



A Study on Occupational Stress and Job Involvement among Professionals serving Adults and Children with Special Needs.

KEYWORDS

Occupational Stress, job-involvement, Stress management, and stressors.

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ABSTRACT A person's status in the workplace can also affect levels of stress. Stress when overwhelming causes distress, which paralyzes health as well as performance of work. The professionals are in specific need to manage their stress and its impact on their profession, and ultimately their health. Moreover the different types of occupational and stressors for professionals who serve for children with disabilities are problems of workload, work overload, work under-load, occupational frustration. The investigator has adopted the survey method of research to study the presence of stress and job involvement among the professionals in various schools, institutions and hospitals who served as the sample of the study. The variables selected for the study were age, gender and their monthly income. The collected data has been statistically analyzed and presented with interpretations. Stress management techniques are essential for them, to increase their level of performance at work and job involvement.

INTRODUCTION

Stress is a fact of life, whatever we are and whatever we are doing. It is not possible to avoid stress, but we can learn to manage it so it does not manage you. Stress is a common problem that affects almost all of us at some point in our lives. Learning to identify when you are under stress, what is stressing? You and your different ways of coping with stress can greatly improve your personal and professional wellbeing.

Changes in our lives – changes in our profession are probably sources of stress. The key is to develop an awareness of how you interpret and react to circumstances. This aware will help you develop coping techniques for managing stress at work and to increase the job involvement.

This fight or flight response became overactive and maladaptive in the fast paced modern world of constant psychological stressors. The stress response impairs our concentration, working memory, rational thinking and ability to function. Much of our stress comes from our worries, fears, expectations, regrets, self-criticism and negative perceptions our stress level is determined more by our perception of stressor than the stress itself.

Objectives

- To study the socio-demographic characteristics of professionals serving the children and adults with special needs.
- To identify the stressors among the professionals who work with differently abled children schools, hospitals, counseling centers and rehabilitation centers.
- To find out the level of occupational stress faced by the professionals who work with differently abled children schools, hospitals and rehabilitation centers.
- To study the level of occupational stress and job involvement in relation to Age, gender and monthly income.
- To suggest stress management strategies for the professionals who work with differently abled children and adults.

Methodology

A survey was conducted to identify the stressors causing

stress and job involvement among professionals, working with the differently abled. 'Survey research' is a procedure in which information is systematically collected from a population through some form of direct solicitation. The questionnaire is used to assess the occupational stress and job involvement among professionals serving the differently abled in various organizations who served as the sample of the study. The content validity was established in consultation with academic experts in the field of Rehabilitation and Disability management. The variables selected for the study were age, gender and their monthly income of the Professionals selected for the study. The different type of stressors was identified among the sample in aspects such as personal physical environment, social support, and on job involvement work-overloadwork under load, absenteeism, and attrition. The collected data has been statistically analyzed and presented with interpretations.

Sample

The researcher has used a random sampling technique for selecting the samples from the population on the basis of age, gender and monthly income. The different type of the stressors were identified among the sample of .The universe consist of 120 out of which 100 respondents were selected as samples based on their availability professionals in the field of Rehabilitation, special schools, hospitals and counseling centers in Tiruchirappalli. The samples were selected using the purposive random sampling technique.

Tools Used for data collection

The researcher used structured questionnaires to collect necessary data from the respondents mainly to identify the type of stressors among the sample. The respondents were briefed about the significance of the study and information regarding their socio-demographic characteristics was collected initially. The occupational stress questionnaire and job involvement questionnaire to identify the type of stressor contained 20 items 5 in each area. The responses and the scores for the items were as follows,

Never – 0, Rarely-1, Sometimes – 2, Always – 3.

The total score was calculated by adding all points scored

for the total items separately and the responses were converted into percentages scores for statistical analysis and interpretation of results.

