ORGANIZATIONAL AND EXTRA-ORGANIZATIONAL ANTECEDENTS OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS: A CASE STUDY OF ASIANET SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS LTD.

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Abstract

In the contemporary organizational milieu, characterised by relentless competition and escalating performance expectations, employee stress has emerged as a pivotal determinant of workplace dynamics. The paradigm of "survival of the fittest" underscores the criticality of human capital in achieving organizational excellence. Amidst mounting workloads and the incessant drive for efficiency, stress, long perceived predominantly as a negative construct, has gained renewed attention for its dualistic nature. While distress continues to pose significant challenges to employee well-being and productivity, the concept of eustress highlights the positive, motivational aspects of stress triggered by favourable developments such as promotions or new responsibilities. This dual perception underscores the complexity of stress as a multidimensional phenomenon, frequently cited as one of the most ambiguously defined terms in scientific literature. The present study situates occupational stress within the broader discourse of organizational behaviour and human resource management, with a specific focus on its influence on job performance. Through a critical examination of empirical, conceptual, and theoretical frameworks, the study investigates the antecedents of occupational stress, termed as "stressors", arising from both organizational and extra-organizational environments. It further explores the implications of these stressors and the adaptive strategies employed to mitigate their effects. By elucidating the intricate relationship between occupational stress and employee performance, this study aims to contribute to more nuanced stress management approaches and informed organizational policy interventions.

Keywords: *occupational stress, employee performance, organizational behaviour, stressors, stress management*

Introduction

Occupational stress has become an increasingly critical concern in today's dynamic and competitive work environments. It is characterized by a condition of mental, emotional, and physical strain that arises when job demands exceed an individual's coping abilities. This form of stress not only influences an employee's emotional well-being and cognitive functions but also affects personality, perception, attitude, and overall behaviour in the workplace. A wide range of factors, both organizational and extra-organizational, contribute to the emergence of occupational stress. These contributing elements, commonly referred to as "stressors," vary across industries and work settings.

One such environment where occupational stress is particularly pronounced, but comparatively under-researched, is the visual media sector. The industry demands multitasking, quick decision-making, irregular schedules, and high-performance consistency, all of which create a fertile ground for both positive and negative stressors. In this context, Asianet Satellite Communications Ltd (ASCL) represents a relevant and timely case for investigation. As a major player in the visual media field, ASCL operates within a fast-paced and pressure-intensive ecosystem, making it an ideal setting to study the antecedents of occupational stress.

This study seeks to explore the various stressors specific to the visual media environment of ASCL and examine how they contribute to occupational stress among employees. By identifying and analysing these antecedents, the study aims to offer insights that can support the development of stress mitigation strategies and promote a healthier, more productive workplace culture. Despite the relevance of this topic, stressors in the visual media profession have received limited academic attention, making this study a meaningful contribution to both organizational behaviour research and practical human resource management.

Review of literature

Occupational stress has emerged as a critical concern globally, imposing significant costs on individual

employees as well as organizational systems. The transformation in the structure and expectations of modern work has intensified pressures on the workforce. Notably, the 1990s witnessed major shifts in large organizations, marked by widespread downsizing, outsourcing, and globalization. While such changes introduced greater flexibility and mobility for certain segments of the workforce, they also generated heightened anxiety around job security, increased workload demands, and a diminished sense of organizational belonging, particularly as part-time and short-term contract arrangements became more prevalent.

Kyriacou (1987) described teacher stress as the emotional discomfort, such as tension, frustration, anger, and depression, that arises from various aspects of the teaching profession. Borg (1990) conceptualized teacher stress as a harmful experience rooted in the teacher's perception of threat. He identified three key factors: the perception that excessive demands are being placed on the teacher, difficulties in meeting these demands, and the belief that failing to meet them poses a risk to their mental or physical well-

being. According to the United Kingdom Health and Safety Commission (1990), stress is the reaction individual's exhibit when they are subjected to overwhelming pressure or demands. Allen (2002) defined stress as a psychological state that occurs when individuals begin to lose confidence in their ability to manage a situation effectively.

