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# GENDER DIFFERENCE IN ORGANISATIONAL ROLE STRESS: A STUDY OF EMPLOYEES IN IT SECTOR IN MANGALORE CITY

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study was conducted to find out the gender difference in organisational role stress on performance of the employees in the Information Technology sector in the city of Mangalore. In carrying out the study, simple random sample technique was used to select 458 employees from the IT sector. Udai Pareek's ORS scale was used to assess the level of organisational role stress among the employees of the IT sector. Ten dimensions of role stress were measured using ORS scale. The hypothesis were tested using t-test. A quantitative, explorative and descriptive research design was employed in this study to gather information about the gender differences in occupational stress on the performance of employees. After gathering relevant data, analysis was conducted to determine the stress level between the male and female employees. The findings of the study reveal that there exists a significant relationship between in the gender differences in organisational stress in the IT sector.*

***Keywords****: Occupational stress, Gender, Role ambiguity, employee performance.*

**Introduction:**

One of the important issues most organizations face today is increasing occupational stress. The modern workplace is potentially considered to be one of the sources of stress for most employees because of the quantity of work expected from them for the amount of time they spent in their respective job. Selye (1956) focused research attention on stressors and patterned physiological changes in reaction to them. He further opines that stress is not necessarily something bad – it all depends on how you take it. The stress of exhilarating, creative successful work is beneficial, while that of failure, humiliation or infection is detrimental. Faye K and James (2004) stress is a term that is used by people almost every day and therefore a distinction needs to be made to identify healthy and effective performance and those that deviate from an individual's healthy performance. Accordingly performance is believed to be increase to an optimal level as stress load rises, creating it as good stress. IT professionals, are considered to be a group of people with high stress occupations along with other professionals such as medical professionals, teachers, pilots, police and social workers (Cooper et al.1989). This kind of occupational stress has brought negative impact not only on employee performance-psychologically and physiologically but also on the economic cost of the organisation. Prior Research studies have shown that high level of stress and associated burnout among IT professionals leads to decreased performance and less job satisfaction. (Luthans (1995, Scheuler 1980). The continuous changing environment of professional, economic, political, cultural and social life and the increased specialization of IT professionals has increased the level of stress among the employees in the IT sector.

**Organisational Role Stress in IT sector:**

Information Technology sector in modern India has got a tremendous boost due to globalization, liberalisation, privatisation, government policies and the move towards making India digital. Stress is perceived by people in different ways. While stress for some seems to be positive, others view it as negative. Stress is seen to be high in IT professionals because of their nature of work, unrealistic deadlines, sedentary

lifestyle, night shift, unfair distribution of work, monotony at work, over work load, inadequate break times and so on. Some of the major stressors identified in any IT work environment, that has a major influence on employee performance and job satisfaction include, work overload, unsupportive relationship, work life imbalance, poor communication, poor working conditions and changes in organisational process. Dynamic business environments often results in employees experience stress owing to roles performed by them in the organizations. Technostress is the word used to explain the phenomenon of stress arising due to the usage of computers. It is a modern disease of adaptation caused by the inability to cope with new computer technologies in a healthy manner. IT has brought in faster processing and transformation of information exposing the IT professionals to ever increasing flow of information thereby causing information overload leading to stressful conditions (Raitoharju, 2005).

**Organizational Stress Level among Male and Female employees in IT Sector:**

Gender is an important determinant of human health, and there is a clear pattern for the sex-specific prevalence rates of various mental and physical disorders Rohit (2011). Men and women report different reactions to stress, both physically and mentally. This is because they try to manage stress in very different ways and also perceive their ability to do so. It is characterized by 'fight-or-flight' in men and 'tend-and-befriend' in women Taylor SE (2000). The observed gender-specific disparity may be partly attributed to effects of sex hormones. Parkhouse and Ellin (1988) have suggested that gender-linked stress can lead women employees to make important compromises between their personal lives and careers A study by the American Psychological Association (2010), on Gender and Stress, Women are more likely than men (28 percent vs. 20 percent) to report having a great deal of stress and are more likely to report physical and emotional symptoms of stress than men, such as having had a headache (41 percent vs. 30 percent), having felt as though they could cry (44 percent vs. 15 percent), or having had an upset stomach or indigestion (32 percent vs. 21 percent) in the past month. American Psychological Association (2011), on Research shows that prolonged periods of stress — which releases the hormone cortisol — can decrease proper cell function, thereby contributing to numerous emotional and physical disorders including depression, anxiety, heart attacks, stroke, hypertension and immune system disturbances that increase susceptibility to infections.

**Methodology:**

The survey research design was utilized for this study. The sample for this study consisted of 458 employees from Mangalore employed in IT sector. The questionnaire was divided into two parts; the first part was designed to capture the demographic responses. Demographical characteristics of the employees were categorized as Personal attributes, comprising age, gender, marital status, number of dependants, educational qualification; Job attributes that includes number of days leaves availed, total experience, nature of work. The second part was the ORSS (Organizational Role Stress Scale) questionnaire. Gender difference was calculated by dividing the sample based on men and women employees.

