

A Comparative Study of Defence Personnel and Railway Employees on Occupational Stress and Coping Style

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ABSTRACT

Occupational stress and burnout have become the buzz words of the 1990's for human resource department throughout all of industry and in particular of the human service industry. Occupational stress has become a serious health issue, not just in terms of an individual's mental and physical well-being, but also for employers and governments who have begun to assess the financial consequences of work stress. Coping style is known to influence an individual's experience of stress. The aim of the study was to compare defence personnel and railway employees on occupational stress and coping style. For the same the data was collected on 100 employees with the age range of 22 to 30 years. The data was calculated using occupational stress index scale and coping strategies scale. Result was calculated using t-test. The result highlights that there are significant differences have only been observed on three aspects which include two coping strategies (Behavioral Approach and Behavioral Avoidance Approach) and one occupational stress (Strenuous working conditions) dimension.

Keywords: *Stress, Occupational Stress, Coping*

Stress is many-faceted process that occurs in us in response to events that disrupt or threaten to disrupt our physical or psychological functioning (Baron, 2005). Stress has negative effects on life's pressures and events (Benson and Stuart, 1992) and can generally be viewed as a set of neurological and physiological reactions that serve an adaptive function (Franken, 1994). The stress is regarded as inevitable consequences of employee's functionality. Job stress can be defined as "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 (Braaten Den J. (2000) & W.R.P.K. fernando et al; 2013). Sources of occupational stress come from: A toxic work environment, Negative workload, Isolation, Types of hours worked, Role conflict & role ambiguity, Lack of autonomy, career development barriers, Difficult relationships with administrators and/or coworkers, Managerial bullying, Harassment, Work place climat.

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Work-related stress among railway workers was related to important occupational stressors (whole-body vibration, awkward body posture, prolonged duties, and work environment, noise, and workers behaviours) and non-occupational stressors (improper rest, sleep disturbances) (Ostan I, Poljsak B, Axelsson EP, 2011).

Stress in military settings is decreased performance along with a host of related negative outcomes that can impact performance (Bray, fairbank, & Marsden, 1999; Kavanagh, 2005). According to MHAT-5 (2008) 23% of American soldiers say that they work less carefully as a result of stress and emotional problems, 15% indicate that these problems limit their ability to do their jobs, and 13% report that emotional problems have led to increases in concern from their supervisors. Soldiers also indicated problems at home with nearly 21 % of married enlisted soldiers reporting that they were considering divorce. In terms of drug and alcohol abuse, upwards of 8% of soldiers admitted to using alcohol in theatre and approximately 2% admitted using illegal drugs.

Coping may be defined as ways of thinking or acting. Coping consists of efforts, both action-oriented and intrapsychic, to manage environmental and internal demands and conflicts among them (Lazarus & Launier, 1978). Psychological and emotional coping may be defined as thoughts or actions designed to resolve or mitigate a problematic situation. The psychological coping mechanisms are commonly termed coping strategies or coping skills. The term coping generally refers to adaptive (constructive) coping strategies. That is strategies which reduce stress.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Pandey and Srivastava (2000) had studied the female professional working in railway, bank and teaching institutions. A sample of 96 females, 16 subjects in each professional area was taken. The study identified that respondents among all the three dimensions, clerks of bank and railway experienced more work stress as compared to teachers.

Aminabhavi and Kamble (2004) conducted a study on work motivation and stress coping behaviour of technical personnel at a railway work shop. The sample comprised of 30 technical personnel in the age range of 30-59 years. It was found that middle aged technical personnel had significantly higher stress coping behaviour as compared to the older technical personnel.

Dwayne Devonish (2014) examined workplace bullying as a potential moderator in the relationship between job demands and physical, mental and behavioural strain and the results revealed that workplace bullying significantly exacerbated the effects of job demands on physical exhaustion, depression, and uncertified absenteeism.

Rajubhai Rana, (2014) study on Job stress of among government and private employees reported that the private employees have more job stress than the government employees.

