

## Stress in Different Types of Organisation - An Empirical Study in Dindigul

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### Abstract:

*Stress and its management have attracted a lot of attention of late, as it is a malady, which appears to affect nearly every person at one time or the other. This trend is more visible in the workplace, which makes it of special interest to the behavioural scientist who is interested in, the dynamics of employee interaction and its consequences. Employees being individual in their own right and highly different from each other as well are assumed to be influenced by various personnel and organizational factors that cause stress and burnout. Understanding these influences is absolutely vital for the organizations, as employees constitute its real sustainable advantage and a great effect and cost is involved in their development. The present research is an attempt to understand the relationship between the individual employees' Propensity to withstand pressure and the organizational the relationship between the individual employee's propensities to withstand pressure and the organizational environment. It is purely exploratory in nature and stems from a desire to know more about the 'stress outbreak' which is slowly but steadily threatening to overwhelm a greater part of our working inhabitants.*

**Key words:** Stress Management, Stress outbreak, Factors to Stress

### Introduction

Stress management is attracting more and more attention today especially with respect to the workplace. Today there is

no such thing as a stress free job. Everybody in the workplace experiences some kind of frustration, tensions and anxieties related to the general work environment. Increasing Urbanization, industrialization and the increase in the scale of operations in the society are causing stresses. People experience stress as they feel that they have lost control over whatever is happening to them in life. Stress-defined as a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint or demand related to what he or she desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both important yet uncertain-has certainly assumed the proportion of an outbreak! The magnitude of the stress outbreak is wide. There are thousands of managers and employers who do not understand that people are the primary sustainable source of competitive advantage. They treat employees as dispensable commodities to be exploited for maximum production, and then simply threatened bullied or sacked when stress affects their performance. Employees on their part must also realize that stress is caused more by their individual propensity to withstand pressure and must also strive to condition their attitude towards external stressors.

## **Objectives**

- To determine stress levels across age, profession, and type of job and duration of work.
- To find out the difference in stress levels with respect to the work environment in the various occupational categories.
- To judge the impact of office atmosphere on stress level of employee and to derive relationships with various factors that are important to the respondent while he is on job.

- To identify and compare level of role related stress with respect to role stagnation, role distance and role overload indices.

## **Research Methodology**

**Research Instrument** – A sample size 300 was considered and random sampling method was used. 2 questionnaires were devised to collect the data in a scientific and systematic manner. Each respondent was administered the two questionnaires. The first questionnaire dealt with the various aspects of work life and the probable impact of these on stress level of the employee. These can be classified into contextual and content factors that affect an employee's behavior and include factors as relationship between superiors and subordinates, rewards and challenges at work place, work freedom, responsibility and accountability issues, as well as personal factors such as nature of self and personality types of respondents. The second questionnaire has been adapted from Dr. Uday Pareek's book on role Effectiveness and uses the RODS SCALE to measure the response to Role Distance, Role Stagnation, and Role Overload stresses. In this questionnaire, questions are segregated into 3 types-those reflect role overload, those that reflect role stagnation, and those that reflect role distance. The statements were chosen in such a way that they reflected each type of role stress. The scale has 30 items, 10 for each of the three role stresses. The audience response to these role stresses. The audience response to these questions as per the Likert Scale is added up. The sample is also distributed among the new, middle and senior operatives.

**Research Technique:** An attempt has been made to analyze the data on scientific lines weighted average scores were taken whenever necessary. Correlation, Frequency distributions, and summary statistics were also used to depict relationship

between the variables. The profile of the Respondents with respect to age, type of job, profession, and work experience is as follows. (See Tables 1.1)

**Table 1.1: Profile of the Respondents**

<b>Classification based on the Profession</b>		
<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
1.	Own Business	30
2.	Teaching Field	29
3.	Bank Officers	43
4.	Leaders in Organisation	92
5.	Followers in Organisation	106
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>Classification Criteria Job Experience</b>		
<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Experience in years</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
1.	0 -5	87
2.	6 – 10	85
3.	11 – 15	43
4.	16 – 20	56
5.	Over 20	79
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>Classification Criteria for Type of Job</b>		
<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Type of Job</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
1.	Desk Job	90
2.	Field Job	210
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>Classification Criteria Age of Respondent</b>		
<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Age group in years</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>
1.	20 – 25 years	43
2.	26 – 30	74
3.	31 – 35	52
4.	35 – 40	44
5.	40 and above	87
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>

