



Development Of Occupational Stress Scale For Salesgirls In Lahore, Pakistan

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Abstract

Objective: The current study aimed to develop an indigenous occupational stress scale for salesgirls in Urdu language, having well-established psychometric properties.

Methodology: This descriptive study was carried out in 3 phases: item generation, pilot study and main study. In item generation phase interviews were conducted with 30 salesgirls about their occupational stress which they are facing during their job. In pilot study, scale was administered on a sample of 60 salesgirls to evaluate its difficulty level. The main study was carried out for establishing psychometric properties of the constructed scale. Total 215 salesgirls were recruited from different shopping malls of Lahore with mean age and standard deviation of 25 and 3.1 respectively. Data was stored and analyzed in SPSS version 21.

Results: The exploratory factor analysis was done with 2 factors and total 28 items were retained. Two identified factors were Familial and Professional Stress, and Self-Objectification with Cronbach's alpha reliability of .86 and .88 respectively. The results of the re-test reliability showed that both factors were highly reliable with $r = 0.97$ and $p < 0.001$. The findings of split half found that reliability between two splits was $r = 0.83$ with $p < 0.05$.

Conclusion: The current study developed an indigenous scale for measuring occupational stress in Pakistani salesgirls. The scale has robust psychometric properties which makes it highly valid and applicable not only in Pakistan but also in other Asian countries, having similar culture. This study is a great contribution to organizational psychology that identified triggers and stressors of salesgirls which they face in their daily lives.

Keywords. Occupational stress, salesgirls, familial and professional stress, self-objectification.

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INTRODUCTION

Stress is an unavoidable consequence of modern living. The modern society and the corporate world have highly become competition oriented, due to which every second person is experiencing stress (Fink, 2010). With this increasing competition in the market, the occupational stress is also growing. Occupational stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional reaction that occur when the requirements of work exceed the capabilities, needs or resources of the worker (Mohajan, 2012). There is a lot of grounds and reasons of occupational stress in workplace; universally, the work overload is considered as one of the main causes of occupational stress that is brought by unsympathetic hierarchical condition, far off correspondence among supervisors and representatives,

need basic leadership capacity, tormenting and badgering, abrupt change, inadequate offices for workers and work-family struggle (Topper, 2007). However, a higher level of occupational stress is faced by the employees in Pakistan due to unrealistic demands of the job, unspecified job roles, structure and culture of the organization, job insecurity, and work-life balance. The personal stress largely driven from psychological and physiological stressors and both micro and macro environmental factors play a vital role to some extent (Zehra & Faizan, 2017).

Research demonstrates that women face more occupational stress than men due to additional responsibility of home; men found to be calmer and not stressed in facing the work stress, while women are the opposite (Yunita & Saputra,

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2019). In Pakistani culture, men do not help their women in domestic chores; it is woman who has to cook, cleans the house, does the dishes, washes clothes, gets their children ready for school etc. and side by side she has to work outside the house like her man. Here, men just deal with duties that are to be done outside, thus, the real obligation of running the family is on the shoulders of ladies (Dashora, 2013). As indicated by United Nations' Human Development Report (2018), a greater part of financially dynamic ladies in Pakistan are working in horticulture (65%) trailed by administrations (20%) and industry (16%). Female experts and specialized laborers speak to just 26% of complete laborers. In addition, the proportion of evaluated female to male earned pay is just 29%. So, working women ratio is increasing in Pakistan just to meet their daily livings in a well-mannered way. But above-mentioned problems are creating hurdles and reducing their productivities in fields. All these hurdles are due to our cultural values and societal norms about women in the workplace. In collectivistic culture, woman is either a housewife or a working lady, facing a lot of problems due to many aspects. But working woman is facing more problems as compared to housewife. It is evident in Pakistani research on saleswomen, conducted by Makhdoom (2015) to find out their problems while communicating with customers. The study revealed that literacy level and number of dependent family members were negatively correlated with self-employment due to the less income or fear of income. They also reported a number of issues for example convincing customers, spoiled image, role conflict, harassment and high travel cost etc. These might be the cause of their stress in personal life as well as in professional life. In the same manner, to explore the factors that might be root cause of the stress in Pakistani working women, many other studies were conducted; Arif et al. (2017) highlighted the major reason in creating stress in working women was sexual harassment. Being in a male dominated culture, women are harassed and are not provided with equality and justice with respect to the promotional opportunities arises within the multi-organization. Colleagues' behavior and relationship with them was also another factor that works downward in women's ambition to succeed proficiently. All such circumstances developed disenchantment

and discouragement leading to stressful situation that are showed by behavioral, psychological and physiological problems among working women. In conclusion to the mentioned literature about the construct of occupational stress, the current study intended to develop an indigenous scale for measuring occupational stress in salesgirls.

