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A Study on Occupational Stress of Employees of Private Health Care Sector in Malappuram

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ABSTRACT

Occupational stress is a growing concern that affects individuals and organizations alike. The impact of stress can be significant, leading to decreased job satisfaction, decreased productivity, increased absenteeism, and physical health problems. To address occupational stress, a combination of organizational, individual, and environmental interventions is necessary. The purpose of this study is to examine the extent and nature of occupational stress among employees in the healthcare sector, identify the factors contributing to it, and examine the change in stress across the various demographic factors. The researcher found a number of factors causing occupational stress, such as the inability to maintain work life balance, daily stressful challenges related to work, the emotional and psychological toll of the job, work dissatisfaction, etc. The researcher also found that stress levels vary according to gender, age, experience, and annual income

INTRODUCTION

Occupational stress refers to the adverse physical, emotional, and behavioural reactions that occur when the demands of the workplace surpass an individual's abilities and resources to cope with them. It is a growing concern in today's work environment and affects not only the individual but also the organization as a whole. The primary cause of occupational stress is job demands, which can range from excessive workload, lack of control over work processes, conflicting demands, and low job security. These demands can lead to physical and emotional strain, leading to symptoms such as anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances. In severe cases, occupational stress can result in burnout, a syndrome characterized by physical and emotional exhaustion, detachment from work, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment.

Stress in the workplace has become increasingly prevalent as the pace of work has accelerated and work-life boundaries have become blurred. The World Health Organization (WHO) has recognized stress as a major public health concern and estimates that work-related stress affects more than half of all workers worldwide. The impact of occupational stress is significant and far-reaching. It can lead to decreased job satisfaction, decreased productivity, increased absenteeism, and a higher rate of turnover. Furthermore, it can also lead to physical health problems, such as cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal disorders, and digestive problems.

Employers have a responsibility to create a healthy work environment that reduces stress levels and promotes well-being. This can be achieved through a combination of organizational, individual, and environmental interventions. At the organizational level, measures to reduce stress can include providing clear expectations and goals, ensuring fair treatment and opportunities for growth, promoting a healthy work-life balance, and addressing workplace bullying and harassment. At the individual level, employees can reduce stress by developing healthy coping strategies, such as regular exercise, mindfulness, and stress management

techniques. They can also improve their physical and emotional well-being by eating a balanced diet, getting enough sleep, and engaging in regular physical activity. Finally, at the environmental level, the workplace can be made more conducive to well-being by providing ergonomic equipment and furniture, promoting natural light and fresh air, and creating a quiet and relaxing environment.

Occupational stress is a growing concern that affects individuals and organizations alike. The impact of stress can be significant, leading to decreased job satisfaction, decreased productivity, increased absenteeism, and physical health problems. To address occupational stress, a combination of organizational, individual, and environmental interventions is necessary. Occupational stress is a growing concern in the health care sector, where employees face a range of physical, psychological and emotional demands in their daily work (Shanafelt et al., 2015). This issue has significant implications for both employees and organizations, as high levels of stress can lead to burnout, decreased job satisfaction, increased absenteeism and turnover, and decreased quality of care (Shanafelt et al.).

Occupational stress among health care employees is a significant issue that has been extensively researched in recent years. Health care employees face a high level of stress due to the nature of their work, which is characterized by long working hours, physically and emotionally demanding tasks, and exposure to occupational hazards. Thus this study attempts to investigate the various factors affecting occupational stress and the level of occupational stress based on the socio demographic factors.

METHODS

Descriptive research design was employed for this study and samples are drawn from the population using simple random sampling method. The data are collected through a structured questionnaire among 121 employees of private health care sector in Malappuram. The collected data are analysed using statistical tools like mean score analysis, anova, t test etc. with the help of SPSS.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Mean Score Analysis

Table 1. Mean Score Analysis of Occupational Stress

Sl.no	statements	Mean score
1	I feel burnt out and exhausted after work.	3.87
2	I often feel physically and mentally exhausted due to work-related stress.	3.89
3	I feel pressure to meet high expectations from patients and colleagues.	3.43
4	I feel the need to always be available for work, even outside of working hours.	3.94
5	I find it difficult to maintain a good work-life balance.	4.09
6	I feel stressed about making medical errors or mistakes.	3.85
7	I feel overwhelmed by the high stakes and high risk environment of the healthcare sector.	3.76
8	I'm feeling overburdened by my job's physical requirements.	3.78
9	I feel like I have to deal with stressful and difficult situations on a daily basis.	4.09
10	I feel burdened by the heavy emotional and psychological toll of the job.	4.02
11	I find it hard to deal with the constant changes in the healthcare industry.	3.74
12	I feel like I don't get enough recognition or appreciation for my work.	3.66
13	I feel stressed about the financial stability of my job.	3.55
14	I feel like my job is undervalued and underpaid.	3.59
15	I feel like my work is unfulfilling and unsatisfying.	3.95
16	I feel like there is a lack of teamwork and cooperation in my workplace.	3.61
17	I feel like the work environment is toxic and negative.	3.70

