

Examining the Influence of Occupational Stress on teaching staff in higher education: A Case Study in Pune City

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Abstract:

Work stress among teaching staff in higher education can have significant impacts on their well-being, job satisfaction, and overall effectiveness as educators. Pune city, known for its educational institutions and academic excellence, would likely see similar effects as in other places (Siu 2002; Winefield et al. 2003). The objective of these study was to determine the impact of work load of teaching staff in higher education institutions in Pune city. This study tries to shows the potential relationship among various factors like physical and mental health, job satisfaction, reduced performance, student learning, higher turnover rates, work life balance, quality of research and publications, institutional reputation, long term career impact and organisational outcomes (HSC 2002). Closed and open ended questions were administered for this study with respect to Pune city. Results shows that to mitigate the impact of work stress on teaching staff in higher education, institutions can consider implementing supportive measures such as providing resources for mental health support, offering training in stress management and time management, encouraging a healthy work-life balance, and addressing systemic issues related to workload distribution and administrative support (Siu 2002; Windfield et al 2001).

Keywords: occupational stress, work life balance, organisational outcomes, productivity of teaching staff, organisational commitments, organisational and individual goal congruence.

Introduction:

Hellriegel, Slocum & Woodman (2001), the workload for teaching staff in higher education often includes teaching multiple courses, conducting research, publishing papers, mentoring students, and participating in administrative tasks. Balancing these demands can be overwhelming, especially when there are limited resources or support (Hellriegel et al. 2001).

Academia places a strong emphasis on research productivity, often measured by the quantity and impact of publications (Dua 1996; Fisher 1994; Winefield 2000). This pressure to consistently publish high-quality research can lead to stress among faculty members who are striving to meet these expectations.

Academic professionals are often faced with time constraints due to the need to juggle teaching, research, administrative duties, and personal commitments. This can result in long working hours and difficulty maintaining a healthy work-life balance (Gillespie, Walsh, Winefield, Dua & Stough 2001).

Meeting the diverse needs and expectations of students while ensuring fair and timely grading can be stressful for educators. Handling student concerns, requests for accommodations, and maintaining a positive classroom environment also contribute to the workload (Siu 2002; Winefield et al. 2003).

Higher education institutions may undergo frequent structural changes, such as reorganizations or shifts in leadership. These changes can lead to uncertainty about job roles, responsibilities, and the overall direction of the institution, causing stress among staff (Finegan 2000; Organ & Ryan 1995).

Budget constraints and limited resources can hinder the ability of academic professionals to carry out their work effectively. Insufficient funding for research projects, teaching materials, and professional development can create added stress (Cohen 1991; Sagie 1998).

Researchers often need to secure external funding for their projects. The competitive nature of grant applications and the reliance on securing funding to support research can lead to significant stress (Hellriegel et al. 2001).

An unsupportive or toxic workplace culture can contribute to stress. In environments where collaboration and positive communication are lacking, individuals may experience additional stress and anxiety (Dua 1996; Fisher 1994; Winefield 2000).

temporary or contract positions are common in academia. The uncertainty surrounding future employment and the lack of job stability can be a significant source of stress (Gillespie, Walsh, Winefield, Dua & Stough 2001).

In some academic circles, there may be a stigma around discussing mental health challenges. This can discourage individuals from seeking help and support, exacerbating their stress.

Despite their contributions, academic professionals may feel undervalued or underappreciated, which can lead to feelings of stress and disillusionment (Beehr & Franz 1987).

Institutions that do not provide adequate opportunities for professional development and growth can contribute to stress, as academic professionals may feel stagnant in their careers (Cox 1978; Cummings & Cooper 1979).

Addressing work stress in higher education requires a comprehensive approach involving institutions, administrators, policymakers, and individuals themselves (Sulsky & Smith 2005). Strategies such as promoting a supportive work environment, offering mental health resources, providing workload adjustments, recognizing and rewarding achievements, and fostering a culture of open communication can help mitigate the negative impacts of work stress in higher education (Arnold, Cooper & Robertson 1998). The workload of teaching staff in higher education can have significant effects on the overall organizational outcomes of educational institutions (Dewe 1992). When the workload is managed effectively and is reasonable, it can contribute to positive outcomes (Lazarus 1990). However, when the workload is excessive or poorly managed, it can lead to negative consequences for both the teaching staff and the institution as a whole. Here's how teaching staff workload can impact organizational outcomes (Lazarus 1990).

Adequate time and resources for teaching staff allow them to design engaging and effective courses, provide individualized attention to students, and deliver high-quality education. This positively impacts student learning outcomes and contributes to the institution's reputation (Lazarus 1991).

Reasonable workloads provide teaching staff with the time and energy needed to engage in meaningful research activities. This can lead to increased research productivity, publications, and contributions to academic knowledge (Frese & Zapf 1999).

