

Research Paper

Occupational Stress as a Determinant of Workplace Contentment among Employees in the Service Sector and Manufacturing Units

Mr. Kashyap Rajput^{1*}, Prof. S.N Pathak²

ABSTRACT

In India occupational stress and workplace happiness follow a similar inverse relationship as in other countries. The prevalence of stressful work environments, such as high workload, lack of work-life balance, and job insecurity, can contribute to elevated levels of occupational stress among employees. The study aimed to assess whether occupational stress significantly predicts workplace happiness and to explore the impact of the sector on both variables. A survey using the Occupational Stress Index and Workplace Happiness index was conducted on 102 managers, executives, and supervisors from Gujarat's service and manufacturing sectors (74 from service sector and 28 from manufacturing sector). Regression analysis revealed that occupational stress negatively predicts workplace happiness, while a t-test showed no significant difference between the service and manufacturing sectors in terms of occupational stress and workplace happiness. Employees perceiving higher occupational stress levels are likely to experience lower workplace happiness. Therefore, organizations should prioritize managing occupational stress to enhance employee well-being and happiness, and both sectors should implement specific initiatives to address stress and promote workplace happiness effectively.

Keywords: *Occupational Stress, Workplace Happiness, Employee well-being, Service Sector, Manufacturing Sector*

Nearly half of the working people experience everyday stress at their job. Workplace stress has long been an issue that is finally receiving the attention and awareness it deserves, both at the organizational and policy levels, in order to prevent people from spiralling into depression and developing mental health issues (Balan, J., 2021). Conventional stress reduction strategies such as Employee Assistance service or work-life balance programs or flexible work schedules in the past were helpful. To some extent, stress management books and recordings, yoga sessions and other meditation approaches were also beneficial (Babcock, P. 2009).

Occupational stress arises from job demands such as time pressure, dealing with difficult customers and emotional labour, role conflict, Job security, Lack of cohesiveness, Culture incompatibility and many more which are also referred as stressors that can produce physical,

¹Ph.D. Scholar, Department Of Psychology, Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar, Gujarat, India

²Guide, Department Of Psychology, Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar, Gujarat, India

*Corresponding Author

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emotional and behavioural reactions (Kinicki, A and Fugate, M., 2016). Occupational stress can have negative effects on both mental and physical health, as well as on the job performance and productivity (Garg, R. & Dhar, R.L., 2014). According to (Das, T. & Mitra, R.K (2023) Occupational stress among the service sector employee is a result of a number of reasons including heavy workload, lengthy workdays, a lack of work life balance and insufficient support from managers and co-workers. These elements can cause a variety of physical and mental health issues, including poor work performance, anxiety, and depression and sleep disruptions.

On the other hand, Employee's overall satisfaction with their working environment and their positive emotional condition are referred as "Workplace happiness". It involves experiencing joy, fulfilment, and contentment as a result of things like encouraging co-workers, meaningful work, work-life balance, recognition and chances for advancement. It is the measure of subjective well-being that is shaped by employment status, job type and workplace characteristics (De Neve, J.E., & Ward, G.W., 2017). Companies make a lot of effort to make their employees happy and engaged in their organization because employee wellness, including mental health and emotional well-being, is essential to the productive work force. According to Hunter, C. (2022) workplace happiness is not simply a subjective emotional state experienced by employees, but rather a complex and entangled concept influenced by various factors. It entails a deeper comprehension of how emotions are transmitted, felt, and managed within the corporate setting and goes beyond merely trying to evoke pleasant feelings. Promoting happiness in the workplace is a complex and nuanced idea that calls for thorough study of the dynamics, power structures, and potential side effects.

According to Rothmann, S. (2008) his study reveals a complex relationship between occupational stress and workplace happiness. Job satisfaction acts as a protective factor, mitigating the negative impact of stress on work engagement and disengagement. High stress levels are associated with diminished work-related wellbeing, exhaustion, and cynicism, leading to reduced job satisfaction. The findings underscore the importance of fostering positive work experiences and addressing occupational stress to enhance workplace happiness and overall employee well-being. Organizations must recognize the intertwined nature of these constructs and implement strategies to create healthier and more satisfying work environments.

