



A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LIFE SATISFACTION, PHYSICAL AND MENTAL STRESS IN INDIANS VERSUS INDIAN EXPATRIATES WORKING IN OMAN

Afshan Perveen

Bachelor of Occupational Therapy Intern, Department of Rehabilitation Sciences, Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi.

Dr. Swati Srivastava*

MOT (Musculoskeletal), Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi Assistant Professor, Department of Rehabilitation Science, Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi.
*Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

Objective: Over the years, there has been a significant increase in the number of Indian migrants in the country of Oman. The Indians working and living there are diverse in terms of the economic strata; therefore, the living and working conditions are also very different. There is a lack of studies focusing on the Indian population, working in abroad more specifically on their lifestyle and its impact on mental and physical health. Hence a need was felt to understand the mental and physical aspect and life satisfaction of the Indian population working and living in Oman.

Methodology: 200 (Office Workers in India-52, Office Workers in Oman-52, Labors in India-48, Labors in Oman-48)

1. Perceived Stress Scale
2. Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)
3. Musculoskeletal Discomfort Form
4. Researcher's Assisted Questionnaire

Results: The findings of present study show that among the total 104 office workers, 66% of office workers in India had higher stress level as compared to 34% of Indian office workers in Oman, in case of life satisfaction, 62% of Indian office workers in Oman were better satisfied with life as compared to 38% of office workers in India. Considering the labor population, among the total 96 labors 53% of Indian labor in Oman had high stress level as compared to 47% of labors in India, in case of life satisfaction, 57% of labors in India were better satisfied with life as compared to 43% of Indian labors in Oman. Office workers reported discomfort in the neck and back region whereas the labor population reported discomfort in knee, shoulder and ankle regions. Providing support to family, dissatisfaction with the job and heavy workload are some of the reasons that the Indian population recognized as factors contributing to their stress and level of life satisfaction. The non-resident population acknowledged facts such as having family support, good living conditions and job satisfaction as factors contributing to their stress and satisfaction with life.

Conclusion: Considering mental stress, the office workers in India have high stress level as compared to the office workers in Oman. On the other hand, the labors working both in India and Oman are facing high stress levels. It was found that in case of life satisfaction, the office workers in Oman are more satisfied with life than the office workers in India whereas, the labors working in Oman are less satisfied with life as compared to the labors working in India. It was found that the neck and lower back areas are more affected among the office workers and the knees, shoulders and ankles are the areas of discomfort among the labors.

KEYWORDS : Office Workers, Labors, Life Satisfaction, Stress

INTRODUCTION

Being one of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries Oman is dependent on migrant labor to bolster and stimulate economic growth and development. Although Indian migration to Oman is apparently for the purpose of spreading their commercial activities and mutually sharing the profits, their mutual good relations are believed to have existed as early as the 7th century.¹ The Indian community in Oman is regarded to be among the prosperous communities in the country. Indians have now become the largest expatriate community in Oman, according to the National Centre for Statistics and Information. There are 6,64,227 Indians living and working in the Sultanate as of October 2018. Among the Indian population, 4,8,115 are female, while the vast majority 6,16,112 are male.² The Indian migrants in Oman have come from all states of India. They are skilled workers and professionals, such as technicians, doctors, engineers, bankers, finance experts, managers who are on many senior and middle management positions in the cooperate division, a number of Indians are working on chief posts in government sector and there are approximately 2000 Indian doctors providing services in the country. The role of Indians in the development of commerce, healthcare, education, horticulture, finance, construction and communications in the country is recommendable.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design: A cross sectional survey

Location: Sultanate of Oman and India community

Population: Indian

Sample size: 200 (Office Workers in India-52, Office Workers in Oman-52, Labors in India-48, Labors in Oman-48)

Sampling: Convenient

Population:

Inclusion criteria: Males (in the age group of 35-55years) working in office, construction sites, shops, etc.

Exclusion criteria:

- Female workers
- Men who are mentally and physically challenged
- Men who were unable to respond to questions (due to hearing problem or any other reason)
- Men who were not willing to participate.

Procedure

The purpose of the study was explained to all the eligible participants in the language (English/Hindi/Arabic) understandable by them. Verbal and written consent were obtained from all participants. Data was collected by face to face interview method using different questionnaires. Questionnaires were filled by the participants at the time of interview. Following that all the participants were explained about different problems related to physical health, mental stress and life satisfaction. Data collected was analyzed. An 'Occupational Therapy Awareness' program was also conducted in which the attendees were given an Occupational Therapy education booklet. The booklet explained

Occupational Therapy program for safe, healthy and efficient lifestyle.

Outcome Measures / Scales

- Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)
- Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)
- Musculoskeletal Discomfort Form
- Researcher's Assisted Questionnaire

The questionnaire was a set of 5 questions each for the resident and non-resident Indian population which had to be answered in simply yes or no. The questions comprised of the factors affecting mental stress and satisfaction from the life.

DATA ANALYSIS

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare the effect of quality of life and stress level among Indian office workers in Oman and India; and Indian labors working in Oman and India. Descriptive analysis included percentages, means and SD.

