

# **A study of Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction among Executives of Private and Public Sector in the city of Guwahati**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Stress has been a functional study amongst individuals across the globe and with organizations and its impact on organizational health and Job satisfaction of employees. The present study was planned to investigate the effect of different factors on occupational stress and job satisfaction. The stress factors which have been taken for the study are forgetfulness, closeness to family, tiredness, accomplishment, physical complaints, and unexplained sadness. Though the entire scale of JDI study was not taken, some sub- scales was taken to formulate the questionnaire. These tools like JDI and many others have been used in a variety of studies aimed at capturing various dynamics of job satisfaction in relation to job stress.*

**Key words:** *Executives, Job Stress, Job Satisfaction*

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## **Introduction**

Stress is a vibrant condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint and demands related to what he or she desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important. Stress in itself is not bad although it is typically discussed in a negative context. Challenge stressors operate differently from hindrance stressors.

## **Consequences of Stress**

Stress can manifest itself in a number of ways as described below:

High levels of stress can lead to:

1. Physiological Symptoms
2. Psychological Symptoms
3. Behavioral Symptoms

## **Physiological Symptoms**

Symptoms of physiological stress include headache, neck or back pain, dizziness,

rashes, nervous bladder, sleep disturbance, weight gain or loss, heart diseases breathing difficulty, stomach pain and list seem endless.

## **Psychological Symptoms**

The psychological symptoms can be just as dangerous as the physical manifestations of stress. The problem sometimes surfaces as difficulty in concentrating and often feels disorganized and overwhelmed by routine tasks. One may feel lonely and worthless and in extreme cases think of committing suicide. Stress level may negatively affect relationships with family and friends. The longer the stress levels, the greater the chances that one may seek relief from stress by resorting to smoking, drugs, drinking alcohol and other self destructive activities.

## **Behavioral Symptoms**

This symptom relates to carelessness, withdrawal, accident proneness, impatient,

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hostility, impatience and other behavioral activities that harm one and others related.

### **Relation between Stress and Job Performance**

Various studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between job stress and job performance. Job performance can be viewed as an activity in which an individual is able to accomplish the task assigned to him or her successfully, subject to the normal constraints of reasonable utilization of the available resources. At a conceptual level, four types of relationships were proposed to exist:

1. One is a negative linear relationship, when productivity decreases with stress (distress).
2. Productivity can also increase as a consequence of stress, thereby implying a positive linear relationship between the two.
3. Thirdly, there could be a U- shaped curvilinear relationship wherein, mild stress could increase the productivity initially up to a peak and then it declines as the person descends into a state of distress.
4. Alternatively, there need not be any quantifiable relationship between the two.

Managerial Stress and Stress Management has become a concern for both researchers and practitioners. Stress has its implications for the individual as well as the organization and can no longer be the prejudice of a manager's problem. Stress affects the individual's adjustment with others and can in turn affect performance, productivity and Job Satisfaction of the employees of the entire organization. The 1993 World Labor Report by the UN's International Labor Organization claimed

that stress will become one of the most serious health issues of the 20<sup>th</sup> and also in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The report also claims points to the staggering costs that result from job stress. One study indicated that stress related diseases such as ulcers, high blood pressure and heart attacks costs the US economy \$ 200 billion a year in compensation claims and medical expenses.

Day by day organizations are now realizing the harmful effects of stress in terms of decreased motivation, lowered performance levels, mental and physical ailments, temper, tiredness which culminates into Job Dissatisfaction. Sources of managerial stress have been well documented since the late 1970's. Stressors at the individual level has been studied more than any other category.

As the factor of Stress and Satisfaction has been a very pertinent factor for the overall concern and growth of an organization, it has been a matter for our research also. As there are very few instances of research in our area regarding the same, we have chosen to study Occupational Stress and Job satisfaction amongst private and public sector organizations and compare the same.

The stress factors which have been taken for the study are forgetfulness, closeness to family, tiredness, accomplishment, physical complaints, and unexplained sadness. Role conflicts, ambiguity, role overload is widely examined individual stressors (McGrath 1976; Newton and Keenan, 1987). It is also reported by many researchers that the low job satisfaction was associated with high stress (Hollingworth et. al., Abdul Halim, 1981; Keller et al., 1975; Leigh et al., 1988).

Several researchers reported that in industrial setting job satisfaction and job involvement increases with age and as a result occupational stress decreases

(Cherrington, 1979). Very little attention has been given to whether the stress, a manager experiences is related to his/her functional area. It is true that “managers” as a broad class perform the same duties, i.e., planning, organization, controlling, directing, etc. However, each functional area has its own particular problems. We define “functionally dependent stress” as stress arising from features specific to a given functional area than another?

