Occupational stress, Organizational commitment and Employee Mental Health: A comparative analysis of Private and Government sector Professionals

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Abstract: Employees are increasingly recognizing that work is infringing on their personal lives and they are not happy about it. Evidence indicates that balancing work and life demands now surpasses job security as an employee priority. They want a life as well as a job. The purpose of the study is to assess the organizational stress, organizational commitment and mental health of employees belonging to three professions namely Banking, Academics and IT firms comprising of both private as well as government sectors. The need was felt so as to aid the personnel to combat with various dimensions of occupation stress and mental health issues and to inculcate feelings of organisational citizenship behaviour and commitment and henceforth help to reduce employee turnover costs and attrition which is on the rise these days.

An attempt was made to study 60 bank employees each from private sector and public sector. Similarly, from the IT firms as well as academic sector (comprising of schools and colleges) 60 each employees were taken from private as well as public sector of Kolkata following simple random sampling. The total sample size was 480. For this purpose the following scales were used-1. The Occupational Stress Index by Dr. A. K. Shrivastava and Dr. A.P. Singh - It purports to measure the extent of stress which employees perceive in terms of 12 domains. 2. The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire by R.T. Mowday, R.M. Steers, and L.W. Porter 3. Employee's Mental Health Inventory (EMHI) by Dr. Jagdish. Descriptive statistics along with t-test was done with the help of spss statistical software.

Results show the Private sector has been found to be highly stressed in regards to areas like Role overload, Powerlessness, Low status, unprofitability and intrinsic impoverishment. However the government sector too has some domains with high organizational stress like role ambiguity, role conflict, strenuous working conditions. Further the occupational stress has been found out to be maximum in terms of role overload, powerlessness, under participation, low status and unprofitability for banks in private sector. Lesser occupational stress has been reported by employees working in IT private sector. For the Academic Sector the Organizational stress is least as compared to the other two professions. Pertaining to the organizational commitment the government sector has been found out to be more committed than the private sector which may be attributed to high job security in the public sector organizations. Organizational commitment is highest among the academic professions in both the sectors with slightly more in the government as compared to the banking and I.T firms. Lastly, taking into account employee mental health the government sector officials have better mental health than their private sector counterparts. Further it has been found out that good mental health prevails among employees from IT government sector and worst among bank private sector. In case of the Academic sector the private employee mental health is superior than the government organizations. In conclusion it may be said that experiencing high levels of organizational stress has negative effects on task performance. It also adversely affects ones' physical and mental health in a wide variety of ways. Stress and low commitment towards an organization is a major cause to disrupt work life balance, desk rage and burnout and increase attrition among the employees.

IndexTerms - Organizational Stress, Organizational commitment, Employee Mental Health

I. INTRODUCTION

Today's successful organizations must foster innovation and master the art of change, or they will become candidates for extinction. An organizations employee can be the impetus for innovation and change or they can be a major stumbling block. The challenge for managers is to stimulate their employees' creativity and tolerance for change. Workers need to continually update their knowledge and skills to perform new job requirements.

Employees are increasingly recognizing that work is infringing on their personal lives and they are not happy about it. Evidence indicates that balancing work and life demands now surpasses job security as an employee priority. They want "a life" as well as "a job".

Organizations that don't help their people achieve work-life balance will find it increasingly difficult to attract and retain the most capable and motivated employees. Instead of responding to competitive pressures by "turning up the heat", some organizations are trying to realize a competitive advantage by fostering a positive work environment.

Today's managers needs to create an ethically healthy climate for his/her employees, where they can do their work productively and confront a minimal degree of ambiguity regarding what constitutes right and wrong behaviours.

For any organization its employees are the main pillars which are needed to hold the smooth functioning of the firm. The employee's cognitive and behavioural attributes are very crucial in shaping the future of the organization where he/she is working.

The organization's productivity, turnover, absenteeism, and attrition rate depend on its employees. There are a number of work-related attitudes that tap positive or negative evaluations that employees hold about aspects of their work environment. Some of them are—(1) Organizational Commitment (2) Occupational stress and (3) Employee mental health

(1) **Organizational Commitment:** It is a state in which an employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals and wishes to maintain membership in the organization--(a) *Affective commitment* - emotional attachment to the organization and belief in its values; (b) *Continuance* - perceived economic value to be in the organization compared to leaving it; (c) *Normative* - Obligation to remain in the organization for moral and ethical reasons.

