

PAPER PUBLICATIONS AND WORK STRESS AMONG PHD. RESEARCH SCHOLARS- A CROSS-SECTIONAL SURVEY

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ABSTRACT

Paper publication is a mandatory process in a PhD journey and plays a crucial role in a PhD student's life. Publishing journals allows PhD students to contribute original research to their field adding to existing knowledge. Furthermore, the publication also adds quality, validation, career advancement, networking, and collaboration and the publication is mandatory for finishing the process towards the completion of the degree. Publishing research papers not only gives knowledge but also aids in an individual's academic and professional growth. However, many universities in India (Tamil Nadu) possess stringent publishing criteria including publishing Scopus and Web of Science-indexed journals which have time constraints and publishing becomes competitive rather than focusing on knowledge, skills, and writing proficiency. However, overcoming and publishing articles requires resilience, dedication, and mentorship. This pressure sometimes builds up and creates work pressure and stress among research scholars. They experience higher levels of stress, which can cause psychological issues including anxiety, depression, cardiac issues, schizophrenia, and paranoia. In a 2017 study, 12% of scholars acknowledged that they had sought treatment for depression or anxiousness-connected issues. In India, it is noted that many capable research scholars belonging to prestigious institutions are committing suicide because of the depression that was caused by excessive work pressure. Significantly, it was discovered that inadequate supervision negatively impacted the mental health of Ph.D. candidates. The present study aims to survey Tamil Nadu research scholars to analyze work stress. The obtained data will be analyzed using SPSS tests like reliability, validity, descriptive statistics, frequency test, ANOVA, and Regression. The dependent variables of the study are work stress, and the independent variables are factors influencing work stress like publication requirements, problems faced in mentorship, writing fluency, and time constraints. The study thus aims to analyze the factors contributing to work stress among PhD research scholars. The study aims to analyze the influence of independent variables on work stress. Prior studies reveal that Stress levels could be alleviated, and mental health could be improved with less performance pressure and a reasonable workload with fewer tasks in addition to the PhD project. The outcomes of this research are expected to facilitate the development of practical strategies for promoting Ph.D. candidates' mental health.

Keywords: - Stress, Depression, Publication, Research scholars

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing research papers involves doing in-depth background research on a particular subject and making strong, evidence-based claims. Well-written research papers include data from reputable sources and established experts to bolster their thesis statements. In a research article, it is imperative that the author appropriately references any findings or analyses from other sources. Research papers often use either MLA or APA formatting for the bibliography page, which lists all of the references, or for in-text citations. In addition to providing readers with

access to the source materials if needed, properly formatted citations support the writer's claims in a research paper by proving their factual foundation. Research paper writing has several advantages when properly cited. Conducting an in-depth study on a particular subject broadens one's knowledge base and makes it possible to give insight that is well-founded into the subject matter. Citations establish the writer's legitimacy by pointing readers to the source material, which supports their original ideas and debate. Furthermore, adhering to ethical academic norms for appropriately citing other people's work is upheld when creating research papers by using high-quality citations throughout the process. In the process of determining which sources are relevant to the main ideas in their work, the writer concurrently develops their critical thinking skills. In the end, research writing that makes extensive use of citations demonstrates the writer's enormous effort to provide an educated, fact-based analysis deserving of the reader's consideration. Scholarly acumen is often fostered via thorough research and citation practices.

Pursuing a Ph.D. or a doctorate is an extremely difficult endeavor because of the constant demands of demanding coursework, hard research, and producing a dissertation. Ph.D. applicants are held to very high academic standards, which include mastery of their topic and the ability to do original research that advances knowledge in their discipline. There is a great deal of tension when they try to balance their studies with the demands of teaching and publishing. In addition, PhD applicants deal with peer competitiveness, social isolation, financial difficulties, and uncertainty regarding their future employment opportunities. The never-ending workload associated with Ph.D. programs has a significant negative psychological and physical impact on students. As a result of managing the academic demands and the ongoing pressure to generate original research and theories for publication, Ph.D. students may experience extreme stress and anxiety during their extended doctorate studies.

