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## Quality of Work Life and Mental Health: As a Predictor of Occupational Stress

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### Abstract:

This study investigated quality of work life and mental health as predictors of occupational stress among 88 university professors from The Shivaji University, Kolhapur and Mumbai University, Mumbai. Results revealed significant positive correlation between quality of work life and occupational stress, negative correlation between mental health and occupational stress and no significant association between quality of work life and mental health. Additionally, using the stepwise multiple regression analysis, it was found that quality of work life significantly contributed 18% (R-square = 0.178) to the variance in occupational stress, ( $F(1,86) = 18.63, p < .01$ ) while a separate simple multiple regression analysis revealed that mental health also contributed 17% (R-square = .165) to the variance in Occupational Stress and this was found to be significant ( $F(1,86) = 16.946, p < .01$ ). These results were significant indicating that quality of work life is a better predictor of occupational stress than Mental health.

**Keywords:** Occupational Stress, Mental Health and Quality of work life.

### INTRODUCTION

*Occupational stress is a major problem, not only for employees and organization, but also for the whole society. The issue of stress in organizations has given birth to too many debates and studies. It is a common theme that is addressed by managers, employees and consultants from different perspectives. Taking into account the changes that are currently taking place in our country, it is clear that these changes, which occur in almost all companies, lead to new stress factors for both employees and the organization.*

Workplace stress is the harmful physical and emotional response that occurs when there is a poor match between job demands and the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. Stress can make an individual productive and constructive when it is identified and well managed. In times of great stress or adversity, it's always best to keep busy, to plow anger and energy into something positive. Positive attitude and meditation will be helpful to cope up with the stress. Stress can be minimized if companies take the right steps. Stress-free employees perform better, work harder, feel happier and have a long term commitment to the organization

as compared to their counterparts. Having broader perspective of life will definitely change the perception of stress. Let us hope that we will be successful in making distress into eustress for our healthy lifestyle as well as organizational well being.

*"Mental health means a proper study of the aspects which affects an individual or society coordination and also optimum use of the aspects of that study." – Klein* 'Mental health is the strength and hidden ability which keeps the human stable in the critical circumstances. The people want to achieve the physical prosperity. The present era is the era of science and technology. The people have become aware of physical health. But in the attainment of physical prosperity, the people have been losing their mental health. If we want to create the total healthy atmosphere, we should think of mental health of the people of the society, because according to Bacon, "mind is the captain of the ship of body. So maintenance and care of mental health is very important.'

Job stress is the most important and significant indicator of work life (Baba & Jamal, 1991) it is subjective concept each individual experiences it differently. It can be positive and negative. Job stress leads absenteeism, decreased productivity, increased health care costs and illness. Job stress affect on physical as well as emotional wellbeing if not managed efficiently and effectively (Marchant,1999). Increasing use of advanced technologies, competition and modernization leads to increase in fierce, and physical, mental and spiritual problems. Work stress can lead to low levels of job satisfaction, high rates of undesirable events and unfavorable physical and mental health outcomes (Chen et al., 2006). Job stress has a negative impact on quality of work life. Role ambiguity, role conflict, role under-load, workplace, work repetitiveness and tension are significantly related with quality of work life (Bolhari et al.,2012; Mageswari and Prabhu, 2012; Behzad et al., 2014 and Kasraie et al., 2014)

Review of Literature:

Rathod and Patel (2014) conducted a study to examine the level of mental health of lady teachers of government and private schools. 40 teachers were selected randomly from Bhavnagar district area's School. In which 20 teacher's (10 teacher's 21 to 30 and 10 teacher's 31 to 40 year) from government school's teachers and also 20 teachers (10 teacher's 21 to 30 and 10 teacher's 31 to 40 year) from private school teachers. Results revealed that in government school, 31 to 40 yrs old teachers' mental health is better than 21 to 30 yrs old teachers' and 21 to 30 yrs old teachers of private school are superior in mental health than government school teachers.

Gujare and Tiwari (2016) conducted a study to assess the role of mental health symptoms in predicting and shaping the academic achievement of the female graduate students. 239 females studying in undergraduate courses belonging to high, middle, and low socioeconomic status (SES) were selected for this study. The results revealed that emotional problems, conduct problems, hyperactivity and peer problems components of mental health symptoms have

negative correlations with the scores of academic achievement of the participants on the other hand the scores of pro-social behavior component of mental health symptoms of the female students exhibited a positive correlation with the scores of academic achievement. Socio-economic status of the participants plays key role in mental health symptoms and academic achievement. The regression analyses showed that the mental health symptoms predicted the academic achievement of the participants.

