



Occupational Stress - A Systematic Review, Its Association With Factors And Implications

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Abstract:

Purpose – This study aims to systematically review the existing literature and develop an understanding of Occupational Stress and its relationship with other factors such as working hours, workloads, motivation, wellbeing, etc., effects of occupational stress and extract research gaps to recommend future research possibilities and priorities.

Design/methodology/approach – The current study has made an attempt to have a detailed study of the research work done by various research scholars in the domain of Occupational Stress and its related aspects. Various research papers, thesis have been studied for the sake of the systematic review of the study. The various conceptual frameworks and their elements have done significant contributions, the various factors which influence Occupational Stress, Occupational Stress Index, its impact on wellbeing, implications are conferred.

Findings – The research highlights to the research gaps and scope for the future research in the area of Occupational Stress.

Keywords: Occupational Stress, Occupational Stress Index, Motivation, Work Loads, Working Hours, Wellbeing, etc

1. INTRODUCTION

The topic of occupational stress has received considerable research attention during the last decade and has emerged as an important occupational safety and health concern. (Joseph J. Hurrell Jr. PhD, Lawrence R. Murphy PhD 1996). Occupational stress has a significant impact on the Personal Life, Health Life, and Family Life for any employee. All the above contributes to the Non-Work Life of the employee which ultimately imbalances work and the non-work life i.e. Work Life Imbalance. In this technological era, work

is becoming demanding with changing nature of work and working patterns (Thilagavathy and Geetha, 2020). According to the World Health Organisation, Work-related stress is the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope. It is also highlighted by the organisation as Work-related stress can be caused by poor work organization, by poor work design, poor management, unsatisfactory working conditions and lack of support from colleagues and supervisors. Hence there is a need to thoroughly study the Occupational Stress and its impact on various factors. This research has focused more specifically the relation between Occupational Stress and Work life balance, Working hours, Motivation, workloads, behavioural factors, etc.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. What Occupational Stress was conceptualised in the earlier studies.?
2. What is the relation of Occupational stress with Work Life Balance, Motivation, Work Load & Working hours and Psychological Wellbeing?
3. What is the Effects of Occupational Stress on the?
4. What is the scope of study towards Occupational Stress?

3. METHODOLOGY:

The study was done by reviewing the abstracts from the database like EBSCO, JSTOR. Several articles were studied through Emerald insight, ELSEVIER, etc. The literature was conducted using the search terms Occupational stress, coping strategies, Occupational Stress Index, Impact of Occupational Stress, Relation with wellbeing, etc. several Research papers, articles were studied in order to justify every research question. The scrutinization of research papers relevant to the expected search terms helped to review the Occupational Stress systematically.

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

The concept of stress is a multidimensional, and it may be interpreted from two major perspectives i.e. eustress and distress conditions (Selye, 1987; Ismail, Yao, Lai-Kuan & Soon-Yew, 2010). Work related stress has been conceptualised as physiological stress (PHS), and psychological stress (PSS) in carrying out duties and responsibilities to achieve key performance indicators (Ismail, et. al. 2010; Ismail, Suh-Suh, Ajis, & Dollah, 2009; Santos, Barros, & Carolino, 2010). In an organizational context, eustress is often called positive stress which is beneficial for organizations where individuals have adequate knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes to cope with their work demands and pressures (Keshavarz & Mohammadi, 2011; Yu-Fei, Ismail, Ahmad, & Kuek, 2012; Code & Langan-Fox, 2001; Gachter, Savage, & Torgler, 2011). Whereas distress is perceived as negative stress referring to individuals having no such positive attributes to cope with external forces and challenges placed on them (Ismail, et. al., 2010; Keshavarz & Mohammadi, 2011). The former is viewed as a physiological reaction of the body (e.g., abdominal pain, chest pain, fatigue, headache, lethargic, migraine, and sleep disturbance) to various stressful triggers at the

workplace that directly and negatively affects an individual's productivity, effectiveness, quality of work and personal health (Ismail et al., 2009; Santos et al., 2010; World Health Organization, 2007). While, the later psychological stress (PSS) refers to internal pressure an employee feel (Low, Kok, & Lee, 2014) due to substantial influence from internal and external environment (Vijayalakshmi, Ramachandra, Reddemma, & Math, 2014; Ngo, Foley, Ji, & Loi, 2014; Saygin et al., 2015) that result in imbalance in one's feelings and senses which in turn contributes to inability to cope with work and sustain pressure in the workplace. Vadivu (2017) in her research examines the connection between occupational stress and job satisfaction among material administrators. Altogether, 553 textile chiefs were welcome to take part in the poll review. A cross-sectional examination was utilized to analyse the connection between occupational stress and job satisfaction. The aim of the research was to discover connection between occupational stress and job satisfaction with respect to age, gender, conjugal status, work insight, and pay of material supervisors in Tirupur. Clear examination, Pearson relationship, and numerous relapse investigations were utilized to break down the information.