Zhou W, Gu G, Wu H, Yu S (2014) examined occupational stress in different types of train drivers. This study reveals that Psychological needs, work responsibilities, job roles, work conflict, and physical environment were important occupational stress factors of train drivers; social support was pivotal mitigating factors; different train drivers had different occupational stress status, high speed rail drivers were the highest, and freight trains drivers passenger train drivers or passenger shunting train drivers were the lowest.

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Dodi Irawanto et al. (2015) concluded that stressors and occupational stress significantly influence the performance of the female employees either simultaneously or partially, and that occupational stress predominately effects the performance of the female employees prior to the addition of demographic variables. Further this study concluded that demographic variables have a role in moderating variables. Further this study concluded that demographic variables have a role in moderating the relationship of stressor and occupational stress with the performance of female employees.

Dr. Axavior Sel Vakumar, Mr. S Lauerence Immanuel, (2015) study that employees in both the public and private sectors face moderate levels of stress, of which they are subject to role erosion that most and resource inadequacy the least. Further, there is no significant difference in total role stress among public and private sector employees. This study highlights employees stress management in public and private sector banks in Negapattinam district an analysis.

Rajesh Ranjan and Prasad (2015) reveals that contending with stressful situations is a common occurrence for the railway drivers leading to deterioration in their quality of work and life.

KDV Prasad, Rajesh Vaidya, V Anil kumar, (2016) study concluded that the impact of occupational stress on performance for the ARS employees is moderate and when compared with the ITS, which reported higher impact on its performance than ARS. The result indicate that the job related stress in general and the stress factor job security in particular effect the employee's performance in IT sector.

Shaik Jan Saida, and B Govinda Reddy (2016) studies on Occupational Stress among Railway Employees. This study reveals that there is no significant differences between low and high level supervisors employees in their occupational stress. Employees with long job tenure experience high occupational stress compared to employees with short job tenure. Employees working in mechanical and commercial department experience same level of occupational stress.

METHODOLOGY

Objective

- To find out the difference between Railway Employees and Defence Personnel on occupational stress and coping style.

Hypothesis

- There would be significant difference between Railway Employees and Defence Personnel on occupational stress and coping style.

Research Design

Comparative Research Design was Used.

Sampling

This study has a random purposive sampling design and the data was collected on 100 Defence Personnel and Railway Employees with the age range between 22 to 30 years.

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Tools

1. Occupational Stress Index Scale [Srivastava and Singh, 1984] was used as a tool of data collection. This Scale contains 46 items (Appendix II), measuring 12 different dimensions that are inherent in any occupation. Each of these items were rated on a five-point scale. Out of the 46 items, 18 are negative statements where the scores had to be reversed called “false-keyed items”. These dimension and the appropriate items under each dimension. Role Overload (1, 13, 25, 36, 44, 46), Role Ambiguity (2, 14*, 26, 37), Role Conflict (3, 15*, 27, 38,45), Unreasonable group & pol. pressures persons (4, 16, 28, 39), Persons’ Responsibility (5, 17, 29), Under participation (6*, 18*, 30*, 40*), Powerlessness (7*, 19*, 31*), Poor peer relations intrinsic (8*, 20*, 32*, 41*), Impoverishment (9, 21*, 33*, 42), Low status (10*, 22*, 34), Strenuous working conditions (12, 24 ,35,43*), Un-profitability (11, 23).

2. Coping Strategies Scale [A.KSrivastava,1984] This scale contains 50 items (Appendix III), to be rated on five-point scale, describing values of coping behaviour underlying following five major categories of Coping Strategies based on the combinations of ‘operation’ and ‘orientation’ of the coping behaviour: ACTIVE / APPROCH COPING (Problem- Focused Coping): (a) Behavioural Approach Coping Strategies (b). Cognitive Approach Coping Strategies (c). Cognitive Behavioural Approach Coping Strategies, AVOIDANCE COPING (Emotion – Focused Coping) (a). Behavioural Avoidance Coping Strategies (b). Cognitive Avoidance Coping Strategies. Each of these items was rated on a five-point scale varying from “Never” to ‘Almost Always’ on the degree of agreement with the statement.

