

Occupational Stress and Associated Factors Among Administrative Employees of Colleges in Kathmandu Metropolitan City

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Abstract

This study explores occupational stress and its associated demographic factors among administrative employees in Kathmandu's private colleges, addressing a critical gap in Nepal's undergraduate education sector. Employing a quantitative research design, data were collected from 152 respondents through a structured online questionnaire comprising demographic items and the Occupational Stress Index (OSI). The primary objectives were to assess overall stress levels and determine differences based on sex, age, marital status, and educational qualification. Findings revealed OSI scores ranging from 85 to 205, with an average score of 141.26, indicating a moderate level of occupational stress. Statistical analysis using Independent Samples t-Test and One-way ANOVA showed no significant differences in stress levels based on demographic variables: sex, age, marital status, and educational qualification. This research contributes to the limited literature on workplace stress in Nepal's higher education sector and highlights the need for institution-wide approaches to stress management. It emphasizes that organizational and contextual factors may be more influential than demographic characteristics in shaping occupational stress. The findings support the development of broad-based policies and support systems aimed at improving well-being and productivity among administrative staff.

Keywords: Occupational stress, Administrative staffs, Associated factors

1. Introduction

Occupational stress is a growing concern in modern workplaces, especially in low-income countries like Nepal, where support systems and resources are often lacking. In the education sector, particularly among administrative employees in private colleges, stress arises from factors such as long working hours, increasing responsibilities, rapid technological changes, and evolving educational demands. Despite the global relevance of this issue, the academic focus on occupational stress within Nepal's undergraduate education sector remains limited, highlighting the need for research in this area. This study addresses that gap by examining stress levels and associated demographic factors among administrative staff in private colleges in Kathmandu Metropolitan City. The research aims to determine the average occupational stress score and explore variations based on sex, age, marital status, and educational qualifications. A quantitative approach using standardized surveys was employed to gather reliable data and uncover patterns in stress experiences. The findings provide insights into how demographic characteristics influence stress responses and help identify major stressors in the academic work environment. These insights not only enrich the theoretical understanding of occupational stress but also offer practical strategies for addressing these challenges in institutional settings.

By investigating stress in the context of private colleges, the study contributes to building a healthier and more productive educational environment. The results are relevant for institutional leaders, policymakers, and practitioners who aim to implement effective stress management programs, improve work-life balance, and foster a supportive workplace culture. Ultimately, addressing occupational stress will not only enhance staff well-being but also improve institutional performance, student outcomes, and the overall quality of education in Nepal.

2. Literature Review

Occupational stress is widely recognized as a significant challenge across various sectors, with growing attention to its impact on employee well-being and organizational performance. Although extensively studied in healthcare, banking, and corporate environments, the education sector—especially administrative roles within private colleges—remains underexplored, particularly in countries like Nepal. Existing literature shows that stress is influenced by several demographic factors, including sex, age, marital status, and educational qualification. However, inconsistencies in findings and a lack of focused research on administrative staff in educational settings highlight the

need for targeted inquiry. This study aims to address that gap by examining how these variables interact to influence stress among administrative employees of private colleges in Kathmandu Metropolitan City.

Research on sex and occupational stress has yielded mixed results. Some studies indicate that women report higher levels of stress due to dual roles and workplace discrimination (Galanakis et al., 2009; Akbar & Akhter, 2011), while others, including Mondal et al. (2011) and Aftab & Khatoon (2012), found male employees reporting greater stress. Yet, a significant number of studies (e.g., Akinmayowa & Kadiri, 2014; Amos et al., 2015; Shkēmbi et al., 2015) found no notable difference between male and female stress levels. This suggests that the influence of sex on occupational stress may be context-specific, varying across professions and countries. Similarly, age has shown a fluctuating relationship with stress. Some studies (Tyagi & Kirmani, 2012; Rehman, 2020) report higher stress among younger workers due to inexperience, while others (Bulatovic, 2013) suggest older workers face more pressure from accumulated responsibilities. In Nepal, Ojha et al. (2020) found significant age-related stress variations, indicating that workplace policies should account for age-specific stressors.

Marital status also presents mixed findings. Studies such as those by Akbar and Akhter (2011) and Khurshid et al. (2011) found married individuals more stressed due to added responsibilities, while others like Omoniyi and Ogunsanmi (2012) reported higher stress among unmarried staff. However, in some settings (Gadirzadeh et al., 2017; Galanakis et al., 2009), marital status had no significant impact on stress levels, indicating that broader social and institutional factors may moderate this relationship. Education, meanwhile, presents clearer trends. Lower educational qualifications have been associated with higher occupational stress in educational administration and teaching roles (Tyagi & Kirmani, 2012; Aftab & Khatoon, 2012). Still, other research (Agai-Demjaha et al., 2015; Shkēmbi et al., 2015) found no significant links between education level and stress, suggesting that institutional factors like training and administrative support might be more crucial than qualifications alone. The Occupational Stress Index (OSI) has been a commonly used tool in assessing stress levels and identifying contributing factors. Studies by Kayastha et al. (2012) and Tabassum and Hashmi (2021) revealed that demographic factors such as age, marital status, and educational qualifications significantly impact stress levels. For example, Bhuin (2017) found that work experience and place of residence played a larger role than income or job position in predicting stress among business school staff. These studies underscore the need to move beyond simplistic demographic comparisons

and consider the interactive effects of multiple personal and professional variables in shaping stress responses.

