

Psychological Well-being and Occupational Stress among Blue Collars

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to assess the relationship between psychological wellbeing and occupational stress among Blue Collar Workers and examines the significant differences among the Blue collar Workers based on the income. The study was carried out, and responses were collected from 150 Blue Collar workers. Psychological Well Being and occupational stress scales were used to gather the data. Correlation was used to study the relationship between psychological well-being and occupational stress among blue-collar workers. Independent sample t-test was used to assess differences within fixed income group and variable income group in psychological wellbeing and also in occupational stress. The result of the study showed a significant difference between fixed income and variable income group with regard to both Occupational Stress and Psychological Wellbeing. The study's findings indicated a negative correlation between the psychological wellbeing and occupational stress among Blue Collar Workers.

Keywords: *Psychological well-being, Occupational Stress*

Psychological Well-being

Psychological wellbeing is one thing that everyone covets. Ryff (1995) described psychological wellbeing as a person's ability to recognize and develop themselves in accordance with their potential. Psychological wellbeing (PWB) is quite similar to other terminology that relate to good mental states, such as happiness or contentment, and it is not essential or useful to worry about subtle differences between some of these terms in many respects. There are two aspects to psychological well-being.

Psychological well-being has two key components: "Hedonic" and "Eudemonic." Hedonic wellbeing is often used to refer to subjective feelings of happiness and comprises of two components: an affective component (high positive affect and low negative affect) and a cognitive component (satisfaction with life). It is believed that an individual experiences happiness when both positive affect and satisfaction with life are high (Carruthers & Hood, 2004). Eudemonic well-being refers to the purposeful aspect of psychological well-being.

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Feelings can range from negative mental states (dissatisfaction, unhappiness, worry, etc.) to a more positive outlook that goes beyond the simple absence of dissatisfaction (just as health is more than the simple absence of illness) and into a state that has occasionally been referred to as positive mental health (e.g. Jahoda, 1958; Herzberg, 1966; Berg, 1975). Life going well is a key component of psychological well-being. It consists of having a positive attitude and performing well. The experiencing of painful emotions (such as disappointment, failure, and sadness) is a natural part of life, and living in sustainable well-being does not need people to feel happy all the time. Negative emotions that are severe or persistent that interfere with a person's capacity to operate in daily life jeopardise psychological well-being. "Psychological well-being is usually defined in terms of the overall effectiveness of an individual's psychological functioning (Gechman & Weiner, 1975; Jamal & Mitchell, 1980; Martin, 1984; Sekaran, 1985).

Diener and his colleagues (1999) suggest that subjective or psychological well-being is a broad class of occurrences that is comprised of a component:

Positive and negative affect -Positive affect refers to the extent to which one feels active, enthusiastic, and alert whereas negative affect is a dimension of distress. This dimension includes several aversive mood states, including anger, guilt, and fear (Watson, Clark, and Tellegen, 1988). These researchers assert that high levels of positive affect can be characterized as a state of high energy, pleasurable engagement, and full concentration, while low positive affect involves sadness and lethargy. Low negative affect is characterized by a state of calmness and serenity (Watson, Clark', and Tellegen, 1988).

"Psychological well-being is attained by achieving a state of balance affected by both challenging and rewarding life events. Psychological well-being consists of positive relationships with others, personal mastery, a feeling of purpose and meaning in life, personal growth and development. Psychological well-being indicates physical and mental wellness.

Occupational stress

Stress is a negative emotional experience accompanied by predictable biochemical, physiological, cognitive, behavioral changes that are directed either towards altering the stressful event or accommodating to its effects (Baum, It is also defined as an 'adaptive response to an external situation that results in physical, psychological, and/or behavioral deviations for organizational participants.'

Occupational stress -also called work stress, job stress or stress in a work place – it is a condition where work-related factors interact with the worker to change, either disrupt or enhance, his or her psychological or physiological conditions such that the individual's mind and/or body are forced to deviate from normal functioning.

Occupational stress is defined in terms of its physical and psychological effects on a person. and can be a mental, physical or emotional strain. Occupational stress occurs when there is a discrepancy between the demands of the environment, workplace and an individual's ability to carry out and complete these demands. One of the main causes of occupational stress is work overload. Occupational stress is a term used to define ongoing stress that is related to the workplace.

