

Gender differences in the perception of occupational stress and its consequences in academic staff of B-school

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1. INTRODUCTION

Stress at work has touched almost all professions. Born out of high competition and its subsequent complexities, stress is a state of affair involving demand on physical or mental energy which can disturb the normal physiological and psychological functioning of an individual. Although stress in moderate doses is necessary as it gives an impetus to increase one's performance and can actually stimulate one's faculties to delve deep into and discover one's true potential, but if the magnitude of the stressor exceeds individual's capacity to cope, it leads to negative moods and emotions and excessive demands made upon the energy, strength and resources of a person leads to distress or burnout. Occupational stress (also termed job stress or work stress) can be defined as the experience of unpleasant, negative emotions such as tension, anxiety, frustration, anger and depression resulting from aspects of work. Work related stress of the employees consequently affects the efficiency of the organizations because when one is under stress one's ability to carry out job responsibilities gets affected. It also has an indirect negative effect on organizational commitment. Unresolved occupational stress results in low job satisfaction, poor work performance, psychological distress, unfocused attention, lack of motivation and intent to quit.

The primary difference between occupational stress and many other forms of stress is the nature of the stressors and their interaction with the overall stress process. Occupational stress may be caused by a complex set of reasons. Some of the most visible causes of workplace stress are- job insecurity, high demand for performance, meeting deadlines, increased workload, work-family conflicts, extremely long work hours, less salary, workplace culture, office politics and conflicts with colleagues. All these factors can actually leave an employee physically and emotionally drained. Reference identified over 40 interacting factors which could be identified as sources of work stress. They grouped these into categories and proposed six major causes of stress at work.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Impacts of stress and stressors have been studied by the different behavioral researchers. It is evident from the past researches that stress has a impact on performance. But sources of stress are dynamic.

Singh et. al. (2007) has explored the relationship of Stress and Job Satisfaction. The study has implications for prevention and reduction of stress for dual career teacher couples. The responsibility for stress reduction lies with organizations/institutions, with dual career couples and with their family members (in the Indian context). Today Indian organizations need to understand and focus on providing support to the couples for work-personal life balance.

Bruke (2002) has found that if employees perceive organizations values supportive of work-personal life balance, they experience greater job and career satisfaction, less stress and have less intention to quit, and more positive emotional well-being. In order to maintain high performance of the employees, organizations may organize professional counseling programs to help the couples cope with work role stress, family role stress and work family conflict. The human resource policies should be designed, keeping in mind the stress that an employee faces at work and due to work-family conflict. Organizations could conduct training, especially for women employees, to enable them to cope with their traditional roles. Stress prevention techniques like yoga, meditation, and physical exercise could also form a part of such programs' curriculum. More emphasis needs to be placed on providing counseling before the problem becomes acute rather than after dysfunctional consequences are evident.

Cooper (Year) have studied the global economic recessions and explored the unprecedented levels of stress-related health problems in most countries, from the developed to the developing world, as people have lost their jobs, financial deprivation.

Chaturvedi (2011) have studied and found out the Gender Differences with relation to Occupational Stress among Faculties in Management Colleges of Private and Government Institutes. She found out found that

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women in both public and private sector were found to be more stressful in comparison to men. It is because they play a dual role and need to keep a work and life balance between both personal and professional life.

Tondon et. al (2014) studied the effect of age and gender on occupational stress. They revealed that there is higher occupational stress among male teachers than female teachers. As per the observational report during survey females tend to do the job so as to have a feeling of independence in their personal lives whereas males have the responsibility of their families as still in our country males are the major earning members of the families whereas females are still the supportive members in majority of cases. In this research it has also been found that mean score of 51-60 yrs (both male and female) teachers is very low. Thus we can conclude that stress level is lowest in this age group.

Vuong & Duong (2013) examined the Job Satisfaction Level between Male and Female Faculty at the Vietnam National University of Ho Chi Minh City. The findings of study showed that most academic members of Vietnamese universities were satisfied with their job. Male faculty members were more satisfied than their counterparts.

Vijayadurai & Venkatesh (2012) have studied Stress Management among Women College Teachers in Tamilnadu, India. They found out that Work stress is a real challenge for college teachers and their employing institution. As institution and their working environment transform, so do the kinds of stress problems that employees may face.