Source: Primary Data

The mean score analysis shows the level of occupational stress. Among all these statements, "I find it difficult to maintain a good work-life balance" and "I feel like I have to deal with stressful and difficult situations on a daily basis," showing the highest contribution towards occupational stress,

were followed by "I feel burdened by the heavy emotional and psychological toll of the job".

Variations in occupational stress based on demographic factors:

Independent sample t test:

H01: There is no significant difference in occupational stress and gender of employee

Table 2. Variations in Occupational Stress with RESPECT to Gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.	F
Occupational stress	Male	64	3.6673	.41663	0.004	8.590
	Female	57	3.8586	.25298		

Source: Primary Data

The result of the t test reveals that the significant p value (0.004) is less than 0.05, rejecting the null hypotheses. So the researcher concludes that there is variation in occupational stress among male and female employees. The female employees

(3.8586) reports high stress than the male employees (3.6673).

One way ANOVA:

H02: There is no significant variation in occupational stress with respect experience

Table 3. Variations in Occupational Stress with Respect to Experience

Sl.no	Variables	Number of Respondents	Mean	Standard deviation	P-value	Decision
1	Less than 4 years	26	3.8235	.16386		
2	4 to 8 years	35	3.5664	.51004	0.002	significant
3	8 to 12 years	47	3.8473	.30211		
4	More than 12 years	13	3.8145	.08936		

Source: Primary Data

The significant p value (0.002) is less than 0.05, rejecting the null hypothesis. The degree of occupational stress varies with respect to the experience of employees. The employees with experience of 8 to 12 years reported high stress, followed by the employees with experience of less

than 4 years. The post hoc analysis reveals that the highest variation in occupational stress is between the groups of 4 to 8 years and 8 to 12 years.

H03: There is no significant variation in occupational stress with respect age

Table 4. Variations in Occupational Stress With Respect to Age

Sl.no	Variables	Number of Respondents	Mean	Standard deviation	P-value	Decision
1	Below 25	19	3.7585	.11246		
2	25 to 35	35	3.4773	.36673		
3	35 to 45	45	4.0327	.22973	0.00	Significant
4	Above 45	22	3.6390	.31142		

Source: Primary Data

The significant p value (0.002) is less than 0.05, rejecting the null hypothesis. The degree of occupational stress varies with respect to the age of employees. The employees with ages of 35 to 45

reported high stress, followed by the employees with ages below 25.

H02: There is no significant variation in occupational stress with respect annual income

Table 5. Variations in Occupational Stress with Respect to Annual Income

Sl.no	Variables	Number of Respondents	Mean	Standard deviation	P-value	Decision
1	Less than Rs.250000	16	3.8272	.21097		
2	Rs.250000 to Rs.500000	52	3.6505	.43825	0.00	Significant
3	Rs.500000 to 750000	27	3.7756	.35521		
4	Above Rs.750000	26	3.9095	.15450		

CONCLUSION

Occupational stress is a growing concern that affects individuals and organisations alike. To address occupational stress, a combination of organizational, individual, and environmental interventions is necessary. The purpose of this study is to examine the extent and nature of occupational stress among employees in the healthcare sector, identify the factors contributing to it, and examine the change in occupational stress across the various demographic factors. By understanding the sources of stress in this industry, it is expected that effective interventions can be developed to improve the well-being of healthcare workers and enhance their ability to provide quality care to patients. The researcher found a number of factors causing occupational stress, such as the inability to maintain work life balance, daily stressful challenges related to work, the emotional and psychological toll of the job, work dissatisfaction, etc. The researcher also found that stress levels vary according to gender, age, experience, and annual income. The organisation has to take necessary steps to reduce the stress level of employees. Overcoming stress in the health care sector is crucial for the well-being of employees and the success of the organization. Reducing stress levels can improve physical and mental health, leading to increased productivity and job satisfaction. Health care employees who are able to manage their stress are more likely to provide high-quality patient care, and a stress-free work environment can lead to a more harmonious team dynamic. Additionally, a healthy and productive workforce can result in improved

financial performance for the organization. By addressing stress, the health care sector can ensure that employees are able to perform at their best and provide the best possible care for patients.

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