Theoretical Background

For the better understanding of occupational stress, Lazarus and Folkman's theory of psychological stress (1993) model can be used, which is also known as cognitive relational approach between the individual and his environment. The authors gave two basic concepts about stress: one was appraisal that is meant by individual's evaluation of the importance of what is happening for their well-being in the environment, and the other concept is coping that is supposed for individual's efforts in form of thoughts and actions to manage environmental demands (Lazarus, 1993). Park and Folkman (1997) wrote in later years that acknowledgement of denotation, that individuals perceive about particular event, can be enclosed by core beliefs grounded on their universal meanings. These are continuing opinions and objectives, based on conventions, one's religion, self-worth, and life experience etc. Park and Folkman (1997) suggested that deriving personal meaning occurs when an individual's beliefs and goals interrelate with person-environment transaction which is defined by the processes of appraisal and coping. Kobasa (1979) proposed a 4Cs model of mental durability that narrates that three interconnected methodologies or examination techniques catch a character trademark that mitigates individuals since the deadly impacts of life stress. These three methodologies are responsibility (esteem exercises or undertakings and one's persistence in them), control (throughout everyday life one is prevailing in results), and challenge (for self-improvement and development worry in life is significant and normal).

Theories also elaborate that gender differences must be considered in explaining the phenomenon of occupational stress. Watson et al. (2011) proposed that women experience more stress than men after immediate primary appraisal activation. On the other hand, men experience stress after secondary appraisal activation. So, it



is believed that women experience stress as a threat while for men it might be the outcome of evaluation of their personal resources for managing the event on workplace.

Considering the provided theoretical background of occupational stress, the current study aimed to develop occupational stress scale for salesgirls in Urdu language, having well-established psychometric properties.

METHOD

This descriptive study was carried out after receiving ethic approval from Department of Psychology, University of Management and Technology, Lahore. The duration of the study was 8 months: from January 2019 to September 2019. Study was conducted in 3 phases:

Phase I: Item generation. In first step, phenomenology was explored by taking interviews from 30 salesgirls about their occupational stress which they are facing during their job. The mean age of girls was 24 years with a standard deviation of 3.2. The interview was consisted of 3 general questions, given as follows:

1. What problems do you face in this profession?
2. What problems do you face at your workplace?
3. What problems do you face in managing personal and professional life?

The salesgirls provided various statements, which were divided in 73 statements. The statements taken by salesgirls, were arranged in a sequence in a form of questionnaire that was constituted on 4-point Likert scale (0= not at all, 1=very less, 2=most often, 3=very much). It was presented to 3 organizational psychologists for the review; they omitted similar and dubious items that were giving same meaning. After elimination, 57 items were left on which

exploratory factor analysis was conducted. Total 28 items were generated by performing factor analysis (see result section).

Phase II: Pilot study. After item generation, the questionnaire, that was consisted of 28 items, was administered on a sample of 60 salesgirls (mean age 23.5 years and standard deviation 3.2) to evaluate the difficulty level of the scale, to find out total time taken in its administration and the clarity of the statements. The feedback given by the participants was positive as no difficulty was reported by them. There was no item that was rephrased, altered, added and removed after pilot study. The average time taken by the participants to complete the questionnaire was approximately 8 minutes.

