

Occupational Stress, Work-Life Balance and Psychological Well-Being in Public and Private Sector Employees During Covid Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to study the differences in occupational stress, work-life balance and psychological well-being of private and public sector employees during covid pandemic. The sample comprised of 100 subjects, out of which 50 were from private sector and public sector each. The age range was 25-35 years. T-test was used to analyse the data. Results confirmed that there exists a significant difference in occupational stress, work-life balance and psychological well-being of private and public sector employees.

Keywords: Occupational Stress, Work-Life Balance, Psychological Well-Being, Covid

Occupational Stress
Beehr and Newman (1978) defined occupational stress as "A condition arising from the interaction of people and their jobs and characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning."

Occupational stress can lead to both physiological as well as emotional response. This response could be both positive as well as negative depending on the nature of the demand, the control they have over the situation and the support they get. Occupational stress is mostly discussed with a negative connotation, but this might not always be the case. Occupational stress can also be an opportunity for growth. In fact, many professionals do perceive the pressure of deadlines as challenges which are positive that enhance their work quality.

Studies have also shown that occupational stress can lead to a negative consequence for the employee in their workspace (Oginska-Bulik, 2006). Excessive stress has been found to be linked with reduction in productivity and harmful impact for the organisation.

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Work Life Balance

Employees often find it difficult to maintain a healthy boundary between work and family life. Especially during COVID-19, with the confinement of workers in their homes most of the times, this issue has been complicated further.

Work life balance is a pervasive concern for both the employers and employees of most organisation across the world.

According to Clark (2000) work life balance is the “satisfaction and good functioning of an employee at work and at home with minimum of role conflict”. Work-life balance is a satisfactory level of ‘fit’ between the multiple roles in a person’s life.

“Work-life balance is the individual perception that work and non-work activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual’s current life priorities” (Kalliath and Brough, 2008). Work-life balance is understood as a healthy integration of work and family life activities.

Psychological Well-Being

Psychological well-being is a very holistic construct trying to understand the people’s evaluation of their own lives. These could be cognitive in nature, or the emotions we experience whether pleasant or unpleasant.

Therefore, Psychological well-being can be understood as a self-evaluation of one’s life in terms of life satisfaction, marital satisfaction etc. This is how you evaluate yourself to be doing in life. A person is said to have high psychological well-being if the person is satisfied with where he is in his/her life right now, if they experience frequent joy and happiness and are content with their mental state.

Psychological well-being of an individual has also been linked to their performance in any organisation they work for and therefore how an individual evaluate himself will also affect his perceptions and judgement.

It becomes important, therefore to explore these variables.

METHODOLOGY

Objectives

The study was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To study the differences in occupational stress of private and public sector employees during covid pandemic.
2. To study the differences in work-life balance of private and public sector employees during covid pandemic.
3. To study the differences in psychological well-being of private and public sector employees during covid pandemic.

Hypotheses

The study had the following hypotheses:

1. Private sector employees are expected to have higher occupational stress in comparison to the public sector employees.

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2. Private sector employees are expected to be lower in work-life balance in comparison to the public sector employees.
3. Private sector employees are expected to have poorer psychological well-being in comparison to the public sector employees.

Sample

A sample of 100 employees in the age group of 25-35 years from various organisations in tricity was taken by random sampling method. Subjects were randomly selected out of the population available in the private and public sector organisations.

Tools

The following tools were used for data collection:

- **The Occupational Stress Index (Srivastava & Singh, 1981):** Is a 46 item self-report scale related to various aspects of the job which could lead to stress. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree” according to how frequently or infrequently the statement applies to them. Higher scores indicate higher levels of occupational stress in an individual.
- **Work-Life Balance Scale (Pareek, 2010):** Is a 36 item self-report scale covering six dimensions namely social needs, personal needs, time management, team work, compensation and benefits and work. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from “Not True” to “Definitely True” according to how frequently or infrequently the statement applies to them. Higher scores indicate higher levels of work-life balance in an individual.
- **The Psychological Well-Being Scale (Bhogle & Prakash, 1995):** Is a 26 item self-report scale covering thirteen dimensions such as meaninglessness, life satisfaction, social support etc. Each item is to be responded to with a “Yes” or “No” according to how frequently or infrequently the statement applies to them. Higher scores indicate higher levels of psychological well-being in an individual.

