

Impact of Occupational Stress on the Work Life Balance of TEACHING PROFESSIONALS in Higher Education with Special Reference to Bhubaneswar City, Odisha

Satyajit Dikshit¹ and Sujit Kumar Acharya²

¹DAV School of Business Management, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

²Department of Business Management, D.D.C.E, Utkal University, Odisha

E-mail: ¹dsbmsatyajit1@gmail.com, ²sujit_acharya@hotmail.com

Abstract—Occupational stress has become increasingly common in teaching profession largely because of increased occupational complexities and increased economic pressure on individuals. The study combining with elements of descriptive and explanatory research based on 80 respondents reports on the impact of occupational stress on work life balance of the teaching professionals in higher education sector. Research findings suggest that there is no significant difference in the level of occupational stress among males and females. Various statistical tools like mean, SD and t- test are used to reach the findings. It is reported by the researcher that there is no significant difference in the stress level among the teaching professionals in government and self- financing colleges.

Keywords: Work life balance, occupational stress, teaching professionals

In competitive environments, stress is a natural phenomenon. Stress is a physiological response to any change, which can be either good or bad. Good stress also called "eustress," which gives us energy and motivates us to strive while bad stress is called "distress" and causes many harmful effects. Robert M. Yerkes and John D. Dodson, two researchers from Harvard, first identified that there exist a relationship between stress and performance in the year 1908 and is called the Yerkes-Dodson law. According to the law, the efficiency increases with the increase in pressure but only up to a point; and after that, performance dramatically falls off. (Endres and Wearden, 1996) suggested that "high levels of stress are an integral and is a component of work which can't be avoided", however, the problem arises when that stress becomes excessive, and it produces adverse effects.

In recent years, we have seen a rise in stress across all spheres of life, particularly in the work place. It is not surprising that we are seeing work place stress emerging as a major cause of physical and mental health problems. For the last few decades, research around stress has produced a large number of conferences, books, and articles, however despite

the popularity of "stress" as a research topic, experts still do not agree on a common definition of this simple and at the same time controversial concept (Rees and Redfern, 2000). Stress is now usually defined as a feeling of physical or emotional tension and a feeling of being unable to cope with anxiety and discomfort, particularly in response to change (Vijayashree and Mund, 2011). It can be due to personal professional (occupational) reasons.

Occupational stress can be described as the adverse reaction people have due to excessive pressure or other types of demand on them (Health and Safety Executive, 2005) Occupational stress and its effect have been amongst the most popular topics in research literature.

Even though the work-life issues were dated back to 1960's they have received greater concern during the past two decades. There has been a growing body of research in the field of work- life issues especially work-life balance as most work and family demands. Generally, work-life balance is defined as a state of equilibrium in which the demands of both a person's job and personal life are equal. It is nothing but investing equal amounts of time and energy between work and personal life. Parkes and Langford (2008) defined work-life balance as 'an individual's ability to meet their work and family commitments, as well as other non-work responsibilities and activities.

Majority of these research and practices are aimed at developed regions of the world (Korabik et al 2003) particularly concerned about the US and focused on the reconciliation of work and family. There is also a growing awareness of work- life issues in developing countries (Joplin et al. 2003). According to Guest (2002), the reasons for the rise of concern regarding work-life balance are the pressure and intensification of work, increasing focus on quality of home and community life and the attitudes and values of

people. This in turn leads to significant rise in stress related to health problem, which in turn financially affect the both the employer as well as the government (Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1997).

Though, more researches are carried out, very minimum is concerned with teaching professionals. Hence, this paper aims at examining the teaching professionals stress level in balancing their work and family demands.

