

Exploring Occupational Stress among Female Faculty in Arts and Science Colleges in Chennai

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Abstract:

In the highly competitive landscape of Arts and Science Colleges, where professional courses have observed a surge in demand, the quality of students enrolled is often below par. The expectations from parents and institutions remain high, while the faculty members face challenges in meeting the standards set by higher education departments and UGC. Consequently, the occupational stress among female teaching faculty in Arts and Science Colleges has reached unprecedented levels, leading to career shifts and personal disruptions. This study aims to analyze the reasons behind occupational stress among female faculty and propose remedies to overcome it.

Keywords: occupational stress, students, performance, roles, responsibilities

Introduction:

Occupational stress is a prevalent issue faced by both management and employees in organizations and institutions. It arises when job descriptions and demands do not align with the skill set and knowledge of individuals, challenging their capacity to handle the situations effectively. In the context of education, today's students often exhibit a casual attitude, disregarding their health and education, and lacking discipline. It is the role of teachers to instill self-discipline, guide students towards a better

future, and foster their engagement in various activities to become responsible citizens. However, being a female faculty member in a college setting has become increasingly demanding. This study aims to analyze the various reasons for stress among female faculty in Arts and Science Colleges in Chennai.

Roles and Responsibilities of Female Faculty:

Female faculty in Arts and Science Colleges are burdened with multiple roles and responsibilities, including teaching activities, driving research, departmental work, and college-related tasks. Teaching involves delivering lectures, preparing coursework, grading exams and projects, meeting with parents, and addressing student requests professionally and personally. Additionally, faculty members must engage in research activities, publish articles and books, present at conferences, and adhere to recommendations and guidelines set by higher education bodies. They are also responsible for maintaining student results, conducting interdepartmental activities, and participating in college committees and events. These demanding roles contribute to occupational stress among female faculty members.

Factors Contributing to Occupational Stress:

Several factors contribute to the stress experienced by female faculty members:

1. Inability to meet management demands and lack of control over students' performance and behavior due to students' poor attitudes.
2. Insufficient support and guidance from peer groups.
3. Challenges in establishing and maintaining effective student-teacher relationships.
4. Overwhelming workload due to the execution of multiple roles and responsibilities.
5. Resistance to adapt to changing conditions and regulations in the teaching profession.

Literature Review:

In Belgium and Slovenia, a study was conducted by Bolliger, Larissa, Junoš Lukan, Elena Colman, Leen Boersma, Mitja Luštrek, Dirk De Bacquer, and Els Clays in 2022. The study examined the Job Demand-Control model and the Effort-Reward Imbalance model, investigating various stressors such as structural and process-oriented stressors, financial stressors, and stressors related to employees' health. The study's focus on group research confirms the complex nature of work stress experiences among office workers, encompassing a broader range of factors than just the psychosocial working conditions at the meso-level.

Rao, J. V., and Chandraiah, K. (2012) discovered that employees perceive occupational stress arising from various factors, including pressure from overload, personal responsibilities, and managerial roles. Junior employees, in particular, feel the stress of having to prove themselves in the industry and meet the expectations of their seniors. They also strive to demonstrate

their capabilities to advance within the organization, leading to increased work stress. This situation highlights potential issues that could arise between junior and senior managers.

Both junior and senior professionals experience job satisfaction, but they also face mental health challenges and pressure related to balancing their work and personal lives. The study found that work-related pressure is a significant predictor of mental health issues for employees in both levels of the organization.

Numerous studies conducted by Behdin Nowrouzi, Christine Nguyen, Jennifer Casole, and Behnam Nowrouzi-Kia have significantly impacted research in the field of occupational stress and its related variables. Among these studies, the ones that have had the most profound influence are those exploring the relationship between occupational stress and other outcome variables, such as coronary heart disease. These studies have been particularly influential in the field of occupational stress. The top-cited studies in this area often focus on specific occupations, such as teaching, nursing, and the healthcare industry in general. They delve into the effects of stress on professionals within these fields. In contrast, some of the other highly cited studies examine various aspects of occupational stress, including its etiology, intervention and management programs, theories, models, frameworks, and methodologies. These diverse approaches contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding occupational stress and its impact on individuals and industries.