Kumari & Verma (2013) found out that in the modern world, stress is a phenomenon that must be seriously recognized and addressed in various professions, particularly in view of increasing incidents of burnouts and health hazards. The teaching profession is no exception. Knowledge about stressors could be valuable in order to avoid and/or manage factors causing stress in teaching at the higher educational level. They tried to understand the relationship of organizational role stress with personal factors such as gender, age and education. The study was conducted among college teachers serving in Himachal Pradesh. After collecting data from representative sample and tabulating it, statistical techniques like Correlation, ANOVA and Regressions were used to analyze the data. The results revealed significant relationship of gender with certain stress dimensions namely, inter role distance, role explosion, role overload and role ambiguity. Males were found to be more under the influence of stress as compared to females.

[Chaturvedi](#) & [Purushothaman](#) (2012) studied and investigated the role of certain demographic variables in determining stress-coping behaviour of female teachers. They found out that married teachers in the age range of 40-60 years, with higher experience can cope better with the job stress than their counterparts.

According to Barbee et al. (1993), personal attributes of employees, for example, the gender of the employee decides the perception level of stress by them. It also determines that who will need platform for social support. Males and females have different approach to involve themselves in social relationships with others, and the support, they expect from these relationship. (Belle, 1987).

It has been highlighted by various research studies that males and females act differently while perceiving stress. (Misra, McKean, West, & Russo, 2000; Roxburgh, 1996). It has been explained by Misra et al. (2000) that females are more stressed out in education industry in comparison of males. Specifically, females scored higher on reported stressors at workplace than males. Females are supposed to perform more tasks in their daily routine for example job and family responsibilities. Misra et al. (2000) also recommended that males perceive the situation less stressful and deal with the stressors at workplace in a positive manner.

The investigator has applied statistical tool to assess the difference in the job stress across the gender.

In this Study, we have discussed about various occupational stresses among management colleges in UP, India.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

TO ASSESS THE DIFFERENCE IN THE PERCEPTION OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES IN ACADEMIC STAFF OF B-SCHOOLS

4. HYPOTHESIS TESTED

Major Hypothesis:

H4: Perception and Consequences of job Stress differs significantly in Male and Female academic staff of Private educational institutions of management (PEIM)

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Sub Hypotheses:

(Sources)

❖ H_{ag1}: WLB as Source of Stress Is Perceived Significantly Different By Male and Female Academic Staff of Private Educational Institutions of Management (PEIM)

❖ H_{ag2}: Lack of Job Satisfaction As A Source Of Stress Is Perceived Significantly Different By Male And Female In Academic Staff Of Private Educational Institutions Of Management (PEIM)

❖ H_{ag3}: Poor Communication As a Source of Stress Is Perceived Significantly Different By Male and Female in Academic Staff of Private Educational Institutions of Management (PEIM)

❖ H_{ag4}: Organisational Management Practices as Sources of Stress Is Perceived Significantly Different By Male and Female in Academic Staff of Private Educational Institutions of Management (PEIM)

❖ H_{AG5}: Participation in Decision Making & Authority as Sources of Stress Is Perceived Significantly Different By Male and Female in Academic Staff of Private Educational Institutions of Management (PEIM)

❖ H_{ag6}: Workload As Source of Stress Is Perceived Significantly Different By Male and Female in Academic Staff of Private Educational Institutions of Management (PEIM)

❖ H_{ag7}: Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity As a Source of Stress Is Perceived Significantly Different By Male and Female in Academic Staff of Private Educational Institutions of Management (PEIM)

❖ H_{ag8}: Promotion, Development, Training Opportunities and Feedback As a Source of Stress Is Perceived Significantly Different By Male and Female in Academic Staff of Private Educational Institutions of Management (PEIM)

❖ H_{ag9}: Work Environment as Sources of Stress Is Perceived Significantly Different By Male and Female in Academic Staff of Private Educational Institutions of Management (PEIM)

❖ H_{ag10}: Resource Inadequacy As A Source Of Stress Is Perceived Significantly Different By Male And Female In Academic Staff Of Private Educational Institutions Of Management (PEIM)

❖ H_{ag11}: Extreme Strain as A Source of Stress Is Perceived Significantly Different By Male and Female Academic Staff of Private Educational Institutions Of Management (PEIM)

CONSEQUENCES

In recent times, the studies on stress have started to focus on the fact that the stress influences the males and females differently. These studies have exposed the fact that females are more stressed in comparison to men and that they are exposed to regular and chronic stressors on regular basis. (Smith, & Zanas, 1992; Carlson, & Dua, 2002, Janicki & Helgeson, 2002. Hogan; Ptacek,; Tamres) In order to explore this association, fewer studies were conducted to observe the differences in the perception of stress by males and females so as to reduce the intensity of the stress in a specific situation. Ptacek et al. (1994) conducted a lab study in which he observed the differences in the perception of stress by males and females and their dealing strategies under the standard stressful situation like delivering a lecture on a specified topic etc. It was explored in the study that both males and females, equally reported the situation as stressful.