Ismail, Ghani, Sudhan & Joarder (2015) discuss that physiology and psychology are the two key elements in organizational stress and work-related stress. Employees' capacity to handle stress correctly while executing their jobs may have an impact on individual results, particularly job satisfaction. The function of work-related stress as an essential factor which has received less attention in the literature on organizational stress. Thus, utilizing self-report questionnaires gathered from Malaysian peacekeeping forces in a conflict-ridden Middle Eastern country, this study was conducted to determine the relationship between work-related stress and job satisfaction. The results of the hypothesis testing utilizing Smart PLS (which is a piece of software with graphical user boundary for variance-based basic equation modelling using the partial least squares path modelling technique) revealed four key findings. First, there was a link between physiological stress and work satisfaction. Second, psychological stress was linked to work satisfaction in a substantial way. In the organizational sample, the study indicates that work-related stress is a key driver of job satisfaction.

The Physiological stress can be defined as bodily pain and sufferings as a result of contexts (Ismail et al., 2009; Vijayalakshmi et al., 2014) and social interactions (Keshavarz & Mohammadi, 2011) that has potential to reduce the level of individual productivity, efficiency, proficiency, and quality outcomes (Santos et al., 2010; World Health Organization, 2007). It is also essential to focus on the fact that the loneliness and interpersonal problems make reduce one's ability to rationalize and increase stress, as argued by Saygin et al. (2015) ultimately turn creates a serious psychological stress in the workplace (Lazrus, 2013) and also long-term sickness. It can be inferred that both types of stress are interlinked to each other, not isolated.

The role of work related stress as an important determinant of job satisfaction has been given little attention in organizational stress related research literature (Low, Kok, & Lee, 2014; Vijayalakshmi et al., 2014; Ngo et al., 2014). Cohen (1980) believes that the poor job performance is also one of the causes of stress. However, the stress can have a positive impact on employees' performance as few perform better under stress, though its negative impacts outweigh positive impacts. However, extreme stress is so aversive to

employees that try to avoid by withdrawing either psychologically, physically or by leaving the job entirely (Beehr & Newman, 1978). It is generally perceived that job stress and job satisfaction has been strongly related where the previous one influencing the level of employees' satisfaction with the job in particular, and also with the organization in general. In fact, in most cases job satisfaction has been the most frequent investigated topic of interest in the organizational research (Spector, 1997). According to Chandraiah et al., (2003), employee who experience high level of job stresses for a longer period of time, tend to have lower levels of job satisfaction and job performance, withdraw from work and experience greater sickness absence, and finally tend to have high levels of turnover intentions.

5. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS:

Occupational Stress: *Occupational Stress* is stress which is associated to one's service. Occupational stress over and over again shoots from unanticipated everyday jobs and demands that do not line up with an individual's acquaintance, proficiencies, prospects, reducing one's aptitude to manage. Occupational stress can supplement when personnel do not feel holed up by superintendents or peers, or sense as if they have self-effacing control over job processes.

Stress Models: Since stress consequences from the multifaceted connections between great systems of unified variables, there are a numeral of psychosomatic theories and symbol that deal with occupational stress,

Individual Atmosphere Fit Model: This imitation proposes that the complement between a person and their job atmosphere is solution in powering their wellbeing. For strong conditions, it is necessary that human resources' thoughts skills, competencies and resources match the load of their occupation, and that work ambiance be hypothetical to meet workers' wants, knowledge, and skillfulness prospective. Lack of healthy in either of this globe of influence can cause predicaments and the greater the gap or oddity among the individual and their atmosphere, the larger the strain as burden exceed their capability and necessities exceeds the supply. This anxious tension can relate to health connected subjects lesser efficiency, and other service problems.

Work Uniqueness Model: This imitation focuses on imperative characteristics of job attributes, such as skill variety, task identity, task insinuation, autonomy and response. These traits are proposed to demonstrate the way to critical psychological situations of knowledgeable meaningfulness, and well-informed responsibility and the acquaintance of results. It is predictable that positive or negative work attributes give rise to psychological states which show the way to equivalent cognitive and behavioral finale e.g. inspiration, fulfillment, non-attendance, etc. In mixture with the replica, Hackman and Oldham during the year 1980 had build up the work Diagnostic Survey, a survey for the sake of job analysis, which involve key types of job-redesign including combining assignments, generate response methods and work enrichment.