Phase III: Main Study. This descriptive study was carried out for establishing psychometric properties of the constructed scale. Total 215 salesgirls were recruited, ranged between 18 to 40 years, from different shopping malls of Lahore with mean age and standard deviation of 25 and 3.1 respectively. The salesgirls who perform their duties on floor of the stores and having job experience of more than six months, were included in the sample, while the salesgirls doing multiple jobs such as product selling, activity managing and more than 2 jobs at a time were excluded from the sample. Permission was taken from Human Resource Management for collecting data, and a consent form was signed from all the study participants. The demographic characteristics of the participants in table 1. Data was stored and analyzed in SPSS version 21; exploratory factor analysis, Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis, test-retest analysis and split-half reliability analysis were conducted for establishing psychometric properties of the scale.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (N=215)

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Education		
Matric	40	18.6
Inter	94	43.7
Bachelors	66	30.7
Masters	15	7.0
Marital Status		
Married	52	24.2
Unmarried	163	75.8
Total Family Members		
1-5	62	28.8
6-10	142	66.0



11-15	11	5.2
Total Earning Persons in Family		
1-3	142	66.2
4-6	73	33.8
Total Tenure of Job		
1-2 years	101	47.0
3-4 years	64	29.8
5-6 years	26	12.1
7-8 years	19	8.8
9-10 years	5	2.3
Monthly Income of the Participant		
10,000 or less	3	1.4
10001-20,000	123	57.2
20001-30,000	73	34.0
30001-40,000	12	5.6
More than 4000	4	1.9
Daily Job Timings		
Less than 8 hours	8	3.7
8 hours	163	75.8
More than 8 hours	44	20.5

RESULTS

This study was conducted to construct and validate Occupational Stress Scale (OSS) for Salesgirls (OSS) on 4-point Likert scale (0= not at all, 1=very less, 2=most often, 3=very much), in Urdu language. It yields total scores from 0 to 84, where higher scores indicate higher level of occupational stress. Firstly, the factor analysis was conducted to determine the factorial structure of OSS. Varimax rotation was used to get underlying factor structure of the items. Scree plot was obtained to determine the number of factors. Kaiser-Meyer Olkin Measure of Sample Adequacy (KEMO) was found to be .92.

Exploratory Factor Analysis of OSS

Factor analysis was carried out to gather the items under specific factors. Eigen value was greater than 1 and loading value was greater than .30. Factor analysis was done four times with reference to number of factors; initially, the factor analysis was conducted with 6 factors but only 6 items were retained. Then, factor analysis was performed with 5 factors, again 6 items were retained. After this, factor analysis was conducted with 4 factors, and then 14 items were retained. Lastly, factor analysis was done with 2 factors and 31 items were taken while 3 were lying below the range of 0.30 factor loading, therefore they were discarded, so in total 28 items were retained. So, after doing the whole procedure, 2 factor solution was finalized for further analysis (See table 2), with reference to the scree plot (See figure 1).

Figure 1. The Scree Plot of the Occupational Stress Scale.

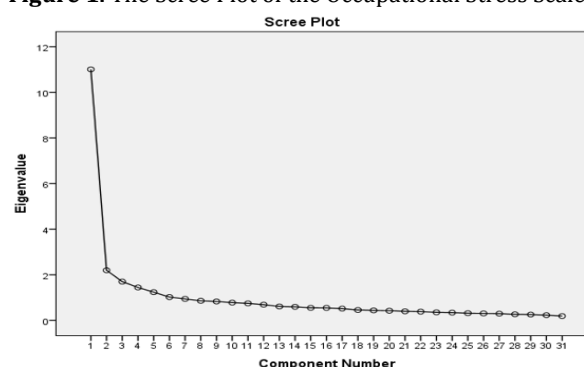


Table 2. Factor Loading for Exploratory Factor Analysis with Varimax Rotation of OSS

Sr. No.	Item. No.	F1	F2
1	11	0.50	0.19
2	12	0.55	0.28
3	13	0.67	0.17
4	14	0.66	0.24
5	15	0.69	0.19
6	16	0.72	0.15
7	17	0.58	0.16
8	18	0.51	0.23
9	19	0.57	0.21
10	20	0.60	0.24
11	21	0.65	0.23
12	22	0.46	0.31
13	25	0.63	0.34
14	26	0.56	0.35
15	27	0.54	0.27
16	28	0.63	0.18
17	30	0.48	0.07
18	31	0.54	0.07
19	1	0.31	0.47
20	2	0.26	0.45
21	3	0.17	0.63
22	4	0.11	0.59
23	5	0.10	0.78
24	6	0.21	0.74
25	7	0.27	0.69
26	8	0.29	0.58
27	9	0.16	0.80
28	10	0.32	0.49



Note.F1=Factor 1, F2= Factor 2

Factor I: Familial and Professional Stress. On the basis of generated items, the current study defined familial and professional stress as the stressors that were caused by family problems and workplace issues. It was related with the items, such as inflexible rules of company, abundance of work and time, lack of perks by company, unable to manage home tasks, physical problems etc. This factor is comprised of last 18 items of the scale, item no. 11 to 28. It provides scores from 0 to 54 while higher scores show higher level of familial and professional stress. Its Eigen values, variance and cumulative factors are mentioned in table 3.