Spector and Jex (1998) noted that the on-going debate around defining occupational stress has led the stressor-strain approach to become a dominant theme in the field of occupational stress research.Beehr (1995) explained that this approach operates on a relatively simple theoretical basis, which sees stress as emerging when job-related factors contribute to deterioration in psychological or physical health.

Hurrell, Nelson, and Simmons (1998) defined stressors as the job-related conditions, events, or demands that trigger stress, while strain refers to the psychological or physiological responses of employees to those stressors. The main focus of this model lies in examining the presumed causal link between job stressors and the

resulting strain experienced by individuals. Cox (1978) compared this approach to an engineering model, where external demands place individuals under pressure, and the resulting strain from that pressure may lead to physical and emotional harm.

Cooper (1998) observed that although substantial research has concentrated on linking job-related stressors to strain, there has been an increasing shift towards the development of process-oriented theories that aim to provide a more structured understanding of occupational stress. Edwards (1992) highlighted that some of these theories are explicitly focused on the workplace, while Hart (1999) emphasized their broader applicability to various aspects of employees' lives beyond the occupational context. Despite their differences, most process-based models share a reliance on the transactional perspective of stress.

Furthermore, Edwards (1992), Hart (1999), and Headey and Wearing (1989) emphasized that this reciprocal nature fosters a self-regulating system that constantly seeks to maintain internal balance, or homeostasis. As a result, gaining insight into occupational stress requires analysing how various related factors interact and evolve over time. However, such understanding remains limited, as most existing research on occupational stress has been cross-sectional, not longitudinal, making it difficult to track how these relationships change over time.

Lazarus and his colleagues (e.g., DeLongis & Folkman, 1984) developed the cognitive-relational theory, a transactional model that is applicable across various aspects of life and helps explain individuals' positive and negative reactions to their surroundings. Drawing from this framework, stress has been described either as a complex, multivariable process (Lazarus, 1990) or as a conceptual domain of inquiry (Lazarus, DeLongis, Folkman, & Gruen, 1985). However, these definitions have faced criticism for being overly broad and lacking clarity regarding which variables or relationships are central to understanding stress.

This definitional approach differs from that of other transactional theorists

such as Cox (1978) and McGrath (1970), who have characterized stress as the perceived imbalance between environmental demands and an individual's perceived ability to handle them. Although this definition offers greater precision, it still does not fully reflect the evolving and interactive nature of the stress experience.

The most significant contribution of cognitive-relational theory lies not in its definitions, but in its emphasis on the mediating role of appraisal and coping processes in shaping how individuals respond and adapt to their environments. Adaptation, as defined within this framework, involves the continuous interaction between appraisal and coping, enabling individuals to manage their circumstances in ways that preserve or enhance their physical, psychological, and social well-being. The outcomes of this adaptive process have been operationalized through both emotional states, such as positive and negative affect (Kanner, Coyne, Schaefer, & Lazarus, 1981) and broader indicators of mental health, including anxiety, depression, perceived social competence, and self-worth (Kanner, Feldman, Weinberger,

& Ford, 1991). Additional outcomes may involve somatic health and social functioning (Lazarus, 1990; Lazarus et al., 1985).

According to the cognitive-relational theory, individuals' responses to their environments are filtered through the process of appraisal. This cognitive process involves a constant evaluation of whether situations affect personal well-being (primary appraisal) and, if so, what can be done to manage them (secondary appraisal). When people perceive environmental conditions as harmful, challenging, threatening, or beneficial, they recognize their relevance to personal well-being and initiate coping responses (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988).

Research Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional, descriptive design to examine the antecedents of occupational stress among employees of Asianet Satellite Communications Ltd (ASCL). A sample of 60 employees was selected using simple random sampling, ensuring representation across departments, age groups, and genders. Data were collected using a structured and pre-

tested questionnaire, designed in English and translated into Malayalam. The tool included sections on personal background, perceptions of occupational stress, and various stressor categories, namely organizational, extra-organizational, group, and individual stressors. Organizational stressors were further sub-classified into job-related, role-related, and structural components.