Tabassum and Jaha (2011) incorporated 128 male and 64 female private commercial banks employees examine quality of work life with respect to gender. Results revealed that there is a significant gender difference in quality of work life. Furthermore, Authors also found significant gender differences in areas of quality of work life namely; adequate and fair compensation, flexible work schedule and job assignment, attention to job design, and employee relations.

Cartal et al. (2012) examined 3398 subjects from Italy to search the relationship of subjective quality of work life and gender. Data were collected through stratified random sampling. Results suggested that young men with urban residence had higher scores of quality of work life than rural men but there was no Locale differences found for quality of work life.

Gowrie (2014) conducted a study to demonstrate teachers' perception of their quality of work life and its most common indicator. Four hundred and five primary teachers working in government and government assisted school in the St. George East Education Division of Trinidad and Tobago were selected as a sample. Size and type of school, demography and gender are the major variables that were taken into account in the study. Results revealed that government school and government assisted school has significant difference of social integration in the workplace (dimension of quality of work life). Government assisted school was found significantly inferior to government schools regarding quality of work life.

Bolhari et al. (2012) conducted a study to examine the association of quality of work life and job stress. They suggest that productivity of the employee is related with quality of work life and Quality of work life is important factor in the improvement of work environment conditions and organizational efficiency. The results revealed that job stress has a negative impact on quality of work life. And dimensions of job stress i.e. role ambiguity, role conflict, role underload, workplace, work repetitiveness and tension were significantly associated with quality of work life. No significant association was found between role overload and quality of work life.

Chadha et al. (2012) conducted a study to examine the effect of organizational stress on domains of quality of life of teachers. A sample of fifty school teachers (25 primary and 25 secondary sections) was selected. Results suggested that there was significant correlation between physical domain and role overload, so domain with role stagnation, role expectation

conflict, role overload, resource inadequacy. There was highly significant correlation between social domain and job stress.

Mani et al. (2014) arranged a study to examine the impact of the occupational stress on the quality work life. Fifty railway station masters of Tamilnadu were selected for the present study by convenience sampling method. 'Occupational Stress Index' by Srivastav and 'Quality of work life scale; by Dhar were used to measure the occupational stress and quality of work life respectively. Correlation and 't' test were used to interpret the data. Results revealed that occupational stress has significant impact on the quality work life of the station masters. The dimensions of job stress namely, role overload, role conflict, strenuous working condition and responsibility has its own impact on the quality work life of the station masters.

Bhatt (2013) conducted a study to examine the role of gender in developing mental health status. 210 Orphan secondary school students (131 Orphan and 79 non orphanages) between ages of 13 to 17 year from Kashmir Valley were selected for this study. Purposive random sampling technique was used for data collection. Results indicated significant difference in emotional stability and depressive level between male and female.

Anjum and Aijaz (2014) administered Shah's Security-Insecurity Scale (2010) on 400 hundred students enrolled in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade of Aligarh Muslim University, to study the impact of gender and socioeconomic status on feeling of security-insecurity of adolescent. 2X2 balanced factorial design was applied to examine the objectives of the study. The study revealed that girls experience more insecure feelings than boys.

Aghaei et al. (2010) conducted a study to compare the level of occupational stress and mental health of employees of a petrochemical company in Isfahan, Central Iran, before and 3 months after privatization. They selected one hundred and forty persons by simple random sampling. Results revealed that, there was significant positive correlation found between the mental health status score and job stress score. They specifically reported that after privatization, the job stress of employees increased significantly and this increase was associated with a decrease in mental health.

Khudanniya and Kaji (2014) compared occupational stress and mental health among one hundred (50 government employees and 50 non-government employees) employees of government and non-government sectors (schools, colleges, companies & banks. The finding of the study demonstrated that mental health was found negatively correlated with occupational stress.

Nahar et al. (2013) designed a study to investigate the association of job stress and mental health on government and non-government employees. A sample of one hundred employees in

which 50 government and 50 non-government employees were consisted in the study. Work stress is measured by Occupational stress index by Shrivastav and mental health was measured by General Health Questionnaire. Results revealed that, there is a significant positive correlation between job stress and types of job. Additionally, significant job stress was found in non-government employees than government employees. Moreover, there is negative correlation was found between job satisfaction and gender.