In conclusion, while demographic variables such as sex, age, marital status, and educational qualification have been widely studied in relation to occupational stress, their effects vary depending on professional context, cultural setting, and institutional structure. This study not only highlights these differences but also underscores the pressing need for targeted research in underrepresented sectors. Through its focus on private college administrators in Nepal, it lays the groundwork for data-driven interventions and policy reforms that can enhance organizational climate, employee well-being, and overall institutional effectiveness.

Conceptual framework

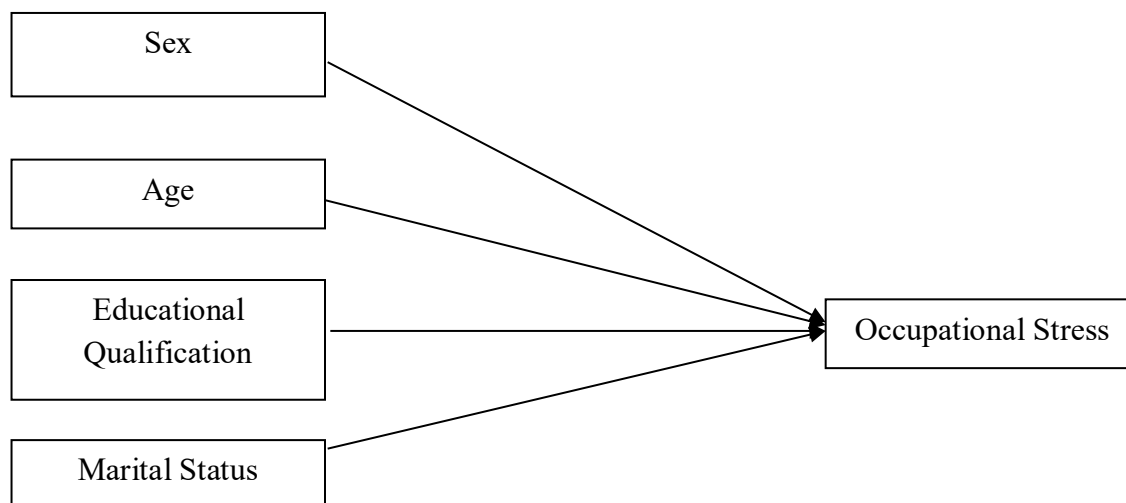


Figure: Conceptual framework

3. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design using quantitative methods to examine occupational stress among administrative employees in private colleges affiliated with Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu Metropolitan City. A purposive sample of 152 administrative staff from 11 colleges was selected, focusing on individuals with at least two years of administrative experience. Data was collected through an online questionnaire comprising two sections: demographic information (sex, age, marital status, education) and the Occupational Stress Index (OSI), a validated tool measuring stress across 12 dimensions. The data collection process ensured voluntary participation, clear communication, and confidentiality, with surveys distributed and submitted electronically for

convenience and data integrity. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS (version 20), employing descriptive statistics to summarize participant responses and inferential statistics—specifically Independent Sample t-Tests and One-way ANOVA—to assess differences in stress levels across demographic variables. Reliability was tested using Cronbach’s Alpha, and normality checks ensured the appropriateness of inferential tests. Ethical protocols were rigorously followed, including informed consent, privacy protection, and cultural sensitivity, ensuring participant autonomy and a respectful research process. This robust methodology enabled a comprehensive and reliable assessment of the factors influencing occupational stress in the targeted educational co

4. Data Analysis

This study investigates the prevalence and determinants of occupational stress among administrative employees in private colleges. A total of 152 participants were surveyed, evenly distributed by sex, with a majority aged between 25 and 34 years and holding at least a Master’s degree. The Occupational Stress Index (OSI) revealed a moderate average stress level ($M = 141.26$, $SD = 17.71$), and normality testing confirmed the data were suitable for parametric analysis. Independent samples t-tests showed no significant differences in stress levels based on sex ($p = 0.27$) or marital status ($p = 0.85$). Similarly, a one-way ANOVA found no significant variance in stress across different age groups ($p = 0.58$). However, educational qualification significantly affected stress levels ($p = 0.03$), with Bachelor's degree holders reporting higher stress compared to their Master's degree counterparts. The findings suggest that while most demographic variables do not significantly impact occupational stress levels, educational attainment plays a critical role. These insights underline the importance of providing additional support and stress management resources to less-educated staff to foster a healthier organizational environment.

5. Conclusion

This study explored occupational stress among administrative staff in Kathmandu’s private colleges, assessing whether stress levels vary based on sex, age, marital status, and educational qualification. Findings indicated moderate stress levels overall, with no significant differences based on sex, age, or marital status. However, stress levels varied significantly by education, with those holding only a Bachelor’s degree experiencing higher stress than their Master’s-holding peers. This suggests that broader organizational factors may be more influential than individual demographics in determining stress levels. Given the uniformity in stress across most demographic groups, the study highlights the

need for institutions to focus on systemic stressors. Factors such as workload, job clarity, and institutional support may play a larger role. Recommended interventions include promoting supportive work environments, access to mental health resources, resilience training, flexible scheduling, and recognition programs. Open communication and employee engagement were emphasized as key to stress reduction and fostering well-being. Future research should consider longitudinal and qualitative methods to understand how stress evolves over time and explore organizational influences such as leadership and job design. Testing the effectiveness of wellness initiatives will help identify targeted strategies. Overall, a holistic, evidence-based approach is essential to effectively manage stress and enhance employee well-being in educational settings.

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