In order to identify these “functionally dependent stressors” the various functional areas that are taken are sales and Marketing, Accountancy, Human Resources, Legal Services, Managerial Executives (Operational), Manager (Planning), Research and Development and Customer services.

The various public sector organizations from where executives were selected were Gujarat Co- Operative, BSNL, SBI, Survey of India, Income Tax, LIC and SBI (Life). The private sector organization chosen for the research were ICICI Bank, Standard Chartered Bank, Airtel, Aircel, and a few prominent hospitals of the area, and Media.

### **Stress and occupational outcomes**

Stress is associated with impaired individual functioning in the workplace. Negative effects include reduced efficiency, decreased capacity to perform, dampened initiative and reduced interest in working, increased rigidity of thought, a lack of concern for the organization and colleagues and a loss of responsibility (Greeberg and Baron, 1995; Matteson and Ivancevich, 1982). Stress has been associated with important occupational outcomes of Job satisfaction.

### **Measuring Job satisfaction**

In order to measure attitudes of public sector managers either in isolation or in comparison to private sector managers – it

was necessary to adopt a questionnaire designed for this task. The Job Descriptive Index (JDI; Smith, Kendall and Hulin, 1969) is an analytical tool which is often regarded as the most well – developed instrument for measuring job satisfaction levels. The parameters for our study for job satisfaction mainly were Pay, Promotion, Co-worker and Supervision. Though the entire scale of JDI study was not taken, some sub- scales was taken to formulate the questionnaire. These tools like JDI and many others have been used in a variety of studies aimed at capturing various dynamics of job satisfaction.

Although there is no closure on the issue, several studies focused on determining whether or not there is meaningful difference between the public and private sectors in terms of Job Satisfaction. Rainey (1979) has found that private sector managers scored higher in Job satisfaction than their public sector counterparts using the Job Descriptive Index.

Kumar & Acharnamba (1993) in their findings among public sector administrative staff their counterparts in private sector; administrative staffs in public sector have greater Job satisfaction than private sector using the Job Descriptive Index.

Scheider & Vaught (1993) had made a study amongst 36 private sector employees and 68 public sector employees with the JDI methodology and there was no significant difference in Job Satisfaction levels between public and private sector employees.

### **Methodology**

The sample for this study consisted of 150 executives drawn on the basis of random sampling from 7 public sector and 8 private sector organizations in and around the city of Guwahati. A total of 105 subjects were responded out of which 58 were from public

sector and 47 were from private sector. Of the total of 58 public sector subjects 14(24%) were identified as young adults (25-35 yrs), 24(41%) as early middle age (36-45 yrs) and 20(35%) as late middle age (46-60 yrs.) whereas in private sector 21(45%) were identified as young adults, 14(30%) as early middle age and 12(25%) as late middle age.

Functional area of each individual included sales and marketing, customer service, human resource, legal service, accounts service, managerial executives(operational),insurance, planning and development,etc.

All the respondents were educationally well qualified, 63% had degree, 27% had post graduate and the remaining 10% had other professional degrees.

The subjects filled in a specially designed questionnaire to study the comparison between Job Stress and Job Satisfaction taking inputs from Occupational Stress Index (Srivastava & Singh) and Job Descriptive Index (JDI, Smith, Kendal, Hulin).

**Occupational Stress:** In determining the occupational stress level of the executives inputs from different Occupational Stress Indices were considered and framed a unique questionnaire based on factors such as

Tiredness, Accomplishment, Unexplained sadness, Forgetfulness, Temper, Closeness to family, Physical complains, Cynical.

**Job Satisfaction Scores**

Job satisfaction score was measured taking inputs from Job Descriptive Index (Smith and Kendal, 1969). To evaluate the scores on job satisfaction emphasis was given on the factors Pay, Promotion, Supervision and Co-worker.

**Results**

**Occupational Stress**

The results obtained from the study show significant decreases in the mean stress score from young adult group to late middle age in both private and public sector executives. Young adults were found to have experienced more occupational stress than the middle aged; especially in the private sector this score is even higher than public sector.

The results obtained in **Table1.1** show that the young adults were experiencing more stress which was reflected in the factors like forgetfulness, closeness to family, tiredness, accomplishment, physical complains, unexplained sadness, etc.