According to a study by Dr. Jitendar Singh Narban, Bhanu Pratap Singh Narban, and Jitendra Singh in 2016, there exists an inverse (negative) correlation between job stress and job satisfaction. The research suggests that occupational stress arises from

a combination of environmental, organizational, and individual factors.

The study's conclusion emphasizes the importance of empirical research in the field of occupational stress and employee health. It recommends considering and examining the impact and influences of various factors, including:

1. Environmental factors
2. Personal factors
3. Process-oriented factors
4. Human consequences
5. Organizational consequences
6. Role dynamics
7. Time of stress occurrence
8. Adaptive responses to stress

The research highlights that stress can be additive, and there is a positive relationship between role stressors and job stress. Consequently, it is crucial to manage and minimize occupational stress (job stress/work stress) to create a conducive work environment within the organization. This approach aims to promote employee well-being and job satisfaction.

In a study by T. Shenbhaga Vadivu (2017), it was found that stress is an inevitable and widespread issue in the Textile sector, leading to severe occupational stress and psychological problems among a significant portion of the workforce. The study highlights the critical role of employee satisfaction in determining workforce productivity, which, in turn, influences the success of an organization. Innovative behavior in service organizations is also considered crucial for success. The study aimed to explore the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction. The findings confirmed that stress negatively affects the employees' satisfaction level.

Another study by Sriharan A, Ratnapalan S, Tricco AC, Lupea D, Ayala AP, Pang H, and Lee DD (2020) focused on women healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research revealed that

women in this field are at an increased risk of experiencing stress, burnout, and depression. These negative outcomes are influenced by factors at individual, organizational, and systems levels, including lack of social support, access to personal protective equipment, high workload, prevalence of COVID-19, rapidly changing public health guidelines, and a lack of recognition at work.

Furthermore, Yi X, Yang J, Gao X, and Li F (2022) utilized structural equation models to examine the relationship between occupational stress and work ability among coal chemical workers. The study found that occupational stress and mental health conditions directly impact work ability. Mental health conditions also mediate the relationship between occupational stress and work ability. The research indicates that occupational stress indirectly affects work ability through its impact on mental health conditions. Both occupational stress and mental disorders, along with their interaction, were identified as risk factors affecting the ability to work in this particular work environment.

Various studies have explored the relationship between occupational stress and related variables. They have identified factors such as work stressors, financial stress, health-related stressors, and the impact on mental health and job satisfaction. These studies have emphasized the importance of understanding and managing occupational stress to create a conducive work environment.

Objective of the Study:

The study aims to:

1. Analyze the predominant factors of occupational stress among female teaching faculty in Arts and Science colleges affiliated with the University of Madras, Chennai.

2. Examine occupational stress based on gender.

Hypothesis: H1:

There is a significant difference among the factors contributing to occupational stress.

Research Methodology:

The study collected primary data from 148 faculty members from different Arts and Science Colleges in Chennai, using convenient sampling. The reliability and validity of the data were assessed through Cronbach Alpha and factor analysis. The researcher conducted exploratory factor analysis and applied the KMO Bartlett test to identify the predominant factors contributing to occupational stress.

Findings:

The KMO Bartlett test yielded a value of 0.867, indicating that the data was normally distributed and suitable for data reduction. The exploratory factor analysis identified the following factors contributing to occupational stress among faculty members:

1. Work Pressure (22.17%)
2. Health-Related Stressors (21.13%)
3. Mental Health and Job Satisfaction (12.14%)

Conclusion:

While stress is an inevitable part of life, it is essential to identify and manage it effectively. The symptoms of occupational stress among female faculty members include frequent arguments with colleagues and students, increased complaints about student behavior, and a decline in performance and well-being. Although complete avoidance of stress is challenging, faculty members can adopt practices such as time management, prioritizing tasks, and enhancing problem-solving skills to alleviate stress. Additionally, cultivating emotional awareness, gratitude, and optimism, improving personal relationships, and engaging in regular exercise, prayer, yoga, and meditation can contribute to the physical

and mental well-being of faculty members, leading to better stress management and a more peaceful and joyful life.

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