### **Operational Definitions**

*Quality of work life:* Quality of work life is overall quality of human experience at the work place which is presented by scores on quality of work life scale (QWLS) by Dhar, Dhar and Roy (2008).

*Mental health:* The degree of psychological, psychiatric and social pathology of respondents as defined by Anandkumar and Thakur (1984) and as measured by Mithila Mental Health Status Inventory developed by Anandkumar and Thakur (1984).

*Job Stress:* Job stress is the extent of employee's perceived stress arise from various components and conditions of their job. In which employees finds himself/herself incompetent to meet the demands from the organizational environment and which is measured and presented by score on "Occupational Stress Index" by A. K. Srivastav and A. P. Singh (1984).

### **AIM**

To find out the strength of association among mental health, quality of work life and occupational stress of university professors.

### **OBJECTIVE**

The investigator has carried out the present study with the following objectives.

1. To measure the level of Mental Health, Quality of Work Life and Occupational Stress of professors.
2. To measure the strength of association among Mental Health, Quality of Work Life and Occupational Stress.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- 1) Will there be significant relationships between the predictor variables (Mental Health and Quality of work life) and Occupational Stress?
- 2) What are the relative contributions of the predictor variables to Occupational Stress?
- 3) What are the combined contributions of the predictor variables to Occupational Stress?

## **HYPOTHESIS**

The following hypotheses were framed to achieve the objectives of the present study:

1. There is significant negative relationship between quality of work life of university professors and occupational stress.
2. There exists positive relationship between mental health of university professors and occupational stress.
3. University professors with relatively higher level of quality of work life will have lower level of mental health.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The sample size of the study, methods used for data collection, procedures used during the administration and the statistical analysis used for the interpretation of the result are discussed below.

### **Statistical Analysis:**

The present study is based upon Descriptive research and the variables to be studied are, Quality of work life, Mental health and Occupational stress. Data was analyzed by the descriptive statistics namely Mean, Standard deviation and Pearson's product moment correlation ( $r$ ) and inferential statistics, regression analysis (R squared) was used for interpretation of the data.

### **Design and Sample:**

A correlational design was used for the present study. A sample of 88 professors from Shivaji university (N=43; female 15, male 28), Kolhapur and Mumbai University, Mumbai (N=45; female 19, male 26) was selected by purposive sampling technique. Descriptive statistics used to

### **Procedure of data collection:**

Individual administration was used. Participants were asked to sit comfortably and a good rapport was established with the general brief talk with them. They were told to answer each question with a tick mark in the place corresponding to the one which they consider suitable. They were told that there is no right or wrong answers and there is no fixed time to finish the test. But ordinarily they can take test 25-30 minutes for completing the tests. It was ensured that the answers would remain confidential. As soon as they finished their work, test materials were collected.

### **Tools Used for Data Collection:**

- A. Quality of Work Life Scale: (QWLS) developed by Dhar, Dhar and Roy (2011) The scale measures four dimensions namely; i) Productivity, ii) Work-life Balance, iii) Human Relations, and iv) Learning Organizations and consists 45 items having five point rating

scale namely: 'Strongly Disagree', 'Disagree', 'Not Sure', 'Agree', and 'Strongly Agree'. The reliability of the scale was determined by the split-half method is 0.89.

- B. Mithila Mental Health Status Inventory: (MMHSI) devised by Anandkumar and Thakur (1984). This scale contains five subscales namely; i) Egocentrism, ii) Alienation, iii) Expression, iv) Emotional Un-stability and v) Social Non-Conformity. The reliability index is calculated by split half method and it is found 0.90 and by the test-retest method is 0.87.
- C. Occupational Stress Index: (OSI) by A. K. Srivastav and Singh. Scale consists of 46 items having five point rating scale namely: 'Strongly Disagree', 'Disagree', 'Undecided', 'Agree', and 'Strongly Agree' and the twelve factors namely i) Role Overload, ii) Role Ambiguity, iii) Role Conflict, iv) Unreasonable Political Pressure, v) Responsibility, vi) Under participation, vii) Powerless, viii) Poor peer relation, ix) Intrinsic Impoverishment, x) low status, xi) Strenuous working condition and xii) Unprofitability. The reliability was calculated by split half method and Cronbach's alpha and it was found 0.93 and 0.90 respectively.

