

A study on occupational stress among employees of public and private sector textile mills with reference to Coimbatore District

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Abstract

Occupational stress arising to an employee is due to non-conducive work environment. In today's era of globalization, the textile mills are facing tough competition in producing quality products on par with global standards. Working condition makes the employee to work with high stress and pressure which leads to fatigue. When they are working in the same state of condition in the textile mills for the next day their

Occupational stress arising to an employee is due to non-conducive work environment. In today's era of globalization, the textile mills are facing tough competition in producing quality products on par with global standards. Working condition makes the employee to work with high stress and pressure which leads to fatigue. 'Stress' refers to the responses, body and mind have to the demands placed on them—which is a normal part of life and a normal part of any job: Without stress, one would not meet deadlines, strive to hit sales or production targets, or line up new clients. Meeting the demands and challenges of a job is part of what makes work interesting and satisfying, and it is often what allows people to develop new skills and advance in their careers.

Keywords: occupational stress, sociability, emotional exhaustion, emotional stability

1. Introduction

Occupational stress arising to an employee is due to non-conducive work environment. In today's era of globalization, the textile mills are facing tough competition in producing quality products on par with global standards. Working condition makes the employee to work with high stress and pressure which leads to fatigue. When they are working in the same state of condition in the textile mills for the next day their. In 1996, the World Health Organization labeled stress a 'worldwide epidemic'. Today, workplace stress is estimated to cost American companies more than \$300 billion a year in poor performance, absenteeism and health costs.

Coimbatore, also known as Kovai, is one of the major industrial cities in South India. It is the second largest city in Tamil Nadu after Chennai and the second most industrialized city in Tamil Nadu after Chennai. It is also the administrative headquarters of Coimbatore District. There are more than 25,000 small, medium and large scale industries and textile mills. The development of hydro electricity from the Pykara Falls in the 1930s led to a cotton boom in Coimbatore. The result has been a strong economy and a reputation as one of the greatest industrial cities in South India.

2. Statement of the Problem

Occupational stress arising to an employee is due to non-conducive work environment. In today's era of globalization, the textile mills are facing tough competition in producing quality products on par with global standards. Working condition makes the employee to work with high stress and pressure which leads to fatigue. When they are working in the same state of condition in the textile mills for the next day their efficiencies in the work place gradually reduces, and they are unable to work with much zeal. Also, they may fail to complete

the given task in the organization especially, the organization commitment. At this juncture, the researcher have analysed the above issues and its impact on physical conditions, viz. coronary heart disease and other ailments due to stress. It is necessary to understand the level of occupation stress based on Emotional Exhaustion, Vulnerability, Physical Fitness, Organisational Commitment, Sociability, Emotional Stability, Health, Relationship have considerable impact among the employees working in Textile mills in Coimbatore.

3. Objectives of the study

- i) To present the theoretical perspective and determinants of occupational stress.
- ii) To identify the perception of the employees of the textile mills towards occupational stress.
- iii) To contribute suggestions for policy implications

4. Methodology

This study adopts a research method in view of the objectives and the focus of the study. The researcher used descriptive type of research. In this study the research is analyzing the perception of employee's occupational stress working in Textile spinning mills in Coimbatore District. For effective data collection, the researcher had adopted simple random sampling technique and the study was focused on 5 NTC (National Textile Corporation) mills and 50 Private Mills in Coimbatore district. The major source of the data used to carry out the analysis is primary data. In order to fulfill the objectives set out, a sample study was undertaken by the use of well framed questionnaire and got them duly filled in. The sources of secondary data includes the publications and reports of textile industries in India, various other unpublished reports of non-governmental organizations, unpublished research

reports, doctoral thesis of various institutions, Books, Journals, articles, etc. The selection of sample is based only on availability of employees in the shift and it works out be about 6% of the total number of employees (Total = 15125 members), which is about 916 employees. The objectives framed for the present study formed the basis of the identification of the relevant statistical techniques such as Percentage analysis and Weighted Mean.

