

A Study Of Selected Correlates Of Organizational Stress In Higher Education Institutions

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INTRODUCTION

In today's world of abundance and mounting desires, there seems to be a rat race to strive for higher and higher material gains. A climate for innovations and creativity is emerging, where intellectual wealth is accumulating the plethora of new knowledge and skills, turning the threats into opportunities. There was never so much need felt for superior intellectual wealth. Education, particularly higher education, is seen as a major foundation in implementing the complex process of change. Really, *"these are tough times for a teacher."* (Smylie, 1999). It is tough because of increasing demand from the teachers and due to a progressive shift in the role expectations. Under such circumstances, the stress is inevitable. Research reveals the fact that teaching is a stressful occupation (Dworkin, Haney, Dworkin and Telschow, 1990; Sigler and Wilson, 1988; Kyriacou, 1987; Schwab, Jackson and Schuler, 1986; Pines and Maslach, 1980) and the stress has increased as the relationship between society and education has become more complex (Esteve and Fracchia, 1986). In fact, academicians throughout the world deal with a substantial amount of ongoing occupational stress (Kinman, 2001).

In India, earlier, the teachers did not have to encounter so many stressful situations, but with new academic demands, and also when the University Grants Commission is in the process of introducing new regulations in which teachers will be subjected to a performance-based assessment system that will determine their career advancement, the teachers will have to learn how to manage stress. The new system will not only take into account a teacher's performance inside the classroom in terms of lectures, practical and tutorials, but will also emphasize on research and academic contributions (HT, 2010). According to Cook and Phillip (2001), stress refers to the body's psychological, emotional and physiological response to any demand that is perceived as threatening to a person's well-being. Stress knows no boundaries. The degree of stress experienced depends on many factors. First, the demand must be perceived. People must be aware that it exists/ as threatening (having the potential to hurt them if they do not react appropriately). Second, the threat must be to something that is important to people (has the potential to substantially affect their well-being). Finally, people experiencing the threatening demand must be uncertain about the outcome (not sure that if they can deal with it effectively). Among life situations, the workplace stands out as a potentially important source of stress, purely because of the amount of time spent in this setting (Erkutly and Chafra, 2006). Thus, stress in general and occupational stress, in particular, is a fact of modern-day life that seems to have been on the increase. According to NIOSH (1999), *"Job stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of the worker."*

Stress is not always negative or harmful and indeed, the absence of stress is death (Selye, 1976). But different people have different feelings and reactions in response to the stressors of life. Individual differences affect perceptions and interpretations of events around us. They contribute to our experience of stress and our decisions what to do to deal with the stressors; our choice of coping process (Moran, 1998). Lu et al. (2003) explained that vast individual differences in vulnerability to stress alter an individual's perception of a potential source of stress (direct effect), impact on the transformation of perceived stress into various consequences of stress (indirect effect), and ameliorate these stress consequences (direct effect).

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The analysis of the related literature reveals that teachers very often feel stress due to professional demands and ambiguous job descriptions, parental pressure, non-supportive behavior and lack of student motivation (Kazimi, 2007). The studies reported work overload (Peiro et al., 2001; Linzer et al., 2002; Hutri and Lindeman, 2002; Lyons, 2002; Bauckenoogh et al., 2005); role conflict (Lyons, 2002; Akiko et al., 2004); time pressure (Iwasaki et al., 2001; Linzer et al., 2002); type of job (Schieman et al., 2003; Anshula, 2008); Lack of support (Linzer et al., 2002; Kang and Singh, 2006; Anshula, 2008) and work standards (Hsieh, 2004) as workplace stressors. The studies further demonstrated that women experience more stress (Bhatnagar, 1988; Ganster and Schaubroeck, 1991; Sharpley, Reynolds, Acosta and Dua, 1996; Sharda and Raju, 2001; Rodriguez et al. 2005; Antoniou, Polychroni and Vlachakis, 2006; Ganapathi and Premapriya, 2008; Tajularipin, Aminuddin Hassan, Vizata and Saifuddin, 2009). Shalini Srivastava and Prashant Verma (2008) added to the above results and reported that married women are highly stressed because of the role overload, while the findings of the study by Nina Polloski Vokic and Bogdonic (2007) revealed no significant difference in stress perceived by men and women. On the other hand, the studies have denied the differences in stress levels due to gender differences (Martocchio and O'Leary, 1989; Xiaodong YUE, 1997). As far as the relationship between education and organizational role stress is concerned, some research results reported that people with the highest level of education had lower stress (Leon Jackson and Sebastiaan Rothmann, 2006; Shalini Srivastava and Prashant Verma, 2008) whereas Xiaodong YUE (1997) found that education levels do not differentiate the levels of work stress and Ganapathi and Premapriya (2008) reported highest stress among highly educated people. Xiaodong YUE (1997) observed that the levels of work stress experienced were independent of age. These were inconsistent with the results, which reported that the younger age group experienced more stress (Dua, 1994; Benbaker, Shammari, Jefri, 1995; Sharpley, Reynolds, Acosta, Dua, 1996; Leyon Jackson and Sebastiaan Rothmann, 2006; Ganapathi and Premapriya, 2008).