When teaching staff have a manageable workload, they are more likely to be engaged and committed to their roles. Engaged faculty members can contribute positively to the institution's academic community, collaborating with colleagues and participating in institutional initiatives (Burke, Greenglass & Schwarzer 1996).

Excessive workloads can lead to burnout and high levels of stress among teaching staff. Burnout negatively affects job satisfaction, performance, and mental health, potentially leading to staff turnover (Jackson & Rothmann 2006).

Overloaded teaching staff might not have the time and energy to prepare adequately for classes, provide timely feedback, or engage with students effectively. This can result in a decline in teaching quality and student satisfaction (Boyd & Wylie 1994; Barkhuizen 2005; Mahomed & Naudé, 2006).

An overwhelming workload might force teaching staff to prioritize teaching duties over research activities, leading to decreased research output and potentially impacting the institution's research reputation (Meyer 1997).

Balancing teaching staff workload is crucial for maintaining a healthy and productive academic environment. Institutions should prioritize effective workload management strategies, such as providing support for teaching staff, optimizing course scheduling, offering adequate resources, and recognizing the importance of work-life balance. Jackson and Rothmann (2006), doing so can lead to positive organizational outcomes, enhanced faculty well-being, and improved overall student experiences (Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian 1974; Mowday, Porter & Steers 1982).

Coetzee and Rothmann (2005), occupational stress is a prevalent issue, and addressing it requires a multi-faceted approach involving both individuals and organizations. Recognizing the signs of stress and taking proactive steps to manage it is crucial for maintaining mental and physical well-being in the workplace. Time Management, Stress-Reduction Techniques, Communication, Workplace Changes, Seek Professional Help, and Strategies to address occupational stress.

Objectives of study:

objectives of this study were to see the impact of work stress of teaching employees in higher educational institutes in pune city. these study can provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of work stress on teaching staff in higher education in Pune city and contribute valuable insights for improving the well-being and effectiveness of educators in the region. The objectives of these study could be designed to explore and analyze various aspects of work stress and its effects on teaching staff like examine work life balance, identifying stressor, understanding coping mechanism, assess work stress levels, explore health and wealth being, study of job satisfaction, evaluate organisational support analyse impact on performance, examine institutional policies regarding teaching staff in higher education institutions.

Hypothesis:

H1: physical and mental ill health can be occupational stress factors in teaching staff in higher education.

H2: there is low commitments of teaching staff in higher educational institutions due to occupational work pressure.

H3: Employee turnover ratio is high in due to work pressure in higher education institutes.

H4: Absenteeism in teaching staff can be the reason of low commitment in organisation.

Research Method:

These study has descriptive and analytical research design to thoroughly examine the impact of work stress on teaching staff. A cross-sectional design found appropriate for capturing a snapshot of the current situation. Sample size of teaching staff at higher education N=293 was chosen from different institutes in

Pune city only. With the prior approval with management of selected colleges took personal interviews and filled the questionnaire for the study. cipants and procedure

Table 1: demographic parameters of the respondents

Items	Category	frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	78	26
	Female	211	72
	Corrections	5	2
Age	18-30 yrs	110	38
	31- 41 yrs	99	34
	42-51 yrs	50	17
	52 -65yrs	23	8
	error values	11	4
Qualification	Batchelor degree	79	27
	Master Degree	182	62
	M. Phil	10	3
	Doctorate	22	8

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristic of respondent. It show 26% of Male and 72% respondent were Female. Only 2% were error factor while data cleaning. Age distribution was from 18yrs to 65 and above. Qualifications of respondents were from graduates to post doctoral.

Statistical analysis and discussion of results:

For data analysis SPSS (2003) and (ASSET) Organisational statistical Tool is used. After Data cleaning for analysis Exploratory and longitudinal factor analysis method used. Relationship between variables is shown with the help of Pearson and Spearman correlation coefficient were used.

It was decided to keep the statistical significance level of 95% ($p \leq 0.05$). To determine proportion of variance in dependant variable multiple regression analysis is used. F-test and T-test is used define the significant regression between dependant and independent variables.

Table 2: Exploratory and descriptive research design is used to access the validity and reliability of data collected :

Percentage of variance is shown in table 2. Reliability, validity, descriptive statistics is well explained in table 2.