As human resource managers and organizational leaders you should understand and manage the behaviours and attitude of their mergers or changes. By studying the levels of Job satisfaction which is one of the variable of Workplace happiness and Occupational stress, organizations can minimize negative effect of occupational stress on employees and the organization as a whole. According to Ngirander, H & Mjoli, Q. T. (2020) The study indirectly emphasizes the importance of managing occupational stress for enhancing workplace happiness and overall employee well-being, with a primary focus on job satisfaction and uncertainty. Findings reveal that while both merged and non-merged institution employees reported satisfaction, their levels of job stress differed. Moreover, uncertainty plays a vital role as a mediator in the relationship between job satisfaction and occupational stress. Human resource managers should address employee uncertainty to enhance job satisfaction and create a positive work environment, effectively minimizing the adverse impacts of stress on individuals and organizations.

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Objectives

- To measure whether Occupational stress will significantly predict workplace happiness.
- To study whether there is a significant effect of sector on Occupational stress and Workplace happiness.

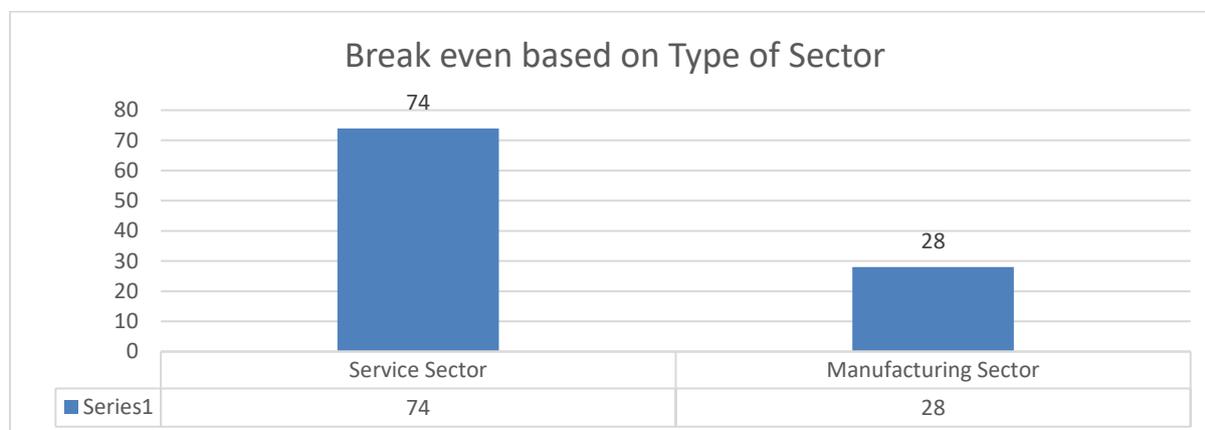
Hypothesis

- Occupational stress will significantly predict the Workplace Happiness.
- There will be no significant difference between employees from the service sector and employees from manufacturing sector in terms of Occupational stress and Workplace happiness.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

72 male employees and 30 female employees make up the sample of 102 managers, executives and supervisors from Gujarat service and manufacturing sectors. There are 74 employees overall who work in the service sector and 28 employees in manufacturing sector. The sample was chosen using an inclusive criterion that required all participants to have at least one year of full-time employment with the present organization.



Tools

Data collection involved the use of a Survey questionnaire. The following subscales were included in the questionnaire:

Occupational Stress Index – Occupational stress index was measured by a scale that was originally developed by Dr. A.K. Srivastava and Dr. A.P. Singh (1984). Five points Likert’s scale was used to collect the quantitative information in which “1” represents for strongly disagree and “5” represents for strongly agree. The current Cronbach alpha for the scale is 0.89.