Diathesis - Strain Model: This imitation looks at presentations as susceptibility encumber jointly with pressure from life incidence. It is useful to differentiate demanding job conditions or stressors on or following an individual's response or strains. Strain can be emotional, corporeal or arousing. Occupational

stress can take position when there is a discrepancy between the difficulty of the ambiance/workplace and an individual 's competence to carry out and whole these demands. Repeatedly a stressor can direct the individual to encompass a physiological comeback that can sprain someone bodily as well as emotionally. A mixture of aspects makes an imburement to place of work stress such as great workload, isolation, widespread hours work, deadly employment environments, short of independence, tricky relationships in the middle of coworkers and management, association bullying, harassment and squat of opportunities or motivation to advancement in one's skill elevation.

Work-Demand related Resource Model : These imitation states that strain is a reply to imbalance flanked by demands of one's job and the belongings he or she has to deal with individuals' difficulty. Job demands are the physical, cerebral, social, or managerial aspects of a job that require to be sustained bodily and/or psychosomatic attempt or skills. As a result, they are associated with expenditure of point in time and liveliness. Job resources are the physical, psychological, social, or administrative aspects of the occupation that lend a hand in achieving job goals; diminish job demands and the connected physiological and mental cost; encourage personal advance, learning, and development.

Effort-Reward Imbalance (ERI)- Model: This imitation focuses on the shared relationship between attempts and rewards at job, additionally specifically, the ERI Model asserts that occupation characterized by together high activities and low rewards symbolizes a reciprocity inconsistency between eminent costs and squat down the gains, which perhaps will draw out negative sentiments in exposed human assets. The accompanying approach may cause continual strain responses. So, working hard-hitting without receiving sufficient positive reception or being treating moderately is the examples of a traumatic unevenness. Another belief of the ERI Model concerned with human being disparity in the considerate of effort-reward unevenness. It is unspecified that human resources characterized by a motivational trial product of extreme job-related pledge and a high need for backing will respond with additional tension reactions to an effort-reward jaggedness in comparison with smaller amount overcommitted populace.

There are various sources of occupational stress such as _Deadly job environment, Negative workload, Loneliness, Nature of hours worked, Work conflict & Ambiguity in role, No independence, career development obstacle, Tricky relations with supervisors or co-worker, Administration bullying, Annoyance and Managerial climate

6. OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND OTHER RELATED VARIABLES

Occupational Stress and Work Life Balance:

Various studies done by the researchers such as such as Brough and O'Driscoll, (2010), Sauter, Greenhaus & Beutell, (1985) Murphy, & Hurrell, (1990), Staines, (1980) have elaborated various elements in occupational stress and work Life balance. Those are such as *Work demands* which refers to the amount of work that is necessary to be done for a given period of time, and level of difficulty involved in work. High work demands have found to be the significant predictor of occupational stress; *Control*: it refers to level of autonomy & the decision-making power that personnel have into their jobs; *Social support*: refers to the level of support and the encouragement that personnel receive from their colleagues, supervisors, and their

family affiliates. *Work-family conflict*: it refers to the extent to which all the work responsibilities interfere with the family responsibilities; *Leisure time*: It refers to the amount of timespan that employees spend for the leisure activities outside the work. According to a study by Grawitch, Barber, and Kroner (2013), occupational stress was found to have a negative impact on work-life balance, which leads to the negative outcomes such as burnout and/or turnover intentions. Another study done by Frone, Russell, and Barnes (1996) analysed that the job stress was significantly related to the work-family conflict, which in turn negatively affected job satisfaction and life satisfaction. The study by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), on the work-family conflict to be positively related to job stress, the study suggested that individuals who generally experience high levels of conflict between work and family roles may experience more stress in their job.

However, the Work-life balance interventions can easily improve both work-life balance and occupational stress: A meta-analysis by Van der Hek and Plomp (1997) concluded that the work-life balance interventions, such as flexible work arrangements & time management training, were found to be very effective in improving both work-life balance as well as reduce occupational stress. Certain studies concluded that, work-life balance was found to be a significant predictor of occupational stress. Whereas, in certain studies, components of occupational stress such as work overload, technology advancement, role ambiguity, and role conflict, were found to be antecedents to work-life balance (Muthu Kumarasamy et al., 2015). hence, on the basis of this existing correlation between the two, a causal relationship between the occupational stress and work-life balance (WLB) can also be proposed.

Hence, Occupational stress and work-life balance can be stated as two sides of the same coin. The factors which stimulate workplace stress influence the pace of work-life balance. For instance, study conducted by Mulay (2014), reported that there are different aspects of a good work environment that has a significant effect on the work-life balance of employees such as Support from the supervisors, team leaders, colleagues, and managers that mediate the level of job stress and help in the harmony of work and personal space.

