

CORRELATES OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF NEPAL

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ABSTRACT

This research work is an exploratory study of occupational stress among executive officers of Nepal. The main objective of the study was to find out the significance relationship between the occupational stressors among executive officers of Nepal. Scores on the stress scale using a t-test of significance between correlated means. The results showed that among executive officers of Nepal do experience stress from work.

1. INTRODUCTION

Occupation related stress among working people is drastically increasing worldwide. Stress at work place has become an integral part of everyday life and is referred as ‘worldwide epidemic’ by the World Health Organization as. In the USA, approximately 25% of the working population suffers from work related stress. The figures for Nepal are not readily available but there is no doubt that occupational stress affects a significant number of executive officers and costs heavy financial losses, human sufferings and mental illness [1]. In the UK Smith A, et al were investigating the scale and severity of occupational stress in current research revealed that 20% of the working people were suffering high or extremely high level of stress at work [2].

Occupation related stress follow in various shapes and forms. Health and Safety Executive defined occupational stress as “The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them.” Organizational stress might be harmful for physiological and psychological effects on workers [3]. Various studies have revealed that workers suffering from stress exhibit decreased productivity, absenteeism, higher number accidents, lower morale and greater interpersonal conflict with colleagues and superiors W. Cranwell and Alyssa, J.[4].

The significance of the effects of occupational stress in some professions is reported, such as among nurses (Dailey et al., 1986), managers (Davidson and Cooper, 1986) and teachers (Byosiere, 1988). These studies indicate that stress can be related to factors like: Physical condition (Braham, 1994); Organizational culture (Cooper, 2001); Moorhead and Griffin, 2001); Interpersonal conflict (Toates, 1995; Cooper, 2001); Personal characteristics (Caplan and Jones, 1975; Alluisi, 1982; Cooper and Roden, 1985; Hurrell, 1985; Dailey et al., 1986; Caudron, 1998; Bliese and Britt, 2001); and Job nature (Caplan and Jones, 1975; Matteson and Ivancevich, 1987) [5]-[10].

It is important to difference between three intimately related terms: stressors, stress and strain L. Francis and J. Barling[11]. Stressors are defined as the external events such as difficult relationships in the workplace or a heavy workload that contribute to the experience of stress S.L. Sauter, L.R.Murphy and J.J.Hurrell[4]. Stress is considered to be an individual's internal response to stressors and is characterized by arousal and displeasure. Strain, on the other hand, describes the long-term effect of stress and includes psychological outcomes such as anxiety and depression.

The Executive Stress has been defined as the experience by top level officers of unpleasant, negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration or depression resulting from some aspect of their work as an Executive. Limited research has been conducted with respect to executive stress prevalent among IT professionals and industry. J L Thong et al. studied the information systems and occupational stress as a theoretical framework. He has highlighted that the information systems (IS) profession is a stressful profession. However, there is little theoretical or empirical research carried out on the effects of occupational stress among IS professionals. A major reason is because IS professionals and researchers are unaware of the consequences of occupational stress and unfamiliar with the occupational stress literature.

T.A. Beehr studied Occupational stressors and revealed that the aspects of the work environment that contingent upon strains, poor psychological health or well being of the individual [13]. And in the way it is now generally accepted that prolonged or intense stress could have a negative impact on the individual's mental and physical health [14]. Work related stress is a characteristics of current economic status from which most of the individuals were suffering at the times and for different extents. In a positive sense, work stress can be a source of excitement and stimulus to achievement. In addition to this sense it could be seriously impair quality of work life, and condense personal and his occupation effectiveness [15].

Further C.J. Rees and D.Redfern added stress in the workplace can affect communication effectiveness, the ability to focus on job and decision making ability [16].

Thomas et al found that the most difficult stressors to manage are “bureaucracy”, “lack of opportunity to learn new skills”, “work-family conflicts” and “different view from superiors”. His results also revealed that the patterns of stress manageability differ between different groups. He has examined the relationships existing among individual stressors [17].

Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction among managers was studied K. Chandraiah et. al.; the effect of age on occupational stress and job satisfaction among managers of different age groups and in term of age distribution of the individual matured personal disposition related to the attainment of developmental tasks specific to each developmental tasks specific to each developmental phase and its influence on individuals perception of the situations as stressful or otherwise.

The present research article is carried out the status of occupational stress among employees working as executives in an organization to investigate following aspects:

- (1) Identifying the origins of stresses being experienced by executive officers in the industry, university, in terms of individual and situational factors;
- (2) Assessing the manageability of stresses and its impact on the management of different disciplines; and
- (3) Determining the interrelationships associated between different stresses and their significance.

