



Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction: A Study on Teaching Professional

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Abstract

Nonetheless, while it is widely recognized that stress particularly occupational stress is detrimental to health, research confirms people still experience and accept it as part of life. There is hardly any profession that is free of stress; be it the corporate sector or as simple a field as academics. Concentrating now on academics only, it has been found through various research that the responsibilities of academicians have increased manifold, and now faculty members are supposed to play many other roles besides their traditional roles of teaching and research (Abbas et al, 2012). Traditionally university teaching has been perceived as a stress-free profession, particularly by those who are not related to this profession (Fischer, 1994). However, some recent studies suggest that university faculty is among the most stressed occupational groups (Iqbal and Kokash, 2011). Since the last two decades with the inflow of many private sector universities, higher education institutions are commonly labeled as stressful environments (Barkhuizen and Rothmann, 2008). The teaching profession was once viewed as a „low-stress occupation and they have been envied for tenure, light workloads, flexibility, and other perks such as foreign trips for study and conferences.

Keywords: *Occupational stress, Teaching Profession, Teachers, Job Satisfaction*

Introduction

“The harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of the worker. Job stress can lead to poor health and even injury”. (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 1999)

“Occupational Stress” is an inevitable spectacle in individual life in today’s domain of fast industrial development and collective growth. Occupational stress is a psychological disorder that influences an individual’s professional excellence, health, efficiency, and efficacy. Academicians working in management institutions experience a peculiar variety of occupational stress. A noble profession like teaching can be labeled as a traumatic profession in this progressive society which can negatively distress the mental well-being and peace of academicians engaged in management institutions, on the other way it affects the teaching and learning environment. Occupational stress concerns a persistent form of the human being. Stress that arises in the professional sphere can be better accomplished by identifying the nerve-racking circumstances at the workplace and interpreting measures to overcome those environments (Quick, James Campbell; Henderson, Demetria F 2016). Literature was evident that occupational stress includes several features like work designing, operating hours organizational policies and procedures, professional position, environmental aspects, relationships, and personal aspects. According to the survey of Cigna International Health, 2023 “almost 12,000 workers around the world, 91% of 18-to-24-year-olds report being stressed compared to 84% on average. Research indicates Gen Z is emerging as the most stressed demographic in the workplace and struggling mightily to cope”.

Traditionally teaching profession is considered a truncated hectic profession, but during the past two decades the situation has become worse and most importantly management teaching profession and professionals are experiencing high-stress and challenging situations. Worldwide teaching is turning into a highly challenging profession. Rigorous surveys conducted globally exposed extensive unease about the consequences of stress on academician, their perception of well-being, and their enthusiasm to remain in the teaching profession. Cotton and Hart (2003) reported that occupational Stress is an expanding crisis worldwide, which results in substantial damage both to profession and professionals. Stress is defined as “a state of psychological and physiological imbalance resulting from between situational demand and the individual’s ability and motivation to meet those needs” (Hans Seyle, 1956). Occupational stress is an extremely commonplace psychological fact that is dominant among individuals working in a variety of duties and occupations. As education is a human assistance occupation, the stress surrounding the teaching occupation is significant and may have far-comprehensive concerns on the absolute education approach. Management teaching profession is a complicated method in which the academician is projected to demonstrate several potentialities and skills. This triggers an academician to encounter stress in the occupation. **Figure: 1, Source:**(Griffith, Steptoe & Cropley, 1999, Schultz & Schultz, 2002).