Results and Discussion:

Among the 100 respondents 67% were in the age group of 25 – 40 yrs and 33 % were in the age group of 41 – 55 yrs. The majority of the respondents i.e. 63% were females and the remaining 37% were males. The respondents whose monthly income is below Rs. 15,000/month were about 48%, respondents whose monthly income between Rs. 16,000– 30,000/month were 36%, respondents whose monthly income is Rs. 31,000 and above is 16%.

tional stress under the group whose income is Rs.16,000/- to 30,000/- month and 75.00% of professionals experience low level of stress when 18.75 and 6.25 of them experience moderate and high levels of stress.

Thus the level of occupational stress assessed in relation to age, gender and monthly income. As per the assessment age wise the occupational stress level is moderate for group A, and for group B the stress level is moderate for male and low in female. As per the monthly income wise the occupational stress level is low for group C.

Table1
LEVELS OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS ACCORDING TO VARIABLES (Age, Gender and Monthly income)

S.No	AGE	N	Low		Moderate		High	
A	Age Group	N	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	25 – 40 yrs-(A)	68	20	28.80%	33	48.80%	15	22.20%
2	41 – 55 yrs-(B)	32	11	34.20%	10	31.40%	11	34.20%
	Gender		Low		Moderate		High	
B		N	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Male	37	11	28.80%	8	22.20%	18	48.80%
2	Female	63	22	34.80%	19	30.40%	22	35.00%
S.No	Monthly income		Low		Moderate		High	
C		N	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Below Rs.15,000/-	48	8	16.67%	11	22.92%	29	60.42%
2	16,000 - 30,000/-	36	9	25.00%	16	44.44%	11	30.56%
3	31,000 and above	16	12	75.00%	3	18.75%	1	6.25%

The level of occupational stress assessed in relation to age of the respondents. It is inferred from the table that 48.8% of them experience the moderate level of stress while 28.8% and 22.2% of them who experience high and low level of occupational stress who belong to the age group of 25 – 40 yrs respectively.

It was also found that 34.2% of respondents experiencing High and also low level of occupational stress and 31.4% of respondents experience the moderate level of stress in the age group of 41 – 55 yrs respectively. The level of occupational stress in relation to their Gender of the respondents. It is inferred from the table that 48.80% of male professionals experience the high level of stress while 28.80 and 22.20% of male professionals experience low and moderate level of occupational stress. And 35.00% of female professionals experience the high level of stress while 34.80 and 35.00% of female professionals experience low and moderate level of occupational stress.

The level of occupational stress assessed in relation to their Monthly Income of the respondents. It is inferred from the table that 60.42% of professionals experience the high level of stress while 16.67% and 60.42% of professionals experience low and moderate level of occupational stress whose income is below Rs.15,000/-month. It is inferred from the table that 44.44% of the professionals experience the moderate level of stress while 25.00% and 30.56% of them experience low and high level of occupa-

TABLE 2
LEVELS OF JOB INVOLVEMENT ACCORDING TO VARIABLES (Age, Gender and Monthly income)

S.No	AGE	N	Low		Moderate		High	
A	Age Group	N	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	25 – 40 yrs-(A)	68	13	19.8%	42	63%	12	17.3%
2	41 – 55 yrs-(B)	32	5	16.0%	22	67.5%	5	16.6%
	Gender		Low		Moderate		High	
B		N	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Male	37	7	18.9%	22	59.8%	8	21.3%
2	Female	63	8	15.4%	46	72.4%	8	12.2%
S.No	Monthly income		Low		Moderate		High	
C		N	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	Below Rs.15,000/-	68	12	17.6%	9	13.8%	47	68.6%
2	16,000 - 30,000/-	25	6	22.3%	12	49.2%	7	28.5%
3	31,000 and above	7	1	8.6%	1	11%	6	80.4%

The level of job involvement assessed in relation to age of the respondents. It is inferred from the table that 63% of them experience the moderate level of job involvement while 17.3% and 19.8% of them who experience high and low level of job involvement who belong to the age group of 25 – 40 yrs respectively. It was also found that 67.5% of respondents experiencing moderate level of job involvement and 16.6% and 16.0% high and also low level of job involvement in the age group of 41-55 yrs respectively. And, 59.8 % of respondents experience the moderate level of job involvement and 21.3% and 18.9% high and also low level of job involvement of male professionals experience the high level of job involvement while 15.4% and 12.2% of female professionals experience low and high level of job involvement. And 72.4% of female professionals experience the moderate level of job involvement moderate level of job involvement.