Factor II: Self-Objectification. On the basis of generated items, the current study defined self-objectification as the stressors that were caused by customer dealing at workplace. It can be seen through items for example, teasing behavior of male customers, thinking of characterless girl by customers, abusive attitude by male customers etc. This factor is comprised of first 10 items of the scale, item no. 1 to 10. It provides scores from 0 to 30 where higher scores indicate higher level of self-objectification. Its Eigen values, variance and cumulative factors are mentioned in table 3.

Table 3. Eigen Values and Variance Explained by 2 Factors of OSS

Factors	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1.Familial and Professional Stress	7.65	24.70	24.70
2.Self-objectification	5.55	17.92	42.62

Internal Consistency Reliability of OSS

To figure out the internal consistency of OSS, Cronbach's alpha reliability test was conducted. Results revealed that both factors of OSS have a high internal consistency (See table 4).

Table 4. Cronbach's Alpha of the Two Factors of OSS (N=215)

Sr. No	Factors	Cronbach's alpha
1	Familial and Professional Stress	0.86
2	Self-Objectification	0.88

Test Re-Test Reliability of OSS

After one week of the scale administration, 20 salesgirls approached again for re-administration of OSS. They were requested to fill the scale again which they filled a week ago. The results of the re-test reliability showed that both factors of OSS were highly reliable with $r= 0.97$ and $p<0.001$ (See table 5).

Table 5. Test Re-Test Reliability of the Two Factors of OSS (N=20)

Measures	1	2	3
1. Familial and Professional Stress	---	0.42***	0.97***
2. Self-Objectification	---	---	0.76***
3. Occupational Stress Total	---	---	---
M	24.52	13.60	38.12
SD	11.16	7.2	15.69

Note. M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation, *** $p<0.001$

Split-Half Reliability of OSS

Split-half reliability of OSS was done through even and odd method. All the items were equally divided according to their sequence of even and odd numbers; each half consisted of 14 items correspondingly. The split half results found that reliability between two splits was $r= 0.83$ with $p<0.05$. It shows that there was significantly high correlation between two splits of the scale.

DISCUSSION

The current study intended to develop an indigenous scale of occupational stress for the salesgirls which would help in identifying their stress level in different situation, especially when they are performing their duties. The manifestation and expression of occupational stress and its effects vary from culture to culture; in individualistic culture its etiology is different while in collectivistic culture like Pakistan, it demands an indigenous tool for its assessment.

Our scale is comprised of two subscales, named as familial and professional stress and self-objectification. The first factor was defined as the stress that was originated due to family and professional life issues. There were 18 items in this subscale. The basic theme behind this subscale was the stress caused by family and workplace circumstances. This subscale constituted on such items; unable to perform home task due to work load, shortage of leaves, lack of



facilities by company, having little pay, lack of freedom in this profession, fear of losing job, lack of power of decision making etc. This subscale has high internal consistency as its Cronbach's Alpha was .86. The second subscale was defined as the factors that were caused by the bad compliments of the customers. This subscale was having ten items. The basic theme of this subscale was the stress caused by comments and compliments by male customers. The following items were there in this subscale; teasing attitude of male customers, thinking of characterless girl by customers, using of abusive language, feeling naked etc. According to Jones, Hodgson, Clegg & Elliott (1998), high stress was indicated in teachers and nurses and also found in the way of gender differences.

CONCLUSION

The current study developed an indigenous scale for measuring occupational stress in Pakistani salesgirls. The scale has robust psychometric properties which makes it highly valid and applicable not only in Pakistan but also in other Asian countries, having similar culture. This study is a great contribution to organizational psychology that identified triggers and stressors of salesgirls which they face in their daily lives.

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