Jones [14] affirmed that scholarly publication is a typical indicator of academic performance. High-quality publications are not just markers of research competency but are also vital for career progression in academics[24]. A Doctoral degree is fraught with challenges. According to published research, scholars frequently struggle with work-life balance, deadline pressure, and the need to publish within a limited amount of time [2]. There is a complex relationship between stress at work and paper publishing. On the one hand, scholars may be inspired to create excellent work by the pressure to publish[27]. Conversely, stress levels can also be raised by intense competition and irrational expectations [17]. Peer networks, mentoring, and institutional support are essential for reducing stress among Ph.D. applicants [4].Scholars often use coping measures to deal with the pressures of academia, such as time management techniques and mindfulness exercises [10]. Scholars pursuing doctorates face additional stress due to difficulties encountered throughout the publication process. Stressors associated with academic publication include peer review, rejections, and competition [1]. A Ph.D. is a significant personal commitment that advances one's education and opportunities for employment in academics. However, complicated publication requirements put doctorate students under increasing strain, which is troubling since it negatively affects their mental health and general wellness[16]. Publishing research articles is undoubtedly a crucial skill Ph.D. candidates should acquire for positions as professors in the future, however, the academic culture now burdens up. To prepare graduates for the realities of "publish or perish" cultures in university, Ph.D. programs provide rigorous research training that partially focuses on the development and display of publication fluency [3]. However, in recent decades, the number of doctorates and academic publications has increased exponentially, leading to strong competition to meet the research output criteria that determine career advancement and perceived competence [8]. Candidates now face increasing demands to publish often while finishing demanding courses, teaching responsibilities, and dissertation deadlines. Many PhD candidates experience severe anxiety when they receive rejection letters or just don't publish as rapidly as they would want to since their identity and self-efficacy are strongly correlated with their publication rate [11]. Research indicates that between 33 and 45 percent of candidates for Ph.D. programs satisfy clinical standards for depression, anxiety, and other mental health conditions. These candidates also report feeling overwhelmed, alone, and uncertain about their ability to continue [6]. These threats to one's mental health are made worse by the constant need to demonstrate one's academic integrity through published research. Graduates who suffer in silence will continue to do so in the absence of stronger support networks and open conversations that normalize hardships. While others commend the rigorous standards that motivate academic production, concerns about promoting doctorate endurance without sacrificing human well-being in the competitive environments of academics persist [26]. Revisions to the curriculum that balance research skills with mental health education, more open communication about publishing schedules and standards, mentorship support networks, and faculty evaluations that reduce student pressure are some of the recent recommendations that have been put forth[15]. Raising awareness to aid in normalizing the psychological experiences of students and providing adequate institutional treatments specific to the pressures of doctorate publication might result in beneficial change.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The article by Saleem et al, [23] examines the perceived stress levels of research scholars in India. It is noted that scholars may face many challenges that contribute to their stress levels and some of the factors that contribute to their high stress levels are heavy work pressure, and lack of enough resources for research such as libraries and research-related articles. It is studies that female scholars perceived more stress than male scholars. Married scholars face more stress than unmarried scholars. The article by Mustafa et al,[19] investigates the relationships between grit, perceived stress, and hope among PhD research scholars in India. It establishes that Indian research involves many challenges like lack of funding and facilities, which can lead to high stress. The study aimed to assess grit levels using Duckworth's Grit Scale, perceived stress via the Perceived Stress Scale, and hope using the Trait Hope Scale. It is studied that most scholars had moderate-to-high stress levels. Especially in the case of scholars, Stress correlated negatively with grit and hope. While grit and hope predicted perceived stress in males, only hope did so in females. Hope also differed significantly by gender. The Article by Prasad [22] examines the causes of stress among PhD research scholars in India, referring to scholars at Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University. The article highlights that stress management programs are in high need by scholars at institutes, even at IIT Bombay. The study aimed to empirically assess key stress factors and coping strategies among scholars. It is examined through the article that scholars face moderate stress levels. Stress correlates negatively with performance. Work overload emerged as a prime contributor. Behavioral avoidance coping is related strongly to reduced stress. This article by Dutta et al,[7] examined the impact of academic stress on the academic achievement and health of higher secondary school students in Guwahati, India. Academic stress refers to stress triggered specifically by pressures and demands within the educational environment. The study measured stress levels and academic performance in a sample of 60 students. The research highlights the need for vigilant support systems to monitor academic stress among youth. Left unchecked, high stress severely undercuts educational development, psychological health, and future life prospects. Stakeholders across institutions, families, and communities must collectively foster positive learning environments where students can thrive. This article by Soomro [25] et al. examines the factors that contribute to stress among university students and the impact on their academic performance. stress includes challenging interpersonal dynamics, anxiety about the future, demanding academic requirements, and financial problems. The study reveals these stressors undermine students' performance and well-being. The authors advocate practical stress reduction policies and programs to support struggling students. This article by Hashim et al, [12]. investigates stress levels among final-year engineering students at a Malaysian public university. Health issues, Mental problems, poor academic performance, strained relationships, and depression in life are caused due to stress among University students. Final-year students face heightened stress from heavy workloads, societal expectations, and Job Placements. The study had students rate their stress levels across personal, academic, motivational, environmental, and workload dimensions to determine factors influencing stress and impact. The study documents common stress triggers for engineering students and advocates university efforts to conduct context-specific assessments and provide adaptive stress reduction training. Findings confirm environmental deficiencies and academic workloads heighten student stress. Targeted institutional support is vital for student well-being and success.