## Findings of the Survey

Findings of the survey have been discussed under two headings:

- A. General factors causing stress burnout (Questionnaire-1)
- B. Specific organizational Role Related Stress (Questionnaire – 2)

The phenomenon of stress is highly individualistic in nature. Some people have a high level of tolerance for stress and appear to thrive in a dynamic environment yet others appear to be almost paralyzed in the face of stressors present in the organization. These include meeting deadlines, meeting high standards of performance expectations, working with moderate resources and coping with sudden emergencies. Thus every individual has an optimum level of stress under which he or she will perform to full capacity. If the stress experienced is below this capacity then boredom or apathy tends to set in. This may result in withdrawal from work. In contrast, when the stressors are too many, and too intense for examples a tough boss or uncooperative employees an atmosphere of mistrust prevails and the performance of the individual also falls down. The employee will be forgetful at times, suffer from hurry sickness and also from insomnia and psychosomatic disorders.

#### **A) Work Related Stress-General Factors**

In Order to identify the stressor present in the work environment, the respondents were asked to specify their agreement or disagreement with the following statements on a 5 point Likert scale. Statements such as ‘I enjoy work’; ‘I get full freedom to do my work. ‘My superior trusts me completely’. “There is lot of office politics” “There is a lot of manipulation at work place” ‘I get good support from my seniors’ and ‘I get what I deserve’ denote work related stressors. These factors were included in the questioner with the presumption that an individual reacts positively or negatively to stressors available in work life such as degree of work freedom , manipulation, politics, environment of trust or mistrust, and the like in the environment. The response to these statements is as follows:

“I enjoy my work” While as many as 173 respondents agreed totally with the statement (69%) 60 agreed somewhat (24%), 11 were indifferent, 5 agreed somewhat and 1 disagreed

totally. Thus, a large majority of respondents claimed to enjoy their work.

“I get full freedom to do my work”. While as many as 100 respondents agreed fully with the statement (40%), 101 agreed somewhat (42%), 17 were indifferent 20 disagreed somewhat and 12 disagreed totally. Thus, the respondents largely claimed that they had autonomy over their job.

“I feel that my superior trusts me completely” While as many as 141 agreed totally with the statement (56%), 64 agreed somewhat (26%) 33 were indifferent, 10 disagreed somewhat and 2 disagreed totally. We see that a large majority of respondents considered that their superior trust them completely.

“There is tremendous office politics”. While as many as 101 agreed totally with the statement (42%), 62 agreed somewhat (25%), 18 were indifferent, 55 disagreed somewhat and 14 disagreed totally. We see that a large majority of respondents agreed that their superior trusts them completely.

“There is tremendous office politics” While as many as 44 agreed totally (18%) 79 agreed somewhat (32%), 46 were indifferent, 45 disagreed somewhat and 36 disagreed totally. The correlation coefficient is 0.63 (sig. at 0.05 level of confidence). This was again perceived to be a major stress factor. Even the relation is a strong significant relationship and once again depicts a vulnerability of the employees to manipulation at work place.

“I enjoy good support from my colleagues” In response 59 agreed totally (20%) 87 agreed somewhat (31%). 23 were indifferent, 88 disagreed somewhat and 43 disagreed totally. The correlation coefficient is 0.8 (sig.at.0.05 level of confidence) Good relationships with colleagues, in fact, reduces stress and promotes better understanding. It also reduces the chance of manipulation and office politics. But then the responses to statement 4 and 5 are at variance with the response to the statement. Normally the colleagues, who indulge in

manipulation and the politics related to the manipulation. This contradiction may imply that the respondents do not understand the real meanings of the responses which contradict each other.

“I enjoy good support from my juniors”. In response 156 agreed totally (58%), 83 agreed somewhat (29%), 21 were indifferent, 20 disagreed somewhat and 20 disagreed totally.

“I get what I deserve” In response 71 agreed totally (24%), 91 agreed somewhat (32%), 62 were indifferent, 56 disagreed somewhat and 20 disagreed totally. “I feel am rewarded justly at workplace”: While 62 agreed totally with the statement (21%), 93 agreed somewhat (33%), 59 were indifferent, 55 disagreed somewhat and 31 disagreed totally. “Stress is very important for giving my best”. 85 agreed totally (30%), 77 agreed somewhat (27%), 49 were indifferent 40 disagreed somewhat and 49 disagreed totally. The respondents were then asked to rank their current level of stress on a 7 point semantic differential scale (0 to 7 point semantic differential scale).