5. Theoretical Perspective

‘Stress’ refers to the responses, body and mind have to the demands placed on them—which is a normal part of life and a normal part of any job. Without stress, one would not meet deadlines, strive to hit sales or production targets, or line up new clients. Meeting the demands and challenges of a job is part of what makes work interesting and satisfying, and it is often what allows people to develop new skills and advance in their careers. In the workplace, people regularly experience stress-causing situations, react to them with heightened tension, then return to a more relaxed state when the crisis, big or small, is resolved. However, problems occur when stress is so overwhelming or constant that the tension never abates and one can never get to relax. The present study categorized stress into eight different categories that are

1. Emotional Exhaustion
2. Vulnerability
3. Physical Fitness
4. Organisational Commitment
5. Sociability
6. Emotional Stability
7. Health
8. Relationship

5.1 Emotional Exhaustion

Years of research on role ambiguity has shown that it is a noxious state which is associated with negative psychological, physical and behavioural outcomes. That is, workers who perceive role ambiguity in their jobs tend to be dissatisfied with their work, anxious, tense, report high numbers of somatic complaints, tend to be absent from work and may leave their jobs. The most common correlates of role overload tend to be physical and emotional exhaustion.

5.2 Vulnerability

The reconceptualization of workplace problems in terms of stress and the individual’s inability to cope with it, lead to proposed cures that have the effect of lowering our expectations regarding human resilience, accentuating the worker’s sense of vulnerability and causing feelings of frailty and powerlessness. When adverse work situations are drawn as instances of an individual’s failure to respond appropriately to the stresses and pressures of their job, the solutions proposed are therapeutic interventions such as counseling or medical treatment.

5.3 Physical Fitness

When stressful situations are not resolved and persist for some time, the body is kept in a constant state of alertness and defensive action, increasing wear and tear on biological systems, resulting in damage and exhaustion. During the ‘fight or flight’ response, the immune system is weakened, increasing vulnerability to illness and compromising the body’s ability to

repair itself and defend itself against disease which leads to difference in physical fitness. Short term symptoms include headaches, muscular tension, chest pains, indigestion, palpitations, disturbed sleep and increased susceptibility to respiratory infections. Long term illnesses attributable to work-related stress include heart disease, hypertension, ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome, high cholesterol and increased risk of cancer, diabetes and asthma.

5.4 Organisational Commitment

Organizational commitment is a bond the employee has with his/her organization. Organizational commitment has been defined and measured in several different ways. The various definitions and measures share a common theme in that organizational commitment is considered to be a bond or linking between the individual and the organization. The stress factors that are attributed to organizational factors are cultural and management practices within the organization, non-participation in decision making, inappropriate and inadequate communication, totalitarian leadership style, organizational policies, insufficient opportunities for advancement, lack of job security are some factors that plays a role on making stress.

5.5 Sociability

Several studies discussed the common behavioural effects of chronic stress includes diminished sociability and reduced confidence. Thus, people subjected under too much stress for a prolonged period often exhibit antisocial and risk aversion tendencies. Another study revealed that people who have higher predisposition toward anxiety are more likely to be less confident and less competitive when under stress as opposed to low-anxiety people who exhibit overconfidence and become highly competitive when subjected under stress.

5.6 Emotional Stability

Emotional stability is one of the six personality traits that influence individual behaviour. Personality refers to dynamic mental structures and coordinated mental processes that determine individuals’ emotional and behavioral adjustments to their environments. The term neuroticism will be used more often in the study and it represents the opposite of emotional stability. Neuroticism is typically defined as higher levels of trait-based psychological distress, anxiety, and general dissatisfaction. Individuals who always show characteristics of worrying, fear, guilt, sadness, anger and disgust have high neuroticism levels and are emotionally unstable, whereas, individuals low on neuroticism are emotionally stable and exhibit characteristics of calmness, even tempered and are relaxed.

5.7 Health

The characteristics and design of the workplace can cause psychological stress. Adverse ergonomic characteristics of work can cause visual, muscular and psychological disturbances such as visual fatigue, eye strain, sore eyes, headaches, fatigue, muscle soreness, cumulative trauma disorders, back disorders, psychological tension, anxiety and depression. Sometimes these effects are temporary and may disappear when the individual is removed from work or given an opportunity to rest at work, or when the design of the work environment is improved. When exposure to poor ergonomic conditions is chronic, then the effects can become permanent.

Visual and muscular disturbances, and aches and pains can induce anxiety in employees.

5.8 Relationship

Family and work are inter-related and interdependent to the extent that experiences in one area affect the quality of life in the other (Sarantakos, 1996). The family is an integral part of the economic process and when hiring an employee, an employer automatically accepts the worker’s family

obligations (Sarantakos, 1996). This phenomenon is known as ‘spillover’.