Occupational Stress Scores		
Age Group	Mean	SD
25-35	14.75	4.99
36-45	12.57	3.74
46-60	12.33	3.86

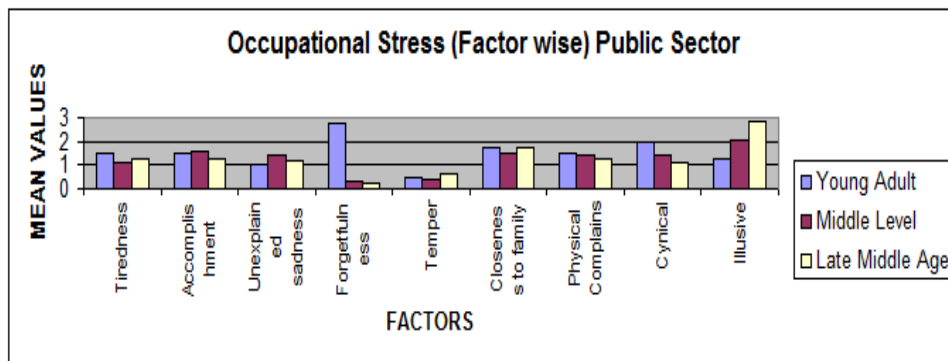
Table No. 1.1.Means, SDs for Occupational Stress Scores (Public)

Occupational Stress Scores		
Age Group	Mean	SD
25-35	20.25	5.36
36-45	14.37	3.25
46-60	12.21	3.75

Table No. 1.2.Means, SDs for Occupational Stress Scores (Private)

Source Factors/Age	25-35 yrs		36-45 yrs		46-60 yrs	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Tiredness	1.5	0.5	1.143	1.23	1.25	0.87
Accomplishment	1.5	0.5	1.571	1.40	1.25	0.97
Unexplained sadness	1	1	1.429	1.16	1.17	1.19
Forgetfulness	2.75	0.433	0.289	0.61	0.25	0.62
Temper	0.5	0.5	0.429	0.76	0.67	0.89
Closeness to family	1.75	0.829	1.5	1.02	1.75	1.48
Physical Complains	1.5	1.5	1.429	1.09	1.25	0.87
Cynical	2	0.707	1.429	1.22	1.08	1.0
Illusive	1.25	0.433	2.07	1.27	2.83	1.53
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.52</b>		<b>1.25</b>		<b>1.27</b>	

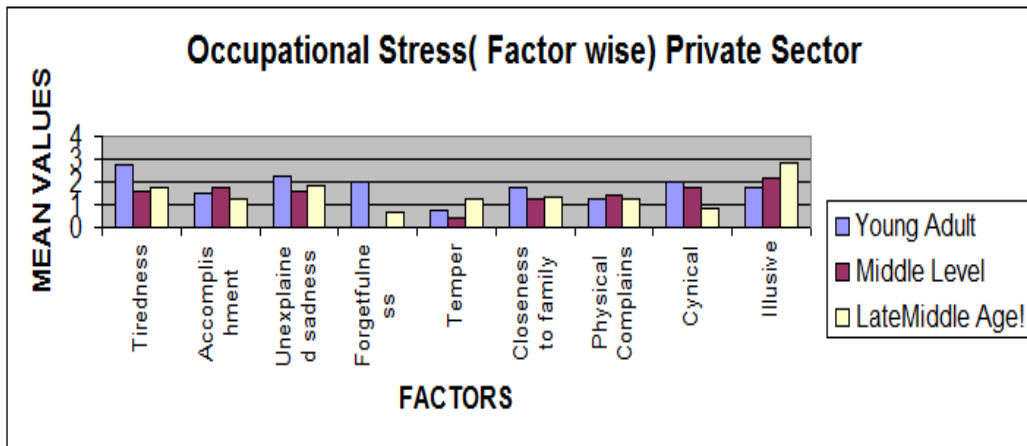
Table No. 2.1. Means and SDs for sub factors of Occupational Stress Scores (Public)



Source Factors/Age	25-35 yrs		36-45 yrs		46-60 yrs	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Tiredness	2.75	1.1	1.543	0.46	1.06	1.03
Accomplishment	1.5	0.56	1.75	1.01	1.25	0.74
Unexplained sadness	2.25	1.07	1.6	0.76	1.85	0.89
Forgetfulness	2	0.80	0.89	0.35	0.68	0.4
Temper	0.75	0.36	0.429	0.36	1.25	0.53

Closeness to family	1.75	0.75	1.24	1.12	1.36	0.7
Physical Complains	1.25	0.63	1.429	0.67	1.25	0.62
Cynical	2	0.48	1.79	0.45	0.85	0.32
Illusive	1.75	0.69	2.13	0.37	2.60	0.58
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.78</b>		<b>1.42</b>		<b>1.35</b>	

