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Level of Stress among the Government Officers: Cases from the Nepal

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Abstract
Job stress can be defined as the inability to cope with the pressures in a job. The main objective of this study is to explore the level of stress among the government officers working in different offices of Nepal. Study was conducted among the 284 technical and non-technical government officers. Simple random sampling technique was applied to select the respondents. The findings revealed that in general, moderate level stress found high, low level stress in 2nd and high level stress in 3rd ranking in all types of position (Class I –III). Similarly, non-technical officers had more stress than the technical officers. Total occupational role stress was found significantly different between the class III and I and insignificantly difference found between the class III and II and II and I. Finding shows that class II felt different level of stress than class III and I. It is necessary to adopt the coping mechanism to address the level of stress of working staffs.

Keywords*:Government Officers, Nepal, Stress*

1. Introduction

Stress in an organization is often regarded as a 'price of success' or 'a necessary evil of work' (Quick, 1984). Some amount of stress or tension is necessary to motivate the individuals. It is generally believed that excessive, continuous stress is harmful resulting in deterioration in employees adequate, and satisfactory adjustment with various dimensions his /her life. Absenteeism, turnover, poor motivation and job dissatisfaction has already been related with stress (Singh, 1995). Stress is inevitable, and so, it is increasingly becoming a focus of variety of empirical investigations due to the human, social and economic costs attached to it (Beehr, 1978; Levi, 1981; Moss, 1981; Ahmad, 1985).

Job stress, which is also called occupational stress, generally refers to the stress that caused by work or factors related to work(Zhou Yongkang, 2014).Lazarus and Launierhold the opinion that stress is any situation beyond normal appropriate reactions, emphasizing the source of stress(Lazarus, 1978). However, Quick suggested that stress reaction is the general, regular and unconscious mobilization of the organizational natural ability resources when facing stress source, emphasizing the consequence of stress (Quick, 1984). Some researchers emphasize that job stress mostly refers to individuals' uncomfortable feelings caused by changes of normal lifestyle (Summers, 1995). Also, there are some researchers who suggest that job stress refers to some individuals' reactions to work environment which may threat themselves, and these reactions will cause physiological and psychological splitting(Jamal, 1990).

Job /role stress has been considered as a person environment misfit. (Cooper, 1976)have noted, "---- by occupational stress is meant negative environmental factors stressors associated with a particular job". Some researchers have reported occupational stress as a disruption in individual's psychological or physiological homeostasis that forces them to deviate from normal functioning in interaction with their jobs and work environment.

Organizations are facing high competition to achieve the goal within a given period. Here the question is not only to achieve the organizational goal but also to provide quality service to the people. In this scenario, organization prefers highly motivated, creative, competent and healthy human resource that can provide the quality services to the people more efficiently and build the organizational image. This situation certainly demands a lot of hard work and time, which exerts many stresses on an employee. Organizational variables such as, conflicting role, role demands, role ambiguity ,negative value towards work, individualism, poor coping strategies etc. increases the level of stress in the employees. Apart to organizational variables, individual has to fulfill owns' as well as others demands that arise due to uncontrolled, unavoidable developing countries, variables such as poverty, high aspirations, transitional nature of society, rapidly changing socio-cultural norms and values, family rift etc. are critical variable which triggers the stress level of an individual. Thus, such factors contribute to create individual as well as organizational stress in turn and affect the health and behavior of an employee.

Workplace stress has recently received attention from managerial executives in Nepal. Nepal is undergoing enormous economic, political and social changes, with the transformation of its industrial structure from being labor-intensive to highly technological. However, organizational and management processes are still conducted in very autocratic ways, such as decision making behind closed doors, top-down communications, and emphasis on policy implementation rather than employee consultations. All these features inherent in Nepalese's organizations and management processes may lead to heavier psychological workload and lower decision latitude.

From a different perspective, with the globalization of the world economy, the rapid development of the society and rapid changes in the value system, economy growth, and demands are increasing both in the individual as well as organizational setting. A systematic study of work stress and well-being of administrators in Nepal would be valuable for the individual and organization to improve health and productivity could be an urgent issue. Workplace stress has recently received attention from managerial executives in Nepal. Nepal is undergoing enormous political, economic and social changes, with the transformation of its industrial structure from being labor-intensive to highly technological. The values and work culture in the organization has been changing swiftly. However, organizational and management processes are still conducted in very autocratic ways, such as decision making behind closed doors, top-down communications, non-participatory leadership, poor human resource planning in an organization and emphasis on policy implementation rather than employee consultations. All these features inherent in Nepalese's organizations and management processes may lead to heavier psychological workload and creates mental pressure. Therefore, administrators in any post could perceive psychological pressure, even though the managers in any places might have perceived autocratic management as a source of stress.