❖ H_{ag12}: Poor work life balance as A consequence of Stress affects significantly Different to Male and Female Academic Staff of Private Educational Institutions Of Management (PEIM)

❖ H_{AG13}: Overall Productivity as a consequence of stress affects significantly different to Male and female academic staff of Private educational institutions of management (PEIM)

❖ H_{AG14} : Job Burnout as a consequence of stress affects significantly different to Male and female academic staff of Private educational institutions of management (PEIM)

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

It is Meta synthesis study. We had covered both quantitative as well as qualitative aspect.

➤ **Quantitative data:** Primary data is used to achieve the objectives of the study. A questionnaire is used as a tool to collect the data. It is random and unbiased sampling.

➤ Qualitative data

Besides it also focuses on 20 to 22 interviews with experts to have meaningful insight into the benefits of stress management interventions and contributing inputs to attain the objectives of the study.

Tools and techniques used

For the purpose of the study, the investigators had developed and use the following tools.

- The use of graphic representation, Charts will also be used to project various facts and figures.
- T test

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT: To validate the study and to assess the occupational stress of management teachers an instrument – *Academic Staff Stress Questionnaire (ASSQ)* was developed and validated by the researcher. Occupational Stress Rating Scale comprises of 58 questions assessing three dimensions (factors, Consequences and Moderators) of Occupational stress.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY AND SAMPLE SIZE

The important representative cities of UP, having at least one private management college was selected through internet. Well established colleges within these cities were then selected on the basis of their infrastructure and courses offered. Approachability factors was also be also is taken into consideration. Gender wise distribution of questionnaire between females and males was done. The populations for the study were 300 faculties from management colleges in Lucknow, Unnao and Barabnaki. It was random and unbiased sampling. Besides it focus interviews with experts were also organized, to have meaningful and contributing inputs to attain the objectives of the study.

6. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

(Sources of Stress Gender Specific Analysis)

WORKPLACE STRESSORS

Table no. 5.26: Workplace Stressors and Gender

Variable	Male (N= 169)		Female (N=131)		T- Test		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig. (2- Tailed)	F	Sig. (p-Value)
WORK LIFE BALANCE	.01981	.9999	-.02556	1.0034	.389	.697	.002	.962
LACK OF JOB SATISFACTION	-.03283	1.0042	.0423	.9966	-.645	.519	.040	.842
POOR COMMUNICATION	-.0394	.9746	.0509	1.0333	-.776	.438	.585	.445
ORGANISATIONA L MANAGEMENT PRACTICES	-.01622	1.0000	.0209	1.003	-.319	.750	.133	.716

Note: results obtained from SPSS

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Variable	Male (N= 169)		Female (N=131)		T- Test		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig. (2- Tailed)	F	Sig. (p-Value)
PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING & AUTHORITY	.067463	.9822	-.08703	1.016	1.329	.185	.132	.717

WORKLOAD	-.08454 2	1.007 7	.1090 6	98305	-1.668	.096	.297	.586
ROLE CONFLICT AND ROLE AMBIGUITY	-.03302 1	.9956 2	.0426 0	1.0078	-.648	.518	.185	.668
PROMOTION, DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES AND FEEDBACK	.06236 3	1.008 6	-.0804 5	986715	1.228	.220	.031	.860

The organizational management practices, lack of job satisfaction, poor communication and work life balance identified as sources of stress. The sources of stress for female faculty members not found significantly different from male faculty members. It is held on the basis of the t-test, the stress from Poor work life balance (t-value = .398, p-value = .962), lack of job satisfaction (t-value = -.645, p-value = .842 > .05), poor communication (t-value = -.776, p-value = .445 > .05) and Organizational management Practices (t-value = -.319, p-value = .716 > .05) equally appeared in both male as well as female faculty members of academic staff colleges. Male as well as female faculty members are equally victims of stress. Organizational management practices not found biased from gender perspective as far as it is concerned with the stress.