Scoring for all the above-mentioned tools was done as per the scoring manual.

Statistical Analysis

T-test was used to analyse the data. Other descriptive statistics was also used as and when needed. Statistical analyses was done with the help of the software ‘Statistical Package for the Social Sciences’ (SPSS) Version 26.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of the study was to study the differences in occupational stress, work-life balance and psychological well-being of private and public sector employees during covid pandemic. The subjects were administered with The Occupational Stress Index questionnaire, Work-Life Balance Scale along with The Psychological Well-Being Scale. The results were analysed using student t-test and the results of the study are presented in the tables.

Table: 1 N, Mean, SD and t-value of Occupational Stress scores across Private and Public Sector.

Sector		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
Occupational Stress Index	Private	50	189.28	16.68	20.04**
	Public	50	111.32	21.87	

**significant at 0.01 level

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Figure No. 1: Showing mean trends of Occupational Stress scores across Private and Public Sector.



Table: 1 and Fig No. 1 gives means, SDs and t-value of Occupational Stress scores across Private and Public Sector. Private sector employees have a higher mean in occupational stress (189.28) than the public sector employees (111.32). The t-value is 20.04 which is significant at 0.01 levels. This reveals that there exists a significant difference in occupational stress between the private and public sector employees.

Table: 2 N, Mean, SD and t-value of across Work-Life Balance Scores across Private and Public Sector.

Sector	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
Work-Life Balance Scale	Private	50	33.48	14.85
	Public	50	91.68	15.56

**significant at 0.01 level

Figure No. 2: Showing mean trends of Work-Life Balance Scores across Private and Public Sector.

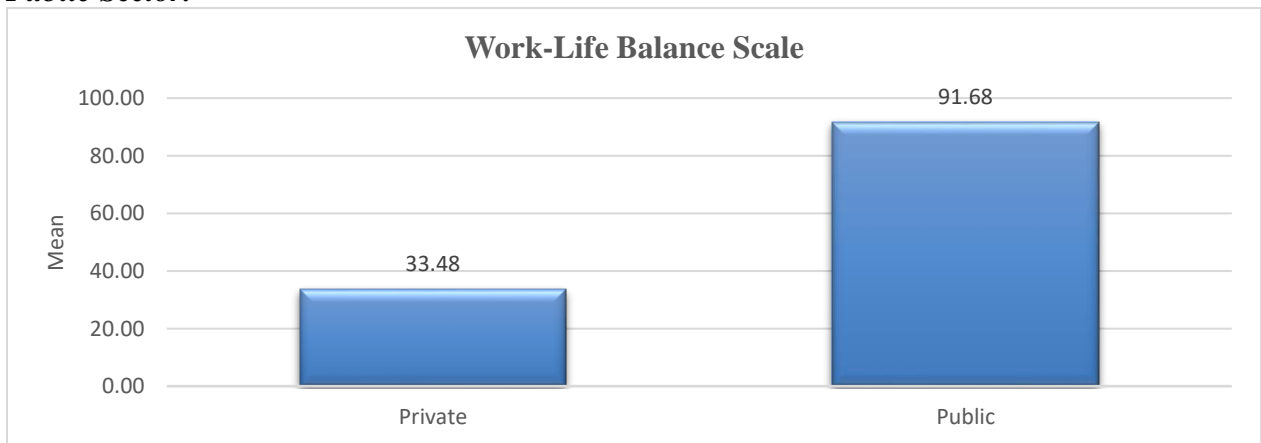


Table: 2 and Fig No. 2 gives means, SDs and t-value of Work-Life Balance scores across Private and Public Sector. Private sector employees have a lower mean in work-life balance (33.48) than the public sector employees (91.68). The t-value is 19.13 which is significant at 0.01 levels.