That is why, this study aims to identify the level of stress among the government officers having with responsibilities of 1st, 2nd and 3rd class Technical and non-technical officers.

2. Methods

Since the present investigation proposed to identify the level of stress on the basis of their position therefore, the organizational role stress by UdaiPareekh, 1981 standard and widely used psychological device used to assess the level of stress. The study was based on descriptive and explanatory research design. Cross-sectional data was collected from 284 Nepal government employees belonging to section officer level to especial class (Secretary) levels randomly selected from various Ministries and departments of government of Nepal. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents. The study was conducted in Kathmandu in 2013. A standard structured questionnaire was used to collect the data. Reliability and validity of data collection instruments was tested by doing the pilot study among the 10% respondents of total sample size. The data was edited and analyzed by using the SPSS. Cross tabulation, ANOVA and multiple comparisons was done to see the correlation between the variables.

3. Results

One of the objectives of this study was to identify the level of stress on the basis of their position. Respondents were selected from the class I – III position and surveyed by using the same questionnaires to collect their opinion regarding their stress level. The observation of data is tabulated in table 1-3.

The study find out that 80.3% male were participated. 80.6% respondents had completed Master Level followed by 17.3% had completed bachelor level and 2.1% had PhD also. Data presents that 94.4% respondents were married followed by 4.2% unmarried and 1.4% was single. 53.5% respondents were participated from that majority (56%) of participants were from the class III followed by 26.4% from class II and 17.6% from the class I.

3.1. Crosstab between organizational role stress and position of respondents

Organizational role stress		**Position**			**Total**
		Class III	**Class II**	**Class I**	
Self-Role Distance	Low	44	29	22	95
	Moderate	78	36	21	**135**
	High	37	10	7	54
Total		159	75	50	284
Inter-Role Distance	Low	46	27	14	87
	Moderate	87	29	24	**140**
	High	26	19	12	57
Total		159	75	50	284
Role Stagnation	Low	31	26	21	78
	Moderate	93	38	20	**151**
	High	35	11	9	55
Total		159	75	50	284
Role Ambiguity	Low	40	27	21	88
	Moderate	81	35	23	**139**
	High	38	13	6	57
Total		159	75	50	284
Role Overload	Low	41	27	11	79
	Moderate	83	34	32	**149**
	High	35	14	7	56
Total		159	75	50	284
Role Isolation	Low	44	17	16	77
	Moderate	86	38	24	**148**
	High	29	20	10	59

Total		159	75	50	284
Role Erosion	Low	47	30	21	98
	Moderate	69	28	19	**116**
	High	43	17	10	70
Total		159	75	50	284
Role Inadequacy	Low	35	30	26	91
	Moderate	73	29	20	**122**
	High	51	16	4	71
Total		159	75	50	284
Total Role Stress	Low	33	22	16	71
	Moderate	80	38	26	**144**
	High	46	15	8	69
Total		159	75	50	284

Table 1. Level of stress
Sources: Field survey, 2013

Stress is the mental phenomenon which creates from the pressure of physical and mental activities. In this research, respondents are selected from the 3 different level and two categories (technical and non-technical). As their position, they are assigned different roles and responsibilities. The above mentions data comparatively identified the level of stress among the three different positions.

From the above data (table 1) shows that in general, moderate level stress found high, low level stress in 2nd and high level stress in 3rd ranking in all types of position (Class I –III). On the basis of positions and response on level of stress in total role stress, it was found that out of 159 class III position officers, 46 (28.93%) reported high level stress followed by out of 75 class II position 15 (20%) reported high stress and out of 50 class I position, 8 (16%) reported high stress. *From the above discussion, it can be said here that the hypothesis no. 1 of this study 'Higher the level (government officers) and role prescription higher the stress level as per their role' is rejected.*

3.2. Correlation between position and Occupational Role Stress (ORS)

Analysis of variance was done between the occupational role stress and position of respondents to know the relation between two variables.