Procedure

Rapport was established initially and afterwards, they were made aware about the purpose of the research inbrief. Then, they were provided with the questionnaires. After the completion of test administration their responses sheets were collected and it was ensured that none of the statement left unresponsive.

Ethical consideration

The aim of the study was clearly defined to the participants and the participants was fully voluntary. Consequently, participants fully agreed to take part in the study. In addition, participants were told that they can withdraw at any time if they feel to do so. During the data collection process, privacy was maintained and confidentiality of information was assured.

Statistical Analysis

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21.0. Descriptive statistics mean and standard deviation was calculated and inferential statistics t-test was used.

RESULT

To accomplish the objective of the present investigation the data was subjected to t-test. The obtained results of the t-test have been shown in table 1 along with the descriptive statistics of each group on coping Strategies & occupational stress.

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Summary table of Mean, S.D, and t-test.

Group Statistics

Variables	groups	N	Mean	S.D.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Behavioral Approach	railway	50	37.34	4.20	2.471	98	.015
	army	50	34.52	6.89			
Cognitive Approach	railway	50	15.92	3.31	-.820	98	.414
	army	50	16.56	4.42			
Cognitive Behavioral Approach	railway	50	19.60	4.09	-.523	98	.602
	army	50	20.10	5.38			
Behavioral – Avoidance	railway	50	18.20	5.16	-2.995	98	.003
	army	50	22.28	8.13			
Cognitive-Avoidance	railway	50	13.08	3.36	-1.573	98	.119
	army	50	14.30	4.33			
Role overload	railway	50	19.76	4.76	-.918	98	.361
	army	50	20.64	4.82			
Role ambiguity	railway	50	11.14	2.27	-1.037	98	.302
	army	50	11.64	2.55			
Role conflict	railway	50	15.26	3.50	.670	98	.504
	army	50	14.84	2.71			
Unre Group & pol. Pre persons	railway	50	13.90	2.57	1.659	98	.100
	army	50	12.96	3.08			
Persons' Responsibility	railway	50	9.22	2.05	-.612	98	.542
	army	50	9.52	2.79			
Under Participation	railway	50	12.62	2.09	-.858	98	.393
	army	50	13.08	3.16			
Powerlessness	railway	50	10.34	1.95	1.358	98	.178
	army	50	9.64	3.08			
Poor peer relations	railway	50	11.12	2.73	0.000	98	1.000
	army	50	11.12	2.73			
Intrinsic impoverishment	railway	50	10.98	1.58	-.368	98	.714
	army	50	11.12	2.17			
Low status	railway	50	7.04	2.58	-1.365	98	.175
	army	50	7.72	2.40			
Strenuous Working Conditions	railway	50	11.12	1.67	-2.536	98	.013
	army	50	12.10	2.16			
Unprofitability	railway	50	5.96	1.34	-1.543	98	.126
	army	50	6.48	1.97			

DISCUSSION

The aim of the study was to compare defence personnel and railway employees on occupational stress and coping style. For the same the data was collected on 100 college employees with the age range of employees was 22 to 30 years. The data was calculated

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using occupational stress index scale and coping strategies scale. Table 1 exhibits obtained T-values for mean difference between railway employees and defence personnel on various aspect of Coping style & Occupational Stress. It is evident that for the present sample significant differences have only been observed on three aspects which include two coping strategies (Behavioral Approach and Behavioral Avoidance Approach) and one occupational stress (strenuous working conditions) dimension. The obtained t-values shows that railway employees found high on Approach Behavioral coping strategy as compared to defence personnel ($t=2.47$; $p<_{=} .02$). Further has been observed railway employees have been found low on behavioral avoidance as compared to defence personnel. Where the avoid behavior tendency is high ($t= -2.995$; $p<_{=} .01$). However, on strenuous working conditions defence personnel have been found significantly high as compared to railway employees. Where the obtained mean difference value is -2.536 ; $p<_{=} .01$.

Practical Implication of the study

The finding of the present study can be useful to researchers working on similar topics.

Limitation

- The data has been collected from only bhiwani city, thus the results could not be generalized.
- There are possible demographic predictors that were not included in this study, and thus, prevent discovering some important data. This support further analysis and replication with this kind of prediction.

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Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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