Allen and Meyer (1996) have defined organizational commitment as a psychological link between an employee and his or her organization that makes it less likely that the employee will voluntarily leave the organization. Organizational commitment is related to job satisfaction in that both deal with the nature of workers' emotional reactions to work. However, commitment can be applied to the entire organization, whereas satisfaction is applied to the specific job. Organizational commitment is viewed as more stable than satisfaction. An individual also relates commitment to job involvement and the level of job involvement.

(2) Occupational Stress: Occupational stress is defined to be a mental and physical condition that calls in a detrimental effect on the individual's productivity. The employees who start to feel the 'pressure to perform' can get caught in a downward spiral of increasing effort to meet rising expectations with no increase in job satisfaction. Stress affects emotions and moods. At work, stressful daily events (e.g., an impending deadline, being reprimanded by your boss) negatively affect employees' moods.

The stress relating to job have become predominant of modern life, exerting for reaching affects on focal employees' behaviour and adjustment on as well as off the job. Margolis and Kroes (1974) (2) defined job stress as a condition worth interacting with worker characteristics to disrupt psychological or physiological homoeostasis. The different physical and psychological conditions at work feature act as potential stressors.

Some of the causal factors of occupational stress are - Role overload, Role ambiguity, Role conflict, Powerlessness, Poor peer relations, strenuous working conditions, etc.

(3) The Employee's Mental Health: The employee's mental health, which is the ability to balance feelings, desires, ambitions and ideals in one's daily living.

According to Anand (1989) (3), a mentally healthy person should be understood as a dynamic and conscientious individual who is found to be reasonably rational in the choice of means for the realization of his pious ends.

If an employee is stressed then his mental health is affected and in turn it affects his productivity and job satisfaction in the organization. The personnel also might be experiencing conflicts and anxiety. This situation can even be cyclic affecting mental health.

The more an employee is mentally healthy he is more fit to work achieves greater job satisfaction and is more motivated and committed to his job as well his organization.

Mental health at work refers to psychological wellbeing of people working at any organization. In the past, occupational health was concerned with safety and physical health of employees and little attention was paid to mental health aspect. Mental health is a growing field which emphasizes assessment, prevention and intervention to promote psychological well-being of employees. Mental health refers to behaviors, attitudes and feelings that represent an individual's level of personal effectiveness, success and satisfaction (Banks et al., 1980) ⁽⁴⁾. Several investigators have shown that job satisfaction plays an important role on employee's health and well being (Caplan,1975) ⁽⁵⁾. Job stress has negative impact on the health and happiness of employees and also negatively affects the efficiency and income of organization. Organizations and individuals himself can take measures to avoid stress effects. Employees must have the knowledge of symptoms of their stress and employers must know the impact of stress on the health of their employees (*Bickford*, 2005) ⁽⁶⁾. Men and old employees having more experience at job can handle stress efficiently. Social support, advice, proper planning, and time management can help to handle job stress (*Mark*, 2008) ⁽⁷⁾.

Literature Review:

Many studies have presented an association between job stress and various diseases. Stress results in the problems like changes in mood, disturbed sleep, headache, upset stomach, and disputes with the friends and family that rapidly grow and these problems are usually discussed in these studies. Usually, these initial symptoms of job stress can be observed easily. But it is not easy to observe the influence of job stress on incurable disorders because incurable disorders take more time to evolve and can be affected by many elements other than stress. However, stress plays a crucial role in various types of incurable health issues particularly heart diseases, musculoskeletal pains, and mental illness. Initial alarming symptoms of job stress are headache, sleeping disorder, lack of concentration, short temperament, disturbed stomach, lack of Job satisfaction, and low confidence (*Sauter et al.*, 1999) (8).