Organizational Role Stress	**Position**	**Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Self-Role Distance	Between Groups	62.9	2	31.5	3.274419198	0.0393
	Within Groups	2701.0	281	9.6		
	Total	2763.9	283			
Inter-Role Distance	Between Groups	5.5	2	2.7	0.181819811	0.8338
	Within Groups	4221.8	281	15.0		
	Total	4227.2	283			
Role Stagnation	Between Groups	158.0	2	79.0	8.744722219	0.0002
	Within Groups	2538.8	281	9.0		
	Total	2696.8	283			
Role Ambiguity	Between Groups	121.4	2	60.7	5.381247837	0.0051
	Within Groups	3168.7	281	11.3		
	Total	3290.0	283			
Role overload	Between Groups	24.4	2	12.2	0.859543221	0.4245
	Within Groups	3994.8	281	14.2		
	Total	4019.2	283			
Role Isolation	Between Groups	70.4	2	35.2	3.17068636	0.0435
	Within Groups	3118.1	281	11.1		
	Total	3188.5	283			
Role Erosion	Between Groups	81.0	2	40.5	3.649490172	0.0272
	Within Groups	3118.2	281	11.1		
	Total	3199.2	283			
Role inadequacy	Between Groups	244.3	2	122.2	11.86242013	0.0000
	Within Groups	2893.6	281	10.3		

	Total	3137.9	283			
Occupational Role stress	Between Groups	3370.7	2	1685.4	4.909678323	0.0080
	Within Groups	96459.7	281	343.3		
	Total	99830.4	283			

Table 2: ANOVA of ORS with position
Sources: Field survey, 2013

There was significant correlation found between self-role distance, role stagnation, role ambiguity, role erosion, role inadequacy, occupational role distance, role isolation, occupational role stress and position of respondents in 0.05 level of significance. Remaining inter-role distance, role overloads was not found correlation with position in general.

3.3. Multiple comparisons between occupational role stress and position
After identifying the significance between the occupational role stress and position of respondents in total; researcher further explore here the level of significance of stress between the positions in relation to the each occupational role (Table 3).

Multiple Comparisons							
Dependent Variable	**(I) Position**	**(J) Position**	**Mean Difference (I-J)**	**Std. Error**	**P-Value**	**95% Confidence Interval**	
						Lower Bound	**Upper Bound**
Self-Role Distance	Class III	Class II	0.83	0.43	0.06	-0.02	1.69
		Class I	1.09	0.50	0.03	0.10	2.08
	Class II	Class III	-0.83	0.43	0.06	-1.69	0.02
		Class I	0.25	0.57	0.65	-0.86	1.37
	Class I	Class III	-1.09	0.50	0.03	-2.08	-0.10
		Class II	-0.25	0.57	0.65	-1.37	0.86
Inter-Role Distance	Class III	Class II	0.06	0.54	0.91	-1.01	1.13
		Class I	-0.34	0.63	0.59	-1.57	0.90
	Class II	Class III	-0.06	0.54	0.91	-1.13	1.01
		Class I	-0.40	0.71	0.57	-1.79	0.99
	Class I	Class III	0.34	0.63	0.59	-0.90	1.57
		Class II	0.40	0.71	0.57	-0.99	1.79
Role Stagnation	Class III	Class II	0.99	0.42	0.02	0.16	1.82
		Class I	1.94	0.49	0.00	0.98	2.90
	Class II	Class III	-0.99	0.42	0.02	-1.82	-0.16
		Class I	0.95	0.55	0.09	-0.13	2.03
	Class I	Class III	-1.94	0.49	0.00	-2.90	-0.98
		Class II	-0.95	0.55	0.09	-2.03	0.13
Role Ambiguity	Class III	Class II	0.81	0.47	0.09	-0.11	1.74
		Class I	1.72	0.54	0.00	0.65	2.79
	Class II	Class III	-0.81	0.47	0.09	-1.74	0.11
		Class I	0.91	0.61	0.14	-0.30	2.11
	Class I	Class III	-1.72	0.54	0.00	-2.79	-0.65
		Class II	-0.91	0.61	0.14	-2.11	0.30
Role overload	Class III	Class II	0.68	0.53	0.20	-0.35	1.72
		Class I	0.10	0.61	0.86	-1.10	1.31
	Class II	Class III	-0.68	0.53	0.20	-1.72	0.35
		Class I	-0.58	0.69	0.40	-1.94	0.78
	Class I	Class III	-0.10	0.61	0.86	-1.31	1.10
		Class II	0.58	0.69	0.40	-0.78	1.94
Role Isolation	Class III	Class II	-0.82	0.47	0.08	-1.74	0.10
		Class I	0.67	0.54	0.21	-0.39	1.74
	Class II	Class III	0.82	0.47	0.08	-0.10	1.74
		Class I	1.49	0.61	0.01	0.30	2.69