The Literature review reveals that personal factors like gender, education and age do have some impact on stress at the workplace. Focusing on the stress level of teachers serving in government and private colleges in Himachal Pradesh, it was decided to analyze the impact of some factors like education, gender and age on their occupational stress. The present study is an attempt to analyze the relationship between organizational role stress, gender, age and education among the faculty members of the government and private colleges in Himachal Pradesh.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the relationship between gender and the dimensions of organizational role stress.
2. To study the impact of age differences on the levels of organizational role stress experienced by the teachers.
3. To analyze the relationship between education levels and organizational role stress.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

Broadly, the following hypotheses have been taken for the study:

H0-1 : There is no relationship between gender and the dimensions of organizational role stress.

H0-2 : Age differences do not differentiate the levels of experienced organizational role stress.

H0-3 : There exists no relationship between education levels and the perceived organizational role stress.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For conducting the study, both primary and secondary data were collected from the college teachers of Himachal Pradesh. Primary data was collected with help of Organizational role stress scale, 1981, 1983 by Uday Pareek. A representative sample was selected with the help of multi-stage sampling technique. First, the colleges were categorized into government and private colleges. Thereafter, all the colleges were arranged on the basis of teachers' strength in descending order. Further, the colleges with the highest, moderate and lowest number of teachers were identified and two colleges were selected from each category. Finally, twelve colleges - six government and six private - constituted the sample, and the number of units studied were two hundred fifty (125 males, 125 females).

Variables for the study included personal variables namely - gender, age and education. Dependent variable consisted of the dimensions of organizational role stress (Uday Pareek, 1983; ORS Scale). To measure the role stress in higher-education, ten dimensions were taken. These are:

- 1. Self Role Distance (SRD):** It arises from a gap experienced between one's concepts of self and the demands of the role.
- 2. Inter Role Conflict (IRC):** Since an individual learns to develop expectations as a result of his socializing and identification with a significant other, it is quite likely that he sees a certain incompatibility between the different expectations of his role.
- 3. Role Stagnation (RS):** When an individual occupies a role for a long time, he feels less secure when he enters the new role.
- 4. Role Ambiguity (RA):** When an individual is not clear about his job definitions, performance expectations and preferred methods of meeting those expectations, or consequences of their behavior.
- 5. Inter Role Distance (IRD):** When the individual occupies more than one role. There may be conflict between the expectations of these roles.
- 6. Role Overload (RO):** When people are expected to accomplish more than their ability, or there are too many expectations from one role, people feel that they under tremendous pressure.
- 7. Role Isolation (RI):** When the individual feels that certain roles are psychologically near to him and some other are at a distance, he observes the absence of strong linkages between one's role and other roles.
- 8. Role Explosion (RE):** It arises when the role becomes less important than it used to be, or when someone else gets the credit for the job done by the individual.
- 9. Personal Inadequacy (PI):** It depicts the absence of adequate skills, competence and training to meet the demands of one's role.
- 10. Resource Inadequacy (RIn):** It arises when the human or material resources allocated to meet the demand of the role are inadequate.