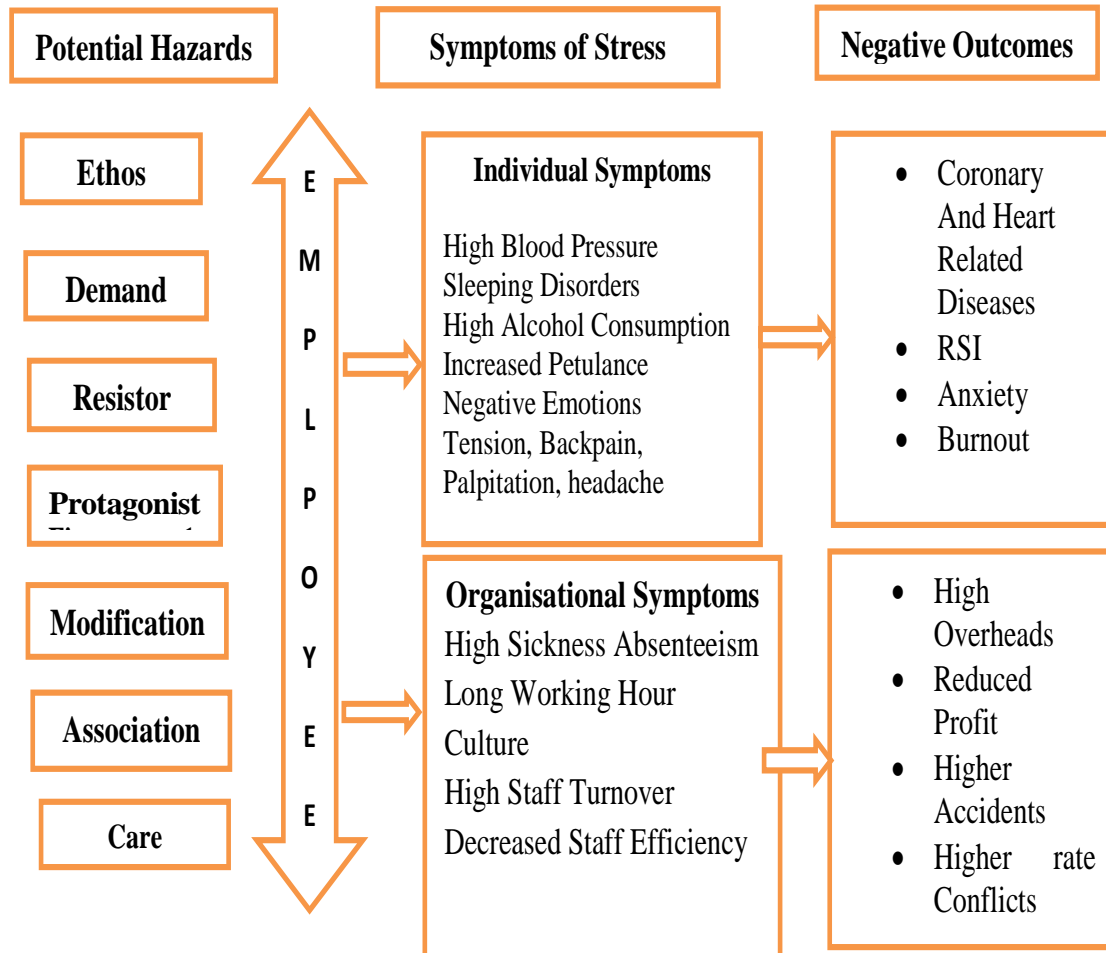


Figure: 1, Source:(Griffith, Steptoe & Cropley, 1999, Schultz & Schultz, 2002).

Occupational Stress Model

Teaching and learning is a progression that improves the character of the student and is only possible by the interface between the students and their atmosphere, and academicians are the most strongest and powerful instruments for student’s growth and development. The responsibility of academics is not only confining to conveying information and acquaintance only, but in enlargement the nationwide attitude improving a logic of effectiveness and capability among the imminent generations, and formulating persons for the precise category of occupation. Occupational stress among the academicians of management institutions is really high because

of the responsibilities like targeted-oriented admission, classroom teaching, course completion, intensive, placement opportunities, personality development, communication growth, and also the conflict inside the institutions. For eras, learning and teaching have been categorized as a profession that is “emotionally taxing and potentially frustrating” (Lambert, O’Donnell, Kusherman, & McCarthy, 2006). It is also observed from the literature that academicians belonging to management institutions quit their profession at a significantly higher rate than other professions (Minarik, Thornton, & Perreault, 2003).

