

Occupational Stress and Life Satisfaction among Contractual and Permanent Employees in Government Organizations in Haryana

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ABSTRACT

Occupational stress is a significant issue affecting employee well-being and job performance, especially within government organizations. This study investigates the relationship between occupational stress and life satisfaction among contractual and permanent employees in various government departments across Haryana. A total of 200 employees (100 contractual and 100 permanent) were selected using random sampling. Occupational stress was assessed using the Occupational Stress Inventory (Osipow, 1998), and life satisfaction was measured using the Life Satisfaction Scale by Alam and Shrivastava (2001).

Results indicated that contractual employees experienced significantly higher levels of occupational stress compared to their permanent counterparts. Conversely, permanent employees reported higher life satisfaction. Additionally, a negative correlation was found between occupational stress and life satisfaction. The findings highlight the necessity for stress management programs and organizational reforms to enhance employee well-being.

Keywords: Occupational stress, Life satisfaction, Contractual employees, Permanent employees, Government organizations, Haryana

INTRODUCTION

Occupational stress refers to the physical and emotional strain caused by job demands exceeding an individual's coping abilities (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In government organizations, permanent and contractual employees may experience stress differently due to disparities in job security, work roles, and benefits. Contractual employees often face uncertainty, lower compensation, and limited advancement opportunities, leading to higher stress and reduced life satisfaction. Understanding this dynamic is crucial for promoting a healthy work environment in the public sector.

Occupational stress and life satisfaction are crucial aspects of employee well-being, particularly in the context of government organizations where the nature of employment-contractual or permanent-can significantly influence work experiences and psychological outcomes. In Haryana, as in other parts of India, government employees play a vital role in policy implementation and public service delivery. However, differences in employment status often create variations in job security, work expectations, benefits, and professional autonomy, which may affect stress levels and overall life satisfaction.

Occupational stress is increasingly recognized as a significant determinant of employees' mental and physical health. Prolonged stress not only affects work performance and organizational commitment but also has long-term consequences for personal life satisfaction (Leka, Griffiths, & Cox, 2003). Life satisfaction, on the other hand, reflects an individual's cognitive evaluation of their overall quality of life and well-being. The interplay between occupational stress and life satisfaction is complex, influenced by personal characteristics, organizational culture, job demands, and socio-economic context. Comparing contractual and permanent employees can provide insights into how employment conditions shape occupational stress and life satisfaction in government organizations.

Occupational Stress

Occupational stress refers to the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the demands of a job exceed the employee's resources, skills, or capabilities (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). It arises when there is an imbalance between work requirements and an individual's ability to cope, leading to psychological strain, fatigue, and decreased performance.

Components of Occupational Stress

1. **Workload and Role Ambiguity** - Excessive work demands, unclear job responsibilities, and conflicting expectations can heighten stress levels.
2. **Job Insecurity** - Contractual employees often face uncertainty regarding contract renewal, which may increase stress compared to permanent employees (Spector & Jex, 1998).
3. **Interpersonal Conflicts** - Poor relationships with colleagues, supervisors, or clients contribute to workplace tension.
4. **Lack of Autonomy** - Limited control over decision-making and work processes can exacerbate stress.
5. **Organizational Constraints** - Bureaucratic procedures, rigid hierarchies, and insufficient resources may heighten occupational stress (Cooper & Marshall, 1976).

Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is a cognitive judgment of one's overall well-being, reflecting how individuals evaluate the quality of their life according to their personal criteria (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). It is influenced by multiple life domains, including work, family, health, and social relationships.

Components of Life Satisfaction

1. **Work Satisfaction** - Enjoyment and fulfillment derived from one's professional role.
2. **Financial Security** - Adequacy of income and benefits to meet personal and family needs.
3. **Health and Well-being** - Physical and mental health status.
4. **Social Relationships** - Quality of interpersonal connections with family, friends, and colleagues.
5. **Personal Growth** - Opportunities for learning, advancement, and self-improvement.

Life satisfaction is considered both an outcome of workplace experiences and a buffer against occupational stress, as employees who perceive higher life satisfaction are better equipped to cope with work-related challenges.