ORGANISATIONAL STRESSORS

TABLE NO 5.27: ORGANISATIONAL STRESSORS AND GENDER

Note: results obtained from SPSS

TABLE NO 5.27: ORGANISATIONAL STRESSORS AND GENDER

The participation in decision making & authority, workload, role conflict and role ambiguity, promotion, development, training opportunities and feedback are identified as sources of stress. The sources of stress for female faculty members not found significantly different from male faculty members. It is held on the basis of the t-test, the stress from participation in decision making & authority (t-value = 1.329, p-value = .717 > .05), workload (t-value = -1.668, p-value = .586 > .05) role conflict and role ambiguity (t-value = -.648, p-value = .668 > .05) and promotion, development, training opportunities and feedback (t-value = 1.228, p-value = .860 > .05) equally appeared in both male as well as female faculty members of academic staff colleges. Male as well as female faculty members are equally victims of stress. Organizational stressors not found to stress any gender less in any perspective as far as it is concerned with the stress.

ENVIRONMENTAL STRESSORS

TABLE NO.5.28: ENVIRONMENTAL STRESSORS AND GENDER

Variable	Male (N= 169)		Female (N=131)		T- Test		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig. (2-Tailed)	F	Sig. (p-Value)
WORK ENVIRONMENT	-.0870	1.0196	.0674	.9822	1.329	.185	.132	.717
RESOURCE INADEQUACY	.1090	.9830	-.0845	1.0077	-1.668	.096	.297	.586
EXTREME STRAIN	-.0804	.9867	.0623	1.0086	1.228	.220	.031	.860

Note: results obtained from SPSS

TABLE NO. 5.28. ENVIRONMENTAL STRESSORS AND GENDER

While applied t-test on the factors, identified as stressors namely Work environment, Resource Inadequacy and extreme strain the study found no significant difference between sampled male and female faculty members. Work environment (t-value = 1.329, p-value = .717 > .05), Resource inadequacy (t-value = -1.668, p-value = .586 > .05) and extreme strain (t-value = 1.228, p-value = .860 > .05) works as stressors for all sampled faculty members. These factors worked as stressor for both males as well as females equally. It is held on the basis of statistical finding that the resource inadequacy as a stressor must be identified seriously in these academic institutions as the gender specific difference not prevails while it comes at resource sharing.

CONSEQUENCES OF STRESS - GENDER SPECIFIC ANALYSIS

In recent times, the studies on stress have started to focus on the fact that the stress influences the males and females differently. These studies have exposed the fact that females are more stressed in comparison to men and that they are exposed to regular and chronic stressors on regular basis. (Smith, & Zanas, 1992; Carlson, & Dua, 2002, Janicki & Helgeson, 2002. Hogan; Ptacek,; Tamres)

In order to explore this association, fewer studies were conducted to observe the differences in the perception of stress by males and females so as to reduce the intensity of the stress in a specific situation. Ptacek et al. (1994) conducted a lab study in which he observed the differences in the perception of stress by males and females and their dealing strategies under the standard stressful situation like delivering a lecture on a specified topic etc. It was explored in the study that both males and females, equally reported the situation as stressful.

Table no.5.29: Consequences of Stress - Gender Specific Analysis

Variable	Male (N= 169)	Female (N=131)		T- Test		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t- value	Sig. (2- Tailed)	F- Value	Sig. (p-Value)
POOR WORK LIFE BALANCE	.02853	.9964	-.0368	1.007 2	.561	.575	.000	.982
OVERALL PRODUCTI VITY	.0550	1.008 5	-.0710	.9881	1.084	.279	.066	.798
JOB BURNOUT	-.0140	1.067 4	.01816	.9094	-.275*	.783	3.898*	.049

Note: * Indicates the Test is significant at 5 % level of significance

Table no.5.29: Consequences of Stress - Gender Specific Analysis

It is evident (See table no. 5.29 :) that consequence of stress for male and female workforces in the academic institute around Lucknow are not significantly different, both faced **Poor Work life Balance** in sampled institutions. The T-test (p-value >.05) clearly exhibited the same fact. Besides it, in terms of **Overall Productivity**, the study exhibited; there is no significant difference due to gender (t-value =1.084, p-value =.798; the p-value > .05). It is found the consequences of stress in terms of **Job Burnout** are significantly different on Females in academic institutions in comparison to males (t-Value= -.275, p-value = .049< .05).The **Job Burnout** found statistically different on male faculty members in comparison to female faculty members of academic staff colleges. Female faculty members in academic institutes statistically not treated in a special manner as the sources of stress not found significantly different for female faculty members in comparison to male faculty members. Female faculty members are equally facing the same problem while they manage home affairs as well hence the job burnout found different among female faculty members.

