

## OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG MANAGERS: A NEPALESE SURVEY

**R Kayastha**

Kathmandu University,  
NEPAL.  
[rkayastha@ku.edu.np](mailto:rkayastha@ku.edu.np)

**P. R. Adhikary**

Kathmandu University,  
NEPAL.  
[pushpa@ku.edu.np](mailto:pushpa@ku.edu.np)

**V Krishnamurthy**

PES Institute of Technology,  
INDIA.  
[v.krishnamurthy@pes.edu](mailto:v.krishnamurthy@pes.edu)

### ABSTRACT

*This study investigates a significant relationship between reported degrees of experienced stress, perceived stress factors, and personal characteristics of the employee, the computing environment (technical and managerial) and the employing organization. In this study consisted of 440 top level managers, were selected for the sample in this study on the basis of random sampling from large scale industries and different organizations situated in and around various part of Nepal.*

**Keywords:** Occupational stress, occupational stress index, occupational stressors, correlations

### INTRODUCTION

Occupation related stress among working people is drastically increasing worldwide. Stress at work place has become an integral part of everyday life and is referred as 'worldwide epidemic' by the World Health Organization as. In the USA, approximately 25% of the working population suffers from work related stress. The figures for Nepal are not readily available but there is no doubt that occupational stress affects a significant number of managers and costs heavy financial losses, human sufferings and mental illness.

Occupation related stress follow in various shapes and forms. Health and Safety Managers defined occupational stress as "The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them." Organizational stress might be harmful for physiological and psychological effects on workers. Various studies have revealed that workers suffering from stress exhibit decreased productivity, absenteeism, higher number accidents, lower morale and greater interpersonal conflict with colleagues and superiors (W. Cranwell and Alyssa, J.).

The significance of the effects of occupational stress in some professions is reported, such as among nurses (Dailey et al., 1986), managers (Davidson and Cooper, 1986) and teachers (Byosiere, 1988). These studies indicate that stress can be related to factors like: Physical condition (Braham, 1994); Organizational culture (Cooper, 2001); Moorhead and Griffin, 2001); Interpersonal conflict (Toates, 1995; Cooper, 2001); Personal characteristics (Caplan and Jones, 1975; Alluisi, 1982; Cooper and Roden, 1985; Hurrell, 1985; Dailey et al., 1986; Caudron, 1998; Bliese and Britt, 2001); and Job nature (Caplan and Jones, 1975; Matteson and Ivancevich, 1987).

It is important to difference between three intimately related terms: stressors, stress and strain L. Francis and J. Barling. Stressors are defined as the external events such as difficult relationships in the workplace or a heavy workload that contribute to the experience of stress S.L. Sauter, L.R.Murphy and J.J.Hurrell. Stress is considered to be an individual's internal response to stressors and is characterized by arousal and displeasure. Strain, on the other hand, describes the long-term effect of stress and includes psychological outcomes such as anxiety and depression.

The Managerial Stress has been defined as the experience achieved by top level officers of unpleasant, negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration or depression resulting from some aspect of their work as Managers. Limited research has been conducted with respect to Managerial stress prevalent among IT professionals and industry. J L Thong et al. studied the information systems and occupational stress as a theoretical framework. He has highlighted that the information systems (IS) profession is a stressful profession. However, there is little theoretical or empirical research carried out on the effects of occupational stress among IS professionals. A major reason is because IS

professionals and researchers are unaware of the consequences of occupational stress and unfamiliar with the occupational stress literature.

Occupational stressors are aspects of the work environment that cause strains, poor psychological health or wellbeing of the individual (T.A. Beehr). It is now generally accepted that prolonged or intense stress can have a negative impact on the individual's mental and physical health (C.L. Cooper, P.J. Dewe and M.P.O'Driscoll). Work related stress is a feature of current economic activity from which most individuals suffer at times and to different extents. In a positive sense, work stress can be a source of excitement and stimulus to achievement. In a negative sense it can seriously impair quality of work life, and reduce personal and job effectiveness (J. Bridge, C.L. Cooper and C. Highley-Marchington).