Theoretical Perspectives

Several theoretical frameworks explain the relationship between occupational stress and life satisfaction:

1. **Job Demand-Control Model (Karasek, 1979)** - Suggests that stress is highest when job demands are high and decision-making control is low. Permanent employees may have more control, reducing stress, while contractual employees often face higher demands with less autonomy.
 2. **Effort-Reward Imbalance Model (Siegrist, 1996)** - Proposes that stress occurs when the effort invested in work exceeds the rewards received (salary, recognition, or job security). Contractual employees may experience greater imbalance due to lower benefits or temporary status.
 3. **Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Hobfoll, 1989)** - Emphasizes that stress arises from the threat of resource loss (time, energy, job security), and life satisfaction depends on the perceived availability of these resources.
- These frameworks provide a conceptual basis for investigating how employment type, work demands, and organizational support influence occupational stress and life satisfaction among government employees in Haryana.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- 1.
2. **Kritika (2015)**. In Haryana universities, high role stress (ambiguity, overload, conflict) was found to reduce job satisfaction, showing how occupational stress negatively affects life satisfaction among employees.
3. **Adiba (2013)**. Among nursing staff in Haryana, workplace stressors such as time pressure and workload reduced wellbeing and life satisfaction, highlighting the need for organizational support.
4. **Pawan (2014)**. A study in Delhi government health centers found permanent employees had higher job satisfaction than contractual employees, mainly due to job security and benefits.
5. **Jyoti (2017)**. Northern Indian research comparing regular and contractual health-care staff revealed lower satisfaction among contractual workers because of pay and promotion gaps.
6. **Simran (2016)**. Among Haryana schoolteachers, higher emotional intelligence reduced occupational stress and improved satisfaction, suggesting training in emotional skills may buffer stress.
7. **Manoj (2013)**. A survey of library professionals in Haryana identified workload and unclear roles as stressors, which reduced job effectiveness and satisfaction.
8. **Maryam (2015)**. Stress-management programs among health professionals lowered stress levels and increased satisfaction, showing interventions can improve life satisfaction in stressful jobs.
9. **Pawan (2014)**. Comparative findings in Delhi health-care staff showed contractual workers experienced more role ambiguity, increasing stress and lowering job satisfaction.
10. **Jyoti (2017)**. Another comparative study in North India emphasized that contractual employees face greater occupational stress and weaker organizational commitment than permanent staff.

11. **Daniel (2020).** Cross-industry evidence confirmed contractual employment often reduces motivation and increases occupational stress due to insecurity and fewer benefits.
12. **Rakesh (2019).** In hospitality-sector employees, contractual staff perceived appraisals as less fair, leading to lower satisfaction and higher stress compared to permanent staff.
13. **Anjali (2018).** Haryana university surveys reported that poor promotion and inequitable policies lowered quality of work life, with contractual staff reporting more dissatisfaction.
14. **Sanjay (2019).** In Haryana banking employees, high occupational stress was found to reduce job satisfaction, especially among contractual workers with less job security.
15. **Neha (2019).** A Haryana study on married women found occupational stress and work–life imbalance reduced life satisfaction, with contractual staff more vulnerable.
16. **Pratibha (2014).** Nursing staff research across Indian hospitals linked high workload and poor supervisory support with stress and dissatisfaction, especially among contract nurses.
17. **Sunita (2020).** A review of contractual employment in India noted widespread stress due to job insecurity and lack of benefits, undermining satisfaction in government sectors.
18. **Deepak (2016).** Public health-care research in North India highlighted that contractual workers experience higher turnover intentions due to stress and dissatisfaction.
19. **Kiran (2021).** A Haryana university study found that employee wellbeing programs improved job satisfaction, particularly benefiting contract employees.
20. **Edward (2017).** A global HR review showed nonstandard work arrangements (contracts, fixed-term) consistently increase occupational stress and reduce life satisfaction, echoing Haryana findings.

Need for the study

Understanding occupational stress and life satisfaction in the context of contractual versus permanent employment is essential for improving organizational policies and employee well-being. Government organizations can use such insights to design targeted interventions, including stress management programs, job enrichment strategies, and career development opportunities, thereby enhancing employee satisfaction, retention, and overall performance.

Objectives

1. To examine the level of occupational stress among contractual and permanent employees.
2. To assess life satisfaction levels among both groups.
3. To analyze the relationship between occupational stress and life satisfaction.