Stress is very complex phenomenon and hence there exist no universally accepted definition of stress rather it has been used widely with varying meaning. Stress has been explained as

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the process of adjusting to or dealing with circumstances that disrupt, or threaten to disrupt a person's physical or psychological functioning (Obikoya, 1998; European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2002; Adegoke, 2011). The work of Hans Selye captures the modernist scientific definition of stress. Stress was defined by Selye (1956) as the result of the interplay between the stimulus and the answer. A more contemporary definition of occupational stress is any force that strains a person by pushing a psychological or physical aspect beyond its capacity (Arnold, Cooper and Robinson 1995). Selye (1956), the concept's creator, described stress as the body's non-specific reaction to any demand made of it to adapt in terms of stress in general (what he called the General Adaptation Syndrome). Therefore, stress as defined by Selye can be either bad or good. In order to distinguish between two different types of stress, he used the phrases distress and eustress. Cooper and Marshall (1976) define occupational stress as the negative environmental stressors (such as work overload, role conflict or ambiguity, and unfavourable working conditions) that are related to one's job. Cartwright and Cooper (1997) pointed out that in the short term stress can lead to emotional distress, stomach disorder, headaches, sleeplessness, and loss of energy, and in the long term it can contribute to serious illness and even premature death, most likely due to cardiovascular disease. There are a number of workplace factors, called job stressors that make jobs stressful. Some stressors concern the nature of the job and job tasks. For example, jobs with heavy workloads requiring long periods of attention (e.g., driving a truck, security) and jobs that are highly repetitive and boring will likely be perceived as stressful. Other stressors concern interpersonal relationships at work, such as conflicts with co-workers or abusive behavior by supervisors.

Occupational stress is the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker which can lead to poor health. Some of the major causes of work stress include low pay, more work pressure (physical as well as mental), lack of fixed work timing.

When affected by stress people may become increasingly distressed and irritable, unable to relax or concentrate, have difficulty thinking logically and in making appropriate decisions, feel less committed to their work, feel tired, depressed and anxious, have difficulty in sleeping, experience serious physical problems such as heart diseases, increase in blood pressure, headaches, and other disorders of the bodily systems (Leka, 2003).

Blue collar workers

Blue-collar work generally connotes an occupation in which a person engages in some type of physical labor that is paid in an hourly, rather than fixed, wage (Lederer, 1987).

A blue-collar worker is a working class where a person who performs manual labor. Blue-collar work may involve skilled or unskilled labor. The type of work may involve manufacturing, mining, electrical construction and maintenance, waste collection, construction workers, driving, trucking and many other types of physical work like carpenter, plumber and transport labor and security guards. Blue-collar work often involves something being physically built or maintained and with no job security and with no medical allowances and paid on a hourly basis.

Consequently, the definition of the blue-collar worker in this study is as follows: a working class person, skilled or unskilled, performing manual work involving the following fields – construction, oil extraction, mechanics, machine operation, and metal processing. Many blue-collar workers are now able to command high salaries because they are highly skilled.

METHOD

The current study uses Non-Experimental Quantitative Research Design to examine the psychological well-being and occupational stress among blue collar workers. This study is totally a quantitative study using 150 sample of blue-collar workers equally divided into fixed income group 75 and variable income group 75.

Statement of the problem

To find out if there is any significant relationship between psychological well-being and occupational stress among blue-collar workers.

Objectives of the study

- To find out if there is any significant relationship between psychological well-being and occupational stress among blue collar workers.
- To find out if there is any significant difference between fixed income blue collar workers and variable income blue collar workers on psychological well being.
- To find if there is any significant difference between fixed income blue collar workers and variable income blue collar workers on occupational stress.

Hypotheses

- Ho1: There is no significant relationship between psychological well being and occupational stress among blue collar workers.
- Ho2: There is no significant difference between fixed income blue collar workers and variable income blue collar workers on psychological well being.
- Ho3: There is no significant difference between fixed income blue collar workers and variable income blue collar workers on occupational stress.

Operational Definition

- **Psychological Well Being:** Psychological wellbeing refers to a person's mental health and how they feel about themselves and their life. It encompasses various factors such as feeling independent, accepting oneself, striving for personal development, finding meaning in life, and having a good level of self-confidence.
- **Occupational stress:** occupational stress is the ongoing or progressing stress an employee experiences due to the responsibilities, conditions, environment, or other pressures of the workplace.
- **Blue Collar Workers:** Blue Collar Workers are those who engage in manual labor, who may not have job security. These people are into either of the income groups like fixed income group and variable income group. The fixed income group people are security guard, maids and labor at a particular sector where there income is on regular basis. The variable income group people are auto drivers, private van drivers, Swiggy, Zomato, etc. who gain income based on how much they work on it.

Tools Used for Study

1. **Psychological Well-being scale:** Psychological Wellbeing Scale developed by psychologist Carol D. Ryff, the 42-item Psychological Wellbeing (PWB) Scale measures six aspects of wellbeing and happiness: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Researchers have used both the 42-item PWB Scale and a shortened 18-item version. Respondents rate how strongly they agree or disagree with 42 statements using a 7-point scale (1=strongly agree; 7=strongly disagree). Internal consistencies varied

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between 0.87 and 0.96 and test-retest reliability coefficients ranged between 0.78 and 0.97 for six subscales. These results demonstrate that the scale is a valid and reliable instrument.