Stress in the workplace can affect communication effectiveness, the ability to focus on job and decision making ability (C.J. Rees and D.Redfern). Emmons asserts that persons who demonstrate a capacity for heightened consciousness of transcendence possess spiritual intelligence. Spiritual intelligence empowers the individual to cope with and resolve life-world issues while demonstrating virtuous behavior such as humility, compassion, gratitude, and wisdom.

Thomas et al found that the most difficult stressors to manage are "bureaucracy", "lack of opportunity to learn new skills", "work-family conflicts" and "different view from superiors". His results also revealed that the patterns of stress manageability differ between different groups. He has examined the relationships existing among individual stressors.

Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction among managers was studied K. Chandraiha et. al.; the effect of age on occupational stress and job satisfaction among managers of different age groups and in term of age distribution of the individual matured personal disposition related to the attainment of developmental tasks specific to each developmental phase and its influence on individuals perception of the situations as stressful or otherwise.

The present research article is carried out the status of occupational stress among employees working as Managers in an organization to investigate following aspects:

- a. Identifying the origins of stresses being experienced by Managers officers in the industry, university, in terms of individual and situational factors;
- b. Assessing the manageability of stresses and its impact on the management of different disciplines; and
- c. Determining the interrelationships associated between different stresses and their significance.

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this research paper is to assess the influence of stress and personal characteristics of the employee. Of this study, it was compared the occupational stress of the relationship between different types of organizations that is academic, financial sector, manufacturing company among managers with particular reference of Nepal.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The finding of the present study would help the managers in their professional work in the following way:

- a. The results of the study would find out the occupational stress of different types of organizations in Nepal.
- b. The results of the study would give information regarding the occupational stress of occupational stress among Managers working in different types different types of organizations in Nepal.
- c. The finding of study would provide the guideline to the future research.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The questionnaires were designed to assess levels of occupational stress among Managers of Nepal. Occupational stress was assessed using "Occupational Stress Questionnaire OSI" in the Indian context (Srivastava and Singh, 1981). The questionnaire is consisted of 46 statements with five alternative responses e.g., 5 for strongly agree, 4 for mildly agree 3 agree, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree. Responses were obtained on a summated rating scale format ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Total score on this scale is considered for the assessment of occupational stress. Higher scores indicated higher perceived occupational stress or more the score on this scale indicates more stress. This scale included twelve dimensions as described in the table 1. Each of job stressors was measured on a five-point Likert Scale in which 1 indicated "strongly disagree", 2 indicated "disagree", 3 indicated "neutral", 4 indicated "agree" and 5 indicated "strongly agree". Out of the 46 items 28 are true keyed and the remaining 18 are false keyed. These items relating to the 12 factors of occupational stress i.e. Role overload, Role ambiguity, Role conflict, Group & political pressure, Responsibility for persons, Under participation, Powerlessness, Poor peer relations, Intrinsic improvement, Low status, Strenuous working condition and Unprofitability.

Information regarding age, gender, marital status, and number of dependent was obtained to provide personnel demographic information. Respondents were also asked to provide job related information including average family income per month in Rupees, years in services, types of organizations, and number of employees engaged in the organization.

Participants: The sample for this study is proposed to consist of 440 participants drawn on the basis of random sampling from large-scale organizations situated in and around different cities of Nepal.

An individual's function within the company including that of professionals in sectors like information technology, sales and marketing system development, production, research and development, medical, finance, supply and distribution, commercial affairs and human resources were be included among study subjects

Data for this investigation was collected in two steps, starting with seeking permission from the authorities concerned to involve Professionals in their organization in the study.

Prior appointment will be sought from the Managers who have provided the bio-data sheet. They will be apprised of the intent of the study and the Occupational Stress Index; format would be provided and will be requested to complete the questionnaire at their own time and leisure. Those who had free time in the office (industry) will fill in the questionnaire on the spot and others at convenient time.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1 shows the profile of respondents. About 86 percent of the respondents were male and 14 percent were female. The majority of the respondents 56 percent were between the age of 25 – 35 years, and 52 percent had between 1 and 5 years of service experience.