Workplace Happiness Index – Workplace Happiness scale was used to collect the quantitative data from the employees. The scale was developed by Singh and Aggrawal (2017) consisting of 15 items. Five points Likert’s scale was used to collect the quantitative information in which “1” represents for strongly disagree and “5” represents for strongly agree. The current Cronbach alpha for the scale is 0.88.

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Research Design

Data collection involved the use of a survey questionnaire. Assessing the characteristics of the entire population is the main goal of the survey research. It may be described as a method where the researcher examines the entire population in relation to particular social and psychological variables (Singh, 2010). The employee received the survey questionnaire and were requested to complete it thoroughly.

Procedure

The relevant Service and Manufacturing industries gave their consent for the data collection. The purpose of the research was explained to the employees. Following the approval, the questionnaire was distributed to the employees who met the criteria for the research and the data was collected. Based on their responses the data was also analysed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Linear regression (Enter) was used to study whether Occupational Stress significantly predicts Workplace happiness.

Table 1 - Occupational stress as predictor of Workplace Happiness among the Service and Manufacturing unit Employees.

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | F | Sig | Beta Value | Sig |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|-------|------|------------|------|
| 1 | .705 ^a | .498 | .487 | 48.52 | 0.00 | -0.75 | 0.00 |

** significant at 0.01 level *Significant at 0.05 level

The findings indicates that Workplace happiness is strongly negatively correlated with Occupational stress. The adjusted R square of the model is 0.48, which indicates that work-related stress has a 48% negative impact on workplace happiness. The model's beta value is 0.75, which means that work-related stress has a negative impact on workplace happiness. The first hypothesis that Occupational stress will significantly predict Workplace happiness is accepted. The results were in line with Naseem, K (2018), who investigated how job stress affected happiness and life satisfaction in the communication industry. His findings suggested that one of the key factors affecting happiness is stress. Hence the first hypothesis is accepted.

Independent t-test was used to study wherever there is a significant of effect of Sector on Occupational Stress and Workplace Happiness.

The result shows that there is no significant difference between Service sector and Manufacturing sector employees in terms of Workplace Happiness and Occupational Stress. In terms of workplace happiness, there is no discernible difference between employees in the service sector and those in the manufacturing sector (Supportive experience $t=1.93$, $p=0.6$, Unsupportive experience $t=0.75$, $p=0.45$, Flow and intrinsic motivation $t=0.56$, $p=0.57$, Work repulsive feelings $t=1.80$, $p=0.07$). In terms of Occupational Stress, there is no significant difference between employees in service sector and those in manufacturing sector (Role overload $t=0.52$, $p=0.5$. Role ambiguity $t=-0.8$, $p=0.8$, Role conflict $t=0.5$ $p=0.24$, Unreasonable group and political pressure $t=0.9$ $p=0.9$, Responsibility for person $t= -1.10$ $p=0.2$, Under-participation $t=0.62$ $p=0.7$, Powerlessness $t= -0.4$ $p=0.26$, Peer group relation $t=-0.6$ $p=0.38$, Intrinsic impoverishment $t=0.75$ $p=0.92$, Low status $t=-0.93$ $p=0.38$,

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Strenuous working condition $t=0.68$ $p=0.19$, Unprofitability $t=0.53$ $p=0.61$). Hence it can be concluded that the sector of the employee does not affect the Occupational stress and workplace happiness. Hence the second hypothesis is accepted.

CONCLUSION

Employees who perceive higher occupational stress in their organization reports to have lower level of workplace happiness in the organization. Numerous studies have examined the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction, which is a key component of workplace happiness. These studies consistently show a negative correlation between occupational stress and job satisfaction. For example, research has found that individuals experiencing higher levels of job demands, such as excessive workload or time pressure, report lower job satisfaction. Similarly, factors like lack of control, role ambiguity, and interpersonal conflicts at work have been associated with reduced job satisfaction. These findings provide empirical evidence supporting the idea that higher occupational stress is related to lower workplace happiness. There is no significant difference between service sector and manufacturing unit in terms of Occupational stress and workplace happiness.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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