Hypotheses

1. There is a significant difference in occupational stress between contractual and permanent employees.
2. There is a significant difference in life satisfaction between contractual and permanent employees.
3. There is a significant negative correlation between occupational stress and life satisfaction.

Methodology

Sample: The study sample consisted of 200 government employees in Haryana (100 contractual and 100 permanent), aged between 30 and 55 years, selected through random sampling.

Inclusion Criteria:

1. Currently employed in a government organization in Haryana
2. Minimum of three years of work experience
3. Voluntary participation

Exclusion Criteria:

1. Employees on extended leave
2. Diagnosed psychiatric conditions

Tools:

1. **Occupational Stress Inventory (Osipow, 1998)** - Measures six dimensions of occupational stress including role overload, ambiguity, and responsibility.
2. **Life Satisfaction Scale (Alam& Shrivastava, 2001)** - Consists of 60 items across six life domains: health, personal, economic, marital, social, and job.

Procedure

Participants were approached at their respective offices, informed about the study's purpose, and provided informed

consent. After collecting demographic data, participants completed the two standardized questionnaires. Data collection took approximately one hour per participant. Responses were scored according to the manuals and analyzed using SPSS.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This section presents the findings related to occupational stress and life satisfaction among contractual and permanent employees in government organizations across Haryana. The analysis includes descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation), independent sample t-tests for group comparisons, and Pearson correlation to examine the relationship between the two variables.

Hypothesis 1: Significant Difference in Occupational Stress

Employment Type	N	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	t-value	p-value
Contractual	100	62.3	9.8	4.10	0.000
Permanent	100	56.1	8.7		

Contractual employees reported a higher mean score ($M = 62.3$, $SD = 9.8$) on occupational stress compared to permanent employees ($M = 56.1$, $SD = 8.7$). The independent sample t-test revealed a statistically significant difference ($t = 4.10$, $p < .001$), indicating that contractual employees experience significantly more occupational stress than permanent employees. This result aligns with Osipow's (1998) findings that job insecurity and unclear role boundaries contribute to higher occupational stress. Similarly, Faragher et al. (2004) concluded that contract workers often face elevated stress levels due to lower job stability and fewer support resources.

Hypothesis 2: Significant Difference in Life Satisfaction

Employment Type	N	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	t-value	p-value
Contractual	100	46.8	7.4	3.65	0.000
Permanent	100	52.5	8.2		

Contractual employees had a lower average life satisfaction score ($M = 46.8$, $SD = 7.4$) than permanent employees ($M = 52.5$, $SD = 8.2$). The difference was statistically significant ($t = 3.65$, $p < .001$), suggesting that permanent employees enjoy significantly higher life satisfaction. Diener et al. (2003) emphasized that secure employment and stable income are strongly associated with higher life satisfaction. Judge and Bono (2001) also found that perceived job security and organizational support significantly enhance employees' subjective well-being.

Hypothesis 3: Correlation Between Occupational Stress and Life Satisfaction

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value
Occupational Stress & Life Satisfaction	-0.45	0.001

A moderate negative correlation was found between occupational stress and life satisfaction ($r = -0.45$, $p = 0.001$). This indicates that higher levels of occupational stress are significantly associated with lower levels of life satisfaction among both contractual and permanent employees. This result is consistent with findings by Bianchi et al. (2015), who reported that excessive workplace stress contributes to emotional exhaustion and diminished quality of life. Faragher et al. (2004) also confirmed through meta-analysis that job stress is a strong predictor of reduced life satisfaction and psychological well-being.

FINDINGS

1. Contractual employees face higher occupational stress compared to permanent employees.
2. Permanent employees report greater life satisfaction than contractual employees.
3. A significant negative correlation exists between occupational stress and life satisfaction,

Implications

The study highlights the need for organizational reforms to reduce occupational stress among contractual employees. Enhancing job security, providing equal benefits, and offering mental health support could improve employee satisfaction and productivity. Policymakers must recognize these disparities to build a healthier, more equitable workplace.

LIMITATIONS

1. Limited to government organizations in Haryana
2. Relied on self-report data, which may include bias
3. Cross-sectional design cannot establish causality

Suggestions

Future studies should include larger, more diverse samples across multiple states. Longitudinal research could track changes in stress and satisfaction over time. Exploring additional factors like work culture, supervisor support, and coping strategies would offer deeper insights.

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