Table 1. Profile of respondents (Part A)

<i>Demographic Variables</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Gender	Male	86.1
	Female	13.9
Age	25 to 35 years	56.0
	36 to 45 years	55.9
	46 to 60 years	23.6
		20.5
Marital Status	Single	38.4
	Married	61.6

Table 1. Profile of respondents (Part B)

<i>Demographic Variables</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Number of Dependent	None	39.3
	One	4.3
	Two	14.1
	Three	15.7
	Four	13.9
	Five and above	12.8
Working Experience	1 - 5 years	51.8
	6 - 10 years	15.7
	11 - 15 years	10.2
	More than 15 years	22.3

Table 2. Mean standard deviation and standard error of mean by item

<i>Sources of stress</i>	<i>Std.</i>		
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Deviation</i>	<i>Std. Error Mean</i>
Role Overload	19.19	3.84	0.18
Role Ambiguity	11.71	2.27	0.11
Role Conflict	15.86	2.10	0.10
Unreasonable Political Pressure	11.59	2.76	0.13
Responsibility	11.19	2.25	0.11
Under participation	13.60	2.79	0.13
Powerless	10.03	2.20	0.10
Poor peer relation	13.47	1.84	0.09
Intrinsic Impoverishment	12.49	1.70	0.08
low status	9.90	1.38	0.07
Strenuous working condition	12.53	2.00	0.10
Unprofitability	6.38	1.48	0.07
Total OSI	147.93	12.49	0.60

Table 2, Table shows scores for the twelve items in the occupational stress and the total mean score, and standard error for all items. The result shows that all organizations taken together, the six major areas where the Managers of organization showed maximum stress were:

- a. Role Overload
- b. Role Conflict
- c. Under participation
- d. Poor peer relation
- e. Strenuous working condition
- f. Intrinsic Impoverishment

The result from this study indicates that Managers were experiencing high stress with Role overload, Role conflict, under participation, Poor peer relation, Strenuous working condition, Intrinsic impoverishment

Occupational Stress among Managers: Based on mean scores, the majority 52.0% (n = 229) of the respondents scored above the mean score on the Occupational stress Index indicating high levels of occupational stress while 48% (n = 211) scored below mean scores indicating low occupational stress. Results from this study also indicated that respondents reported high occupational stress, Role overload (M=19.19), followed by Role Conflict (M=15.86), Under participation(M=13.60), poor peer relations (13.47), Strenuous working condition (M=12.53) Intrinsic Impoverishment (M=12.53). Whereas, less occupational stress was indicated Un-profitability with (M=6.38)

Table 3. Correlations among all variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Role Overload														
2. Role Ambiguity	.359(**)													
3. Role Conflict	.254(**)	.342(**)												
4. Unreasonable Political Pressure	.359(**)	.273(**)	.207(**)											
5. Responsibility	.228(**)	-0.047	.094(*)	.235(**)										
6. Under Participation	-0.007	-.199(**)	-0.064	.095(*)	.446(**)									
7. Powerlessness	-.099(*)	-.166(**)	-0.039	-0.02	.267(**)	.655(**)								
8. Poor peer relation	.188(**)	0.083	.138(**)	.153(**)	.265(**)	0.092	.127(**)							
9. Intrinsic Impoverishment	.197(**)	0.089	0.047	0	-0.046	-0.012	0.043	.167(**)						
10. Low Status	-0.033	-0.029	0.06	0.028	.194(**)	.232(**)	.242(**)	.134(**)	0.08					
11. Strenuous Working Condition	.462(**)	.277(**)	.238(**)	.237(**)	.097(*)	0.087	-0.017	.105(*)	.147(**)	0.013				
12. Unprofitability	.226(**)	.146(**)	.096(*)	.191(**)	.140(**)	.095(*)	0.063	0.079	0.072	-0.03	.128(**)			
13. Age	.143(**)	0.059	.115(*)	.216(**)	.237(**)	.110(*)	0.069	0.058	0.029	0.082	0.066	.107(*)		
14. Sex	0.07	0.023	-0.048	-0.079	-0.069	-0.047	0.019	0.013	0.032	-0.076	-0.01	-0.091	-.116(*)	
15. Working Exp	0.006	0.013	0.021	0.002	0.029	0.039	-0.032	-0.01	-0.024	-0.014	-0.018	-0.032	.179(**)	0.052