STATISTICAL TOOLS USED

Correlation analysis was used to measure the strength and the direction of the relationship between the variables. The correlation value (r) lies between -1 and +1. When the coefficient is -1, it is said to be perfectly negative. When the coefficient is +1, it is said to be perfectly positive, and when the coefficient is zero (0), it is said to exist in no correlation. One-way ANOVA, the analysis of variance, was used for the comparison of mean and standard deviation values to clear the impact of different categories of the personal variables, i.e. gender, age and education on organization role stress dimensions. Besides, regression analysis was used to ascertain the probable form of the relationship between the dependent variables and independent variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Table 1 : Relationship Between Personal Variables And The Dimensions Of Organizational Role Stress (ORS)										
ORS Dimensions Personal Variables	IRD	RS	IRC	RE	RO	RI	PI	SRD	RA	RIn
Gender	-.177*	-.071	-.057	-.115*	-.234**	.064	-.007	-.044	-.306**	-.051
Age	-.078	.040	.026	-.129*	-.039	-.188**	-.136*	-.198**	.011	-.224**
Education	-.085	-.030	-.032	-.108	-.053	-.058	-.008	-.126*	-.158*	-.150*
*P<0.05, **P<0.01										

✿ **Gender:** The correlation Table 1 above exhibits significant negative relationship of gender with inter role distance

($r = -.177, p < 0.05$), role explosion ($r = -.115, p < 0.05$), role overload ($r = -.234, p < 0.001$) and role ambiguity ($r = -.306, p < 0.05$). Meaning thereby that gender differences influenced the experienced inter role distance, role explosion, role overload and role ambiguity among the faculty members of the institutions of higher learning.

✿ **Age:** The Table 1 reported a significant negative relationship of age with role explosion ($r = -.129, p < 0.05$), role isolation ($r = -.188, p < 0.01$), personal inadequacy ($r = -.136, p < 0.05$), self role distance ($r = -.198, p < 0.01$), and resource inadequacy ($r = -.224, p < 0.01$). From these results, it is revealed that with the increase in age, the extent of organizational role stress on different dimensions namely, role explosion, role isolation, personal inadequacy, self role distance and resource inadequacy is reduced.

✿ **Education:** The Table 1 revealed significant negative relationship of education with self-role distance ($r = -.126, p < 0.05$), role ambiguity ($r = -.158, p < 0.05$) and resource inadequacy ($r = -.150, p < 0.05$). The analysis suggested that obtaining of higher qualification/ higher degree reduced self-role distance, role ambiguity and resource inadequacy among the teachers.

ONE WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

The Table 2 shows the results of one-way analysis of variance. The analysis revealed that males experience more stress as compared to their counterparts. These results are inconsistent with the research results, which reported high stress among women as compared to men (Bhatnagar, 1988; Sharpley, Reynolds, Acosta and Dua, 1996; Ganstre and Schaubroeck, 1991; Sharda and Raju, 2001; Rodriguez et al., 2005; Polychroni and Vlachakis, 2006; Ganapathi and Premapriya, 2008; Tajularipin, Aminuddin, Vizata and Saifuddin, 2009). Further, the results discarded the findings which referred that gender differences have not influenced the extent of work stress experienced by the individuals (Martocchio and O'Leary, 1989; Xiaodong YUE, 1997; Nina Poloski and Bogdanic, 2007).

Table 2 : Impact Of Gender On The Dimensions Of Organizational Role Stress						
ORS Dimensions	Gender	(n)	Mean	Standard Deviation	F-Value	P-Value
IRD	Male	125	5.2880	4.0077	7.998*	.005
	Female	125	4.0400	2.8776		
RS	Male	125	5.2640	3.2357	1.271	.261
	Female	125	4.8240	2.9267		
IRC	Male	125	4.4960	3.0417	3.318	.070
	Female	125	3.8480	2.5623		
RE	Male	125	6.9440	3.7574	5.788*	0.17
	Female	125	5.9200	2.9199		
RO	Male	125	4.3840	3.9325	14.378*	.000
	Female	125	2.7280	2.8943		
RI	Male	125	7.2800	3.9321	1.029	.311
	Female	125	7.7760	3.7970		
PI	Male	125	5.9280	3.7970	.014	.907
	Female	125	5.8800	3.4831		
SRD	Male	125	5.9520	2.9800	.489	.485
	Female	125	5.7280	2.9536		
RA	Male	125	4.4240	2.6255	25.610*	.000
	Female	125	2.5280	3.4320		
RIIn	Male	125	6.2560	2.4015	.636	.426
	Female	125	5.9520	2.4015		
*P<0.05, **P<0.01						

✿ **Age :** Table 3 reports the impact of different age groups on certain dimensions of role stress. It shows that the lowest