Occupational Stress and Motivation:

As per the study done by Dr. Showkat Khalil Wani (2013), the increased level of stress leads to decrease in the motivation level of employees. Lesser scope for personal growth, under utilization of abilities, uncongenial working environment, ambiguous organizational policies are other findings leading to stress and lesser motivation of employees. Chandrakant Jamadar, Mysore (2012) studied on occupational stress and work motivation among the employees in telecom sector. The results concluded that there is an association between work motivation and occupational stress. Occupational stress affects both the employee as well as the organisation. As per the study done by Anamika Basumatary (et.al) in 2021, there is a negative correlation between occupational stress and employee motivation among field job and desk job employees Also there is a negative correlation between occupational stress and psychological well-being between individuals work in field job and desk job.

Occupational Stress and Work Load, Working Hours:

As per the study done by Yu Hong (et.al) in 2023, Long working hours are associated with occupational stress, well-being, and the depression. The results concluded that working hours, occupational stress, and well-being were the strong predictors of depression. Working hours significantly effects on depression *through* occupational stress. Hence, the result of this study stated that decreasing working hours and reducing occupational stress would be effective for couriers to prevent depression.

As per the research article from Stress & Health by Kenneth S. Shultz, Mo Wang, Deborah A. Olson (2009), role overload had the highest level of all 16 negative health outcomes, with the role underload group being the next highest and the matched group being the lowest.

Occupational Stress and Psychological Wellbeing:

A.Bharadwaj et.al in India (2008) worked on occupational health and psychological well-being of the industrial employees. In the current period of globalization of the business, the idea of work associations and its condition are found to be changing resulting to broaden noticeable effect on the person's activity, wellbeing, and prosperity. This study was planned to analyze the impact of the occupational health on the mental prosperity. It was administered for 150 line-staff working in a creation association. Psychometrically institutionalized scales were applied to evaluate the extent of occupational health and psychological well-being.

James Campbell et.al in April (2016) in University of Texas worked on the occupational stress: preventing suffering, enhancing wellbeing. According to James, Occupational stress is harmful for any individual's health causing physical, mental, psychological, disorders and diseases. Organisations and the individuals can lessen these disorders through preventive stress management and enhanced well-being.

7. IMPLICATIONS OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS:

The Occupational stress can have a far-reaching impact on Employee Health, Productivity which ultimately decreases the health and productivity of the Organisation. Base on the literature of Human Resource, University of Cambridge, high occupational stress results in affecting individuals physically, emotionally, Intellectually and behavioural perspective. The health issues (physical) arising due to occupational stress includes sleep disturbances, headaches, gastrointestinal upset, Raised blood pressure/cardiovascular disease. Impact of occupational stress affecting emotionally results Anxiety and irritability, Depression, Liable emotions. Occupational stress affects intellectually in the form of loss of concentration, Lack of motivation, Difficulty with thought process, loss of memory, poor decision-making. The behavioural factors affected due to occupational stress includes, substance (alcohol) misuse, decreased libido, inappropriate display of behaviour, Isolation, Unpunctuality. Occupational stress has a negative impact on any individual employee which results in decreasing the productivity into their own organisation. This ultimately has an adverse impact on the organisation as a whole. It results in the form of High absenteeism, High labour turnover, poor time keeping, poor performance and productivity, low morale, poor motivation, increased employee complaints, increased ill-health, accidents and incidents reports.

8. SCOPE FOR THE FUTURE RESEARCH IN THE AREA OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS:

There is a scope to analyse the Occupational stress occurring at different sectors or nature of organisation. Occupational stress is found to be the dependant variable which can be determined by the influence of various factors contributing to arise. The current studies can identify the factors, However, more studies are needed to verify the relationship between them. For instance, there is an association between occupational stress, working hours and depression. But lack to identify the relationship between working hours and depression.

Srivastava, A. K., & Singh, A. P. (1981) developed a scale named Occupational Stress Index that used to quantify the Occupational stress. There is the scope to quantify the scores for each element of the demographic profile of the individuals, sector wise analysis, nation wise analysis. There is a scope to create other such relevant scale for the measurement of Occupational stress.

Limitation:

There is a possibility of missing out a few research papers unintentionally, which may not be included in this review. Also, the papers in the English language were only considered for the review. Hence, the papers in other languages were not considered in this systematic review which is one of the limitations of this research work

9. CONCLUSION:

The current research work aspires to conduct a systematic review to extract the research gaps, and propose direction for the future studies. The review section made to elaborate on evolution and conceptualization of Occupational Stress. Moreover, the literature review was discussed in detail highlighting the relationship between Occupational Stress and other relevant variables. The discussion reveals the importance and essentiality of the organisations to understand the causes and effects of Occupational Stress. Accordingly, the future research directions exploring the relationship between the variables have been proposed. Occupational stress is an important area of research; thus, the proposed research directions are of important for the academicians. The review's finding demonstrates that there are very few studies related to Occupational stress and its impact on variables. This gives a scope for the researchers conduct studies and investigations in this area. Hence, it is essential to conduct more research on Occupational stress, strategies to reduce occupational stress.

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