

OCCUPATIONAL STRESS OF CONTRACTUAL EMPLOYEES IN RELATION TO GENDER

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1. INTRODUCTION:

Occupational stress is defined as ‘The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them at work’. It is one of the most commonly reported health problems experienced by employees. Teaching and educational professionals reported the highest average number of days lost per worker due to work related stress, depression and anxiety. Occupational stress refers to the harmful physical and emotional responses that can happen when there is a conflict between job demand on the employee and the control an employee has in meeting these demands. Work stress is a term that has become associated with many things. Our understanding of stress has come a long way in the last seven or more decades. While previously, occupational stress was perceived to be a problem only in jobs with high pressure and low pay such as teaching and social services, today it has become an epidemic spreading like wildfire across occupations and industries. Organizations lose so much money in stress related accidents, loss of productivity, absenteeism, and medical insurance costs.

Contractual employees are usually employed for a specified amount of time and this employment ends upon completion of a project or assignment. Contractual employees may have the opportunity to achieve permanent employment status after the time period has lapsed. Employment terms may be based on the completion of a project, the availability of funding, or other circumstances.

Occupational stress situations are those in which characteristics of, or events related to the workplace lead to an individual’s ill health or welfare. These environmental job situations are often labeled as stressors, instances of which could be work conditions, overload, role ambiguity, role conflict, etc. A person’s mal-adjustive psychological, physiological, and behavioural reaction or response to stress has been labeled as strain (Beehr, Johnson & Nieva, 1995). It is interchangeably used with terms such as job tension, job anxiety, etc. Operationally it may manifest itself in reported anxiety, depression, psychosomatic complaints, debilitation, physiological changes, work dissatisfaction, strikes, smoking absenteeism, illness, alcoholism, neuroticism, violence and accidents (Jolt, 1982). Reviewers have identified a number of specific models that they believe have played an important role in developing the theoretical context for investigating work stress. These include McGrath’s (1976) stress cycle model, and the Person-Environment Fit Model (French, Caplan & Van Harrison, 1982).

Tastan (2016) examined the impact of psychological hardness on work stress and perceived organizational support. Data was collected from 252 employees of seven organizations in Istanbul, Turkey in the banking and finance sector. The findings showed that there was a negative relationship between psychological hardness and job strain and a positive relationship with perceived organizational support. This study examined the direct impact of hardness and organizational support perception on job strain, but the study did not investigate the interactive effect of both factors, which may reveal some interesting findings.

Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (2000) examined the impact of fulfilment of a psychological contract on the behaviour of organizational citizenship. Two surveys were conducted in a sample of local authorities in the South East of Britain, one with employers and the other with employees. The results show the positive effect of fulfilment of a psychological contract on the behaviour of organizational citizenship.

Insecurity also has significant consequences for the attitudes of temporarily-employed workers. The objective condition of job insecurity has many negative effects on people's wellbeing and health, according to various studies. It gives rise, for example, to a greater sense of fatigue in performing one's duties, and higher levels of job dissatisfaction (Benavides, Benach, Diez-Roux, & Roman, 2000).

The concept of choice is seen as crucial in the reference literature, in terms of a preference for temporary employment contracts. Marler, Barringer, and Milkovich (2002) saw temporary workers differ on two dimensions: their skills and preferences for different contract types. Therefore, two types of workers can be identified: a “traditional” worker with limited skills and a preference for a standard, open-ended contract of employment, and a “boundless” worker with far more skills and a preference for a non-standard career. Limitless workers perceive the opportunity to have numerous short- or medium-term working relationships with different companies more positively than traditional workers; expect and sometimes actually receive higher salaries; are more satisfied with their work and payment; feel more engaged with the organization; are more often part of a family where both partners work and earn an income.

2. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM :

In this study, the researcher has tried to study and compare the various dimensions of occupational stress of contractual employees in relation to gender. The exact problem of the present study is “**Occupational Stress of Contractual Employees in Relation to Gender.**”

3. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the present research is to study and compare the various dimensions of occupational stress such as, Role Overload, Role Ambiguity, Role Conflict, Unreasonable Group and Political Pressure, Responsibility of Persons, Under Participation, Powerlessness, Poor Peer Relations, Intrinsic Impoverishment, Low Status Strenuous Working Conditions, and Unprofitability between male and female contractual employees.

4. HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant difference between male female contractual employees in relation to various dimensions of occupational stress such as Role Overload, Role Ambiguity, Role Conflict, Unreasonable Group and Political Pressure, Responsibility of Persons, Under Participation, Powerlessness, Poor Peer Relations, Intrinsic Impoverishment, Low Status Strenuous Working Conditions, and Unprofitability.

5. SAMPLE

For this study, 60 contractual employees (30 male and 30 female) were randomly selected from Ahmedabad City.

6. VARIABLES

In the present research, gender of contractual employees is taken as an independent variable and various dimensions of occupational stress such as Role Overload, Role Ambiguity, Role Conflict, Unreasonable Group and Political Pressure, Responsibility of Persons, Under Participation, Powerlessness, Poor Peer Relations, Intrinsic Impoverishment, Low Status Strenuous Working Conditions, and Unprofitability are considered as dependent variables.

7. TOOL :

For data collection occupational stress index by Dr. A.K. Srivastava and Dr. A.P. Singh was used.

- **Main Features of Occupational Stress Index**

The scale consists of 46 items, each to be rated on the five-point scale. Out of 46 items, 28 are ‘true-keyed’ and the remaining 18 are ‘false-keyed’. The items relate to almost all relevant components of the job life which cause stress in some way or the other, such as Role Overload, Role Ambiguity, Role Conflict, Unreasonable Group and Political Pressure, Responsibility of Persons, Under Participation, Powerlessness, Poor Peer Relations, Intrinsic Impoverishment, Low Status Strenuous Working Conditions, and Unprofitability.

- **Reliability**

The reliability index ascertained by split-half (odd-even) method and Cornbach’s alpha-coefficient for the scale as a whole were found to be .935 and .90, respectively. The reliability indices of the 12 sub-scales were also computed through split half method.

Validity

The validity of the O.S.I. was determined by computing coefficients of correlation between the scores on O.S.I and various measures of job attitude and job behaviour. The employees’ scores on the O.S.I. are likely to positively correlate with the scores on the measures of such job related attitudinal and motivational and personality variables which have proved to have a lowering or moderating effect on the level of occupational stress.

- **Scoring**

Since the questionnaire consists of both true-keyed and false-keyed items, two different patterns of scoring had to be adopted for the two types of items. The following table provides the guideline to score the responses given to the two categories of items:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
True	1	2	3	4	5
False	5	4	3	2	1

8. PROCEDURE :

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For data collection, Occupational Stress Index (OSI) by Dr. A.K. Srivastava and Dr. A.P. Singh was administered to the participants in an individual setting. After completion of data collection, scoring of the responses of each participant was done using the scoring key of the OSI and the data was tabulated for analysis.

9. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS :

To analyze the data, ‘t’ test was used. Statistical analysis was done by using SPSS and hypotheses were tested at 0.01 and 0.05 levels of significance.

Table-1

Showing mean, SD and t-value of various dimensions of occupational stress in relation to male and female contractual employees

Sr.	Dimensions	Group	N	Mean	SD	‘t’ value	Level of significance
1	Role Overload	Male	30	21.90	4.70	4.98	0.01
		Female	30	26.77	2.55		
2	Role Ambiguity	Male	30	13.20	3.02	4.98	0.01
		Female	30	16.00	3.21		
3	Role Conflict	Male	30	16.97	3.93	2.37	0.05
		Female	30	19.40	4.03		
4	Unreasonable Group and Political Pressure	Male	30	16.16	4.24	0.14	NS
		Female	30	16.23	3.09		
5	Responsibility of Persons	Male	30	11.83	2.00	3.04	0.01
		Female	30	13.83	1.81		
6	Under Participation	Male	30	13.57	4.59	1.93	NS
		Female	30	11.57	3.34		
7	Powerlessness	Male	30	10.93	3.65	0.99	NS
		Female	30	11.87	3.67		
8	Poor Peer Relations	Male	30	12.23	2.88	0.76	NS
		Female	30	12.80	2.90		
9	Intrinsic Impoverishment	Male	30	11.83	3.26	0.86	NS
		Female	30	12.47	2.40		
10	Low Status	Male	30	9.20	3.38	4.52	0.01
		Female	30	12.70	2.56		
11	Strenuous Working Conditions	Male	30	12.47	3.43	1.40	NS
		Female	30	13.53	2.37		
12	Unprofitability	Male	30	7.80	2.35	5.53	0.01
		Female	30	11.80	3.43		