**Table 1.2 Types of Stress**

Types of Stress	No of Employees
Low Stress	116
Medium Stress	80
High Stress	104

Thus we see that about 61.3% of the work and are experiencing medium to high level stress. A contingency Chi-square Table was constructed to find out the stress level with respect to age, Profession experience at work and type of job. This enabled the researcher to find out the stress level within/due to each category. (See Table 1.3-Age Factor and Stress level)

**Table 1.3 Age Factor and Stress level**

Sl. No.	Age	Very Low	Medium	High	Total
1.	20-25	15	13	15	43
2.	26-30	34	17	23	74

3.	31-35	16	12	24	52
4.	35-40	17	13	14	44
5.	>40	34	25	28	87
<b>Total</b>		<b>116</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>300</b>

The correlation between age and level of stress is 0.31, which is low but significant at 0.05 level of confidence interval. There is nothing very significant to suggest that stress level increases with an increase in age. It is a weak significant relationship. The correlation between job experience in years and stress is 0.08. Significant at 0.05 level of confidence. The correlation coefficient denotes a weak significant relationship that indicates that the two are not interrelated significantly. With respect to job experience 38% of the 0-5 category suffer from moderate to high stress, 61% of the 6-10 category experience moderate to high stress, 65% suffer from moderate to extreme stress in the 11-15 years category, 61% of respondents with job experience of 16-20 years suffer from moderate to extreme stress and 86% in the over 20 years experience suffer from moderate to extreme stress condition.

Thus the stress zones in terms of how long the employee has been working are 11-15 years and over 20 years where stress levels are recorded higher. A few observations can be mentioned here. The number of respondents feeling stress with 11-15 years experience is 65% and here it is related more to career aspiration levels. However number of respondents facing organizational stresses in the over 20 category is 86% and where the stress is more to the job maintenance factors and desired output level. Some stress is also due to worries related to post retirement plan of activity. (See Table 1.4 Experience and Stress Levels)

**Table 1.4 Experience Factor and Stress level**

S. No.	Experience in years	Low stress	Medium stress	High stress	Total
1.	0-5	31	11	35	77
2.	6-10	35	16	24	75
3.	11-15	18	3	12	33

4.	16-20	24	18	14	46
5.	>40	18	32	19	69
	<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>300</b>

With respect to the occupation of respondents and the stress levels, we find that 70% of those having own business are facing medium to high stressors. 68% of those in the teaching field face medium to high stressors, about 57% in the banking field face medium to high stressors, those having leadership positions and facing medium to high stressors number about 72%, and those having essentially subordinate positions in the organizations, facing medium to high stress, number are about 51%. Thus the high stress occupation appear to be in the nature of self-owned enterprise and all those occupations in the private and public sector where the employee perceives himself to be holding a leadership position. (See Table 2.3 Occupation and Stress Levels) In our survey we found that those having a field job face greater work stressors, than those who face essentially a desk job are feeling high to medium stress, whereas 78% of those, having a field job, feel high to medium level of stress. (See Table 1.5 Type of job and Stress levels)

**Table 1.5 Occupation Category and Stress Levels**

S. No	Nature of Profession	Low Stress	Medium Stress	High Stress	Total
1.	Own Business	13	3	4	20
2.	Education	16	19	14	49
3.	Banking	24	14	15	53
4.	Leaders	33	16	43	92
5.	Followers	30	28	28	86
	<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>300</b>

**Table 1.6 Type of job and Stress Levels**

Sl. No.	Type of Job	Low Stress	Medium Stress	High Stress	Total
1.	Desk Job	16	21	53	90
2.	Field Job	100	59	51	210
	<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>300</b>

The weighted average stress score WASS on an 7 point scale according to respondents demographic profile has also been calculated (See Table 1.9 to 1.13) The WASS of those having Leadership positions in organizations and those having own business is higher than any other occupation category selected for the purpose. Bank officers and subordinate positions are less prone to high stressors according to this survey. The stress factors for entrepreneur could be accountability and responsibility issues, frequent fluctuations in business cycles, up gradation and competition (See Table 1.6). The stressors Leaders include targets, quotas, results a unwilling subordinates.

