

OCCUPATIONAL STRESS IN THE ASSAM CIVIL SERVICE OFFICERS (ACS) A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Ankita Bora, Dr. Dimpy Mahanta

PhD Scholar, Department of Psychology, Cotton University, Assam, India

Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Cotton University, Assam, India

ABSTRACT

Stress in every sphere of life has become a major issue of concern these days. Stress in workplace has become a common problem these days. Stress in workplace often leads to dissatisfaction with one's job, which leads to deterioration of one's physical health as well as mental health. The life of an administrator is burdened with a lot of stress due to the nature of the job profile. The purpose of the present study is to empirically investigate Occupational stress among the Assam Civil Service Officers and to compare their Occupational Stress on the basis of length of service. Also, to study the level of Job Satisfaction, Resilience and Emotional intelligence of the bureaucrats with respect to tenure/hierarchy in the organisation and Gender. A sample of 60 participants were taken for the study. The four variables namely occupational stress, emotional intelligence, job satisfaction and resilience were measured using four different psychometric tools. Significant difference was seen in Occupational stress of the bureaucrats serving at different levels of the hierarchy wherein officer of the shortest tenure exhibited the most amount of stress as compared to the officers of the longest tenure. It was also found that gender difference was seen between male and female participants in terms of the four variables namely occupational stress, emotional intelligence, job satisfaction and resilience.

Keywords: *Occupational stress, Emotional intelligence, Job satisfaction and Resilience.*

Introduction

Human life is bestowed with lot of stress these days. Occupational stress constitutes as one of the major stresses. Job or occupation is an essential part of one's life which cannot be ignored. Stress in workplace has become a common phenomenon. As such has become a familiar term in our day-to-day life. The root of the word stress is derived from the Latin word "Stingere" which means to tighten. Occupational stress can be conceptualized as the imbalance between one's physical and emotional response that occurs when an individual perceives an imbalance between the demands thrown by their work condition and the resources to meet those demands. Beehr and Newman (1978) have defined occupational stress as "a situation wherein job-related factors interact with a worker to change (i.e., disrupt or enhance) his or her psychological or physiological condition such that the person (i.e., mind-body) is forced to deviate from normal functioning.

Stress in moderate amount is normal but excessive stress is harmful for one's physical and mental health. It is seen that often people with higher level of occupational stress may not be satisfied with their job and hence they will not be satisfied by working in the organization. They may feel frustrated or "burn out" when they face problems on daily basis. This may leave a negative impact to the organization itself. Therefore, it is very important for employer and employees to realize the stress and the stressors that causes all the negative effects. Different factors contribute to the work stress of employees in different streams and sectors of employment which are essentially rooted in the inherent facets of specific jobs and their requirements, roles and role demands. Major work stressors are role ambiguity, job dissatisfaction and poor performance, poor peer relations, unsupportive spouse, unsupportive family, poor individual beliefs and values, poor physical environment, long working hours, low-income inadequate resources to complete the task, workload both overload and under load. Consequences of work stress also include cognitive consequences such as mental illness, concentration problem, poor judgement etc. It also leads to behavioural consequences such as sleeping disorders, poor eating habits, use of drugs, alcohol, neglecting responsibilities. The Emotional consequences of stress include short temper, restlessness, depression, eating disorders, loneliness etc. Physical consequences include back and neck problem, heart problem, blood pressure nausea anxiety etc. The sources of job stress as pointed out by Marshall and Cooper 1979 can be understood to exist at both organizational and non-organizational levels. Organisational stressors are inherent in the organization involved. This can include relationship with boss and colleague, lack of social support, work place environment, lack of proper guidance etc. Occupational stress has been closely associated with factors such as Job satisfaction, Resilience.