Variables	Norms	Mean	SD	Percentage Variance	α	r (Mean)
Time management	5	9.42	4.3	49.2	0.66	0.31
Work life balance	5	9.86	4.5	56	078	.42
Work culture	6	19.	6.77	43.22	.80	.35
Cooperation of superiors	6	9.81	3.69	56.23	.75	.23

Research and publications	5	8.25	4.1	57	.69	.48
Mental and physical health	5	9.23	4.12	56	.56	.45
Organisational commitments	5	9.11	4.23	54	.54	.41
Organisational behaviour	5	9.14	4.22	48	.78	.40

Table 3: Pearson’s correlation coefficient descriptive analysis

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Time management	0.36	0.38	0.45	0.48	0.12										
Work life balance	0.36	0.38	0.45	0.48	0.12	0.26									
Work culture	0.36	0.38	0.45	0.48	0.12	0.26	0.33								
Cooperation of superiors	0.36	0.38	0.45	0.48	0.12	0.26	0.33	0.45	0.12						
Research and publications	0.36	0.38	0.45	0.48	0.12	0.26	0.33	0.45	0.12	0.27					
Mental and physical health	0.36	0.38	0.45	0.48	0.12	0.26	0.33	0.45	0.12	0.27	0.25	0.12			

Organisational commitments	0.36	0.38	0.45	0.48	0.12	0.26	0.33	0.45	0.12	0.27	0.25	0.12	0.014	0.26
Organisational behaviour	0.23	0.02	0.45	0.48	0.12	0.26	0.33	0.45	0.12	0.21	0.25	0.12	0.014	0.26

Table 4: Standardised discriminant function coefficients

Item	Coefficient
Time management	-0.25
Work life balance	-0.22
Work culture	0.25
Cooperation of superiors	0.21
Research and publications	0.24
Mental and physical health	-0.28
Organisational commitments	0.24
Organisational behaviour	0.29

Table 5: Employee turnover retention: loss to organizations

Item	2021	2022	2023
Actual resignation rate	93	34	63
Percentage variance	67%	70%	75%
Resignation due to work pressure	60	22	40
Average cost to institutes	R1502 364	R192 866	R 174 926

Discussion:

The objective of there study was to define the effect of occupational stress on teaching staff in higher education in Pune (N=293). Intension was to describe the stressor factors what affect the teaching staff potential and impact their output performance.

The study aimed to identify occupational stressors and their impact on various aspects of work-related well-being and organizational outcomes. The study found that, compared to normative data, support staff in this institution experienced average levels of occupational stress. Occupational stressors had a more significant impact on organizational commitment than on physical ill health. Specifically, job control, resources, communication, and work relationships were significant stressors affecting organizational commitment.

Regarding physical ill health, while a statistically significant model was produced, none of the specific occupational stressors emerged as significant predictors, although job overload nearly reached statistical

significance. On the other hand, psychological ill health was significantly predicted by job overload. When support staff experienced unmanageable workloads and time constraints, they were more likely to exhibit symptoms of psychological ill health, such as anxiety and depression. The study also found that several factors, including resources, communication, job overload, and job control, significantly influenced individual commitment toward the organization. A lack of adequate communication and resources reduced commitment, as did experiencing high levels of job overload and a lack of job control. The results indicated that occupational stressors had a significant impact on both individual commitment to the organization and perceived commitment from the organization. Stressors such as job control, resources, communication, and work relationships led to lower commitment toward the institution, potentially resulting in employee turnover (Siu 2002; Winefield et al. 2003).

Finally, the study revealed a significant relationship between physical ill health and absenteeism, indicating that stress-related illnesses led to substantial absenteeism, resulting in financial losses for the institution. It also found a link between psychological ill health and intentions to quit the job, with stress-related psychological issues contributing to employee turnover.

In summary, Lavi (1996), the study suggests that occupational stressors, such as job overload, communication issues, and a lack of resources, can have a detrimental impact on both individual well-being and organizational outcomes, including absenteeism and turnover.

Limitations and recommendations:

Limitations of the study were analysed on this study. Cross sectional and longitudinal study were collected in which causal relationship inferences can not be possible. Sample size was selected of N=293, was relatively not sufficient so that accuracy of findings can not be generalized for all higher educational institutes. Data collected were little bit personal so avoidance of respondents to data collection was found. Furthermore only one higher educational institute was selected for the study. Again, time constraints to complete the research was crucial for this study.

Conclusion

Occupational stress is a prevalent issue, and addressing it requires a multi-faceted approach involving both individuals and organizations. Recognizing the signs of stress and taking proactive steps to manage it is crucial for maintaining mental and physical well-being in the workplace. Time Management, Stress-Reduction Techniques, Communication, Workplace Changes, Seek Professional Help, and Strategies to address occupational stress.

Excessive workloads, tight deadlines, and long working hours can overwhelm employees, leading to stress. Lack of control or autonomy over one's work can be stressful, as individuals may feel powerless in their roles. An unhealthy work environment, including noise, poor lighting, or uncomfortable workspace, can contribute to stress. Fear of job loss or job insecurity can create significant stress and anxiety. Conflicts with colleagues, supervisors, or clients can add to workplace stress. Unclear job expectations and responsibilities can leave employees feeling stressed and anxious. A lack of opportunities for career growth and advancement can be a source of stress. Difficulty balancing work and personal life can lead to stress and burnout.

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