The outcome of stress on university academic staff based on sex was significant. This finding is in line with Adeoye (2002), Liu and Zhu (2009) but inconsistent with Adebiyi (2013), Abouserie (1996), Ofoegbu and Nwadiani (2006) who found no significant different in stress among male and female academic staff. This may explain why women have the ability of striking a perfect balance between the schedule of job and other than job, herby marking a clear cut difference between the personal and the professional life for example leaving office timely ,not doing office job at home),taking off from job, and paying attention on the amusement activities like gardening etc.

Conclusion

University academic staff is subjected to an intense level of stress which have unleashing consequences on them both professionally and personally. As a result of this, stress management techniques like adequate remuneration and tight role boundaries are required as stress moderators than can assist them to deal with work place stress.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is being highly recommended after the analysis of the findings that the female workforce is experiencing more occupational stress in the dimension of Job burnout. It is advisable for the management of PEIM that the female employees should be given work autonomy in matters relating to their job profile.

An empathetically attitude should also be maintained to understand the personal perspective of the stress of a female employee. It can enhance her productivity and can reduce her stress at work simultaneously.

On behalf of Management:

1. Organizational Stress Auditing: Before organizational stress is targeted, we need to know what is causing it. Workplace stressors should be identified and employees can guide with options to manage it.
2. Stress Management Training (group or individual): Through a range of easily applied, practical courses underpinned by widely accepted Stress Management theory, groups and individuals can increase their understanding of the causes of stress and through this, learn techniques for reducing and dealing with stress.

On behalf of Manager:

As the boss, one can ensure that subordinates are not put to undue stress and also that they are helped to get out of stress situations as quickly as possible. The steps are

- I. Recognize the stress levels
- II. Show concern
- III. Encourage talking
- IV. Listen
- V. Empathize
- VI. Explain and show how it can be done
- VII. Reassure
- VIII. Provide support
- IX. Discuss and involve them in decisions
- X. Show respect to the individuals
- XI. Avoid insult, denunciation, abuse, reprimand, particularly in public
- XII. Avoid manipulation, coercion, blaming
- XIII. Avoid pressurizing too much
- XIV. Provide social support

All the above, render support and help to reduce anxieties. It is not suggested that the demands on people should be lowered. People like challenges. They must be given challenging assignments. That is the only way to growth. But if there is a sensing of extreme stress, it should be managed through reassurance, not by withdrawing the assignment.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Time Management

Inadequacy of resource is a common stressor. One needs resources to do a job and if the resource is not available, there could be stress. One important resource is Time. Many people find that they do not have enough time to do a job. Studies show that people are poor planners in terms of usage of time as a resource. Time is wasted in a number of ways. Therefore, if one learns ways to manage one's time better, there could be a better control on stress. Time is wasted because of below mentioned factors. We can avoid time wasters like

- I. Non-productive work like searching for files, papers and references
- II. Available information being inadequate or incomplete
- III. Meetings and lengthy reports
- IV. Indecisiveness, unable to make up one's mind
- V. Correcting errors in instructions, assignments
- VI. Clarifying goals and roles
- VII. Too much routine, paperwork
- VIII. Lack of prioritization

2. The Stress Audit for the Organization: Organisations must carry out a Stress Audit for your organization. The findings of the audit can be addressed in the Stress Management Training sessions

3. Organizational Stress Management: Stress Management Training will be of value .Organizational Stress Management aims at preventing and reducing stress for both the individual employee and the organization or company.

4. It is being highly recommended after the analysis of the findings that the female workforce is experiencing more occupational stress in the dimension of Job burnout. It is advisable for the management of PEIM that the female employees should be given work autonomy in matters relating to their job profile.

5. An empathetically attitude should also be maintained to understand the personal perspective of the stress of a female employee. It can enhance her productivity and can reduce her stress at work simultaneously.

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