Table No. 2.2. Means and SDs for sub factors of Occupational Stress Scores (Private)



**Job satisfaction:** The Table3.1 and Table3.2 show that the late middle aged executives of public sector reported more job satisfaction than the two younger groups whereas in case of private sector executives of middle age group were enjoying more job satisfaction than the other two groups. The study reveals that the executives in the middle age were more satisfied with their coworkers compared to their seniors and juniors in both the sectors. It also reveals that the late

middle aged executives were appeared to be more satisfied on supervision and pay than the two younger groups in public sectors whereas in private sectors this group is satisfied more on supervision. The young adult executives of both public and private sector were found to be more satisfied with their promotion.

Another aspect from the study was the positive correlation between the age and the satisfaction scores of the executives.

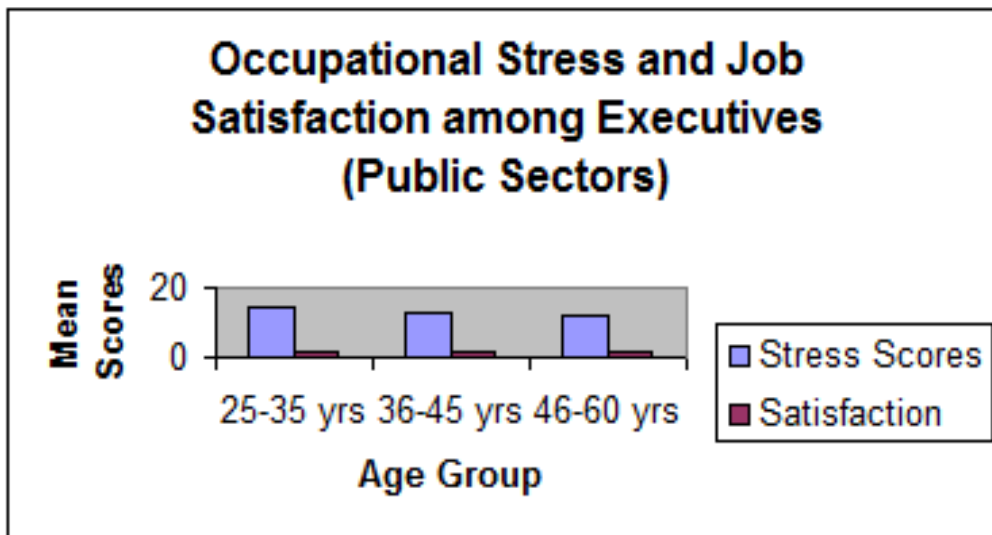
Age	25-35 yrs		36-45 yrs		46-60 yrs	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Supervisor	1.5	0.5	1.43	1.22	2.33	0.4
Coworker	1.5	0.5	2.57	1.23	2.42	0.5
Promotion	1.2	0.8	1.07	1.09	0.92	0.9
Pay	1.2	0.8	1.14	0.92	1.75	0.8
<b>Mean</b>	<b>1.37</b>		<b>1.55</b>		<b>1.85</b>	

Table3.1.Means and SDs for sub factors of Satisfaction Scores (Public)

Age	25-35 yrs	36-45 yrs	46-60 yrs
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Factors	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Supervise	1.1	0.3	1.76	0.75	2.07	0.98
Coworker	1.7	0.7	2.93	1.23	2.16	0.56
Promoti	2.2	1.0	1.25	0.37	1.68	0.47
Pay	1.2	0.5	2.37	1.56	2.01	0.65
Mean	1.5		2.07		1.98	