3. METHOD AND PARTICIPANTS

The method employed in the study is the cross-sectional survey method. To measure research output among Ph.D. research researchers at various institutions in Vellore district in terms of paper publications and their perceptions of job stress, this cross-sectional study used a survey approach. A total of 112 PhD researchers from various disciplines, including the social sciences, humanities were, comprised for the sample. A self-designed online questionnaire with 30 items was created to evaluate paper publications, job stress levels, and related factors,. Three elements made up the survey tool: a standardized scale to measure stress related to PHD, information about paper publications, and researcher demographics. Greater distress connected to work was indicated by higher scores. Age, gender, ability levels, and past exposure to technology-assisted language learning will all be varied within the sample. In my study, random sampling was the approach used for sampling. The sample size from the population was determined using the formula used by Kregcie and Morgan. In the investigation, a random sampling approach will be used. An organized questionnaire intended to capture quantitative data is the main data-collecting method used in this investigation. The survey will include closed-ended questions with Likert scale answers, enabling respondents to indicate whether they agree or disagree with certain claims.

3.1 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The collected data were subjected to both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Survey data were statistically analysed using SPSS Statistics. Tests including frequency tests and descriptive statistics to find the range, sum, percentage, standard deviation, and variance were performed in order to characterise the basic traits of the subjects. Internal consistency was investigated at, and reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha in SPSS. Given that the 30 item Cronbach alpha test score of $0.841 > 0.7$, the questionnaire is considered as reliable and tabulated in table 1 .

Table-1: Reliability of the Publication Stress Questionnaire (PSQ-30, N=112)

Questionnaire	Items	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient
Publication Stress Questionnaire (PSQ-30, N=112)	30	0.861

The data collected were quantitatively analyzed using SPSS and the data was tabulated in the table 4. Almost 81.25% of the participants affirmed that the pressure to publish research papers has significantly increased their stress levels. Nearly, 68.75% of the respondents agreed that balancing multiple research projects affects their stress levels negatively. 87.5% of the participants affirmed that meeting publication deadlines causes substantial stress in their academic life. 93.75% of the participants claimed that the expectation of publishing in high-impact journals creates stress level. Closely 75% of the participants avowed that the process of manuscript preparation adds to their work-related stress. Approximately 75% of the scholars stated that receiving reviewer comments negatively impacts their stress levels. Nearly 68.75% of the participants confirmed that collaborative research work contributes positively to reducing their stress. Totally 93.75% of the participants declared that having a clear publication plan helps in managing their stress related to publishing. Nearly 93.75% of the participants responded that inadequate support and guidance in the publication process elevates their stress. However, 68.75% of the respondents admitted that peer pressure to publish affects their stress levels in academics life. 93.75% of the participants confirmed that the supportive research environment helps in mitigating stress related to publications. 62.5% of the participants confessed that balancing teaching responsibilities and research work adds to their stress level. 87.5% of the respondents asserted that the fear of rejection from journals significantly impacts their stress levels. 93.75% of the respondents upheld that frequent revisions required for publication submissions increases their stress. 87.5% of the participants insisted that continuous encouragement from mentors and supervisors reduces their stress related to publications.

Table-2: Descriptive Statistics and Frequency of PSQ-30 (N= 112)

PSQ Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean	Frequency				
				1	2	3	4	5
Item 1	4.1875	1.01814	.09620	0	14	7	35	56
Item 2	4.0000	1.12306	.10612	7	0	28	28	49
Item 3	4.5000	.86992	.08220	0	7	7	21	77
Item 4	4.4375	.79164	.07480	0	7	0	42	63
Item 5	3.9375	1.25405	.11850	7	14	7	35	49
Item 6	3.8750	1.05800	.09997	0	21	7	49	35
Item 7	3.7500	1.03541	.09784	0	21	14	49	28
Item 8	4.4375	.79164	.07480	0	7	0	42	63