Numerous research has shown that academicians of management institutions experienced strain in several circumstances, such as managing classrooms, discipline among students, planning lectures, organizing extracurricular activities, class monitoring, attaining administrative responsibilities, managing queries of students and parents (Chaplain, 2008; Kyriacou&Kunc, 2007, Brown 2005, McCarthy et al., 2009). Research is also evident that managing students’ attitudes, excessive work pressure, time management, reforms in the educational sector, and preparation for educational review, are the most frequently experienced sources of occupational stress. For occupational stress of management institution’s academicians’ poor institutional policies, poor administrative cooperation, unfair division of work, less supportive peers, subordinates also responsible. According to the most recent Academics Follow-up Survey, 32% of teaching professionals who switch from one institution to another, cited “poor working conditions” as an imperative purpose for their decision, and over 37% of academicians who left the job stated they were leaving to “pursue a job outside of teaching” (Cox et al., 2007). Females, working in management institutions experience a comparatively higher level of occupational stress than their male peers because of students’ behaviour (Klassen, 2010). Among the academicians of management institutions, male professionals experience low stress and high job satisfaction whereas females have just adverse experiences (Pal, 2011). In his study of job satisfaction and occupational stress among teaching professionals, found male teachers to be more satisfied and less stressed with their jobs as compared to their female counterparts. It is also observed that the less efficient and effective teachers of management institutions have more occupational stress (Rana 2014). In the teaching profession excessive of occupational stress is always harmful because teachers are responsible for the holistic and entire development of students which hampers due to teacher occupational stress, anxiety, depression, excessive workloads, and lack of a familiar institutional environment.

Causes of Occupational Stress

Occupational stress is commonly defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the demands of the job exceed the capabilities, needs, or resources

of the worker". Generally, occupational stress arises and is experienced by employees in the work place during the course of his/her employment and it is different levels like mild, moderate, and high for different reasons. During the ancient time when the term stress was not introduced to biological science or behavioral science, it existed in the form of happiness and sorrow. In simple terms all the favorable things to us are happiness and all the unfavorable items are sorrow like hot water in winter is happiness and the same hot water in summer is sorrow. So, it depends upon us how we take our surroundings, stressfully or joyfully.

Work Overload : To perform economic activity to satisfy social, and economic needs is universal and important too. But here the prime concern is to do work in such a way so, that it will not act as a superset. "Work is a subset of like not superset". To lead a better life, we all struggle professionally but sometimes for several reasons employees get over loaded with work and work overload is a prime reason for occupational stress.

Colleagues : Human beings are social creatures, and they need society and social beings to stay happy in both the happiness and sorrowful moment. Professional co-workers play an important role in the life of every employee. A cooperative and supportive colleague is essential to reduce occupational stress and vice versa. Employees spend their valuable time in the organization and when they don't find supportive co-workers, they have high amount of occupational stress. As we all know when we share our internal feelings and pain in front of a cooperative individual, we get relaxed and balanced, so this is also applicable in our professional life too.

Role Uncertainty : Uncertainty and lack of security in the job create work stress in the organization. Because of the uncertainty always employees are in a stress mood and are afraid to meet the future expectations of the own and family members. This kind of thought reduces their performance level, skills, and efficiencies and this is another important cause of occupational stress.

Occupation : The nature of the job and work profile are also responsible for occupational stress such as the sectors that involve risk and hazards. Sometimes it's the job demand to do several kinds of activities that causes stress among employees.

Annoyance : Both self-irritation and working with irritated colleague creates work stress and it destroys occupational harmony and well-being. Too much annoyance is harmful to individual peace and satisfaction, and it creates occupational stress among the employees.

Job Duration : According to the World Health Organization, “long work hours have a causal effect on health and also claims that 745000 deaths were caused by long working hours” in the year 2016. They conducted a systematic study, and many participants were from blue-collar occupations, pink-collar occupations, and white-collar occupations. It found that men are more identified with work-related burdens and diseases too. Too many working hours lead to several diseases and medical practitioners also suggest that while employees work for more than 55 long working hours, they experience a 35% higher risk of heart stroke and 17% more risk of cardio vascular diseases. Long and excessively stressful working hours lead to breast cancer among women.