Job satisfaction according to Vroom 1964, is "A worker's positive or negative emotional reaction to his/her role at work or in work related matters". A very widely accepted research definition of Job satisfaction was proposed by Locke 1976 who defined it as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" It is seen that occupational stress has an impact on Job satisfaction. However, the level of job satisfaction varies depending on one's emotional intelligence, resilience and coping skills. Job satisfaction can be defined as the extent to which a worker is content with the rewards he or she gets out of his or her job, particularly in terms of intrinsic motivation (Statt,2004). Job satisfaction is the accumulation of feelings and beliefs that people have about their current job. The level of people's job satisfaction can vary from the scale of extreme satisfaction to extreme dissatisfaction. In addition to having attitudes about their jobs as a whole people also can have attitudes about various aspects of their jobs such as the kind of work they do, their co-workers, supervisors or subordinates and their pay (George et al., 2008). Job satisfaction can therefore be considered as one of the major factors when it comes to efficiency and effectiveness of an organizations. There are various theories of job satisfaction such as Herzberg's two factor theory, which argues that there are two factors that organisation can adjust to influence motivation at workplace. These factors are divided as Motivators and Hygiene Factors. The Motivators are those factors which encourages an employee to work harder. Whereas, Hygiene factors are those which represent tangible basic needs such as absence of which will lead to job dissatisfaction.

METHOD

Participants

The participants of the present study are Assam Civil Service Officers. Total sample size taken for this study is 60. The samples collected were categorized into three levels based on the tenure of service. The categories are Junior Grade (less than 10 years in service), Senior Grade II (more than 10 years in service), Senior grade I (more than 20 Years in service). Probability Sampling Method was used for the study. Proportionate Stratified Random Sampling Technique was used. 20 sample was taken from each category for the purpose of this study.

Tools Used

Data collection was done using Questionnaires. Personal Information Schedule (PIS) was prepared to collect information related to demographic variables such as name, age, gender, service, batch, cadre, place of posting, department, designation etc. It is a self-designed information schedule. The four different tools used to study the variables such as Occupational Stress, Job Satisfaction, Resilience and Emotional intelligence.

Occupational Stress was measured using Occupational Stress Index (1984) constructed and standardized by Dr. A.K. Srivastava and Dr. A.P. Singh. The scale consists of 46 items, each to be related on the five-point scale. Out of 45 items, 46 items 28 are "true-keyed" and next 18 are "fake keyed".

Job Satisfaction Scale- developed by B.L.Dubey, K.K.Uppal, S.K. Verma, C.K.Maini (1989) was used. It is a five-point scale comprising twenty-five items. This 25 items scale measures level of job satisfaction in an employee. Reliability: test retest is 0.64, split half reliability coefficient is 0.72 and intrinsic validity score of .80

Emotional Quotient Test by Chadha & Singh (2006) Emotional Intelligence of the bureaucrats was measured by Emotional Quotient Test by Chadha & Singh 2006. It has 22 situational items so as to measure emotional responses of the respondents to different situations while requiring them to answer on the basis of how they feel and not what they think. This EQ test has a test- retest and split-half reliability of 0.94 and 0.89 respectively and validity of 0.89.

Resilience Scale by Dr. Vijaya Lakshmi & Dr. Shruti Narain (2017) This scale helps to assess an individual's ability to successfully adapt to, recover, and strengthen from stressful circumstances and negative emotional experiences. It consists of 30 items and has four dimensions- Perseverance, Composure, Self-reliance and Faith. It is a Five- point Likert type scale. The test-retest reliability was calculated and found to be 0.87 and split half reliability found to be 0.84. Validity was found to be 0.86

Procedure

The participants were selected all over Assam through Probability Random sampling method. Personal interview was conducted and Questionnaires were administered to the participants. Sample size comprised of 60 participants. Data was collected through personal meeting and mails. Data was analysed using statistical analysis. Hypothesis was formulated as mentioned below:

HO1: There would be significant difference in the Occupational stress levels of the bureaucrats serving at different levels of hierarchy based on the length /tenure of service

