

A Gender Perspective of Workers of Apparel Industry

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ABSTRACT

Today the industries are realizing that an organization does not compete with the products alone but how well it uses its people is more important for its survival. The Apparel industry is one of the largest and most prominent sectors of Indian economy. The apparel manufacturing units are labour intensive. The workers play a vital role in maintaining the stability in terms of productivity. The total sample for the study consisted of 100 male and 100 female workers working in apparel manufacturing units of Jaipur. Occupational Stress index and job Satisfaction Scale were used to collect the data. The main objectives of the study were to find the differences between occupational stress and job satisfaction among male and female workers. The results reveal that the occupational stress of both male and female workers in apparel industry was not significantly different but on job satisfaction they differed at 0.05 level.

Key words: Occupational stress, Job satisfaction, apparel Industry

Introduction:

The Apparel Industry is one of the largest and most prominent sectors of Indian economy. The apparel manufacturing units are labour intensive. The workers play a vital role in maintaining the stability in terms of productivity. Both male and female workers are contributing equally in the apparel manufacturing units. Garmenting and ironing are the two processes where the maximum numbers of workers in the industry are employed. The men normally control the process of cutting, garmenting, ironing and packing. On the other hand, the proportion of women is higher in quality checking. Although women constitute a majority of the workers in the garment manufacturing, most of them are involving in garmenting. The comparatively lower wages of female workers is another important factor encouraging large-scale women's participation in the garment industry. However, some gender-specific concerns are also influential in encouraging garment employers to employ more women than men in their firms.

These concerns are as follows: (a) women are more patient and nimble; (b) women are more controllable than men; (c) women are less mobile and less likely to join a trade union; and (d) women can do better in sewing because this job coincides with their traditional jobs.

The first and the foremost need of any industry is to maintain the relation between workers and the work. This is possible by knowing the parameters such as the occupational stress and job satisfaction of the workers. Today the industries are realizing that an organization does not compete with the products alone but how well it uses its people is more important for its survival. In any working condition, both stress and psychological pressure are indispensable part of an individual.

Stress at work results from increased complexities of work and its divergent demands which has become prominent feature of the modern industries and organization. Occupational stress has been

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described as the experience of negative feelings, such as frustration, worry and anxiety, perceived to arise from work related factors (Kyriacou, 2001). It is further defined as individuals state of mind when one encounters a situation of demand and a constraint in an organization and perceives the same as harmful or threatening. Workplace stress can have a negative impact on the well being of the individual and his or her day-to-day functioning. This is observable level (e.g., depression, anxiety, low self-esteem), at cognitive level e.g. (absent model for females and males). Being a social construct, the roles and expectations as well as the opportunities and privileges of the different genders change from time to time.

The amount of satisfaction derived from one's job is an indicator of one's job satisfaction. Job satisfaction expresses the degree of congruence between one's expectations of the reality that job provides (Davis, 1981). Job satisfaction is an effective reaction of feeling of employees with job, supervision, co-workers, pay and his/her current and future career progress. In short, job satisfaction is the general attitude which is the result of many specific attitudes such as specific job factors, individual's characteristics and group relationship outside the job.

Many theories of job satisfaction have been proposed, but one of the most widely utilized is Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. According to this theory job satisfaction comes from one set of job variables (called Motivator needs or Satisfiers) and job dissatisfaction from another set of variables (Hygiene factors or Dissatisfiers). Satisfiers include, for example, recognition responsibility for one's work, personal growth, achievement and advancement, while Dissatisfiers include many

aspects of work external to the self such as pay, relationships with colleagues and supervisors, work conditions and security (Herzberg, 1968).

Studies have revealed that occupational stress has been linked to decrease in job satisfaction and job commitment, absenteeism and reduced performance (De Nobile & Mc Cormick, 2007; Jepson & Forrest, 2006; Kyriacou, 2001; Muchinsky, 2000; & Spector 2000).

Thus, the main objectives of the study were:

1. To study the difference between occupational stress of male and female workers.
2. To find out the difference between job satisfaction of male and female workers.

Method:

Sample:

The total sample for the study consisted of 100 male and 100 female workers working in Apparel Manufacturing units of Jaipur. Workers of Apparel Industries from Jaipur city were contacted to gather the information. Both the groups were matched in terms of age, marital status, salary, literacy, job and educational level. The sample selected was from literate group of people.

Tools and Techniques:

1. Occupational Stress Index, (Srivastava and Singh, 1984)
2. Job Satisfaction Scale (Singh & Sharma, 1971)

Procedure:

The questionnaires were individually administered to the workers and analyzed according to the instructions given in the manual.

Table 1 Mean, SD, t- values and significance level between male and female workers on Occupational stress and Job satisfaction

Variables	Males		Females		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Occupational stress	127.22	13.87	127.10	18.68	0.04
Job satisfaction	63.6	8.76	70.6	13.2	3.12*

*P: < 0.05

The result in Table 1 depicts the mean and SD scores of male and female workers with regard to occupational stress at work place and Job satisfaction. The mean scores of males (M:127.22) and females (M:127.10) did not differ significantly (t: 0.04, NS) indicating homogeneity in the experience of occupational stress between males and females at work place though there are some specific stressors that affect gender differently, such as males experience stress in relation to risk taking, disciplinary matters, implications of mistakes and career progression, whereas women are concerned about personality development, rates of pay, keeping with new ideas and such others (Loosemore & Waters, 2004).

Male and Female workers feel that their activities are well defined. According to Kahn (1986) it is the role ambiguity that causes stress. French, et al (1992) summarized the finding of the study that role ambiguity, appears to be wide spread. It produces psychological strain and dissatisfaction and leads to underutilization of human resources and feeling of futility on how to cope with their organizational environment.

The reason for higher occupational stress of the male and female workers could be because of strenuous working condition, role overload, role ambiguity, role under load and working conditions. Adler (1989) observed that employees who have substantial degree of independence, autonomy and freedom to make decision, can handle work pressure better. Jackson (1983) in the study has

reported that if employees are given a sense of control over their work environment, such as giving them a chance to be involved in the decision making process that which affects them will reduce their work stress.

The results in Table 1 show Mean scores of males (M: 63.64) and females (M: 70.6) on the level of job satisfaction. The mean scores on job satisfaction show that males scored significantly lower than females (t= 3.107, p < 0.05). Women consistently express themselves as more satisfied with their jobs than men. Women's higher job satisfaction has been reported in recent work by Clark (1996, 1997) and Sloane & Williams (2000), Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza (2003) and Long (2005).

Males experience less satisfaction from their job compared to females. The reason for the difference in job satisfaction could be due to male workers evaluate themselves in terms of their job security, wages and financial gains, safety and medical care of their families. Males have a greater pressure to be the bread winner of the family leading to frustrations because of finances and less interest in job. Whereas, the working women carry the extra load of work physically and psychologically and have better ability to cope with the situations and are satisfied with the job, because of low expectations from the society as compared to men.

To conclude the Occupational Stress of both male and female workers in apparel industry was significantly different but males significantly lower job satisfaction as compared to females.

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