Table 3 : Impact Of Age On Organizational Role Stress Dimensions						
ORS Dimensions	Age (Yrs)	(n)	Mean	Standard Deviation	F-Value	P-Value
IRD	30-35	94	5.1596	4.2561	1.626	.199
	35-40	111	4.2703	2.9938		
	Above40	45	4.6000	3.0832		
RS	30-35	94	4.9894	3.1809	.471	.659
	35-40	111	4.9369	2.9887		
	Above40	45	5.4222	3.1658		
IRC	30-35	94	4.0319	3.0672	.208	.812
	35-40	111	2.2883	2.8361		
	Above40	45	4.1778	2.2592		
RE	30-35	94	6.9043	3.6102	3.108*	.004
	35-40	111	6.3423	3.2319		
	Above40	45	5.6667	3.2474		
RO	30-35	94	3.9574	4.2652	1.684	.188
	35-40	111	3.0991	3.0240		
	Above40	45	3.8444	2.9692		
RI	30-35	94	8.3723	3.7301	4.530*	.012
	35-40	111	7.2703	3.8399		
	Above40	45	6.4000	3.9104		
PI	30-35	94	6.5000	3.3753	3.655*	.002
	35-40	111	5.6036	3.0845		
	Above40	45	5.4000	3.1795		
SRD	30-35	94	6.3936	2.5197	5.032*	.007
	35-40	111	5.7117	2.5059		
	Above40	45	5.0000	2.3837		
RA	30-35	94	3.4362	3.2281	.016	.984
	35-40	111	3.4865	2.9752		
	Above40	45	3.5333	3.2235		
RIIn	30-35	94	6.9255	3.0839	6.683*	.001
	35-40	111	5.8018	2.6725		
	Above40	45	5.1333	3.2794		
*P<0.05, **P<0.01						

age group experienced stress on the dimensions of role explosion, role isolation, personal inadequacy, self-role distance and resource inadequacy. The results are in consonance with the results of some research studies (Dua, 1994; Ben – Bakr, Shammari, Jefri, 1995; Sharply, Reynolds, Acosta, Dua, 1996; Leyon Jackson and Sebastiaan Rothmann, 2006; and Ganpathi and Premapriya, 2008).

✿ **Education** : Table 4 portrays the effects of different levels of education on the dimensions of organizational role stress. The analysis reported that the respondents with the lower degree in higher education were highly stressed on the dimensions of self-role distance, role ambiguity and resource inadequacy. The results are consistent with the research studies which related higher levels of education with lower stress (Leon Jackson and Sebastiaan Rothmann, 2006; Shalini and Prashant, 2008) whereas, these results have denied the findings which stated no differentiation in levels of work stress due to educational differences (Xiaodong YUE, 1997). Further, the results are totally opposite to

Table 4 : Impact Of Education On Organizational Role Stress Dimensions						
ORS Dimensions	Education	(n)	Mean	Standard Deviation	F Value	P Value
IRD	Below Graduation	25	4.9200	4.5270	1.370	.256
	Graduation/Post Graduation	70	5.2000	3.9291		
	M.Phil/Ph.D	155	4.3806	3.1464		
RS	Below Graduation	25	5.3600	3.7292	.151	.860
	Graduation/Post Graduation	70	5.0429	3.3855		
	M.Phil/Ph.D	155	4.9935	2.8433		
IRC	Below Graduation	25	4.4800	3.7982	.171	.843
	Graduation/Post Graduation	70	4.1717	2.7661		
	M.Phil/Ph.D	155	4.1226	2.8655		
RE	Below Graduation	25	7.3600	3.7625	1.476	.231
	Graduation/Post Graduation	70	6.6429	3.5306		
	M.Phil/Ph.D	155	6.1871	3.2629		
RO	Below Graduation	25	3.4000	4.1130	1.213	.299
	Graduation/Post Graduation	70	4.1143	3.3688		
	M.Phil/Ph.D	155	3.3290	3.5201		
RI	Below Graduation	25	6.5200	2.4000	1.991	.139
	Graduation/Post Graduation	70	6.1143	2.6460		
	M.Phil/Ph.D	155	5.6065	2.9067		
PI	Below Graduation	25	6.3600	2.9844	.489	.614
	Graduation/Post Graduation	70	5.6429	3.0315		
	M.Phil/Ph.D	155	5.9484	3.2530		
SRD	Below Graduation	25	9.1600	3.8371	3.210*	.042
	Graduation/Post Graduation	70	6.9000	3.6065		
	M.Phil/Ph.D	155	7.5484	3.9067		
RA	Below Graduation	25	4.4400	4.0008	3.219*	.042
	Graduation/Post Graduation	70	3.9571	3.2768		
	M.Phil/Ph.D	155	3.1032	2.8081		
RIIn	Below Graduation	25	7.1200	2.5053	2.837	.060
	Graduation/Post Graduation	70	6.4571	3.1746		
	M.Phil/Ph.D	155	5.7806	2.9745		
*P<0.05, **P<0.01						

the findings of the study conducted by Ganapathi and Premapriya (2008) which referred the highest stress among the people with higher degrees.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