Notes: \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed); \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)

Table 3 shows that there is a significant inter-correlations among the study variable. The study suggests that among the occupational stressors are significant. The present study also confirms that age was significantly correlated with sources of stress, in particular to Role overload, Role conflict, Group & political pressure, Responsibility for persons, Under participation, and Unprofitability.

**CONCLUSION**

The current analysis adds to the literature on occupation stress and prevention of occupation stress especially in the Nepalese context. Generally, Managers faced with the same sources of stress across all organizations.

Frequency distribution analysis along with one-sample chi-square test is carried out to evaluate the status of occupational stress. The Managers are categorized into three groups based on the stress level relative to each occupational factor as low, moderate and high. It was found that stress due to ‘strenuous’ was very high whereas the stress due to all other occupational factors was low among Managers.

The importance of this study cannot be overemphasized for the long-term survival of any organizations planning to build a healthy working environment while reducing the risk of work-related diseases and accidents. The contribution of variables such as Role overload, Role ambiguity, Role conflict, Unreasonable political pressure, Responsibility, Under participation, Powerlessness, Poor peer relation, Intrinsic Impoverishment, Low status, Strenuous working condition, Unprofitability to level of stress has its own significance. The findings of this study thus need to be acknowledged in implementing a healthy working environment. Careful and well-planned implementation strategies that consider the amount of work, role clarity, and training and development can provide a fruitful result to the employees and organization.

**REFERENCES**

- Beehr, T.A. (1995), *Psychological stress in the workplace*, New York: Routledge.
- Baum, A., Grunberg, N. E. & Singer, J. E. (1982). The use of psychological and neuroendocrinological measurements in the study of stress. *Health psychology, 1*, Pg, 217-236.
- Beehr, T. A., & Newman, J. E. (1978). Job stress, employee health and organisational effectiveness. A facet analysis, model and literature review. *Personal Psychology, 31*, 665-669.
- Caplan, R. D. & Harrison, R.V. (1993). Person-environment fit theory: Some history, recent developments, and future directions. *Journal of Social Issues, 49*, Pg, 253-275.
- Caplan, R. D. (1987). 'Person-environment fit theory and organisations: Commensurate dimensions, time perspectives and mechanisms. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour, 31*, Pg, 248 -267.
- Caplan et al., (1975). *Job demand and worker health* (HEW Publication No. NIOSH 75-160). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Cooper, C. L., Sloan, S. J., & Williams, S. (1988). Occupational stress Indicator, Management Guide. NFER – NELSON: Oxford, Windsor.
- Cooper et al., (2001) *Organizational Stress: A Review and critique of theory, research and applications*. CA:Sage Publications.
- Cranwell, W., & Alyssa, J. Abbey.(2005). *Organizational Stress*. New York (USA): Macmillan Press.
- Emmons, R.A.(1999). *The psychology of ultimate concern: Motivation and spirituality in personality*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Francis, L., & Barling J. (2005). Organizational Injustice and Psychological Strain. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science,*
- Greenwood, J.W., & Greenwood, J.W. Jr. (1979). *Managing Managers stress; A systems approach*. New York, John Wiley and Sons.
- Kumar, T., & Pradeeswaran, S.(2008). Effect of Occupational Stress on spiritual Quotient Among Executives. *International Journal of Trade and Finance 4*, Pg, 28-292.
- Rees, C.J., & Redfern, D. (2000). Recognizing the perceived causes of stress – a training and development perspective. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 24*, Pg, 397-414.
- Sauter et al., (1990). Prevention of work-related psychological disorder: A national strategy proposed by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. *American Psychologist, 45*, Pg, 1146-1158.