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0.01 levels. This reveals that there exists a significant difference in work-life balance between the private and public sector employees.

Table: 3 N, Mean, SD and t-value of Psychological Well-Being Scores across Private and Public Sector.

Sector	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
The Psychological Well-Being Scale	Private	9.70	3.12	17.290**
	Public	19.74	2.66	

**significant at 0.01 level

Figure No. 3: Showing mean trends of Psychological Well-Being Scores across Private and Public Sector.

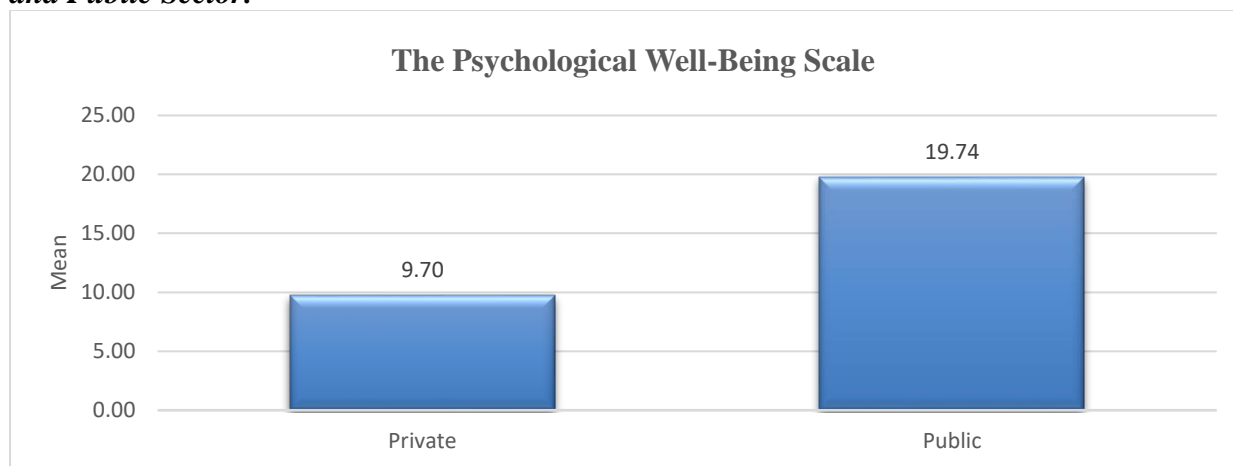


Table: 3 and Fig No. 3 gives means, SDs and t-value of psychological well-being scores across private and public sector. Private sector employees have a lower mean in psychological well-being (9.70) than the public sector employees (19.74). The t-value is 17.29 which is significant at 0.01 levels. This reveals that there exists a significant difference in psychological well-being between the private and public sector employees.

CONCLUSIONS

1. There is a significant difference between types of sector with regard to the occupational stress of their employees, with private sector employees reporting higher occupational stress than public sector employees.
2. There is a significant difference between types of sector with regard to the work-life balance of their employees, with private sector employees reporting lesser work-life balance than public sector employees.
3. There is a significant difference between types of sector with regard to the psychological well-being of their employees, with private sector employees reporting lesser psychological well-being than public sector employees.

Implications

- The research results can be utilised by private sector organisations to modulate the work flow within the organisation.
- Private sector MNC's can look into the wellness of the employee in consideration to the results offered for work-life balance.

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- Psychological well-being of the employee could be improved by having solution focussed workshops and seminars.

Limitations

- Sample size was small thus generalisations are difficult to draw.
- Gender comparisons were not made.
- Salary and experience considerations could not be controlled in the study.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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