Irritating behavior, depression, anxiety, unable to concentrate, sleeping disorder, tiredness, heart diseases, digestive system problems, headaches, high blood pressure, and muscular-skeleton problems are the diseases which are a result of stress. If the employees of an organization are suffering stress, this will ultimately affect the performance of an organization. It will also be risky for an organization to survive in the market $(WHO, 2004)^{(9)}$.

Stress is the cause of many physical and psychological disorders. When the individual experiences stress, blood flows from the internal parts of the body and skin to the brain and muscles, fatty acids and cellulose are activated in the blood to supply energy, eyesight, and listening skill is enhanced and a person becomes alert. Normal physical support functions i.e. digestion, immune and curative systems are all weakened. This response to the stress is normal which develops when the stress is perceived by an individual but when the stress continues for a long time and it's severe and not properly managed, it will be a threat for the health of an individual. The immune system is disturbed as a result of the severe stress and the body is unable to function normally and becomes sensitive to various diseases and illness. Psychological diseases which result from job stress badly influence both employee and employer. Depression, tension and other psychological diseases normally result in absence because of sickness, medical appointments and malfunction (*Blaug, Kenyon and Lekhi, 2007*) (10). Toxic stress has more harmful effects as compared to the normal stress.

Stress at work affects the quality of life and brings negative changes to human nature both physically and mentally. Stress not only badly affects the health of an employee but also detriments the performance of an employee in an organization. Ulcer, weak immune system, rheumatoid arthritis and coronial heart diseases are the results of job stress (*Cox*, 1993) (11). Stress influences mental as well as physical health. University of London reported that stress is a major cause of cancer and heart disease as compared to smoking or cholesterol foods (*Cryer*, 1996)⁽¹²⁾.

iii. Objectives

- 1. To assess the *organizational commitment* of professionals belonging to Private and Government sector.
- 2. To assess the *occupational stress* of professionals belonging to Private and Government sector.
- 3. To assess the *employees' mental health* of professionals belonging to Private and Government sector.
- 4. To suggest *need based measures* for maintaining a sound mental health and adequate productivity in the organization.

iv. Methodology:

The methodology is based on primary collection of data. The study depends mainly on primary data collected through well framed and structured questionnaires to elicit the well considered points of the respondents. The study is confined to a few selected public and private sector banks, IT firms and Academic Institutions in Kolkata.

Simple random sampling method is to be used in the study to select the sample.

Rationale of the Study

Today's professional life has become more challenging than ever before. The employee needs to strike a balance between the personal and professional life.

The organization demands more in items from its employees every minute in comparison to earlier times. So, it's very crucial for an employee to be extremely competent and focussed on work along with having a sound mental and physical health. This will help him to be more productive towards the firm.

The personnel needs to have loyalty and commitment towards the organization, should be more involved in the activities of the organization. He/she should have low stress and anxiety towards her job and/or organization. This in turn will boost up the mental health of the employee. All these dimensions of job are influenced by certain personality as well as environmental factors as well. Ultimately this reflects how competent the personnel will be in his/her job as well as personal life.

This study is taken up for understanding some of the above mentioned organizational - job dimensions of professionals belonging to various job types like banks, IT firms and Academic institutions. This study also aims to understand the conditions of employees working in different sectors as well, i.e., private and government or government aided.

This study will help in identifying the job and mental health aspects of an employee along with the problems faced by him/her in the organizations and further help in improving the performance and productivity as well as enhance his/her mental and emotional health and happiness towards life. Further this will help him to strike a proper work life balance.

Variables

Organizational Commitment: It is a state in which an employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals and wishes to maintain membership in the organization. It is an attitude for--(i) a strong desire to remain a member of a particular organization; (ii) a willingness to exert high levels of effort on behalf of the organization; (iii) a definite belief in, and acceptance of, the values and goals of the organization.

Occupational Stress: Occupational stress is defined to be a mental and physical condition that

calls in a detrimental effect on the individual's productivity. The stress relating to job have become predominant feature of modern life, exerting for reaching affects on focal employees' behaviour and adjustment on as well as off the job.

Mental Health: Health is a state of complete, physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Mental health is the ability to balance feelings, desires, ambitions and ideas in one's daily living. Here, it is defined as the state of mental pleasure and lacking of psychosomatic complaints. The mental health of personnel in different organizations is very crucial in the performance of the employee on the job.