A pilot study

It was conducted with a sample of 10 respondents to assess the internal consistency of the survey instrument. The analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.896, indicating a high level of reliability and internal consistency among the items. Subsequently, the instrument underwent expert validation, during which domain specialists reviewed the content for clarity, relevance, and coherence. Based on their feedback, revisions were implemented to enhance both the linguistic clarity and structural consistency of the tool.

Data collection

Data collection employed a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," to capture the respondents' perceptions of occupational stress. For analytical purposes, responses were quantitatively categorized into three levels of stress, "No Stress," "Low Stress," and "High Stress" using weighted average scores to ensure objective classification.

Given that a subset of respondents were illiterate, data collection for these individuals was conducted through structured oral interviews. The researcher administered the questions verbally and recorded the responses directly, thereby minimizing misinterpretation and ensuring data accuracy and consistency across the sample.

Statistical Technique

Data from 60 respondents were analysed using SPSS (v13) with descriptive statistics, Chi-square tests, Mann–Whitney U and Kruskal–Wallis tests for group comparisons, and Confirmatory Factor Analysis to validate stressor dimensions

Objectives

1. To determine the major antecedents leading to the emergence of occupational stress.

2. To find out whether employees in ASCL differ in level of stress perceived as a consequence of their background information.

3. To find out the association between employees' perception on occupational stress and their overall stress.

Hypothesis

- H0: There do not exist significant differences in the level of stressors with respect to age, gender, locale, occupation, marital status, education, type of family and monthly income against the alternative hypothesis,

- H1: There exist significant differences in the level of stressors with respect to age, gender, locale, occupation, marital status, and education, type of family and monthly income.

Results

Occupational stress has emerged as both a widely discussed topic and a significant concern in contemporary work environments. Its multidimensional nature makes it a complex phenomenon that influences various aspects of organizational behaviour and human resource management practices. A more meaningful understanding of occupational stress lies not merely in defining the concept, but in examining the underlying factors that contribute to its development. Like many psychological and organizational constructs, occupational stress carries both positive and negative dimensions. In moderate levels, it can serve as a motivating force, enhancing employee productivity and job performance. However, when stress exceeds manageable limits, it becomes overwhelming, impairing employees' ability to function effectively and leading to diminished workplace performance.

Stressors

At the heart of the concept of occupational stress lie the underlying

causes or antecedents, more commonly referred to as stressors. The appearance of these stressors within the work environment is what triggers the development of occupational stress. Understanding these stressors is considered more critical than focusing solely on the consequences of stress, as they are the root of the problem. Occupational stress is shaped by numerous factors that can be broadly grouped into four main categories:

1. **Organizational Stressors**

2. **Extra-Organizational Stressors**

3. **Group Stressors**

4. **Individual Stressors**
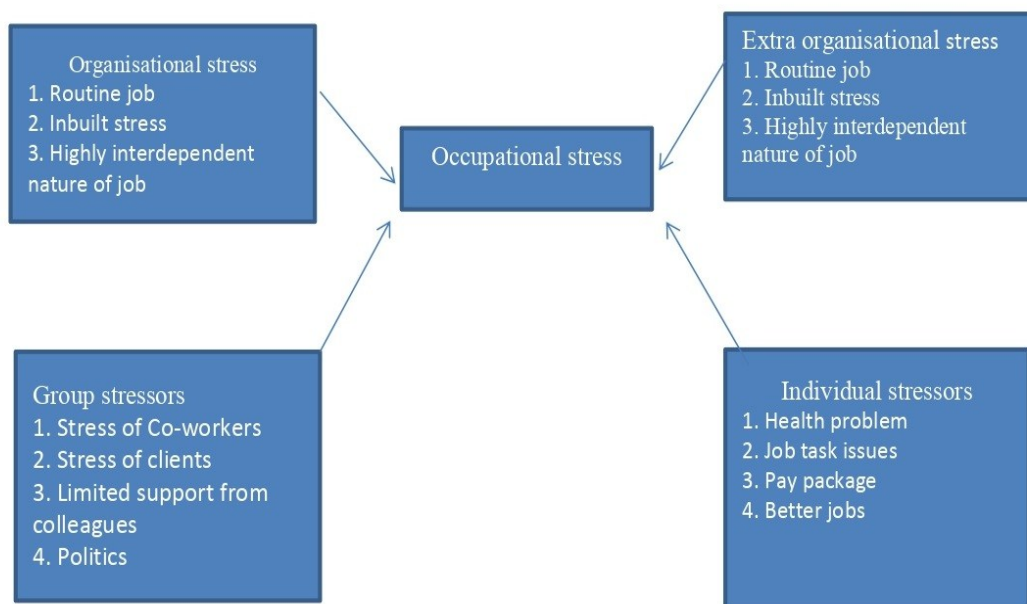
When occupational stress goes beyond a certain level, it starts affecting the employees in mental emerges as a result of factors not just from part of the organization but also from outside the organization which could be termed as 'extra-organizational'. These are crucial to the issue of occupational stress as they are to be curbed in order to put an end to the stressful situations brought about in the working environment. There was found to be significantly very high levels of stress in terms of extra organizational