## RESULT

Table No. 1: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Occupational Stress	127.20	19.545	88
Quality of Work Life	164.16	23.354	88
Mental Health	133.32	14.259	88

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for occupational stress, quality of work life and mental health of university professors. Occupational stress has the mean score of 127.20 with 19.545 SD. Quality of work life and mental health has the mean score of 164.16 with 23.354 SD and 133.32 with 14.259 SD respectively.

Research Question 1: Will there be significant relationships between the predictor variables (Mental Health and Quality of work life) and Occupational Stress?

Table No. 2: Correlation among Occupational Stress, Quality of work life and Mental Health

	Occupational Stress	Quality of Work Life	Mental Health
Occupational Stress	1		
Quality of Work Life	-.422**	1	
Mental Health	.406**	-0.009#	1

Note: \*\* significant at 0.01 level, # not significant

The relation among occupational stress, quality of work life and mental health was investigated with Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient. There were no violations of normality. The findings displayed on table 2 revealed two sets of scores occupational

stress and quality of work life are correlated strongly and negatively;  $r(86) = -0.422$ ,  $p < 0.0$  (two tailed). Indicating that more the quality of work life less the occupational stress or vice versa.

While strongly positive correlation existed between occupational stress and Mental Health;  $r(86) = 0.406$ ,  $p < 0.01$  (two tailed), indicating that more the mental health higher the occupational stress among professors.

There was no significant relationship found between quality of work life and mental health of university professors for present study. That clearly means deviation in scores was by chance only.

Research Question2: What are the relative contributions of the predictor variables to Occupational Stress?

Table 3. Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis predicting Occupational Stress.

	Predictors	SEb	$\beta$	R	R-Sq	Adjusted R Square	$\Delta R^2$	t	F
Step 1	QWL	-0.353	-0.42**	.422	0.178	0.168	0.178**	4.32	18.63
Step 2	QWL	-0.35	-0.42**	.583	0.34	0.324	0.162**	4.75	20.82
	MH	0.551	0.40**					4.56	

Note \*\*Sig at 0.01 level

SE b = unstandardised coefficients showing the predicted increase in the value of the criterion variable

$\beta$  = the standardized beta coefficients, gives a measure of the contribution of each variable to the model

$\Delta R^2$  = R Square Change

R-sq = the square of the measure of correlation

The second aim of this study was to estimate the relative contributions of the predictor variables to the variance in Occupational Stress. To this end, stepwise regression analysis and simple multiple regressions were computed with Occupational Stress as the dependent measure and Quality Of Work Life and Mental Health being the predictors as seen in tables 3 Quality Of Work Life and Mental Health were entered to find out how much variability each of them could significantly account for. As can be seen in table 3, step 1, attending to Quality Of Work Life alone accounted for 18% (R-square = 0.178) of the variance in Occupational Stress, the inclusion of Mental Health accounted for 34% (R-square 0.34) which resulted in an additional 16% in step 2.

Result in any additional significant relative contribution. In table 3, step 2 also, the standardized  $\beta$  values revealed the decreasing order of the predictors: Quality Of Work Life >

Mental Health showing that Quality Of Work Life was the best predictor, while Mental Health was another significant predictor. Thus, Occupational Stress was significantly predicted by Quality Of Work Life, ( $\beta = -0.42$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and by Mental Health ( $\beta = 0.40$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Nonetheless, in order not to miss out any information on the relative contributions of the predictor variables, a simple regression analysis was performed to find out if Mental Health will contribute significantly to the variance in Occupational Stress. Expectedly, findings presented on table 4 revealed that Mental Health also contributed 17% (R-square = .165) to the variance in Occupational Stress and this was found to be significant ( $F(1,86) = 16.946$ ,  $p < .01$ ) while Quality of Work Life contributed 18% to the variance in Occupational Stress which was also significant ( $F(1,86) = 18.63$ ,  $p < .01$ ). These results indicated that both Quality of Work Life and Mental Health are important variables in professors' Occupational Stress although Quality of Work Life emerged as a better predictor of Occupational Stress than Mental Health in this study.