Independent Variables

Sectors:

- a) Private
- b) Government and/or Government Aided.

Hypotheses

HO_{1:} The pattern of organizational commitment of private sector employees will be different from public/government sector employees irrespective of the type of professions.

HO₂: The pattern of occupational stress of private sector employees will be different from public/government sector employees irrespective of the type of professions.

HO₃. The pattern of mental health of private sector employees will be different from public/government sector employees irrespective of the type of professions.

Tools

1. The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire by R.T. Mowday, R.M. Steers, and L.W. Porter

2. The Occupational Stress Index by Dr. A. K. Shrivastava and Dr. A.P. Singh (14) - It purports to measure the extent of stress which employees perceive arising from various constituent and conditions of their job. The items relate to components of job, such as, role over-load, strenuous working condition, etc.

3. Employee's Mental Health Inventory (EMHI) by Dr. Jagdish (15) - The inventory is designed to assess the mental health of personnel working in different organizations.

3.1Population and Sample

Sample

Sectors	Banks	IT Firms	School	College
Private	60	60	60	60
Government	60	60	60	60

a. Collection of Data

The study depended mainly on primary data collected through a well-framed and structured questionnaires to elicit the pertinent point of the views of respondents. The study was confined to a few selected public and private sectors organizations

from banking, IT and Academic professions. Simple random sampling was used in the study and the selected sample size was (N=480).

The private sector banks covered were HDFC, Indusind Bank & Yes Bank, The govt sector banks covered SBI, Canara Bank & Bank of India.

The data for private IT was taken from CTS &Wipro. The data for govt IT was collected from Webel.

The data for private academic institutes was taken from M.B. Girls school, St. Thomas, I LEAD, IIHM and for the public sector it was taken from Ballygunge Govt. Boys school, Alipore Multipurpose school, Asutosh college, Muralidhar girls college.

Statistical Analysis

Analysis of Data was carried out by using SPSS 16 Software.

3.2 Data and Sources of Data **Data and Results**

-test for equality of means (Govt. Vs. Private)								
Domain of Stress	Sector Type	No. of Recs.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Mean Difference	t-test Result	Remarks
RO	Govt.	240	16.60	6.644	.429	-1.546	.012	Significant
	Private	240	18.15	6.801	.439	-1.546		
RA	Govt.	240	10.27	4.670	.301	1.213	.001	Significant
	Private	240	9.05	3.570	.230	1.213		
RC	Govt.	240	9.50	4.958	.320	1.125	.007	Significant
	Private	240	8.38	4.094	.264	1.125		
LID	Govt.	240	10.98	5.366	.346	4.958	.000	Significant
UP	Private	240	6.03	1.728	.112	4.958	1.000	
RP	Govt.	240	8.89	3.300	.213	079	.790	Non-Significant
KP	Private	240	8.97	3.215	.208	079		
TT	Govt.	240	10.74	4.620	.298	1.463	.000	Significant
U	Private	240	9.28	4.272	.276	1.463		
P	Govt.	240	7.73	2.911	.188	-1.575	.000	Significant
	Private	240	9.31	3.031	.196	-1.575		
PR	Govt.	240	9.79	4.637	.299	2.788	.000	Significant
PK	Private	240	7.00	2.956	.191	2.788		
W	Govt.	240	10.08	3.602	.233	050	.874	Non-Significant
II	Private	240	10.13	3.301	.213	050		
LS	Govt.	239	8.32	3.589	.232	682	.039	Significant
	Private	239	9.00	3.597	.233	682		
wig	Govt.	240	10.69	5.216	.337	2.188	.000	Significant
WC	Private	240	8.50	4.682	.302	2.188		
UF	Govt.	240	5.28	2.089	.135	375	.042	Significant
	Private	240	5.66	1.932	.125	375		
OCQ	Govt.	240	85.05	21.503	1.388	15.900	.000	Significant
	Private	240	69.15	27.191	1.755	15.900		
ЕМНІ	Govt.	240	17.29	3.812	.246	2.379	000	Significant
	Private	240	14.91	4.434	.286	2.379	.000	