✿**Gender** : As far as relationship between gender and organizational role stress is concerned, the regression analysis (Table 5) suggests that gender contributed 44.1 percent (strong) towards inter role distance, 35.6 percent (average) towards role explosion, 43.7 percent (strong) towards role overload, and 41.5 percent (strong) towards role ambiguity.

✿**Age** : Table 5 depicts that age contributed 24.9 percent (average) towards role explosion, 33.4 percent (average) towards role isolation, 28.2 percent (average) towards personal inadequacy, 31.8 percent (average) towards self role distance, and 40.2 percent (strong) towards resource inadequacy.

Table 5 : Personal Variables And Organizational Role Stress															
ORS	IRD			RS			IRC			RE			RO		
Personal Variables	R ²	B value	t value	R ²	B value	t value	R ²	B value	t value	R ²	B value	t value	R ²	B value	t value
Gender	1.248	0.441	2.828**	0.44	0.39	1.128	1.024	.0426	2.406**	0.648	0.356	1.822	1.656	0.437	3.792**
Age	0.382	0.311	1.231	0.171	0.272	0.63	0.934	0.402	3.613**	0.104	0.249	0.417	0.191	0.312	0.613
Education	0.448	0.333	1.344	0.14	0.292	0.48	.544	0.319	1.705	0.137	0.267	0.512	0.278	0.335	0.832
*P<0.05, **P<0.01															

Table: 5 continued -- Personal Variables And Organizational Role Stress															
ORS	RI			PI			SRD			RA			RIn		
Personal Variables	R ²	B value	t value	R ²	B value	t value	R ²	B value	t value	R ²	B value	t value	R ²	B value	t value
Gender	0.496	0.489	1.015	0.048	0.41	0.117	0.224	0.32	0.699	1.896	0.415	5.061**	0.304	0.381	0.797
Age	1.006	0.334	3.007**	0.608	0.282	2.154**	0.694	0.318	3.178**	0.049	0.273	0.179	0.934	0.402	3.613**
Education	0.335	0.334	3.007**	0.608	0.282	2.154**	0.694	0.318	3.178**	0.049	0.273	0.179	0.934	0.402	3.613**
*P<0.05, **P<0.01															

✿ **Education** : Regression Table 5 exhibits that education levels contributed 23.7 percent (average) towards self role distance, 44 percent (strong) towards role ambiguity and 41.2 (strong) percent towards resource inadequacy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of above results, males were found to be easy victims of stress as they rated higher on inter role distance, role explosion, role overload and role ambiguity. It was reported that young teachers felt more stress due to high role explosion, role isolation, personal inadequacy, self role distance and resource inadequacy. Further, teachers with only post-graduate degree were found to feel stressed out on self role distance, role ambiguity and resource inadequacy, and the organizational role stress as a whole.

Thus, based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that the management of both types of colleges i.e. government and private should acknowledge the emotional and physical health of faculty members as an important contributor to their working effectiveness and productivity. Stress management should form a part of the curriculum, and regular workshops should be conducted for the faculty members to deal with stress. The institutions should provide more leisure-time facilities at the college level and family level. Good performers, particularly the young ones, should be recognized for their work. At the individual-level, teachers must find ways to manage stress such as physical exercise and recreational activities, enough sleep and a healthy diet (Keiper and Buselle, 1996). They can also practice the use of internal stress management strategies such as positive self-talk, stress relief thinking, relaxing exercises and rest (Keiper and Buselle, 1996; Lamb, 1995; Beard, 1990). A teacher should furthermore develop his/her own personal plan to combat stress, for example, delegation of responsibilities, setting of realistic goals, better time management and realistic self-assessment (Beard, 1990; Swart, 1987). Belonging to a support group can also help teachers to handle stress more effectively through the supportive relationship (Van Wyk, 1998; Keiper and Buselle, 1996; Travers and Cooper, 1996; Squelch and Lemmer, 1994; and Beard, 1990).

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