Table 4. Multiple Regression table showing Mental Health as a predictor of Occupational Stress.

Predictor	SE (B)	$\beta$	t	R	R-Sq	Adjusted R Square	$\Delta R^2$	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
Mental Health	.556	.406**	4.12	0.406	.165	.155	.165**	16.946	1	86	.000

Note: \*\* significant at 0.01 level

Research Question3: What are the combined contributions of the predictor variables to Occupational Stress?

The third aim of this study was to find out the joint contributions of the predictor variables. Using the stepwise method, a significant model emerged: as seen in table 3 step 2, these predictors significantly accounted for 34% (R-square = 0.34); ( $F(1, 85) = 20.82$ ,  $p < .01$ ) of the variance in Occupational Stress. Therefore it was concluded that Occupational Stress was significantly predicted by both Quality of Work Life and Mental Health. The findings displayed on Table 5 revealed the information for the predictor tables included in the model.

Table 5: Stepwise Unstandardised and standardised regression coefficients for the variables Included in the model

	Predictors	SEb	$\beta$	R	R-Sq	Adjusted R Square	$\Delta R^2$	t	F
Step 1	QWL	-0.353	-0.42**	.422	0.178	0.168	0.178**	4.32	18.63
Step 2	QWL	-0.35	-0.42**	.583	0.34	0.324	0.162**	4.75	20.82
	MH	0.551	0.40**					4.56	

## DISCUSSION

This study investigated the relationships between Quality of work life, Mental Health and Occupational Stress. The findings revealed that Occupational Stress negatively correlated with Quality of Work Life. This significant negative correlation between Quality of Work Life and Occupational Stress indicated that occupational stress affected by quality of work life. This result was expected and a probable reason for this outcome among this sample may be due to fact that quality of work life is very important in work place. According to Behzad et al. (2014) quality of work life of employees and their job stress is significantly associated with each other. Kasraie et al. (2014) also reported the same fact they demonstrated that there is a significant positive relationship between the quality of work life of employee and their job stress. Kobranorouzian et al. (2014) also reported positive and significant relationship between stress management and quality of work life among employees. Occupational stress of station masters has significant impact on the quality work life of the station masters (Mani et al., 2014).

The findings also revealed that, Occupational Stress positively correlated with Mental Health. It was as expected, according to Siu et al. (1997) the employees who perceived work pressure they were positively associated with mental as well as physical health. Again coping strategies among employees were negatively related to mental and physical health. In contrast, after privatization, the job stress of employees increased significantly and this increase was associated with a decrease in mental health (Aghaei et al., 2010). Khudanniya and Kaji (2014) reported in their study, that mental health is negatively correlated with occupational stress.

In terms of the relative contributions of the predictor variables to occupational stress using stepwise multiple regression analysis, the result exhibited on table 3 revealed that quality of work life significantly contributed 18% (R-square = 0.178) to the variance in occupational stress, ( $F(1,86) = 18.63, p < .01$ ) while a separate simple multiple regression analysis revealed that mental health also contributed 17% (R-square = .165) to the variance in Occupational Stress and this was found to be significant ( $F(1,86) = 16.946, p < .01$ ) indicating that quality of work life is a better predictor of occupational stress than Mental health among this sample.

Another important outcome of this study is that the quality of work life and mental health jointly accounted for 34% (R-square = 0.34) of the variance in occupational stress and this was found to be significant ( $F(1, 85) = 20.82, p < .01$ ) as seen on table 5 step 2. The current study investigated the relationship between professors' job stress and their mental health and it obtained a reverse correlation. This result is consistent with the findings of Pourbabkan and Javidi (2010), and Razmi and Nemati (2011). However, there is no inconsistency among researchers. It can be interpreted that job stress may affect mental performance of professors, so a higher stress index in professors ' job will reduce their mental health. In general, there is a negative relationship between job stress and mental health. Therefore, to decrease the level of occupational stress of professors needs to increase the quality of work life status and decrease the mental health status.

This is to be done by determining and removing job stress related issue. It is necessary to identify and mitigate stressors associated with each parameter, since mental health refers to a state in which an individual relates to the environment, the self, and others.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings of this study reveal that both quality of work life and mental health are predictors of occupational stress but quality of work life emerged as a better predictor of occupational stress than mental health. The findings also suggest that there was no significant association found between quality of work life and mental health for this present study.

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