The data has been collected from two sectors namely public and private. The micro-organisational variables which were taken up for the present research as being the dependent variables were -

- **Occupational Stress**
- **Organisational Commitment**
- **Employee Mental Health**

These three variables were considered keeping in mind that these are contributory factors for the organisational productivity and growth. Human Capital being the main impetus for growth of an organisation deserves to be strategically planned and intervened to lead to the attainment of both the short term and long term objectives of the organisation. Hence determining the Organisational Commitment Level, Occupational Stress and Employee Mental Health stands of paramount importance in the determination of the credibility of the organisation as a whole.

Descriptive Statistics was carried out on the two sectors(private and govt.undertaking) for three professions namely Bank, IT Firms and Academic institutions (Schools & Colleges).

As per the comparative analysis stated ,taking into consideration the occupational stress index the following differences has been obtained between the employees of the two sectors.

- **Role Overload (RO)** The mean for government and private sector employees has been found out to be 16.60 and 18.15 respectively. It is seen that role overload is higher for private sector employees. Which may be primarily attributed to the core nature of the jobs at private sector requiring the incumbents to do multitasking and at the same time being bound by restrictive timelines.
 - Pertaining to the t test results the difference among the two sectors has been found to be significant (0.012) which confirms there is significant difference among the two sectors present.
 - Role Ambiguity (RA) The mean for government and private sector employees has been found out to be 10.27 and 9.05 respectively. It is seen that role ambiguity is higher in case of government than in private sector. This is so because of the nature of the chain of command and control present in the organisational hierarchy in the government sector.
 - The t test result reveals that there is significant difference in role ambiguity among the two sectors (0.001).
 - Role Conflict (RC) The mean for government and private sector employees has been found out to be 9.50 and 8.38 respectively.It is seen that role conflict is higher in case of government than in private sector. This is so because of the lack of carrying out exercises of job analysis and job evaluation coupled up by the nature of the chain of command and control present in the organisational hierarchy in the government sector.
 - The t test result reveals that there is significant difference in role conflict among the two sectors (0.007).
 - Unreasonable group and political pressure (UP) The mean for government and private sector employees has been found out to be 10.98 and 6.03 respectively. It is seen that unreasonable group and political pressure is higher in case of government than in private sector. This is so because of the inherent nature and modus operandi of the public sector being driven by the State /Central governments.
 - The t test result reveals that there is significant difference in unreasonable group and political pressure among the two sectors (0.000).
- Responsibility for persons (RP) The mean for government and private sector employees has been found out to be 8.89 and 8.97 respectively. The mean scores for the two sectors are more or less similar indicating that employees from both the sectors share reciprocal reporting relationships amongst themselves.

The t test results indicate that there is no significant difference among the two sectors pertaining to this domain of stress (0.790)

- Under participation (U) The mean for government and private sector employees has been found out to be 10.74 and 9.28 respectively. It is seen that under participation is higher in case of government than in private sector. This is so because of the inherent nature and modus operandi of the public sector and by not being driven by the ideology of an effective performance appraisal and feedback system.
 - The t test results indicates significant difference among the two sectors (0.000) in terms of underparticipation.
- **Powerlessness (P)** The mean for government and private sector employees has been found out to be 7.73 and 9.31 respectively. It is seen that powerlessness is higher in case of private sector employees than in government sector. This is primarily because of the lack of delegation of authority amongst the employees and stringent company policies in private sector.

The t test results reveal that there is significant difference among the two sectors (0.000) in terms of powerlessness.

Poor Peer Relations (PR) - The mean for government and private sector employees has been found out to be 9.79 and 7.00 respectively. It is seen that poor peer relation is higher in case of government than in private sector. This is so because of the inherent nature and modus operandi of the public sector and by not being driven by the ideology of an effective employee engagement program.

The t test results shows that there is significant difference between the two sectors (0.000).