Review of Literature

Occupational stress can be described as the adverse reaction people have due to excessive pressure or other types of demand on them (Health and Safety Executive, 2005). Occupational stress and its effect have been amongst the most popular topics in research literature. This is because many researchers believe that stress is becoming a major contributor to absenteeism, low employee morale, high accident and turnover rates. The cost of these stress consequences has become huge burden on many organizations (Jefri and Al-shammri, 1995, Iqbal and Kokash, 2011). The effects of occupational stress are devastating to both employees and employers (McDonald and Korabik, 1991).

Dr. K. M. Nalwade and Shri. S. R. Nikam (2013) done a literature review on quality of work life in academics and explores earlier research in the academic area. The researcher explains quality of work life on Walton's eight factors. They establish its relationship with employee demographic variable, stress, satisfaction, commitment, performance, job satisfaction which reveals that the former are the determinant of work life balance.

Tharakan (1992) studied on occupational stress and job satisfaction among workingwomen. He observed that professional women experienced greater work related stress than non-professional women. The expectation of technocrats was much higher than the no technocrats.

Ryhal and Singh (1996) studied the correlates of job stress among university faculty. Results revealed that assistant professors experienced higher job stress than associate professors and professors.

Orpen (1996) examined the moderating effects of cognitive failure on the relationship between work stress and personal strain. He compared the work stress among 136 nurses and 12 college lecturers. The results found that nurses experienced more stress than the lecturers.

Ansari and Singh (1997) made an attempt to explore the contribution of demographic variables to the nature of stress experienced by the teachers in an agriculture university. The professors were either in moderate or in high stress categories as compared to associate and assistant professors.

Upadhyay and Singh (1999) compared the occupational stress level experienced by the 20 college teachers and 20 executives. The teachers showed significant higher levels of

stress than executives on intrinsic impoverishment and status factors. They experienced stress because their personal wishes and strong desire for better and prosperous career were felt to be blocked by others. Aminabhavi and Triveni (2000) revealed that nationalized bank employees have significantly higher occupational stress than non-nationalized bank employees, in the dimensions such as role conflict, unreasonable group/political pressure, intrinsic impoverishment and strenuous working conditions. Potter et al. (2002) concluded that the interpersonal stressors at work place have the influence on the employees. Interpersonal conflicts experienced in the work place also predict diseases and well-being declines. Results proved that psychosocial environment of workplace have unique effects on employee. Vashishtha and Mishra (2004) explored the relative contribution of social support and occupational stress to organizational commitment of supervisors (n=200) the result revealed that the social support and occupational stress significantly predict the degree of organizational commitment of supervisors. Chand and Monga (2007) examined the correlates of job stress and burn out among 100 faculty members from two universities. Respondents with internal locus of control, high social support and high job involvement experience less stress. Results also revealed that maximum stress is reported by professors and minimum by assistant professors.

Upadhaya & Singh (2001) studied the occupational stress among school and college teachers. Their study revealed that the school teacher were under more occupational stress as compared to college teachers. They found that work overload, role conflict, higher expectations of students and their parents were found to cause more stress among the school teachers.

D. Kumar and J.M. Deo (2011) undertaken a study to measure the effect of stress on quality of work life of college teachers. They took 100 college teachers of universities of Bihar and Jharkhand and studied their different perception of quality of work life. Findings exposed that junior teachers had more stress than senior teachers. As well as female teachers were feeling more stress in their job in comparison to male teachers.

Objectives of the Study

To study level of occupational stress among teachers in higher education sector.

To compare the level of occupational stress between male and female teachers in higher education.

To compare the level of occupational stress of the teachers working in Government and Private college.

Hypotheses of the Study

H0 1- There exists no significant difference between male and female teachers in their levels of occupational stress.

H0 2- There is no significant difference between Government and Private college teachers in their level of occupational stress.