6. Analysis Results

The independent variables chosen for the study were type of mills, gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, department and monthly income. The data thus collected were arranged in simple tabular form suitable statistical tools were employed to analyze the data.

6.1 Demographic Variables

Table 1: Demographic Variables of the Respondents Working In Various Mills in Coimbatore District

S. No.	Demographics	Respondents (916 Nos.)	Percentage (100%)
01.	Type of Mill respondents working		
	NTC	90	9.83
	Private Ltd.	826	90.17
02.	Age		
	Below 25	194	21.18
	25 to 40	422	46.07
	Above 40	300	32.75
03.	Gender		
	Male	646	70.52
	Female	270	29.48
04.	Marital Status		
	Married	582	63.54
	Unmarried	334	36.46
05.	Educational Qualification		
	Secondary Level	376	41.05
	Higher Secondary	105	11.46
	Graduates	303	33.08
	Post Graduates	28	3.06
	Technical Degree	104	11.35
06.	Department		
	HR, Finance and Administration	127	13.86
	Plant and Production	667	72.82
	Supply chain and Marketing	122	13.32
07.	Monthly Income		
	Below Rs.10000	224	24.45
	Rs.10000 to 20000	251	27.40
	Rs.20000 to 30000	229	25.00
	Above Rs.30000	212	23.14

Source: Survey Data

From the above table it is clear that majority (90.17%) of the respondents are working in Private Textile Mills and 9.83% of the respondents are working in NTC Mills. Majority (70.52%) of the respondents are male and 29.48% of the respondents are female. Less than half (46.07%) of the respondents belong to the age between 25 and 40 years, while 32.75% of the respondents belong to the age above 40 years and the remaining 21.18% of the respondents belong to the age below 25 years. Most (63.54%) of the respondents are married and 36.46% of the respondents are unmarried. Less than half (41.05%) of the respondents have qualified upto secondary level, 33.08% of the respondents are qualified with graduation, 11.46% of the respondents are qualified with higher secondary,

11.35% of the respondents are qualified with technical degree and the remaining 3.06% of the respondents are post graduates. Majority (72.82%) of the respondents are working in Plant and Production departments, while 13.86% of the respondents are working in HR, Finance and administration departments and the remaining 13.32% of the respondents are working in supply chain and marketing department. Maximum (27.4%) of the respondents are having income between Rs.10000 and 20000, 25% of the respondents income is from Rs.20000 to 30000, 24.45% of the respondents monthly income is below Rs.10000 and the remaining 23.14% of the respondents monthly income is above Rs.30000.

7. Weighted Mean

Table 2: Rank Showing the Respondents Opinion on Emotional Exhaustion

Emotional Exhaustion	Wtd. Mean	Rank
Feeling emotionally drained of the work.	3.717	5
Generally feel that life is a burden.	3.848	3
Feel absolutely useless, when gets scolding from the boss for minor mistakes.	3.801	4
Finding extremely difficult to take decisions.	3.456	6
Getting very nervous, when facing role ambiguity in my job.	3.976	1
Sharing the feelings openly when feeling angry or worried.	3.883	2

Source: Primary Data

The result shows that the highest rank “getting very nervous when they face role ambiguity in their job requirements” that has less significance leading towards occupational stress and the least rating was towards “finding extremely difficult to take

decisions” which does have very high impact on emotional exhaustion that leads towards organizational stress among the employees working in Textile mills in Coimbatore.

Table 3: Rank Showing the Respondents Opinion on Vulnerability

Vulnerability	Wtd. Mean	Rank
Compared to others, usually come out ahead.	3.881	5
Love to take risks, when the stakes are high.	3.752	7
Explains things and apologies	3.966	4
Life is series of achievements to meet challenges.	4.023	3
Doing something and expected to be rewarded	3.647	8
Given enough time to do what is expected of me on my job.	2.786	10
Getting upset and thinking that not able to prosper (or) make progress in the job or career.	3.582	9
Feel neglected and not in the team.	4.145	1
Not having information to do the work.	3.844	6
Feeling heavily loaded with too many jobs.	4.053	2

Source: Primary Data

The result shows that the respondents were highly vulnerable to stress with respect to “getting upset and thinking that not

able to prosper” and “given enough time to do what is expected of them on their job”.