Sexual Harassment : There is much evidence of literature that reveals that sexual harassment affects adversely the professional over all well-being and affects badly to women. It is also true that women who face higher levels of sexual annoyance perform poorly in the organization. sexual harassment is not specific to any gender, it takes place with any gender and the harasser also be of any gender and it is also not necessarily compulsory that the harasser be of the opposite sexual identity. In the organizational structure, it is more likely to be seen that the harasser belongs to a professional of a higher position but not always. There are many forms of sexual harassment such as rape, trying to rape, sensational contact, forcible sexual performance, sharing of sexually identified photos, videos, and massages, verbal and non verbal harassment, cracking of jokes referencing sexual acts, and opening with sexual relations and fantasies.

Workplace Bullying : Both in structured and unstructured organizations workplace bullying refers to the poor behaviors and poor treatment of employees and managers towards other employees. Here the main concern is about power distribution and power imbalances, the employees having more power and authority in the organization engage in bullies towards the employees having lower positions and authority. Bullying of employees includes utter abuse, psychological exploitation, and corporal abuse, and it results in depression and lower productivity in the workplace. Workplace misbehavior impacts a lot in the mind of employees and creates complex and self-neglected behaviors.

Life and Career Changes : Every individual expects a good life and career for their own well-being. Any kind of adverse changes that arise in life and career options like not getting the required favorable life options or not owning the career option as expected creates stress among the individual in a greater response.

Role Characteristics : This is another type of feature of an individual stress or that exists within the individual itself and the individual fights with his/her own personality. This is a situation where our roles are completely unknown to us and we never have an idea about it, simply we can say it as an unconscious stage for the individual.

Social Change : When any kind of change happens in our society or our immediate environment then also our body and mind experience stress. When someone changes location from one place to another, a college change, a school change, going to a new family after marriage, all these are the clear pictures of social change that generates stress in the individual mind.

Technological Changes : For a growing society technology is required and on the other side society needs technological progress for its growth as well as prosperity. And to deal with society it is a requirement to be technology-friendly and tech-savvy without which we will leave behind from development. As with the above statements, it is also true that sometimes it is difficult to learn new things after a certain period and there, we unconsciously call the stress element. Without technological knowledge, our productivity is reduced, and every single task consumes extra time with more trials and errors.

Lack of Group Cohesiveness : Group cohesiveness stands for respect for each other in a group and team, commitment towards others in the group, and every group members should be responsible for the accountability of others, all these are the positive impacts that an individual requires when starts living in a group and without the group cohesion individual experienced stress.

Organisational Policy

When an individual works for the organization it is his/her responsibility to correlate personal objectives to organization all objectives to work peacefully and smoothly. Every organization follows a specific kind of standard norms of its own, it is the only employee who needs to manage because the organization can't change its policy for every single employee. In the organization, if the employees are easy with the policy, then there are no disturbances and if not, then the stress component starts to play its own role.

According to the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), there are some practical and efficient steps to reduce occupational stress in the organization.

- We need to ensure that the employees are not overloaded, and they are assigned the task as according to their capacity and the available resources.

- Designing jobs in such a way that they will be more meaningful and create opportunities to use their skills.
- Transparency in mentioning the employee's job role.
- To manage occupational stress, managers may supervise the workload of esteemed employees regularly and organize stress management programs.
- Create open opportunities for employees to participate in the organization's decision-making.
- Improves job security and future development opportunities for employees.
- Opportunity for personal get-togethers among workers to build good inter personal relationships.
- Manage work schedules in such a way that they will meet the demands of the organization.
- Abolition of work place discrimination related to gender, community, caste, colour, race, religion, personal identity, and physical identity.
- Promote the participative leadership style in the organization so, that it will be helpful to reduce stress.
- Promote an equilibrium work-life approach in the organization. Job recognition for effective performance.
- Fairness and job neutrality toward employees.
- Inspire mindfulness.
- Inspire them to move regularly.
- Supportive towards professionals during their difficult times.
- Assistance plan for the benefit of professionals.
- Creation of self-respect and satisfaction.
- Opportunities for participatory leadership style in the organization.