- Occupational stress scale (A.K Srivastava).** The reliability index of the test was .935 by split- half method, and Cronbach s alpha was .90. The Occupational Stress Index (OSI; Srivastava & Singh; 1981) employees' stress in various dimensions of their job life. 50 initial items related to relevant component. The scale consists of 46 items selected to constitute the final OSI. For the items were on a 5-point Likert type scale.

Statistical tool used

The statistical technique used for the data analysis in this study is Correlation analysis and Independent Samples t Test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The aim of the research was to study the psychological wellbeing and occupational stress among blue collar workers. The study was conducted on 150 blue collar workers. the sample population was divided into two, 75 variable income group and 75 fixed income group workers.

Table-1 Relationship between Psychological wellbeing and Occupational stress.

Variables	M	SD	r	sig
Psychological Wellbeing	172.94	26.61	1	.000
Occupational stress	136.68	11.752	-.698**	.000

** $p < 0.01$

H01- There is no significant relationship between psychological wellbeing and occupational stress among blue collar workers.

Table shows that the correlation between psychological well-being and occupational stress among blue-collar workers. The mean and standard deviation of the occupational stress has found to be 136.68 and 11.752. In Psychological wellbeing mean of 172.9 was found with a standard deviation of 26.61.the correlation between Psychological wellbeing and occupational stress was found to be -.698 and from the table it can be observed that there is a significant negative relationship between psychological well-being and occupational stress which means that if the occupational stress increases automatically psychological well-being decreases. Hence the null hypothesis “there is no significant relationship between psychological wellbeing and occupational stress among blue-collar workers “was rejected.

Table 2 Difference between Fixed and Variable income on Psychological wellbeing.

Variables	Fixed income			Variable Income			t	p
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
Psychological well-being	79	158.50	14.70	78	187.53	28.05	8.10	.001

** $p < 0.01$

H02- There is no significant difference between fixed and variable income on psychological wellbeing.

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Table shows the difference between fixed and variable income on psychological well-being among blue-collar workers. The mean and standard deviation of the psychological well-being has found to be 158.506 and 4.7012 for fixed income group. Mean and standard deviation In Psychological wellbeing has found to be 87.538 and 28.0545 for variable income group. The calculated “t” value for psychological well-being between two groups is -8.106 with corresponding “p” value of .001 that there is a significant difference between fixed income group and variable income group in psychological well-being. Hence the null hypothesis, “There is no significant difference between fixed income group and variable income group on psychological well-being.” Was rejected.

Table 3 *Difference between Fixed and Variable income on Occupational Stress.*

variables	Fixed income			Variable Income			t	p
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
Occupational Stress	79	139.78	9.969	78	133.54	12.619	3.43	.002

* $p < 0.05$

H03- There is no significant difference between fixed and variable income on occupational stress.

Table shows the difference between fixed and variable income on occupational stress among blue-collar workers. The mean and standard deviation of the occupational stress has found to be 139.78 and 9.969 for fixed income group. Mean and standard deviation in occupational stress has found to be 133.54 and 12.619 for variable income group. The calculated “t” value for psychological well-being between two groups is 3.43 with corresponding “p” value of .002 that there is a significant difference between fixed income group and variable income group on occupational stress. Hence the null hypothesis, “There is no significant difference between fixed income group and variable income group on occupational stress.” was rejected.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

The study was conducted to understand whether there is any relation between psychological well-being and occupational stress among blue-collar workers. This quantitative research design study used 2 different assessment tools which are psychological well-being scale and occupational stress scale which helps to assess the psychological well-being and occupational stress of blue-collar workers. Non-probability and Convenient sampling method were used for data collection in this research and the total sample size was N=150, with 75 fixed income group (security guards, maids, etc.) and 75 variable income group (auto drivers, Swiggy, Zomato, private van drivers). The statistical tools used in this study are Correlation and independent sample t test. The study aimed at understanding the relationship among the two variables in blue-collar workers. The results revealed that there is a significant relationship between psychological well-being and occupational stress of blue-collar workers. The study found that there is a negative correlation between psychological well-being and occupational stress of blue-collar workers. There is a significant difference between fixed income and variable income group on psychological well-being. There is a significant difference between fixed income and variable income group on occupational stress.

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Conclusion

According to the research the following hypotheses were studied and the results were found to be:

- The null hypotheses H01- There is no significant relationship between psychological well-being and occupational stress among blue-collar workers has been rejected.
- The null hypotheses H02- There is no significant difference between fixed income group and variable income group on psychological well-being has been rejected.
- The null hypotheses H03- There is no significant difference between fixed income group and variable income group on occupational stress has been rejected.

Limitations:

- Sample size is relatively small.
- The questionnaire is time consuming to explain them in detail.
- The study collected data only from Bangalore and Hyderabad. The sample could have been collected from other locations as well.
- There was a language barrier to collect data from other cities.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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