Table 4: Rank Showing the Respondents Opinion on Physical Fitness

Physical Fitness	Wtd. Mean	Rank
Get disturbed sleep.	3.845	3
Have frequent head ache while doing a job.	3.721	5
Loose weight consistently.	3.743	4
Become restless and feel difference in respiration	4.001	1
Feel highly tensed when angry or worried	3.945	2

Source: Primary Data

The results shows that the highest rank was “becoming restless and felt the difference in respiratory conditions” which had least impact on physical fitness and the least rating was “having

frequent headache while doing the job” that had most level of impact on the physical fitness due to stress.

Table 5: Rank Showing the Respondents Opinion on Organisational Commitment

Organisational Commitment	Wtd. Mean	Rank
Proud to tell people about the work place.	3.328	5
Feel proud to be part of the organization.	3.590	1
Feel to move from this concern because of various reasons.	3.348	4
feel that, the company should change in some policies and perspectives.	3.377	3
Expects opportunities for advancement in my career and productivity	3.437	2

Source: Primary Data

The result shows “feeling proud to tell people about the work place” that on a positive factor based on the organisational commitment had very high impact of stress on the respondents, whereas, the least rating on the negative factor was “feel that,

the company should change in some policies and perspectives”, which also shows most contribution in their level of stress based on the organisational commitment.

Table 6: Rank Showing the Respondents Opinion on Sociability

Sociability	Wtd. Mean	Rank
Like to go out frequently to balance mood disparity	3.658	4
Prefer to meet people for social interaction	3.904	1
Hate being with a crowd who exchange practical jokes on one another	3.429	5
Enjoy spending long period of time socially and within	3.801	2
Loss of interest or pleasure in normally enjoyable activities	3.787	3

Source: Primary Data

The weighted average shows that on the positive perspective the respondents “Enjoy spending long period of time socially and within” had maximum stress among the respondents towards sociability whereas, “Loss of interest or pleasure in

normally enjoyable activities” on a negative factor had maximum level of stress among respondents towards sociability.

Table 7: Rank Showing the Respondents Opinion on Emotional Stability

Emotional Stability	Wtd. Mean	Rank
Able to do things like other people	3.428	3
Thinking self as unlucky	3.818	1
Suffering from the feelings of imperiously	3.418	4
Feeling inadequate when addressing social gatherings	3.612	2

Source: Primary Data

The result shows that on the positive perspective shows “ability to do things like other people” the respondents had significant impact of stress based on their emotional stability and the least

factor based on negative scoring “Thinking self as unlucky” reveals that they had significant influence on their stress levels towards emotional stability.

Table 8: Rank Showing the Respondents Opinion on Health

Health	Wtd. Mean	Rank
Experience problems like feeling asleep at work.	3.835	4
Used to choose things tactfully that makes happy	4.075	3
Suffer from depression, or having felt depressed such as sadness or loss of motivation.	3.514	5
Skip meals or eat sporadically / frequently.	4.222	2
Having increased physical complaints such as muscle aches or more frequent illnesses.	4.255	1

Source: Primary Data

The result shows that “having increased physical complaints such as muscle aches or more frequent illnesses” that the respondents had very small impact of stress based on their health related issues and the most stress factor was “suffering

from depression, or having felt depressed such as sadness or loss of motivation” that had high influence on their stress levels with regards to their Health situations.

Table 9: Rank Showing the Respondents Opinion on Relationship

Relationship	Always True	Usually True	Sometimes True	Rarely True	Never True	Wtd. Mean	Rank
Spend sufficient time with family.	186 (20.31)	125 (13.65)	441 (48.14)	91 (9.93)	73 (7.97)	3.284	3
Work puts strain on family / relationships.	86 (9.39)	71 (7.75)	401 (43.78)	155 (16.92)	203 (22.16)	3.347	2
Have time to contact / spend time with friends.	154 (16.81)	110 (12.01)	404 (44.10)	103 (11.24)	145 (15.83)	3.027	4
Feel negative changes in behavioral pattern at home, caused by work related stress.	57 (6.22)	29 (3.17)	435 (47.49)	173 (18.89)	222 (24.24)	3.517	1
Avoid expressing true emotions at home.	136 (14.85)	50 (5.46)	337 (36.79)	129 (14.08)	264 (28.82)	2.634	5

Source: Primary Data

The result shows that the highest rank was “having less time to contact / spend time with friends” based on the positive scoring factor and the highest level of stress was “feeling negative changes in behavioural pattern at home, caused by work related stress” that are creating maximum stress based on the relationship factors.