Alarming Situation of Occupational Stress

Occupational stress is so persistent that we recognize it as a truth of existence and life, but the fact is that challenging occupations do more than make us disappointed, and unhappy it edge major mental and physical effects.

High risk of Heart Attack : According to a study conducted in the year 2011 and published in the journal PLOS ONE, employees who work for more than 11 hours a day and twice a week are more expected to suffer from heart attack and other heart-related disorders. Depression will also be caused and it reduces life expectancy, lack of sleep, and high risk of stroke and attacks.

Risk of Diabetes : Women professionals engaged in stressful jobs and targeted occupations are at a higher risk of diabetes and it is also the same for men.

Wrenched Relationship : Occupational stress creates risk for personal emotions, sentiments and relationships. Research says that in the case of men 79% and women 61% have relationship issues caused by occupational stress.

Burnout : Burnout is a situation when we receive information from our brain to take a break and it's very frequently experienced by professionals due to excessive workload, sentimental exhaustion, dissatisfactory work, and the workplace.

Low Emotional Wellbeing : Research says that 15% of professionals described that occupational stress disturbed their mental health, well-being, and peace. They also reported that the level of stress they are experiencing is so high which breaks them emotionally and sentimentally. Due to high occupational stress employees get disconnected from their fellow being and distracted emotionally.

Accelerated Ageing : Naturally aging is good, but the literature shows that occupational stress accelerates the aging of professionals and that high levels of occupational stress result in the shortest telomeres.

Objectives of the study

- To study occupational stress and its differential impact on the teaching community.
- To study the job satisfaction level of teaching professionals.

Research Gap

- The studies of occupational stress in the teaching community are unexplored because of the stereotypical perception of society and other professionals.
- The research study of occupational stress only includes female academicians and the study of male faculty members is ignored.

Teaching Profession and Occupational Stress

High-stress levels are plaguing the teaching profession, but one factor makes a big difference in terms of whether teachers are still satisfied with their job: their ability to cope with the stress. A team of researchers from the University of Missouri analyzed survey data of 2,300 teachers from Missouri and Oklahoma who were asked to rate their levels of work stress, job

satisfaction, and how well they feel they can cope with work stress. They found that teachers who say they are not coping well with work stress report far lower job satisfaction compared to teachers who say they have found ways to manage workplace pressures. The role of a teacher is filled with challenges that are devastating and occasionally depressing (Wiggins 2015). Coping refers to the action taken by an individual concerning the internal and external demands of a situation perceived as threats. Teachers need to cope with things that transpire to them and the things that occur within them. Having a positive attitude allows the teacher to practice professional efficacy by handling problems correctly. They engaged in positive coping mechanisms for a corresponding volume and level of stress trending the teachers. Conversely, when a teacher faces challenges poorly, this response precipitates a state of stress that is potentially dangerous to their performance and wellness.

Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction in the Teaching Profession

“Job satisfaction was a positive or pleasurable reaction resulting from the appraisal of one’s job, job achievement, or job experiences”. (*Locke, 2002*)

Job satisfaction is the satisfactory or negative independent response with which employees view their job responsibility. It results when there is correspondence between demands, job expectations of employees, and requirements of employees. It conveys the degree of coordination between the expectations of employees and the amount of rewards received by employees from the organization. It is also true that the physical and mental condition of employees is always important for job satisfaction and productivity. “Job satisfaction is defined as an effective or emotional response toward various facts of one’s job” (*Kreitner&Kinicki, 1998*). Presently it is a common misconception spreading in society that professionals involved in the teaching profession are not satisfied with their jobs specifically management faculty members because of reasons like excessive administrative responsibilities, poor peer culture, and lack of opportunities for personal growth. Irrespective of gender, job satisfaction is influenced by factors like personal growth, promotion, increment, self-esteem, good HR policies, positive coordination, efficient staffing, and a supportive institutional environment.