The results of the above table show that t-value of male and female contractual employees on occupational stress dimension A Role Overload is 4.98 which is significant at 0.01 level. Mean score of male contractual employees on role overload is 21.90 with SD 4.70 and mean score of female contractual employees on role overload is 26.70 with SD 2.55. Here null hypothesis “there is no significant difference between male and female contractual employees on role overload” is rejected so it can clearly be said that significant difference exists between male and female contractual employees with regard to role overload. Here female contractual employees have more role overload than male contractual employees.

The results of the above table show that t-value of male and female contractual employees on occupational stress dimension B Role Ambiguity is 4.98 which is significant at 0.01 level. Mean score of male contractual employees on role ambiguity is 13.20 with SD 3.02 and mean score of female contractual employees on role ambiguity is 16.00 with SD 3.21. Here null hypothesis “there is no significant difference between male and female contractual employees on role ambiguity” is rejected so it can clearly be said that significant difference exists between male and female contractual employees with regard to Role Ambiguity. Here female contractual employees have more role ambiguity than male contractual employees.

The results of the above table show that t-value of male and female contractual employees on occupational stress dimension C Role Conflict is 2.37 which is significant at 0.05 level. Mean score of male contractual employees on role conflict is 16.97 with SD 3.93 and mean score of female contractual employees on role conflict is 19.40 with SD 4.03. Here null hypothesis “there is no significant difference between male and female contractual employees on role conflict” is rejected so it can clearly be said that significant difference exists between male and female contractual employees with regard to role conflict. Here female contractual employees have more role conflict than male contractual employees.

The results of the above table show that t-value of male and female contractual employees on occupational stress dimension D Unreasonable Group and Political Pressure is 0.14 which is not significant. Mean score of male contractual employees on Unreasonable Group and Political Pressure is 16.10 with SD 4.24 and mean score of female contractual employees on Unreasonable Group and Political Pressure is 16.23 with SD 3.09. Here null hypothesis “there is no significant difference between male and female contractual employees on Unreasonable Group and Political Pressure” is accepted so it can clearly be said that significant difference does not exist between male and female contractual employees with regard to Unreasonable Group and Political Pressure.

The results of the above table show that t-value of male and female contractual employees on occupational stress dimensions E Responsibility of Persons is 3.04 which is significant at 0.01 level. Mean score of male contractual employees on Responsibility of Person is 11.83 with SD 2.00 and mean score of female contractual employees on Responsibility of Person is 13.83 with SD 1.81. Here null hypothesis “there is no significant difference between male and female contractual employees on Responsibility of Person” is rejected so it can clearly be said that significant difference exists between male and female contractual employees with regard to Responsibility of Person. Here female contractual employees have more Responsibility of Person than male contractual employees.

The results of the above table show that t-value of male and female contractual employees on occupational stress dimension F Under Participation is 1.93 which is not significant. Mean score of male contractual employees on Under Participation is 13.57 with SD 4.59 and mean score of female contractual employees on Under Participation is 11.57 with SD 3.34 Here null hypothesis “there is no significant difference between male and female contractual employees on Under Participation” is accepted so it can clearly be said that significant difference does not exist between male and female contractual employees with regard to Under Participation.

The results of the above table show that t-value of male and female contractual employees on occupational stress dimension G Powerlessness is 0.99 which is not significant. Mean score of male contractual employees on Powerlessness is 10.93 with SD 3.65 and mean score of female contractual employees on Powerlessness is 11.87 with SD 3.67. Here our hypothesis “there is no significant difference between male and female contractual employees on Powerlessness” is accepted so it can clearly be said that significant difference does not exist between male and female contractual employees with regard to Powerlessness.