Methodology

The study was undertaken in the Bhubaneswar and Cuttack city of Odisha, India. The respondents were the faculty members working in Higher education sector both self financing and government Colleges and selected using stratified Random Sampling method. The study was aimed at unearthing the relationship between demographical factors and the level of occupational stress in balancing work and personal life among the sample respondents. For this purpose the level of occupational stress was selected as the dependent variable. The independent variables such as gender and employment status were chosen for this analysis. The questionnaire was sent to the 103 faculty members but only 80 responses were received and the response rate of 77.65%. Hence, the total numbers of respondents were 80, including 39 male respondents and 41 female respondents. Among the 80 respondents 50 were from self financing and 30 were from government colleges.

Results and Discussion

Table-1

| Gender | No. of teachers | Mean | Standard Deviation | t-value | Level of Significance |
|--------|-----------------|-------|--------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| Male | 39 | 134.5 | 25.35 | 0.246 | Not Significant |

It is found (Table-1) that the calculated t-value is 0.246 is less than critical value at 0.05 level of significance. Thus the difference between the means of male and female teachers in their level of occupational stress cannot be taken significant at 0.05 level. Thus it can be concluded that male and female teachers do not differ significantly in their level of occupational stress. The findings of this study is in confirmity with the findings of Englezakis, D. (2001) in which there was found no significant difference in the occupational stress of male and female teachers.

Table-2

| Sl. No | Subscales of variables | Male | | Female | | t-Value | Level of Significance |
|--------|---|------|------|--------|------|---------|-----------------------|
| | | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| 1 | Role overload | 21.2 | 3.42 | 20.1 | 2.59 | 1.626 | Not significant |
| 2 | Role Ambiguity | 11.4 | 2.32 | 10.4 | 2.03 | 2.047 | Significant |
| 3 | Role Conflict | 14.3 | 2.79 | 14.5 | 2.32 | 0.349 | Not significant |
| 4 | Unreasonable group and Political Pressure | 15.3 | 1.71 | 12.02 | 2.64 | 6.558 | Significant |

| | | | | | | | |
|----|------------------------------|------|------|-------|------|-------|-----------------|
| 5 | Responsibilities for persons | 10.7 | 0.8 | 9.41 | 1.33 | 5.22 | Significant |
| 6 | Under-participation | 12.1 | 2.27 | 12.5 | 2.33 | 0.777 | Not significant |
| 7 | Powerlessness | 8.4 | 2.41 | 10.41 | 1.73 | 4.301 | Significant |
| 8 | Poor Peer Relationship | 10.5 | 1.21 | 12.81 | 2.42 | 5.357 | Significant |
| 9 | Intrinsic Impoverishment | 8.9 | 2.12 | 9.5 | 2.41 | 1.180 | Not significant |
| 10 | Low Status | 6.5 | 1.3 | 8.1 | 3.62 | 2.60 | Significant |
| 11 | Strenuous Working Condition | 9.7 | 2.46 | 9.3 | 0.83 | 0.984 | Not significant |
| 12 | Unprofitability | 6.1 | 2.54 | 7.52 | 1.46 | 3.08 | Significant |

A close observation of the table 2, has made it clear that calculated t-value for comparing male and female teachers in the domains of role overload, role conflict, under-participation, intrinsic impoverishment and strenuous working condition is less than critical value at 0.05 level of significance. So mean difference in male and female teachers is not significant in case of all the above said domains is not significant. It means that male and female teachers do not differ in these areas. But in the domains of unreasonable group and political pressure, responsibilities for persons, low status, powerlessness, poor peer relationship and unprofitability, the calculated value of t-ratio is greater than critical values. Thus in these areas the mean difference between male and female teachers is significant. In the area of role ambiguity, there was found significant difference between male and female teachers.

Table-3

| Gender | No. of teachers | Mean | Standard Deviation | t-value | Level of Significance |
|--------------------|-----------------|-------|--------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| Government College | 30 | 134.7 | 23.12 | 0.248 | Not Significant |
| Private College | 50 | 135.8 | 25.18 | | |

From the table 3, it is clear that the calculated t-value is 0.248 which is less than critical value at 0.05 level of significance. Thus the difference between the means of teachers working in Government and Private college is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. Thus it can be concluded that teachers working in Govt. and Private schools do not differ significantly in their level of occupational stress. The findings of the study are in contrast with Kaur (2006) in which Private college teachers were found to have more occupational stress than Govt. teachers.