stressors at work place. Majority of employees seemed to develop stress as

a result of bringing work home and feeling alienated due to transfers

Descriptive statistics of extra organizational stress factors in the total sample

Extra Organizational Stressors	Response (%)	Mean	SD
Your family life is not peaceful	63.30	2.12	1.98
The demands from family gives you less time to work	63.30	2.03	1.90
You hear complaints while bringing work to home	85.00	3.53	1.79
You are alienated from your family by transfer	90.00	3.62	1.61
You are not able to cope up with rapid technological advancement	58.30	2.02	1.98
Over All Extra Organizational Stressor	98.30	2.66	0.72

Source: Primary data from field survey

The data reveals that a significant majority (98.3%) of respondents experience stress stemming from extra-organizational factors. The mean score for extra-organizational stressors is 2.66, with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.72, suggesting a relatively high and consistent level of stress among the participants. Notably, a substantial proportion of respondents, 90% and 85%, respectively, reported elevated stress levels in situations where they feel alienated from their family due to job transfers or face complaints from

family members when they bring work home. These appear to be the most impactful stressors. In contrast, a comparatively smaller percentage (58.3%) of respondents indicated stress due to challenges in keeping up with rapid technological changes, suggesting that while technological adaptation is a concern, it is not as pressing as family-related stress factors.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to examine whether the original five dimensions of stressor

variables adequately explain the stress levels experienced by the respondents. CFA, a statistical technique used to assess the dimensionality and structure of a set of variables, helped validate and expand upon the initial framework. As a result of the analysis, 11 distinct stressor dimensions were identified, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the sources of stress. These dimensions include: (1) Role in organization (2) Job ambiguity and internal conflicts (3) Health problems and anxiety (4) Job structure issues (5) Organizational structural conflict (6) Duties (7) Family and career crisis (8) Work culture conflicts (9) Client service issue (10) Organizational politics (11) Work to family conflicts.

Results of factor analysis and factor loadings

F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F10	F11
0.79	0.07	-0.08	0.0	0.06	0.02	0.01	-0.07	0.24	-0.1	-0.02
0.75	-0.07	0.35	0.0	0.19	0.09	0.16	-0.07	0.08	0.04	-0.31
0.75	0.24	0.02	0.35	-0.09	0.11	0.12	0.15	-0.09	-0.18	-0.02
0.69	0.03	0.37	0.09	0.18	0.02	0.05	0.11	-0.16	0.17	-0.16
0.58	0.46	-0.16	-0.09	0.18	0.15	0.04	0.13	0.01	0.25	0.12
0.0	0.79	0.12	-0.11	0.22	-0.05	-0.02	0.14	-0.06	0.05	0.07
0.13	0.75	0.12	0.16	-0.11	-0.11	0.05	-0.13	0.13	0.02	0.15
0.12	0.56	-0.3	0.17	0.19	0.17	-0.07	-0.3	0.08	-0.35	-0.35
0.13	0.54	0.18	-0.08	0.11	0.4	0.08	0.19	0.06	0.26	-0.4
-0.02	0.03	0.83	0.0	0.03	0.08	-0.02	0.04	0.1	-0.02	0.12
0.23	0.05	0.63	0.12	0.28	0.05	0.19	-0.14	-0.08	-0.34	-0.06
0.17	0.47	0.55	0.11	-0.14	0.21	-0.2	0.14	-0.08	0.1	0.02