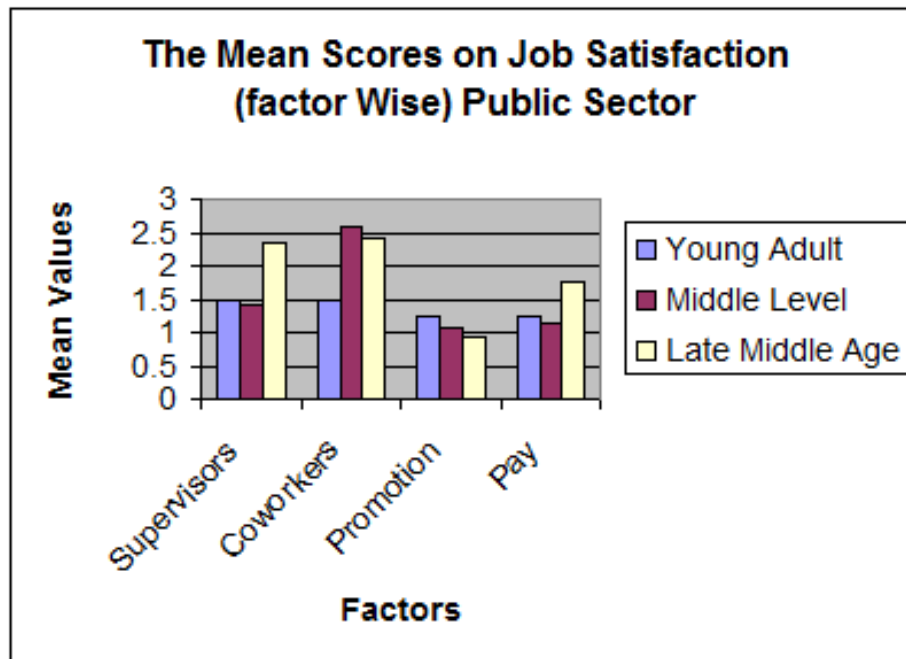
Table3.2.Means and SDs for sub factors of Satisfaction Scores (Private)



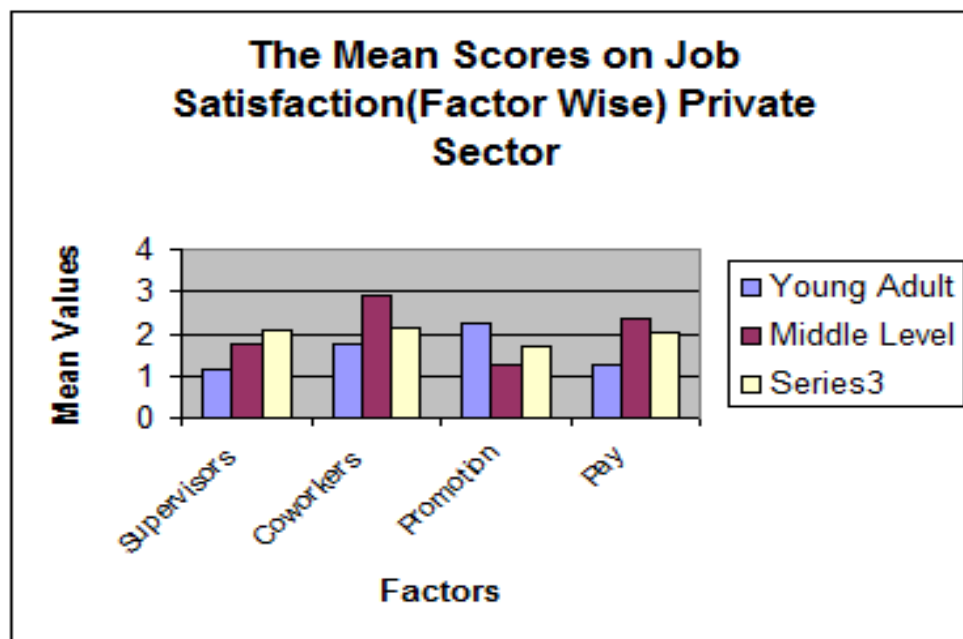
Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction among Executives (Public Sectors)



Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction among Executives (Private Sectors)



The Mean Scores on Job satisfaction (Factor wise) Public Sector



The Mean Scores on Job satisfaction (Factor wise) Private Sector



### Conclusion

The study revealed that individuals under excessive stress tend to find their jobs less satisfying. Corroborating many studies in the literature, the findings of the represent study revealed the same. The subjects with lower job satisfaction were found to experience more stress in the form of like forgetfulness, closeness to family, tiredness, accomplishment, physical complains, unexplained sadness, etc.

Age, therefore was found to be important in these study and findings. The results of the study reiterate the significance of demands at each career developmental levels as pointed by Hollingsworth.

The study revealed that age was found to be negatively correlated with occupational stress and positively with job satisfaction. In this study the focus was on understanding the

nature of functionally dependent stress and establishes the usefulness in understanding and managing stress among managers. Some stressors through the study revealed that they can be controlled by providing additional manpower wherever required, integrating some dissimilar functions or through any other structural interventions. Management development activities can also be initiated to create awareness on the nature and the level of stress and help managers to cope effectively.

However, we feel strongly that the stressors should be studied on a gender difference response pattern and the study should involve in the longitudinal sense so that seasonal or cyclical variations in the system can be understood for initiating actions at the individual and the organizational level.

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