HO2: There would be significant difference in the Emotional Quotient, Resilience, Job satisfaction levels of the bureaucrats serving at different levels of hierarchy based on the length/tenure of service

HO3: There would be significant difference in the Occupational Stress Emotional Quotient, Resilience, Job satisfaction levels in between male and female ACS Officers of Assam.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis was done on the data obtained. The raw scores obtained from the data was entered into the excel sheet and SPSS-16 version software was thereafter used for Statistical Analysis. Descriptive statistics was used for calculating mean and Standard deviation on each of the obtained variables. Thereafter inferential statistics was done for comparing mean across different length of service through Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

RESULTS

The mean Occupational stress score obtained by the officers belonging to the three different hierarchies based on length of service were compared using One-way ANOVA as shown in the table below:

Table 1 One Way ANOVA test: Descriptive statistics showing the difference among the Grades

		N	Mean	SD		df	Mea n	F	(P- value)
Occupational Stress Index	Junior Grade	20	138.45	12.626	Between Groups	2	1310.117	7.596	.001
	Senior Grade-II	20	125.60	14.573	Within Groups	57	172.469		
	Senior Grade-I	20	123.50	12.068	Total	59			
	Total	60	129.18	14.527					
Job Satisfaction scale	Junior Grade	20	48.05	13.698	Between Groups	2	324.017	2.348	.105
	Senior Grade-II	20	52.05	10.395	Within Groups	57	137.995		
	Senior Grade-I	20	56.10	10.877	Total	59			
	Total	60	52.07	12.013					

		N	Mean	SD		df	Mean Square	F	(P-value)
Resilience	Junior Grade	20	119.60	20.436	Between Groups	2	795.617	3.373	.041
	Senior Grade-II	20	128.00	12.074	Within Groups	57	235.890		
	Senior Grade-I	20	131.95	12.011	Total	59			
	Total	60	126.52	15.964					
Emotional Quotient	Junior Grade	20	299.25	45.227	Between Groups	2	2723.750	1.868	.164
	Senior Grade-II	20	321.25	32.317	Within Groups	57	1458.377		
	Senior Grade-I	20	317.00	35.851	Total	59			
	Total	60	312.50	38.746					



The following table 2 presents for the multiple comparison of groups thru Tukey HSD to find out the significance differences while the F-value is significant in table 1

Table 2 Post HOC Test Multiple Comparisons between the Grades

Dependent Variable	(I) Hierarchy	(J) Hierarchy	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. (P-value)
Dependent Variable	(I) Hierarchy	(J) Hierarchy	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. (P-value)
Occupational Stress Index	Junior Grade	Senior Grade-II	12.850 [*]	4.153	.008
		Senior Grade-I	14.950 [*]	4.153	.002
	Senior Grade-II	Junior Grade	-12.850 [*]	4.153	.008
		Senior Grade-I	2.100	4.153	.869
	Senior Grade-I	Junior Grade	-14.950 [*]	4.153	.002
		Senior Grade-II	-2.100	4.153	.869
Job Satisfaction scale	Junior Grade	Senior Grade-II	-4.000	3.715	.532
		Senior Grade-I	-8.050	3.715	.086
	Senior Grade-II	Junior Grade	4.000	3.715	.532
		Senior Grade-I	-4.050	3.715	.524
	Senior Grade-I	Junior Grade	8.050	3.715	.086
		Senior Grade-II	4.050	3.715	.524
Resilience	Junior Grade	Senior Grade-II	-8.400	4.857	.203
		Senior Grade-I	-12.350 [*]	4.857	.036
	Senior Grade-II	Junior Grade	8.400	4.857	.203
		Senior Grade-I	-3.950	4.857	.696
	Senior Grade-I	Junior Grade	12.350 [*]	4.857	.036
		Senior Grade-II	3.950	4.857	.696
Emotional Quotient	Junior Grade	Senior Grade-II	-22.000	12.076	.172
		Senior Grade-I	-17.750	12.076	.313
	Senior Grade-II	Junior Grade	22.000	12.076	.172
		Senior Grade-I	4.250	12.076	.934
	Senior Grade-I	Junior Grade	17.750	12.076	.313
		Senior Grade-II	-4.250	12.076	.934