**Table 1.7 Weighted Average Stress Score (Profession wise)**

A	Profession	WASS
1.	Own Business	6.21
2.	Teaching	5.16
3.	Bank Officers	4.63
4.	Leaders in Organisation.	5.93
5.	Followers in Organisation.	4.49

With respect to job experience we find the stress points to be more with those respondents who had a work experience of 6-10 years, 11-15 years and above 20 years. The stress factors could be related to promotions, additional responsibility, threat of competition, technology up gradation and also retirement, (See Table 1.8)

**Table 1.8 Weighted Average Stress Score (Experience wise)**

B	Job Experience	WASS
1.	0 -5 years	4.48
2.	6-10 Years	6.73
3.	11 -15 years	6.52
4.	16 – 20 years	5.61
5.	> 20 Years	6.80

With respect to the age profile we find the high stress some to be in the age group 31-35 years followed by the 20-25 years. The stress factors could be related to performance expectations

job change targets and quotes, job uncertainty deadlines and pressures as well as role stagnation factors (See Table 1.9)

**Table 1.9 Weighted Average Stress Score (Age wise)**

C	Age profile	WASS
1.	20 – 25 Years	5.60
2.	26 – 30 Years	4.14
3.	31 – 35 Years	6.13
4.	35 – 40 years	5.41
5.	Over 40 Years	4.44

With respect to the type of we find that the field job entails a lot of stress and heavy pressure. The stress factors could relate to meeting targets, calls per day, frequent and irregular travel, irregular hours, meeting all types of clients, frustration due to unmet targets daily reporting and strict control by top management (see Table 1.10).

**Table 1.10 Weighted Average Stress Score (Nature of job)**

D	Type of Job	WASS
1.	Desk Job	5.17
2.	Field Job	6.56

## **B) Organizational Role Related Stress**

Pareek's has identified three types of conditions prevailing in the organizations that can be responsible for work stress. These have been classified as:

1. Role overload- refers to the state when the role occupant feels that there are too many expectations relative to those from others in his role set; the person experiences role overload.
2. Role self-distance, that is when there is a conflict between the self – concept and the expectations from that role, as perceived by the role occupant.
3. Role stagnation – With the advancement of the individual the role changes, and with this change in role, the need for taking up a new role becomes crucial. The new role demands that an individual outgrow the previous one and take change of the new role effectively. This leads to a feeling of stress, when

the role occupant feels that he cannot cope with the changing environment. He feels stagnated and bored and less secure in the job environment.

The average score obtained of the three types of indices is mentioned in Table 1.11

**Table 1.11 Average Role Stress Scores**

Sl. No.	Type of Role Index	Mean Score of 300 respondents (out of 50)
1.	Role Overload	32.68
2.	Self-Role Distance	23.28
3.	Role Stagnation	31.40

The questionnaire designed by Uday Pareek comprises 25 statements in all out of which certain statements represent the level of stress due to that particular organizational role response to statement such as “I am over whelmed with work in my present role” Too many people expect too much with me, I have difficulty in coping with my work load”, “Many aspects could be undertaken by others to share my burden” and others, on a 5 point Likert Scale has the range of Not True at all to very true indicate the level of Role Overload an employee is facing.

Response to statements likes “I would like to change over to other roles”. The role that I have in the organization just suites me”, “my self image matches with that of the organizational role” and other questions indicate the level of self role distance the employee is facing. Response to statement like “In my department not much is done in giving the needed time and training to people prior to their promotion”, “I feel that I have only been repeating myself in what I do”; “I hardly learn anything in my role”; “new competencies need to be added to make my role more challenging” and others reflect the level of Role Stagnation in the organizations.

Any score above 25 indicates that employees are stressed out due to that particular role stress. Thus the average score for role overload is 29.28 which indicate that

employees by and large feel that they are overloaded with too many expectations. The average score of role stagnation is 28.38 which is also indicative of some type of stress due to boredom, fatigue and indifference towards the job. The score of self-role distance is below the stress point of 25 (23.28) which does indicate that on an average employees are satisfied with their self concept and the designated roles in the organization.