	Class I	Class III	-0.67	0.54	0.21	-1.74	0.39
		Class II	-1.49	0.61	0.01	-2.69	-0.30
Role Erosion	Class III	Class II	0.67	0.47	0.15	-0.24	1.59
		Class I	1.40	0.54	0.01	0.34	2.46
	Class II	Class III	-0.67	0.47	0.15	-1.59	0.24
		Class I	0.73	0.61	0.23	-0.47	1.92
	Class I	Class III	-1.40	0.54	0.01	-2.46	-0.34
		Class II	-0.73	0.61	0.23	-1.92	0.47
Role inadequacy	Class III	Class II	1.28	0.45	0.00	0.40	2.17
		Class I	2.38	0.52	0.00	1.36	3.41
	Class II	Class III	-1.28	0.45	0.00	-2.17	-0.40
		Class I	1.10	0.59	0.06	-0.05	2.25
	Class I	Class III	-2.38	0.52	0.00	-3.41	-1.36
		Class II	-1.10	0.59	0.06	-2.25	0.05
Occupational Role stress	Class III	Class II	4.52	2.60	0.08	-0.59	9.63
		Class I	8.97	3.00	0.00	3.05	14.88
	Class II	Class III	-4.52	2.60	0.08	-9.63	0.59
		Class I	4.45	3.38	0.19	-2.21	11.11
	Class I	Class III	-8.97	3.00	0.00	-14.88	-3.05
		Class II	-4.45	3.38	0.19	-11.11	2.21

Table 3: Multiple comparisons between occupational role stress and position
Sources: Field study, 2013

Self-role distance was found significance difference between the class III and II (p=0.06), III and I (0.03) but there was found not significant difference between class II and I (p=065). Inter-role distance was found insignificant difference between class III and II (p=0.91), III and I (p=0.59) and I and II (p=0.57). Regarding the Role Stagnation was found significant difference between class III and II (p=0.02), III and I (p=0.00), but there was no significant difference found between the class I and II (p=0.09). There was significant difference found between the class III and I (p= 0.00) but there was no significant difference between the class III and II (p= 0.09), I and II (p= 0.14) in relation to the role ambiguity. Role overload was found insignificant difference between class III and II (p=0.20), III and I (p=0.86) and I and II (p=0.40). Role Isolation was significant difference found between class I and II (p=0.001), but there was insignificant difference found between the class III and II (p=0.08) and III and I (p=0.21).
There was significant difference found between the class III and I (p=0.01), but there was no significance difference found between class III and II (p=0.15) and II and I (p=0.23) in relation to the role erosion. Similarly, there was significant difference found between class III and II (p=0.00) and class III and I (p=0.00), but there was no significance difference found between class II and I (p=0.06). Finally, occupational role stress found significant difference between III and I (p=0.00), but found no significant difference between class III and II (p=0.08) and II and I (p=0.19). Significant level was tested at 0.05.
From the above discussion, it was observed that in general occupational role stress was found significantly different between the class III and I and insignificantly difference found between the class III and II and II and I. Finding shows that class II felt different level of stress than class III and I.

3.4. Crosstab between the level of total role stress and occupation
Researcher had calculated the cross tabulation between the level of total role stress and occupation of respondents. Regarding the occupation of respondents, non-technical and technical officers were selected to measure their level of role stress.
The data of table no. 10 shows that 21.2% non-technical officers reported the low level of role stress followed by 28.3% technical officers. Whereas, 53% non-technical officers reported that they had moderate level stress followed by 48.7% technical. 25.8% non-technical officers reported high level stress in compression of 23% technical officers reported high level of role stress. The data shows that non-technical officers had more stress than the technical officers. On the basis of this observation of data, hypothesis no. 4: *technical jobholders are in high stress than non-technical jobholders*, is rejected.

Level of Total Role Stress and Occupation					
			Occupation		Total
			Non-technical	Technical	
Level of Total Role Stress	Low	Count	28	43	71
		% within Level of Total Role Stress	39.4%	60.6%	100.0%
		% within Occupation	21.2%	28.3%	25.0%
		% of Total	9.9%	15.1%	25.0%
	Moderate	Count	70	74	144
		% within Level of Total Role Stress	48.6%	51.4%	100.0%
		% within Occupation	53.0%	48.7%	50.7%
		% of Total	24.6%	26.1%	50.7%
	High	Count	34	35	69
		% within Level of Total Role Stress	49.3%	50.7%	100.0%
		% within Occupation	25.8%	23.0%	24.3%
		% of Total	12.0%	12.3%	24.3%
Total		Count	132	152	284
		% within Level of Total Role Stress	46.5%	53.5%	100.0%
		% within Occupation	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	46.5%	53.5%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.896[a]	2	.388

Symmetric Measures					
		Value	Asymp. Std. Error[a]	Approx. T[b]	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	-.070	.059	-1.173	.242[c]

Table 44: Level of Total Role Stress and Occupation
Data source: Field survey, 2013

The above statistical analysis showed that there was no association (p= .338) and correlation (r = -.070, p = .242) found between the level of role stress and occupation (technical and non-technical) of jobholders.