Table No.4

| Sl. No | Subscales of variables | Government College | | Self financing College | | t-Value | Level of Significance |
|--------|---|--------------------|------|------------------------|------|---------|-----------------------|
| | | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| 1 | Role overload | 21.02 | 2.39 | 20.1 | 3.56 | 1.377 | *N.S |
| 2 | Role Ambiguity | 9.34 | 1.62 | 11.51 | 2.04 | 4.959 | **S |
| 3 | Role Conflict | 15.01 | 2.93 | 12.9 | 1.87 | 3.935 | **S |
| 4 | Unreasonable group and Political Pressure | 15.0 | 1.79 | 14.2 | 1.47 | 2.169 | **S |
| 5 | Responsibilities for Persons | 10.67 | 0.81 | 9.41 | 1.35 | 4.629 | **S |
| 6 | Under-participation | 12.0 | 2.28 | 12.6 | 2.33 | 1.15 | *N.S |
| 7 | Powerlessness | 8.9 | 1.46 | 10.01 | 2.82 | 1.999 | **S |
| 8 | Poor Peer Relationship | 9.7 | 3.34 | 11.5 | 1.46 | 3.327 | **S |
| 9 | Intrinsic Impoverishment | 8.7 | 1.87 | 9.61 | 2.56 | 1.693 | *N.S |
| 10 | Low Status | 7.3 | 1.2 | 7.2 | 1.47 | 0.314 | *N.S |
| 11 | Strenuous Working Condition | 10.3 | 1.73 | 8.59 | 1.48 | 4.693 | **S |
| 12 | Unprofitability | 7.2 | 1.6 | 6.7 | 1.24 | 1.563 | *N.S |

(* Not Significant) (**Significant)

From the table 4, it is clear that the calculated t-value in the domains of role overload, under participation, powerlessness, intrinsic impoverishment, low status and unprofitability is not significant. Thus the teachers working in Govt. and Private schools do not differ in these areas. But in the domains of role ambiguity, role conflict, responsibilities for persons, Unreasonable group and Political Pressure poor peer relationship and strenuous working condition, there was found a significant difference.

On the basis of results, following conclusions are made: Male and female teachers did not differ in their levels of occupational stress. But if we critically examine the areas of occupational stress, male and female teachers did not differ in the domains of role overload, role conflict, under-participation, intrinsic impoverishment, low status and strenuous working condition. Male teachers were found to have more stress in comparison to their counterpart due to unreasonable group & political pressures and responsibilities for persons. The reasons for workplace stress in female teachers were found to be powerlessness, poor peer

relationship, low status and unprofitability as compared to their counterpart.

The teachers working in Govt. and Self financing colleges were not found to differ in their level of occupational stress if we look at the overall mean value of occupational stress. But from critical analysis, it was found that the teachers working in self financing colleges had more stress due to role ambiguity, poor peer relationship and powerlessness. The teachers working in Govt. colleges were found to have more stress due to unreasonable group and political pressures, strenuous working conditions and responsibilities for persons.

Conclusion

In this contemporary world, the role of teaching professionals are ever changing and evolving and the new teaching learning environment puts heavy pressure on teaching professionals. This pressure of work will have a profound impact on their personal life which ultimately lead to imbalance in their work and life. Hence, work life balance of the teaching professionals is the most significant aspect of the success and development of educational institutions. It is vital for any institution to provide facilities to their staff members to get relieved from occupational stress in order to balance their work and personal life. The further research may help to determine the suitable work-life balancing programs for teaching professional in higher education institutions in India. It is a rewarding exercise to the researchers and helps to gain knowledge on socially relevant problems.

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