8. Summary of the Results

- Majority of the respondents are working in Private Textile Mills, while most of the respondents are male, less than half of the respondents belong to the age between 25 and 40 years and most of the respondents are married. It is evident that less than half (41.05%) of the respondents have qualified upto secondary level, majority (72.82%) of the

respondents are working in Plant and Production departments, maximum of the respondents are having income between Rs.10000 and 20000.

- It is found that based on emotional exhaustion the highest rank was for the statement “getting very nervous when they face role ambiguity in their job requirements” and the least rating was towards “finding extremely difficult to take decisions”
- It is found that based on vulnerable leading to stress was highest for the statement “getting upset and thinking that not able to prosper” and least for the statement “given enough time to do what is expected of them on their job”.
- It is found that based on impact on physical fitness due to stress was highest for the statement “becoming restless and felt the difference in respiratory conditions” and the least rating was “having frequent headache while doing the job”.
- It is found that based on impact on stress on organizational commitment was highest for the statement “feeling proud to tell people about the work place” whereas, the least rating was for the statement “feel that, the company should change in some policies and perspectives”.
- It is found that based on impact on stress on sociability was highest for the statement “Enjoy spending long period of time socially and within” whereas, “Loss of interest or pleasure in normally enjoyable activities” was found to be the least.
- It is found that based on stress disturbing the emotional stability was highest for the statement “ability to do things like other people” and the least factor was “Thinking self as unlucky”.
- It is found that based on stress having impact on Health situations was least for the statement “having increased physical complaints such as muscle aches or more frequent illnesses” and the most stress factor was “suffering from depression, or having felt depressed such as sadness or loss of motivation”.
- It is found that based on stress having impact on relationship factor was least for the statement “having less time to contact / spend time with friends” and the highest level of stress was towards “feeling negative changes in behavioural pattern at home, caused by work related stress”.

9. Suggestions

There are eight contributing factors of occupational stress measured based on the perception of the respondents which shows that the respondents “finding extremely difficult to take decisions” does have very high impact on emotional exhaustion that leads towards organisational stress.

- It is important to assist the respondents in the work, the management shall train these respondents and help them overcome their negligence or unforced errors in the areas they are suffering from which may help them to overcome the emotional exhaustion faced in their job and manage their occupational stress in the Textile Mills.
- The growth and prospects is the fundamental need of every employee working in the organization.
- With respect to physical fitness factors, the respondents need to be provided with sufficient rest and proper restroom with suitable rest timings.

- When it comes to organizational commitment, the respondents feel that the company should change in its policies and prospective.
- The change is the need of the hour and it is recommended that the company shall adopt policies, which is not stringent to comply with or not a stereotype.
- It is also recommended that the people in textile mills need to be identified and proper counseling should be provided to help them come out of stress. A proper mentoring should help them overcome this situation and make them understand how worthy is their contribution to the organization, what are all the positive factors due to their presence, how they are useful to their family and how much productivity has been achieved
- The higher level of stress is the suffering from depression or having felt depressed such as sadness or loss of motivation. Therefore, the management needs immediate attention to eradicate the occupational stress caused by physical and psychological factors.
- It is suggested that the relationship shall be improved through helping the respondents to spend sufficient time with family and friends, control their emotions, categorize their work and give enough time for their personal comfort.

10. Conclusion

The demographics such as age, gender, educational qualification, experience, income, etc. are taken into consideration to compare with the contributing factors for stress such as Emotional Exhaustion, Vulnerability, Physical Fitness, Organizational Commitment, Sociability, Emotional Stability, Health and finally, Relationship which are considered to be the determinants to measure the level of stress among the employees of select Textile mills in Coimbatore. it is essential to maintain the competence which may have indirect influence that may be the contributing factor of occupational stress among the respondents working in Public and Private Sector Mills. The study concludes that if the recommendations are taken for implementation by the management of the Textile mills by providing the specialized support to their employees to overcome stress and prosper to lead a stress free life.

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