The results of the above table show that t-value of male and female contractual employees on occupational stress dimension H Poor Peer Relations is 0.76 which is not significant. Mean score of male contractual employees on Poor Peer Relations is 12.23 with SD 2.88 and mean score of female contractual employees on Poor Peer Relations is 12.80 with SD 2.90. Here null hypothesis “there is no significant difference between male and female contractual employees on Poor Peer Relations” is accepted so it can clearly be said that significant difference does not exist between male and female contractual employees with regard to Poor Peer Relations.

The results of the above table show that t-value of male and female contractual employees on occupational stress dimension I Intrinsic Impoverishment is 0.86 which is not significant. Mean score of male contractual employees on Intrinsic Impoverishment is 11.83 with SD 3.26 and mean score of female contractual employees on Intrinsic Impoverishment is 12.47 with SD 2.40. Here null hypothesis “there is no significant difference between male and female contractual employees on Intrinsic Impoverishment” is accepted so it can clearly be said that significant difference does not exist between male and female contractual employees with regard to Intrinsic Impoverishment.

The results of the above table show that t-value of male and female contractual employees on occupational stress dimension J Low Status is 4.52 which is significant at 0.01 level. Mean score of male contractual employees on Low Status is 9.20 with SD 3.38 and mean score of female contractual employees on Low Status is 12.70 with SD 2.56. Here null hypothesis “there is no significant difference between male and female contractual employees on Low Status” is rejected so it can clearly be said that significant difference exists between male and female contractual employees with regard to Low Status. Here female contractual employees feel more Low Status than male contractual employees.

The results of the above table show that t-value of male and female contractual employees on occupational stress dimension K Strenuous Working Conditions is 1.40 which is not significant. Mean score of male contractual employees on Strenuous Working Conditions is 12.47 with SD 3.43 and mean score of female contractual employees on Strenuous Working Conditions is 13.53 with SD 2.37. Here null hypothesis “there is no significant difference between male and female contractual employees on Strenuous Working Conditions” is accepted so it can clearly be said that significant difference does not exist between male and female contractual employees with regard to Strenuous Working Conditions.

The results of the above table show that t-value of male and female contractual employees on occupational stress dimension L Unprofitability is 5.53 which is significant at 0.01 level. Mean score of male contractual employees on Unprofitability is 7.80 with SD 2.35 and mean score of female contractual employees on Unprofitability is 11.80 with SD 3.43. Here null hypothesis “there is no significant difference between male and female contractual employees on Unprofitability” is rejected so it can clearly be said that significant difference

exists between male and female contractual employees with regard to Unprofitability. Here female contractual employees have more Unprofitability than male contractual employees.

10. CONCLUSIONS:

1. Significant difference exists between male and female contractual employees with regard to role overload. Here female contractual employees have more role overload than male contractual employees.
2. Significant difference exists between male and female contractual employees with regard to role ambiguity. Here female contractual employees have more role ambiguity than male contractual employees.
3. Significant difference exists between male and female contractual employees with regard to role conflicts. Here female contractual employees have more role conflicts than male contractual employees.
4. Significant difference does not exist between male and female contractual employees with regard to unreasonable group and political pressure.
5. Significant difference exists between male and female contractual employees with regard to responsibility of person. Here female contractual employees have more responsibility of person than male contractual employees.
6. Significant difference does not exist between male and female contractual employees with regard to under participation.
7. Significant difference does not exist between male and female contractual employees with regard to powerlessness.
8. Significant difference does not exist between male and female contractual employees with regard to poor peer relations.
9. Significant difference does not exist between male and female contractual employees with regard to intrinsic impoverishment.
10. Significant difference exists between male and female contractual employees with regard to low status. Here female contractual employees feel more low status than male contractual employees.
11. Significant difference does not exist between male and female contractual employees with regard to strenuous working conditions.
12. Significant difference exists between male and female contractual employees with regard to unprofitability. Here female contractual employees have more unprofitability than male contractual employees.

11. REFERENCES

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