A glance at the summary statistics (Table 1.12) shows that as high as 46 and 47 (out of 50) scores were present for stresses due to role overload and role stagnation respondents have scored stress scores of 30 and 28 (for role overload and role stagnation respectively) more often than the rest. Table gives a detailed account of the frequency of the scores obtained.

**Table 1.12 Distributions of Stress Scores**

Sl. No.	Stress	Medium	Low	High
1.	Role Overload	30	12	46
2.	Role Self Distance	23	11	24
3.	Role Stagnation	28	2	47

The occupation wise stress score is depicted in the Table 4.3, where we find that the stress due to role overload is highest in the private sector and lowest among the bank officers. In fact in the education sector also we find greater stress due to role overload.

Those working in the private sector record a high stress score with respect to role self-distance (in comparison with the rest of the occupations listed). Surprisingly even in the role stagnation stress the private sector records a higher score than the public sector.

**Table 1.13: Occupation Category and Role Stress**

S. No.	Sectors	Role Overload	Role Self Distance	Role Stagnation
1.	Business	38.96	17.56	20.97
2.	Bank Officers	15.37	24.87	28.17
3.	Public Sector	23.29	24.38	34.35
4.	Private Sector	41.43	29.49	35.76

5.	Education	29.37	20.10	22.78
	<b>Total</b>	<b>29.68</b>	<b>23.28</b>	<b>28.40</b>

## Implications of Research

The research is meant to be exploratory in nature and attempts to examine the trends prevailing in the environment with respect to the most common ailment in work life, which is stress. Observations with respect to the demographic factors such as age, occupation, type of job are presented below.

- Stress is not age specific. There is nothing of suggest that stress occur in only older are groups. It can occur to any individual irrespective of age. In our survey we found that most people in the age group of 31-35 years seem to suffer high incidence of work-related stress.
- Profession and type of job definitely impact upon the work stress that an individual suffers from. Those with leadership role in organizations suffer from a greater incidence of stress than those with follower type role. A desk job is more easygoing than a field job.
- Though no direct relationship can be seen between work stress and job experience yet our survey does imply that the stress in more in individuals with work experience of 6-10 years and those with experience of 6-10 years and those with experience of over 20 years. This is possibly due to the aspiration inspiration quotient that makes an individual ambitious enough to put in more effort.
- According to Uday Pareek, role overload role self-distance and role stagnation are the three main types of stressors in the work environment. Every individual must evaluate his role in the organization as a role entails not only duties but accountability and responsibility as well. We found a high degree of role overload and role stagnation among the employees that we surveyed. Role overload was specifically on the higher side for those employed in the private sector,

entrepreneurs, and the education sector. Role stagnation was high for those employed in the private sector, public sector and even the banking sector. With respect to respect to the stress due to role self-distance private sector employees record a higher stress score than their counterparts.

- A significant majority claimed to enjoy their work and confirmed that they got full freedom to do their jobs. A large majority also confirmed that they enjoyed support from their colleagues and subordinates.
- The key area for concern is high level of office politics and manipulations recorded by a large majority. Motivation or lack of it as perceived by the employee also figures as a prominent stress factor.

We see that there is an imperative need for employers to realize that employees must be treated fairly and justly so that each employee feels motivated and enthusiastic about the job. On their part the employees must appreciate that an organization has a higher focus to operate from and hence a different orientation. An employee should make a thorough assessment about the stress factors in his life and try to reduce them through self-corrective measures. He must question the stakes he has in the organization. If, need to be, may even have to change his internal attitude and predisposition. Organizations, which have a more caring attitude towards their employees, succeed in retaining their best employees even in the most recession-hit times. In this era of highly technology driven enterprises an organization with a human face definitely stands out as the most preferred work destination.

The organizations can implement the following for its employees to perform well:

1. Clarify roles, duties and responsibilities.
2. Design suitable in-built job flexibility Organized counseling and feedback sessions

3. Training needs assessment and up gradation of skills.
4. To relieve a constant pressures on the filed force try to formulate group targets as different from individual targets so that the team shares the burden. Also review incentives periodically.
6. Outline a viable career succession plan for each position. The employee can do the following to lead a happy and fulfilled work-life.
  1. Conduct a thorough self-assessment. Find out internal strengths and strategies to cope with stress.
  2. Prioritize
  3. Learn to manage time effectively.
  4. Develop a positive attitude about work.
  5. Avoid the manipulation and politics trap.

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