The table below shows the levels of Occupational stress among the different hierarchy of Officers based on the tenure of Service

Table 3 Levels of Occupational Stress among different hierarchy of sample surveyed based on tenure of service

Variables	Level of Scales		Hierarchy			Total	Pearson χ^2
			Junior Grade	Senior Grade-II	Senior Grade-I		
Occupational Stress Index	High	Count	11	3	2	16	$\chi^2=16.258$
		% of Total	18.3%	5.0%	3.3%	26.7%	Df=4,4,1
	Moderate	Count	8	9	8	25	P=.003
		% of Total	13.3%	15.0%	13.3%	41.7%	
	Low	Count	1	8	10	19	
		% of Total	1.7%	13.3%	16.7%	31.7%	
	Total	Count	20	20	20	60	
		% of Total	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	100.0%	

Emotional quotient of the bureaucrats was measured serving at different levels of hierarchy based on the tenure of service. One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used. F value calculated is shown in the Table below

TABLE 4 shows the Emotional Quotient of the Bureaucrats serving at different levels of hierarchy

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation		df	Mean Square	F	(P-value)
Emotional Quotient	Junior Grade	20	299.25	45.227	Between Groups	2	2723.750	1.868	.164
	Senior Grade-II	20	321.25	32.317	Within Groups	57	1458.377		
	Senior Grade-I	20	317.00	35.851	Total	59			
	Total	60	312.50	38.746					

The table below shows the levels of Emotional intelligence among the different hierarchy of Officers based on the tenure of Service

Table 5 Levels of Emotional Intelligence among different hierarchy of sample surveyed based on tenure of service

Emotional Quotient	High	Count	5	7	7	19	$X^2=2.200$
		% of Total	8.3%	11.7%	11.7%	31.7%	Df=4,4,1
	Moderate	Count	7	9	8	24	P=.699
		% of Total	11.7%	15.0%	13.3%	40.0%	
	Low	Count	8	4	5	17	
		% of Total	13.3%	6.7%	8.3%	28.3%	
	Total	Count	20	20	20	60	
		% of Total	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	100.0%	

Resilience of the bureaucrats was measured serving at different levels of hierarchy based on the tenure of service One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used. F value calculated is shown in the Table below

TABLE 6 shows Resilience of the Bureaucrats serving at different levels of hierarchy

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation		df	Mean Square	F	(P-value)
Resilience	Junior Grade	20	119.60	20.436	Between Groups	2	795.617	3.373	.041
	Senior Grade-II	20	128.00	12.074	Within Groups	57	235.890		
	Senior Grade-I	20	131.95	12.011	Total	59			
	Total	60	126.52	15.964					

Resilience of the bureaucrats was measured serving at different levels of hierarchy based on the tenure of service

Table 7 shows Resilience of the Bureaucrats serving at different levels of hierarchy

Resilience	High	Count	5	7	8	20	$X^2=8.074$
		% of Total	8.3%	11.7%	13.3%	33.3%	Df=4,4,1
	Moderate	Count	6	10	10	26	P=.089
		% of Total	10.0%	16.7%	16.7%	43.3%	
	Low	Count	9	3	2	14	
		% of Total	15.0%	5.0%	3.3%	23.3%	
	Total	Count	20	20	20	60	
		% of Total	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	100.0%	

Job Satisfaction of the bureaucrats was measured serving at different levels of hierarchy based on the tenure of service One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used. F value calculated is shown in the Table below

TABLE 8 shows Job Satisfaction Scale of the Bureaucrats serving at different levels of hierarchy