0.3	0.32	0.46	0.1	0.22	-0.12	0.04	-0.12	-0.3	0.16	-0.03
-0.05	0.06	0.06	0.85	0.13	-0.01	0.17	0.0	0.05	0.03	0.05
0.31	-0.05	-0.07	0.72	0.03	-0.05	-0.18	0.02	-0.27	0.26	0.09
0.05	-0.05	0.17	0.54	0.17	-0.07	-0.3	-0.26	0.26	-0.28	0.15
-0.03	0.27	0.34	0.52	0.05	0.37	0.25	0.29	0.22	0.11	-0.28
0.13	0.0	0.24	0.27	0.81	0.07	-0.04	0.01	-0.01	0.11	0.05
0.29	0.26	0.0	-0.05	0.65	0.14	0.11	0.08	0.21	0.07	-0.07
0.18	0.0	0.21	0.03	0.03	0.75	0.18	0.19	0.02	-0.03	-0.04
0.06	0.11	0.24	-0.04	-0.35	-0.56	0.2	0.07	-0.02	-0.26	0.03
0.46	0.02	0.16	-0.27	0.03	0.48	-0.07	-0.06	-0.03	-0.14	0.24
0.16	-0.06	-0.02	0.01	0.04	0.09	0.84	-0.04	-0.13	0.17	0.01
-0.29	-0.03	-0.18	0.02	0.12	0.27	-0.55	0.14	-0.41	0.19	0.25
-0.2	0.32	-0.04	0.18	0.43	0.08	0.50	0.31	0.01	-0.02	0.06
-0.02	-0.07	0.02	-0.03	-0.01	0.2	-0.05	0.78	0.08	0.0	-0.22
0.27	0.38	-0.04	0.04	0.26	-0.15	0.05	0.56	-0.03	-0.2	0.08
0.09	0.05	-0.03	0.01	0.13	0.04	-0.09	0.08	0.86	0.21	0.1
-0.01	0.13	-0.05	0.17	0.19	0.07	0.15	-0.11	0.22	0.74	-0.07
-0.14	0.14	0.1	0.11	0.02	0.02	-0.03	-0.17	0.1	-0.03	0.81
3.466	2.847	2.433	2.271	1.934	1.743	1.739	1.554	1.457	1.447	1.445
11.554	9.491	8.109	7.569	6.448	5.809	5.796	5.179	4.858	4.822	4.815
11.554	21.04	29.15	36.72	43.17	48.98	54.776	59.956	64.813	69.63	74.45

Conclusion

The study highlights the multifaceted nature of occupational stress, emphasizing that while mild stress can motivate employees, excessive stress, especially from extra-organizational sources, can severely impact well-being and job performance. Among the various stressors analysed, factors such as family-related pressures, job transfers, and the inability to cope with technological changes were found to be the most significant contributors to stress, whereas organizational and individual stressors played a comparatively minor role. Using statistical tools like the Chi-square test and Confirmatory Factor Analysis, the study identified 11 key dimensions of stress, with extra-organizational stressors emerging as the most dominant. The findings suggest that although overall workplace stress levels are low, there is an urgent need for organizations to implement supportive policies that address external pressures and promote work-life balance to enhance employee resilience and productivity.

Suggestions

1. Introduce flexible working hours to support work-life balance.

2. Provide regular stress management and wellness programs.

3. Ensure job rotation to prevent work monotony.

4. Create clear pathways for career advancement.

Establish a zero-tolerance policy for workplace politics

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