Findings

- Due to occupational stress academicians suffer from diseases like high blood pressure, neck pain, feeling low, asthenopia, hypertension, anxiety, spondylitis, sleeplessness, heartproblems, irritation, digestive issues, joint pain, schizophrenia, psoriasis, vertigo, psychosis.

- Despite different affiliations and standards all institutions work for an average 8 hours per day which is satisfactory. Still, some institutions seem to be harassed intentionally. Employer approach for late evening schedule, organize meetings after the 8 hours of the scheduled time, organize seminar / workshop on Sunday, deduct official holiday which results from the higher level of occupational stress and reduce job satisfaction too.
- In both the institutions and university, teaching staff are overloaded with administrative responsibilities, which causes higher occupational stress and lack of job satisfaction.
- In the workplace academicians face difficulties of both financial and non-financial benefits, which is a key for occupational stress and job dissatisfaction.

Suggestions & Recommendations

Every teaching institution needs productive and efficient professionals for growth and development and employees need continuous and constant motivation to be productive without any distress environment. It is also an obvious human tendency to take the job and environment seriously which creates stress, job dissatisfaction, and incidence of work-life imbalance. So, it is wise and advisable for every institution to have a scope of counseling by registered counselors for professionals who cooperate with the employees to settle down mentally and physically. Teaching profession and professionals are like rollers, they grow and shine the way they roll, so continuous learning is a requirement for faculties to survive and sustain. Professors of management institutions are continuous learners, so for learning purposes, they need sabbaticals and study leave with pay because their learning will be an additional advantage for the institutions. There are several proven methods to deal with stress positively that help the employees to balance their personal and professional lives such as meditation, exercises, music, reading good books, aerobics, Zumba, and many more, so employees expect a gymnasium with professional experts, motivational talks in regular intervals, good cafeteria etc to chill with colleague. Generally, an employee of any institution works for financial (salary) and non-financial benefits (medical benefits, health insurance, transport facilities, working lunch). Apart from the above the faculty members also recommended things for a stress-free environment of institutions and smooth running of academics with job satisfaction, which are as follows:

- To reduce occupational stress academicians, need to adopt healthy diets, physical workouts, exercises, practice of mindfulness, and social-emotional outlets.

- It is recommended that creche facilities inside the organization campus can widely reduce the level of occupational stress associated with academicians.
- A strong faculty association needs to be formulated with neutral representation to address academicians' challenges and difficulties.

Conclusion

Job is an essential part of our life and we spend much of our hours in occupation and organization. After our family it is the job only where we are attached and involved with commitment so, it needs to be flexible, familiar, and stress-free. Like other teaching profession also need to be modified with stress-free programs, orientation, awareness campaigns, and mental well ness workshops because teachers with stress, anxiety, and dissatisfaction can't act efficiently and are not able to show justice to the students and society. The teaching profession and teachers need to be specially taken care of by the organization and the government because teaching is such a profession where professors teach to another profession (David Hasilkorn 1991). Teachers are those people in the university who inspire their students to have some dreams, follow their dreams, help to discover the student's research, and innovation and motivate the students to use their potential fullest. Teachers are the most responsible and respectable individuals in our society because their valuable efforts decide the future and fate of society as a whole. Teachers need to be very happy with their job because they are the primary source to our future generation towards nation-building and new innovation. It is our foremost responsibility to think about teachers and the teaching profession and how they get optimum satisfaction out of that which help them to maintain equilibrium in their professional and personal life. And lastly, teachers are contributing more to our future generation than other professions so, they need to stay happy, satisfied, and blessed to contribute from generation to generation.

Limitations

- This study is confined to the teaching community (Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professors) of institutions and universities.
- Time constraint is an other limitation because this research study demands a prescribed time limit to complete the work successfully.
- Financial constraints are also there during this study.

Further Scope of Study

This study understands the handling of occupational stress in teaching communities by the human resource management department and the occupational stress management system. This present study would help institutions and universities to know the factors of occupational stress and to reduce the amount of stress in academicians. After analyzing occupational stress institutions would initiate to achieve job satisfaction among academicians.

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