Item 9	4.5000	.79412	.07504	0	7	0	35	70
Item 10	3.6875	1.31541	.12429	14	7	14	42	35
Item 11	4.5000	.61512	.05812	0	0	7	42	63
Item 12	3.8750	1.32288	.12500	7	14	21	14	56
Item 13	4.3125	.84928	.08025	0	7	7	42	56
Item 14	4.3125	.77146	.07290	0	7	0	56	49
Item 15	4.6250	.69910	.06606	0	0	14	14	84
Item 16	3.8750	1.05800	.09997	0	14	28	28	42
Item 17	3.9375	.97057	.09171	7	0	14	63	28
Item 18	3.5625	1.27894	.12085	7	21	21	28	35
Item 19	3.6875	1.31541	.12429	7	21	14	28	42
Item 20	4.3125	.77146	.07290	0	0	21	35	56
Item 21	4.3750	.86081	.08134	0	7	7	35	63
Item 22	4.5625	.61191	.05782	0	0	7	35	70
Item 23	4.5000	.79412	.07504	0	0	21	14	77
Item 24	3.5625	1.06358	.10050	7	0	56	21	28
Item 25	3.8750	.86081	.08134	0	7	28	49	28
Item 26	4.5000	.71028	.06712	0	0	14	28	70
Item 27	4.3125	.84928	.08025	0	7	7	42	56
Item 28	4.1250	1.11602	.10545	0	14	21	14	63
Item 29	4.4375	.61191	.05782	0	0	7	49	56
Item 30	4.5000	.71028	.06712	0	0	14	28	70

62.5% of the respondents stated that competing with peers for publications intensifies their stress level. 81.25% of the participants avowed that insufficient resources for conducting research contribute to their stress related to publications and increases the stress level significantly. 56.25% of the respondents admitted that the importance of publications in career advancement increases their stress levels. 62.5% of the participants corresponded that self-imposed pressure to achieve a certain number of publications affects their stress level. 81.25% of the participants agreed that clear communication with co-authors reduces their stress in collaborative publishing. Almost 87.5% of the participants consented that the fear of not meeting publication expectations adds to their stress level. 93.75% of the participants confirmed that continuous rejection from journals impacts their stress levels adversely.

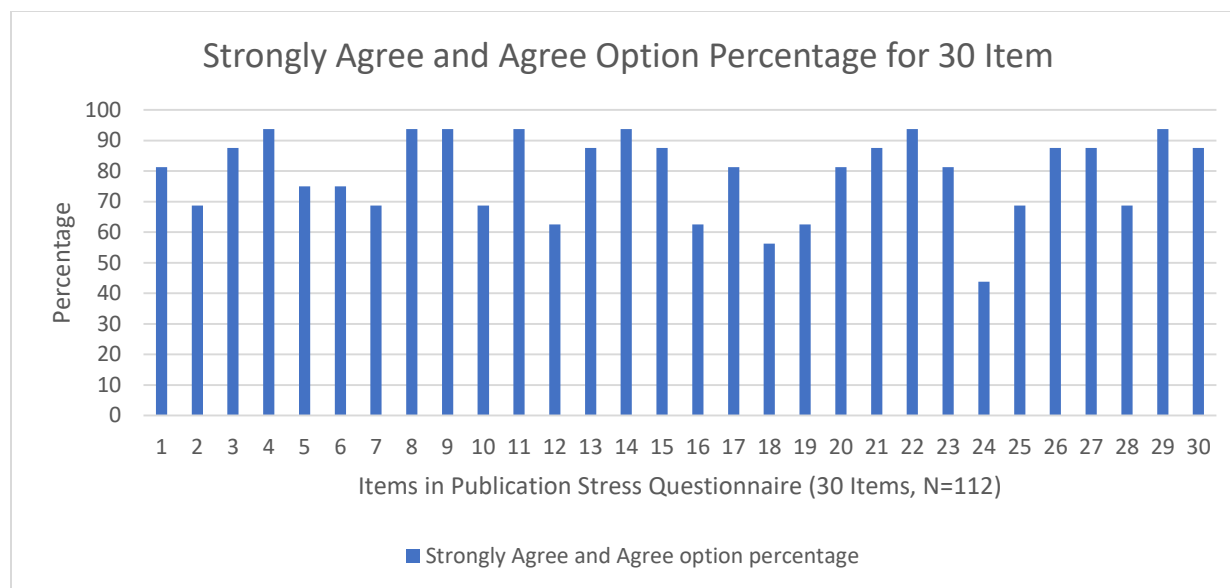


Chart-1: Percentage of PSQ-30

81.25% of the participants acclaimed that effective time management helps in minimizing stress related to publishing. 43.75% of the scholars confirmed that opportunities for sharing research findings alleviate their stress related to publications. 68.75% of the participants affirmed that the process of peer review is a significant stressor in academic publishing. Almost 87.5% of the participants consented that balancing personal life and research work affects their stress related to publications. Almost 87.5% of the participants confirmed that constructive feedback from reviewers helps in managing their stress level. 68.75% of the participants confirmed that the pressure to publish impacts their mental health negatively. 93.75% of the participants assented that support from colleagues in the publication process reduces their stress level. 87.5% of the participants have confirmed that the overall process of publishing research papers significantly contributes to their stress levels.