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation		df	Mean Square	F	(P-value)
Job Satisfaction scale	Junior Grade	20	48.05	13.698	Between Groups	2	324.017	2.348	.105
	Senior Grade-II	20	52.05	10.395	Within Groups	57	137.995		
	Senior Grade-I	20	56.10	10.877	Total	59			
	Total	60	52.07	12.013					

The table below shows the levels of Job Satisfaction among the different hierarchy of Officers based on the tenure of Service

Table 9 Levels of Job Satisfaction among different hierarchy of sample surveyed based on tenure of service

Job Satisfaction	High	Count	3	6	8	17	$X^2=5.484$
		% of Total	5.0%	10.0%	13.3%	28.3%	Df=4,4,1
	Moderate	Count	8	10	8	26	P=.241
		% of Total	13.3%	16.7%	13.3%	43.3%	
	Low	Count	9	4	4	17	
		% of Total	15.0%	6.7%	6.7%	28.3%	
	Total	Count	20	20	20	60	
		% of Total	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	100.0%	

Table 10 T-Test: Difference between Male and Female ACS officers in Emotional Quotient, Resilience, Job satisfaction levels

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Mean Difference	t	df	P-Value
Occupational Stress Index	Male	35	126.40	13.519	2.285	-6.680	-1.788	58	.079
	Female	25	133.08	15.256	3.051				
Job Satisfaction scale	Male	35	54.26	13.395	2.264	5.257	1.698	58	.095
	Female	25	49.00	9.152	1.830				
Resilience	Male	35	125.83	15.298	2.586	-1.651	-.392	58	.696
	Female	25	127.48	17.127	3.425				
Emotional Quotient	Male	35	314.57	40.554	6.855	4.971	.487	58	.628
	Female	25	309.60	36.683	7.337				

From the above table it observed that the mean score of Male officials is 126.40 and Female is 133.08 in the matter of Occupational stress index. It also observed that Stress index in regards occupation to Female is higher than the Male officials. The t-value 1.788, P=.079 depicts that the difference is not significant. However, it is seen that Occupational Stress Index is higher in Female ACS Officers as compared to male ACS Officers. Job Satisfaction is more in male ACS Officers as compared to female ACS Officers. Resilience is more in Female ACS Officers as compare to male ACS Officers. Emotional Quotient is more in Male ACS Officers as compared to female ACS Officers

DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study was to compare the bureaucrats on the basis of the length of service which reflects the three levels of hierarchy namely Junior Grade, Senior Grade II and Senior Grade.

Hypothesis 1 dealt with the comparison of Occupational Stress scores across the three levels of officers. The comparison on the basis of length of service was undertaken on the premise that as the officers progress through their careers their roles and responsibilities increases. The junior grade is seen to have higher occupational stress as they are susceptible to a lot of uncertainties and challenges as they enter into their service. Moreover, frequent transfers and field postings away from home and at the interior places also leads to higher occupational stress in the Junior Grade officers as compared to Senior Grade II and Senior Grade I officers. One-way ANOVA calculated on Occupational Stress Index across three levels of administrative hierarchy based on length of service (i.e. Junior grade: less than 10 years of service; Senior Grade II: 10 to 20 years of service; and Senior Grade I: more than 20 years in service) showed that each of the calculated F values was found to be significant, implying that officers belonging to three hierarchical levels differed significantly from each other on Occupational stress index. Hence Hypothesis 1 was proved. Occupational Stress experienced by bureaucrats can be expected to enhance or decline in relation with the gamut of responsibilities they shoulder along with the adversities and uncertainties they encounter. Accordingly, the present analysis has revealed that the officers

belonging to the Junior Grade category demonstrated the highest level of Occupational Stress as they are unable to cope with the challenging nature of Job and face difficulties in dealing with day to day instructions and uncertainties of the Job. Senior Grade II officers had medium level of Occupational Stress while the Senior Grade I exhibiting least amount of Occupational Stress. The findings arrived at highlighting variation in Occupational stress level with the level of Administrative hierarchy can be supported by research studies in literature which have yielded similar results. Yasmeeen and Supriya (2010) conducted a research on bureaucrats belonging to the Indian Administrative service (IAS), Tamil Nadu Cadre. The researcher found that the three career stages differed significantly on Occupational stress.