4. Discussion

Ivancevich and Matteson reported that job stress was directly associated with the role being played or the tasks we have to accomplish in the organization. They included sources of stress associated with role ambiguity, role conflict, quantitative role overload, career development and responsibility for people. Such conditions may interfere with normal or physiological functioning if they perceived as stressful (1980). Job stressors had been correlated to poor job performance and lead to feelings of being under substantial time pressure as well as depression (Parker, 1983).

The above discussion in table 1 showedthat 3rd class officer had reported higher level of stress than the 2nd and 1st class officers. The findings rejected the hypothesis that higher level position had high level of stress. The finding was found similar in the context of level of stress in leader and non-leader, a study conducted byShermana et.al.(2012).A model predicting cortisol level from leadership (dummy-coded) revealed that leaders had significantly lower cortisol level than non-leaders ($\beta = -0.26$, $P < 0.001$). The average leader's cortisol level was 0.54 SDs lower than the average non-leader (Fig. 1). Analysis of anxiety reports provided convergent evidence that leaders experienced less stress: leaders had lower levels of anxiety than non-leaders ($\beta = -0.23$, $P < 0.001$) (Fig. 2). This is standardized coefficient. Leadership remained a significant predictor of both cortisol and anxiety reports when controlling for demographic variables (sex, age, education, and income) and mood(Gary D. Shermana, 2012).A previous studyconducted by MP Singh and Dr JyotsnaSinhain Allahabad with aims to examine the organizational role in causing stress to the government officers. The sample consists of 87 officers serving in the government departments. They have been assessed for their organizational role stress utilizing the Organizational Role Stress (ORS) scale. The result reveals that while inter role distance, role expectation conflict and role erosion are the main sources of stress felt by the officers, personal inadequacy, role ambiguity and resource inadequacy are the least felt stresses (MP Singh, 2013).

A similar previous research was conducted to explore the relationship among role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload and job stress of middle-level cadres in Chinese local government. Through a questionnaire survey of 220 cadres, the results showed that time pressure was significantly correlated with role conflict and role overload; job anxiety and job stress were significantly and positively correlated with role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload; role ambiguity had a significant and positive effect

on job anxiety and job stress; role conflict and role overload had a significant and positive effect on time stress, job anxiety and job stress (Zhou Yongkang, 2014).

In this study, on the basis of occupation of respondents, it was found that non-technical officers had more stress than the technical officers. Similarly, a previous study was conducted to determine the some differences level of job stress of permanent employees in public sector and private sector banks Islamabad, Pakistan by using the 7 dimensions of stress level i.e. physical health issues, work environment, job control, social support, adaptability, organizational structure and role conflict. 104 employees had participated in study. The results had shown that there are some differences in overall level of job stress among permanent employees in Private and Public sector's banks. Results founded the public sector banks' employees significantly affected more by stress due to no control on their jobs, social unsupported by the mangers, and mechanistic and strict organizational structure than the private sector bank's employees (Jamil, 2012).

Role stress can also be significant sources of problem in the workplace. Role conflict and role ambiguity have been studied extensively Parasuraman and Alutto, (1984) have shown how contextual task and role related variables interact with work stressors (e.g., inter unit conflict, technical problems, efficiency problems, role frustration, staff shortages, short lead times, and too many meetings) to produce negative outcomes. Similarly, Srivastava found that role stress (role conflict and role ambiguity) correlate positively and significantly with job anxiety and negatively and significantly with need for achievement (Srivastava, 1985).

5. Conclusion

From the whole discussion of primary and secondary data, it came in conclusion that people cannot be free from the level of stress. Stress becomes the inevitable part of daily life. Not only working people, but general house-workers also have stress of work. The general assumption, 'higher levels of roles have higher level of stresses' is rejected from the findings. The workers who are working as 3rd class officers had reported the high level of stress more than the 1st and 2nd class officers. Similarly, in Nepalese context, technical officers are understood as very busy and laborious and have high level of work pressure so that they have high level of stress but this assumption also failed from the findings that non-technical officers had reported high level of stress than the technical officers. But, in general, government staffs have moderate level stress so Nepal Government should constitute the effective human development new strategy which can increase the level of motivation and decrease the level of stress among the jobholders.

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