FINDINGS

T-TEST VALUE FOR DIFFERENT FACTORS

Table 1: T-Test value for different factors

Variable	Office Workers in Oman	N=52	Office Workers in India	N=52	t-value	Significance level
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation		
PSS	12.7307	4.343	30.5576	4.1746	-20.61*	0.000
LSS	30.2692	2.9777	19.7115	3.189	-16.54*	0.000

Variable	Labours Working in Oman	N=48	Labours Working in India	N=48	t-value	Significance level
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation		
PSS	16.5416	3.6739	19.25	6.6795	-2.57	0.0667
LSS	12.6041	1.932	25.593	2.7586	-27.70*	0.000

(*significant at 0.00 level: NS: Not Significant)

PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

1. Life satisfaction and stress level in office workers in Oman and India

	OFFICE WORKER IN OMAN	OFFICE WORKER IN INDIA
a) Life satisfaction	62%	38%
b) High stress level	34%	66%

Table 2

2. Life satisfaction and stress level in labors in Oman and India

	LABORS IN OMAN	LABORS IN INDIA
a) Life satisfaction	43%	57%
b) High stress level	53%	47%

Table 3

3. Factors considered by Indians

	INDIANS
Job satisfaction	23%
Support family	30%
Work in abroad	16%
Mental stress	15%
Physical stress	16%

Table 4

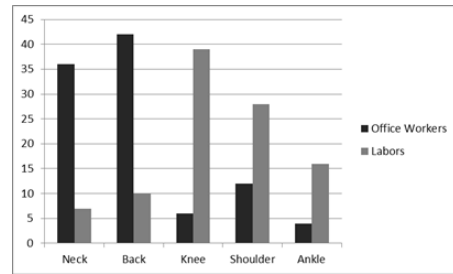
4. Factors considered by non-resident Indians (NRIs)

	NRIs
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Job satisfaction	28%
Family support	19%
Living conditions	20%
Continue working in Oman	24%
Return to India	9%

Table 5

DISTRIBUTION OF AREAS OF MUSCULOSKELETAL DISCOMFORT



Graph 1

DISCUSSION

This study was set out to investigate and compare life satisfaction, mental stress and physical stress among the Indian population of office workers and labors working in India and the Indian population of office workers and labors working in the Sultanate of Oman. A total sample of 200 Indian men was taken which were divided in 52 office workers from Oman and India respectively and 48 labors from Oman and India respectively.

The satisfaction from life was analyzed using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). Upon doing the analysis, it was found that the Indian office workers in Oman are more satisfied with life than the office workers in India. The percentage analysis shows that 62% of office workers in Oman are satisfied with life as compared to 38% of office workers in India. In case of the labor community the results are opposite; the labors working in India have a higher life satisfaction than the labors working in Oman. It was seen that 57% of labors working in India are better satisfied with life as compared to 43% of labors working in Oman.

A similar study titled 'For Better, For Worse: Life Satisfaction Consequences of Migration' was conducted by Gordon F.De Jong et al. The results showed considerable similarity between the theoretical predictors of increased and decreased post-move satisfaction by migration type.¹⁵

The mental stress was analyzed using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS). The comparative analysis between the office workers showed that 66% of office workers in India have higher stress level as compared to the 34% of office workers in Oman. On the other hand, the labors working in India and Oman have almost the same level of mental stress with 47% of labors in India and 53% of labors in Oman having high stress level.

Shotaro Doki et al conducted a similar study on Stress of Working Abroad: a systematic review. It concludes that foreign-born workers are suffering from acculturation and occupational stress.¹³

The Musculoskeletal Discomfort Form was used to determine the physical stress and the work related discomfort and pain among the two groups of office workers and labors. Both groups marked the areas of distribution of discomfort. It was investigated that the office workers reported discomfort in the neck and the back region. The labors' group reported discomfort in the knee, shoulder and the ankle region.

The study also carried a Research Assisted Questionnaire to better understand the factors involved and contributing to the aspects of stress and satisfaction with life. The questionnaire consisted of 5 questions each for the Indian population, which are office workers and labors working in India; and the non-resident Indian population, which are the office workers and labors working in Oman respectively. The questions had to be answered in 'yes' or 'no'.

Considering the Indian population first, this was a total of 100 participants, 52 office workers and 48 labors. Out of the total population 30% agree on having a family to support, 23% are satisfied with their current job, 16% agree that their workload gives them physical stress, 15% agree that their workload gives them mental stress and 16% wish to work in abroad.

Coming on to the non-resident Indian population, this was also a total of 100 participants, 52 office workers and 48 labors. Out of the total population 26% wish to continue working in Oman, 28% are satisfied with their job, 22% are satisfied with their living conditions in the country, 20% have their family living with them in Oman and 9% wish to permanently return to India.

PKameswara et al conducted a similar study on Perceptual Factors in Quality of Work Life of Indian Employees. Results from the factor analysis suggest four dimensions of QWL labeled favorable work environment, personal growth and autonomy, nature of job and stimulating opportunities and co-workers.²¹

CONCLUSION

In our comparative study on physical stress, mental stress and life satisfaction among the Indians working in India and the Indian expatriates working in Oman, the data analysis was done by dividing the population into four groups, viz. office workers in India, office workers in Oman, labors in India and labors in Oman. Results were obtained by comparing the two groups of office workers and the two groups of labors.

Considering mental stress, the office workers in India have high stress level as compared to the office workers in Oman. On the other hand, the labors working both in India and Oman are facing high stress levels. It was found that in case of life satisfaction, the office workers in Oman are more satisfied with life than the office workers in India whereas, the labors working in Oman are less satisfied with life as compared to the labors working in India. It was found that the neck and lower back areas are more affected among the office workers and the knees, shoulders and ankles are the areas of discomfort among the labors.

It is evident that more and more Indians are migrating to foreign countries for better job opportunities and a better lifestyle. For the well educated population the quest to work abroad seems to be achievable and in most cases turns out in their favor. But the skilled and the unskilled labor population of India who dream of working abroad need not necessarily end up with the expected results. Therefore it is important to identify the different factors that act as a barrier for both population and the problems that they face in different working conditions in order to resolve them.

Conflicts of interest: The authors report no conflicts of interest in this work.

Findings sources: Self

Ethical clearance: Necessary permission was obtained from the head of superintendent to conduct the study. Verbal consent and written consent were obtained from all the men who elected to participate in the survey.

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