above 5 shows that where lack of recognition is concerned, of the total 300 respondents 107 (35.70%) indicate that they always find difficulty in their jobs, 99 (33.00%) face job related difficulties sometimes and there are 94 (31.30%) employees who have never faced any major difficulty while doing their job. Thus, it appears that a large proportion of our respondents working in the IT organizations have faced difficulties related to lack of recognition of their merit sometime or the other.

FACTORS LEADING TO FEELING OVERLOADED IN WORK AMONG WORKING WOMEN AT WORKPLACE

Table 6 Shortage of required resources

Occurrence	N	Percentage
Yes	211	70.30
No	89	29.70
Total	300	100.00

As is clear from Table 6 out of 300 respondents as many as 211 (70.30%) considered shortage of required resources as a cause of work overload. Thus a larger proportion of the respondents believed that shortage of required resources was the reason for feeling overloaded.

Table 7 Insufficient co-workers

Occurrence	N	Percentage
Yes	137	45.70
No	163	54.30
Total	300	100.00

Where insufficient number of co-workers was concerned, a larger proportion of the respondents, i.e., 163 (54.3%) did not consider this a factor. Thus a larger proportion of the respondents believed that insufficient number of co-workers was the reason for feeling overloaded with work.

Table 8: More administration and paper work

Occurrence	N	Percentage
Yes	211	70.30
No	89	29.70
Total	300	100.00

In terms of having too much administration and paper work, of the 300 respondents as many as 211 (70.3%) considered this as a cause of work overload. Thus a larger proportion of the respondents believed that more administration and paper work was the reason for feeling overloaded with work.

Table 9: Continuous and chaotic job demands

Occurrence	N	Percentage
Yes	153	51.00
No	147	49.00
Total	300	100.00

Almost equal proportion of respondents among the total 300 gave positive and negative responses to the factor of continuous and chaotic job demands as being the cause of work overload.

Table 10: Shortage of help at work

Occurrence	N	Percentage
Yes	153	51.00
No	147	49.00
Total	300	100.00

In terms of the shortage of help at work, too, there was not much difference between those who considered this factor as a reason for work overload and those who did not, as 153 (51%) of the 300 respondents said yes to this question and 147 (49%) replied in the negative.

CONCLUSION

Where the factors leading to difficulty in work at the workplace are concerned, we found that the working women (married) employees have been affected by group behavior, lack of information, office politics and conflicts, excessive interruptions, and lack of recognition. Any of these factors can lead to occupational stress among them at the workplace. Where factors leading to feeling overloaded in work were concerned, we found that women (married) employees have been affected by shortage of required resources, insufficient co-workers, too much administrative and paper work, continuous and chaotic job demands and shortage of help at work.

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