The level of job involvement assessed in relation to their Monthly Income of the respondents. It is inferred from the table that 68.6% of professionals shows the high level of job involvement while 17.6% and 13.8% of professionals experience low and moderate level of job involvement whose income is below Rs.15,000/-month. It is inferred from the table that 49.2% of the professionals shows the high level of job involvement while 28.5% and 22.3% of them experience high and low level of job involvement under the group whose income is Rs.16,000/- to 30,000/-month and 80.04% of professionals shows high level of job involvement when 8.6% and 11% of them experience high and low levels of job involvement.

Thus the level of job involvement assessed in relation to age, gender and monthly income. As per the assessment age wise the job involvement level is moderate for group A, and for group B the job involvement level is moderate. As per the monthly income wise the job involvement level is high for group C.

Stress management strategies

Stress management strategies for professionals in the field of rehabilitation and special education can be as follows.

Relaxation techniques are a great way to help with stress management. Relaxation isn't just about peace of mind or enjoying a hobby. Relaxation is a process that decreases the effects of stress on your mind and body. Relaxation techniques can help you cope with everyday stress and with stress related to various health problems, such as cancer and pain. The Quality of Working Life is an area of great concern and there is a need to reduce the high number of physical and psychological symptoms that lead to stress and has an impact on their performance. Whether your stress is spiraling out of control or you've already got it tamed, you can benefit from learning relaxation techniques. Learning basic relaxation techniques is easy. Relaxation techniques also are often free or low cost, pose little risk, and can be done just about anywhere. Explore these simple relaxation techniques and get started on de-stressing your life and improving your health.

Managing Time Stress

Time stress is one of the most common types of stress that we experience today. It is essential to learn how to manage this type of stress if you're going to work productively in a busy organization.

First, learn good time management skills. This can include using To-Do Lists or, if you have to manage

many simultaneous projects, Action Programs.

Next, make sure that you're devoting enough time to your important priorities. Unfortunately, it's easy to get caught up in seemingly urgent tasks which actually have little impact on your overall objectives. This can leave you feeling exhausted or feeling that you worked a full day yet accomplished nothing meaningful.

Managing Anticipatory Stress

Because anticipatory stress is future based, start by recognizing that the event you're dreading doesn't have to play out as you imagine. Use positive visualization techniques to imagine the situation going right.

Research shows that your mind often can't tell the difference, on a basic neurological level, between a situation that you've visualized going well repeatedly and one that's actually happened.

Managing Situational Stress

Situational stress often appears suddenly, for example, you might get caught in a situation that you completely failed to anticipate. To manage situational stress better, learn to be more self-aware. This means recognizing the "automatic" physical and emotional signals that your body sends out when you're under pressure.

Conflict is a major source of situational stress. Learn effective conflict resolution skills, so that you're well-prepared to handle the stress of conflict when it arises. It's also important to learn how to manage conflict in work place, since resolving group conflict can be different from resolving individual issues.

Conclusion

Work-related stress is common in today's workforce, including individuals practicing social work. Given their professions are client-centered by nature, stress is a concern among these professionals. Considering their experiences of insufficient time to complete day-to-day work tasks, heavy workloads, poor compensation, challenging and/or difficult clients, few resources, long work hours, and unclear job expectations, it is not surprising that decreases their job involvement and increases work-related stress. Under these less-than-optimal work conditions, professionals serves for children dis-ability often "pushed to the limit" when trying to complete their job requirements. Over time, work-related stress can result in burnout, increased risk for work place health complaints, impaired performance, poor mental health, impaired cognitive functioning, decreased concentration, and health-related problems for social workers. Additionally, these issues may cause to these professionals to consider a career change.

Re-establishing a sense of control, mastery, and competence in one's work situation may seem, at first glance, a daunting task. However, with strategies like regular exercise, meditation/relaxation techniques, and therapy—identified by professional social workers as useful coping tools—alleviating work stress, will increase the job involvement.

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