Limitation

1. The questionnaire was circulated only to the Vellore district in Tamil Nadu and focused only on PhD research scholars' publication pressure and stress.
2. The questionnaire was circulated to PhD scholars and focused only on the publication criteria in the stipulated time period.

Future scope

1. Comprehensive research should be carried out in all the districts of Tamil Nadu and states of India to address the issues and challenges of PhD scholars in meeting publication requirement.
2. Studies could be carried out to discover the students' mental and physical health in higher education.

Conclusion

The results of this cross-sectional study provide insight into the complex relationship between stress at work and paper publishing among Ph.D. research researchers. The poll has frozen a point in time, exposing a complex environment where the pressures of doctorate studies combine with the goal of achieving scholarly achievement through publications. It's interesting to note that the study shows a favourable relationship between academic motivation and the quality and quantity of paper submissions. A significant number of participants expressed that their desire to publish serves as a driving force behind their success in their research endeavours. This positive link

highlights the significance of publications as a source of motivation for researchers in their quest for knowledge as well as an indicator of academic performance. On the other hand, the survey has also shed light on the difficulties and pressures associated with the publication process of papers. The peer review process, publication deadline pressure, and rejections were found to be important sources of stress. These difficulties highlight the necessity for an encouraging academic setting that understands and deals with the pressures involved in the publishing process. The study emphasises how important coping strategies and peers are for reducing work-related stress in Ph.D. research academics. Peer networks, institutional assistance, and mentoring proved to be essential tools for overcoming the difficulties presented by the publication process. Coping mechanisms have been shown to be useful tools for stress management, such as time management techniques and mindfulness exercises. The results have clear implications for research supervisors and academic institutions. It is critical to acknowledge the pressures Ph.D. research scholars confront and to cultivate a positive research environment. Organisations have to think about starting mentoring programmes, offering resources for developing coping mechanisms, and creating cooperative research settings that prioritise mental wellbeing and productivity foremost.

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Appendix

Survey on Paper Publications and Work Stress among Ph.D. Research Scholars(PSQ-30)

S.No	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	The pressure to publish research papers has significantly increased my stress levels.					
2	Balancing multiple research projects affects my stress levels negatively.					
3	Meeting publication deadlines causes substantial stress in my academic life.					
4	The expectation of publishing in high-impact journals creates stress.					
5	The process of manuscript preparation adds to my work-related stress.					
6	Receiving reviewer comments negatively impacts my stress levels.					
7	Collaborative research work contributes positively to reducing my stress.					
8	Having a clear publication plan helps in managing my stress related to publishing.					
9	Inadequate support and guidance in the publication process elevate my stress.					
10	Peer pressure to publish affects my stress levels in academia.					

11	A supportive research environment helps in mitigating stress related to publications.					
12	Balancing teaching responsibilities and research work adds to my stress.					
13	The fear of rejection from journals significantly impacts my stress levels.					
14	Frequent revisions required for publication submissions increase my stress.					
15	Encouragement from mentors and supervisors reduces my stress related to publications.					
16	Competing with peers for publications intensifies my stress.					
17	Insufficient resources for conducting research contribute to my stress related to publications.					
18	The importance of publications in career advancement increases my stress levels.					
19	Self-imposed pressure to achieve a certain number of publications affects my stress.					
20	Clear communication with co-authors reduces my stress in collaborative publishing.					
21	The fear of not meeting publication expectations adds to my stress.					
22	Continuous rejection from journals impacts my stress levels adversely.					
23	Effective time management helps in minimizing stress related to publishing.					
24	Opportunities for sharing research findings alleviate my stress related to publications.					
25	The process of peer review is a significant stressor in academic publishing.					
26	Balancing personal life and research work affects my stress related to publications.					
27	Constructive feedback from reviewers helps in managing my stress.					
28	The pressure to publish impacts my mental health negatively.					
29	Support from colleagues in the publication process reduces my stress.					

30	The overall process of publishing research papers significantly contributes to my stress levels.					
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Thank you for participating in this survey. Your responses will help in understanding the relationship between paper publications and work stress among Ph.D. research scholars.