- Intrinsic Impoverishment (II) The mean for government and private sector employees has been found out to be 10.08 and 10.13 respectively. It is relatively similar between the two sectors. This is attributable solely to subjective and individual factors.
 - The t test results reveal that there is no significant difference among the two sectors (0.874).
- Low Status (LS) The mean for government and private sector employees has been found out to be 8.32 and 9.00 respectively. The mean score is higher for private sector than that of government sector because of the lack of delegation of authority, perceived work overload backed up by feelings of job insecurity and pressure of performance.

The t test results reveal that there is significant difference among the two sectors (0.039).

- Strenuous Working Condition (WC) The mean for government and private sector employees has been found out to be 10.69 and 8.50 respectively. The mean is higher in case of government sector . This is so because of the lack of ergonomical considerations and interventions from organisational development point of view.
 - The t test results reveal that there is significant difference among the two sectors (0.000).
- Unprofitability (UF) The mean for government and private sector employees has been found out to be 5.28 and 5.66 respectively. The mean is slightly higher in case of private sector. This is so because of the perennial perception amongst the employees of the private sector of getting into routinised activities rather than doing "out - of - the box" business operation solely because of the fear of restrictive company policies and job loss.

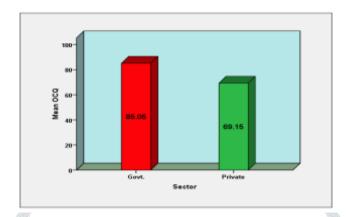
The t test results reveal that there is significant difference among the two sectors (0.042).

Stressors	
Private Sector	Government Sector
Role Overload	Role Ambiguity
Powerlessness	Role Conflict
Unprofitability	Strenous Working Conditions
Low Status	Underparticipation

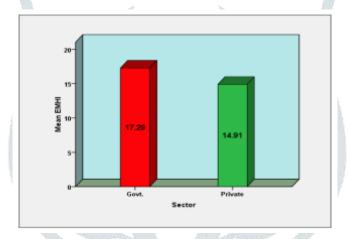
Poor Peer Relations
Unreasonable Group And Political Pressure

Oragnisational Commitment - The mean for government and private sector employees has been found out to be 85.05 and 69.15 respectively. The mean is higher in case of government sector. This is so because of the inherent previledge of job security experienced by the employees of the government sector and also the experience of the perquisites and benefits.

The t test results reveal that there is significant difference among the two sectors (0.000).



Employee Mental Health - The mean for government and private sector employees has been found out to be 17.29 and 14.91 respectively. The mean score is higher in case of government sector. This is so because of the factors like job security, power and compensation and benefits enjoyed by the employee coming from the government sector.



CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

In the present era of liberalisation ,globalisation and privatisation , where each of the organisations are bent on outperforming the other human capital held by each organisation stands out as the only factor which lends competitive edge to a firm that makes the organisation distinct from others. Thus, organizational commitment, occupational stress and mental health of these human capital ought to be taken care off to ensure the personal and personnel growth of them to enhance the attainment of the long term and short term strategic goals of the

Experiencing high levels of organisational stress has negative effects on task performance. It also adversely affects ones' physical and mental health in a wide variety of ways. Stress and job lack of commitment is a major cause to disrupt work life balance, desk rage and burnout.

To reduce employees' stress, organisations are to use the following *need based measures* –

- Employee Assistance Programs. 1.
- 2. Absence Control Programs.
- 3. Stress Management Programs.
- 4. Individual Managing Skills -
- Good time management techniques
- Eating a healthy diet
- Being Physically fit
- Practicing meditation
- Seeking social support
- Avoiding inappropriate self talk
- Conflict management
- Adequate comprehension of ones' own role and its significance in the organisational goal
- Being flexible and open towards upgradation of ones' skills.
- Being driven to take up alternate job roles.
- Managing negative emotions.

- 5. Employee Engagement Measures The pillar to check employee attrition.
- 6.Training needs assessment.
- 7.Job enrichment and Job enlargement.
- 8. Enhancing and ensuring cross departmental communication and dependency.
- 9.Educate and inculcate corporate ethics.

Acknowledgment

I would I like to that the schools for cooperating in terms of allowing me to carry out the entire procedure & each one who has directly or indirectly contributed to the completion of the research. Especially JETIR to acknowledge the publication of the said research paper.

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