Hypothesis 2 stated that there would be significant difference in the Emotional Intelligence, Resilience and Job Satisfaction levels of the bureaucrats serving at three levels of Administrative Hierarchy. Based on the findings Hypothesis 2 was partially proved. The comparison of Emotional intelligence across three administrative hierarchies showed that there was no significant difference between the three levels of Administrative hierarchy. These findings can be addressed in the light of certain similar research studies. Rajkhowa (2002) attempted to compare the EQ of IAS officers on the basis of Age. It was found that older group of officers exhibited higher EQ as compared to the younger officers, though this difference was not found to be significant. Significant difference was found in Resilience across the three levels of Administrative hierarchy. Senior grade I showing the highest level of Resilience as compared to Senior Grade II and Junior grade. This could be because of experience gathered by the senior most officers in dealing with the stressors and overcoming them effectively as compared to the junior grade officers. No significant difference was found in Job Satisfaction across the three hierarchies but it was seen that Job satisfaction increased with the increase in the length of Service as such Senior Grade I depicting the highest level of Job Satisfaction as compared to the Senior Grade II and Junior Grade. %. The relationship between age, stress and job satisfaction was conducted by K. Chandraiah S.C. Agrawal, (2003) and it was concluded that young people faced more stress and less job satisfaction as compared to senior level employees between the ages of 36 Effect of Salary and Stress on Job Satisfaction of Teachers in District Sialkot, Pakistan

Hypothesis 3 stated that there would be significant difference in Occupational Stress, Emotional Quotient, Resilience, Job satisfaction levels in between male and female ACS Officers of Assam. the mean score of Male official is 126.40 and Female is 133.08 in the matter of Occupational stress index. It also observed that Stress index in regards to Female Officials is higher than the Male officials. The t-value depicts that the difference is not significant. However, it is seen that Occupational Stress Index is higher in Female ACS Officers as compared to male ACS Officers which can be highlighted by the study done by (Derogatis and Savitz, 1999) who found that women consistently report higher levels of psychological and physical stress than their male co-workers. It is certainly plausible that the organizational environment in the administrative field may have a similar effect on levels of work-related stress reported by male and female officers. Additionally, research involving women working in other non-traditional occupations, like steel mills and mailrooms, has shown that females working in these environments may experience hostility that may elevate reported levels of stress (Walshok,1981) Job Satisfaction is more in male ACS Officers as compared to female ACS Officers. Resilience is more in Female ACS Officers as compare to male ACS Officers. Emotional Quotient is more in Male ACS Officers as compared to female ACS Officers. is partially proved. No significant difference was

found in the level of Occupational stress, Emotional intelligence, Resilience, Job satisfaction levels in between male and female ACS Officers of Assam. It also observed that Stress index in Female is higher than the Male officials though the difference is not significant. Job Satisfaction is more in male ACS Officers as compared to female ACS Officers. Resilience is more in Female ACS Officers as compare to male ACS Officers. Emotional Quotient is more in Male ACS Officers as compared to female ACS Officers. Thus Hypothesis 3 is partially proved.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

The present study has revealed a number of important findings with regard to the complex and challenging nature of Job of the bureaucrats of Assam. Increased Occupational stress leads to lower Job Satisfaction. The study will be useful in finding out the various occupational stressors with regard to the complex and challenging nature of the job of bureaucrats. The study will also help in finding out the measures of reducing occupational stress and enhancing their job satisfaction which would ultimately result in a better job performance in the future.

Limitations

Present study was conducted on a smaller sample size. The study comprised of only Assam Civil Service officers. Intervention programs were not used for this study.

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