2. METHODOLOGY

A sample for this study is executives those are working in, a public sector, private and government sector, undertaking engaged in different fields and are situated in different parts of Nepal. For selection of respondent for the survey, a random sampling technique was used to record the responses about occupational stress. A total more than 800 questionnaires were distributed to the employees in executive position, out of which 600 questionnaires were returned. Only 440 the returned questionnaires were found with required information and were completely usable.

The questionnaires were designed to assess levels of occupational stress among Executives officers of Nepal. Occupational stress was assessed using “Occupational Stress Questionnaire OSI” in the Indian context (Srivastava and Singh, 1981). The questionnaire is consisted of 46 statements with five alternative responses e.g., 5 for strongly agree, 4 for mildly agree 3 agree, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree. Responses were obtained on a summated rating scale format ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. Total score on this scale is considered for the assessment of occupational stress. Higher scores indicated higher perceived occupational stress or more the score on this scale indicates more stress. This scale included twelve dimensions as described in the table 1. Each of job stressors was measured on a five-point Likert Scale in which 1 indicated “strongly disagree”, 2 indicated “disagree”, 3 indicated “neutral”, 4 indicated “agree” and 5 indicated “strongly agree”. Out of the 46 items 28 are true keyed and the remaining 18 are false keyed. These items relating to the 12 factors of occupational stress i.e. Role overload, Role ambiguity, Role conflict, Group & political pressure, Responsibility for persons, Under participation, Powerlessness, Poor peer relations, Intrinsic improvement, Low status, Strenuous, Working condition and Unprofitability.

Information regarding age, gender, marital status, and number of dependent was obtained to provide personnel demographic information. Respondents were also asked to provide job related information including average family income per month in Rupees, years in services, types of organizations, and number of employees engaged in the organization.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Results

Demographic and professional characteristics of respondents are shown in table 1.

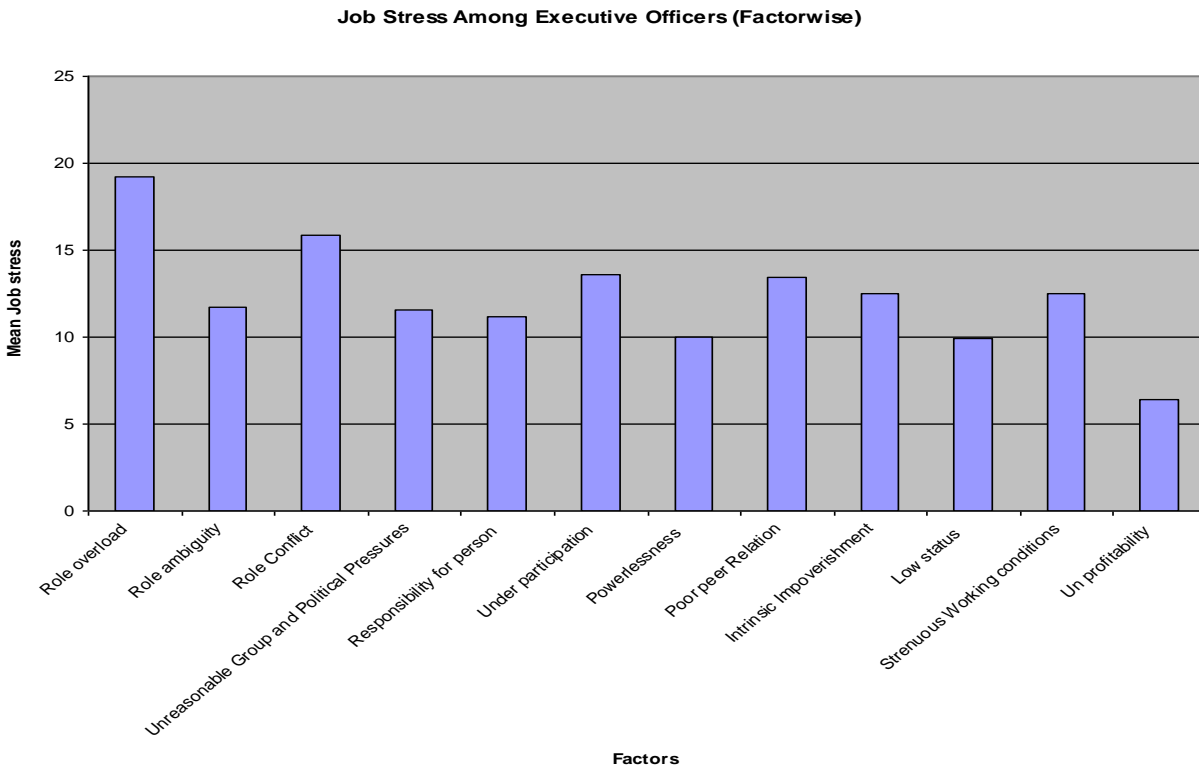
Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	379	86.1
	Female	61	13.9
Age	25 to 35 years	246	55.9
	36 to 45 years	104	23.6
	46 to 60 years	90	20.5
Marital Status	Single	169	38.4
	Married	271	61.6
Number of Dependent	None	173	39.3
	One	19	4.3
	Two	62	14.1
	Three	69	15.7
	Four	61	13.9
	Five and above	56	12.8
Working Experience	less than 1 year	109	24.8
	1 - 5 years	119	27.0
	6 - 10 years	69	15.7
	11 - 15 years	45	10.2
	More than 15 years	98	22.3
Job Tenure	less than 1 year	181	41.1
	1- 5 years	167	38.0
	6-10 years	44	10.0
	11-15 years	23	5.2
	more than 15 years	25	5.7

Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the Study Variables

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Role overload	19.18	4.317
Role ambiguity	11.63	2.296
Role Conflict	15.74	2.218
Unreasonable Group and Political Pressures	11.61	3.497
Responsibility for person	11.13	2.332
Under participation	13.53	2.835
Powerlessness	9.93	2.314
Poor peer Relation	13.41	1.921
Intrinsic Impoverishment	12.40	1.792
Low status	9.83	1.478
Strenuous Working conditions	12.46	2.051
Un profitability	6.32	1.547

Figure1. Mean Job stress among executive officers of Nepal



The result shows that the significant increasing in the mean stress score. The executive officers were experiencing more stress due to role overload, Role Conflict and so on.

Table 3 shows that there is a significant intercorrelations among the study variable. The study suggests that among the occupational stressors are significant. The present study also conforms that age was significantly correlated with sources of stress, in particular to Role overload, Role conflict, Group & political pressure, Responsibility for persons, Under participation, and Unprofitability.

4. CONCLUSION

The current analysis adds to the literature on occupation stress and prevention of occupation stress especially in the Nepalese context. Generally, these executives faced with the same sources of stress across all organizations.

Frequency distribution analysis along with one-sample chi-square test is carried out to evaluate the status of occupational stress. The executives are categorized into three groups based on the stress level relative to each occupational factor as low, moderate and high. It was found that stress due to ‘strenuous’ was very high whereas the stress due to all other occupational factors was low among executives.

The importance of this study cannot be overemphasized for the long-term survival of any organizations planning to build a healthy working environment while reducing the risk of work-related diseases and accidents. The contribution of variables such as Role overload, Role ambiguity, Role conflict, Political, Responsibility, Under participation, Powerlessness, Poor peer relation, Intrinsic Impoverishment, Low status, Strenuous working condition, Unprofitability to level of stress has its own significance. The findings of this study thus need to be acknowledged in implementing a healthy working environment. Careful and well-planned implementation strategies that consider the amount of work, role clarity, and training and development can provide a fruitful result to the employees and organization.

Table 3. Intercorrelations of study variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Role Overload														
2. Role Ambiguity	0.591(**)													
3. Role Conflict	0.254(**)	0.342(**)												
4. Unreasonable Political Pressure	0.228(**)	-0.047	0.207(**)											
5. Responsibility	-0.007	-0.199(**)	0.094(*)	0.235(**)										
6. Under Participation	-0.099(*)	-0.166(**)	-0.039	0.093(*)	0.446(**)									
7. Powerlessness	0.188(**)	0.083	0.138(**)	0.153(**)	0.263(**)	0.653(**)								
8. Intrinsic Impoverishment	0.197(**)	0.089	0.047	0	-0.046	0.092	0.127(**)							
9. Low Status	-0.033	-0.029	0.06	0.028	-0.194(**)	-0.012	0.043	0.167(**)						
10. Simultaneous Working Condition	0.462(**)	0.277(**)	0.238(**)	0.237(**)	0.097(*)	0.087	-0.017	0.134(**)	0.08					
11. Unprofitability	0.226(**)	0.146(**)	0.096(*)	0.191(**)	0.140(**)	0.093(*)	0.063	0.079	0.147(**)	0.013				
12. Age	0.143(**)	0.059	0.113(*)	0.216(**)	0.237(**)	0.110(**)	0.069	0.058	0.029	0.082	0.066			
13. Sex	0.07	0.023	-0.048	-0.079	-0.069	-0.047	0.019	0.013	0.032	-0.076	-0.001	-0.091		
14. Working Exp	0.006	0.013	0.021	0.002	0.029	0.039	-0.032	-0.01	-0.024	-0.018	-0.018	-0.032	-0.116(*)	
15. Working Exp														0.052

Notes: *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed); **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

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