**Tool Used:**

To measure the job stress, Organisational Role Stress Scale (ORS) scale developed by Udai Pareek (1983) is being used. The ORS scale contains five items for each Role Stress (a total of 50 statements); it uses a 5 point scale of 0-4. (0 for rarely/not applicable and 4 for nearly always/very frequently applicable). The scale measures the following ten role stressors which are as follows:

1. **Inter-Role Distance (IRD):** is experienced when there is a conflict between organizational and non-organizational roles.
2. **Role Stagnation (RS):** is the feeling of being stuck in the same role for long due to lack of opportunities or development.
3. **Role Expectation Conflict (REC):** arises out of conflicting demands originating from superiors, subordinates or peers.
4. **Role Erosion (RE):** arises when a role occupant feels that others are performing certain functions, which should have been a part of his role.
5. **Role Overload (RO):** is the feeling that an employee is given work more than required.
6. **Role Isolation (RI):** arises when a person feels that his role is isolated from the mainstream of organizational life.
7. **Personal Inadequacy (PI):** is created by the lack of adequate skills and the resulting inability to meet the demands of one's role.
8. **Self-Role Distance (SRD):** arises from a gap between one's concept of self and the demands of his role.
9. **Role Ambiguity (RA):** is experienced when there is a lack of clarity about the demands of the role.
10. **Resource Inadequacy (RIN):** arises when human and material resources allocated are inadequate to meet the demands of the role.

**Findings of the Study:**

This study mainly highlights on the gender differences relating to stress among employees in IT sector.

**H1:** There will be a significant difference on gender of employees of IT sector.

To find out the level of Job stress among employees of IT Sector, Mean value presented in Table 2 and independent-samples t-test presented in table 3 is discussed as follows:

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to study the gender differences relating to stress among employees in IT sector on the above mentioned ten dimensions of Organisational Role Stress scale. In measuring the first dimension of Inter Role Distance stressor, the result shows that there is a significant difference in the scores for male respondents (M=2.9520, SD=.516) and female respondents. (M=3.0206, SD=0.534) conditions; t (416)=.1.333, p = 0.183. These results suggest that Inter Role Distance stressor is more in female respondents as compared to male respondents.

In order to find out the possible differences in gender differences relating to stress regards Role Stagnation stressor, the result shows that there is a significant difference in the scores for male respondents (M=2.9716, SD=.562) and female respondents (M=3.0710, SD=0.531) conditions; t (416)= 1.859, p = 0.064. These results suggest that Role Stagnation stressor is more in female respondents as compared to male respondents.

In comparing the results of the gender differences relating to stress among employees in IT sector regards Role Expectation Conflict the result shows that there is a significant difference in the scores for male respondents (M=3.0333, SD=.818) and female respondents (M=2.0449, SD=0.598) conditions; t (416)=1.266, p = 0.206. These results suggest that Role Expectation Conflict stressor is more in male respondents as compared to female respondents.

While assessing the gender differences relating to stress among employees in IT sector on Role Erosion the result shows that there is a significant difference in the scores for male respondents (M=2.9451, SD=.526) and female respondents (M=2.9514, SD=0.514) conditions; t (416)=0.124, p = 0.902. These results suggest that Role Erosion stressor is more in female respondents as compared to male respondents.

To compare Role Overload, the result shows that there is a significant difference in the scores for male respondents (M=2.9333, SD=.551) and female respondents (M=3.9421, SD=0.732) conditions; t (416)= 0.137, p = 0.891. These results suggest that Role Overload stressor is more in female respondents as compared to male respondents.

In checking the possible gender differences relating to stress regards Role Isolation, result shows that there is a significant difference in the scores for male respondents (M=2.0225, SD=.543) and female respondents (M=2.9897, SD=0.511) conditions; t (416)=0.636, p = 0.525. These results suggest that Role Isolation stressor is more in female respondents as compared to male respondents.

To check the gender contrast relating to stress on Personal Inadequacy result shows that there is a significant difference in the scores for male respondents (M=3.9667, SD=.519) and female respondents (M=3.2336, SD=0.604) conditions; t (416)=0.598, p = 0.550. These results suggest that Personal Inadequacy stressor is more in male respondents as compared to female respondents.

To weigh the possible gender differences relating to stress regards Self Role Distance the result shows that there is a significant difference in the scores for male respondents (M=2.9471, SD=.588) and female respondents (M=3.0019, SD=0.545) conditions; t (416)= 0.988, p = 0.324. These results suggest that Self Role Distance stressor is more in female respondents as compared to male respondents.

In estimating the possible gender differences on assessing Role Ambiguity, result shows that there is a significant difference in the scores for male respondents (M=2.9873, SD=.553) and female respondents (M=3.0224, SD=0.558) conditions; t (416)= 0.646, p = 0.519. These results suggest that Role Ambiguity stressor is more in female respondents as compared to male respondents.

In measuring the possible gender differences regards Resources Inadequacy, the result shows that there is a significant difference in the scores for male respondents (M=2.8284, SD=.601) and female respondents (M=2.9308, SD=0.512) conditions; t (416)= 1.877, p = 0.061. These results suggest that Resources Inadequacy is more in female respondents as compared to male respondents.

Also from the above table it can be inferred that all the parameters are not significant between male and female employees in the IT sector. There is significant difference between the means of male and female employees except for Role Erosion, Role Overload, Personal Inadequacy, Resources Inadequacy. Hence the hypothesis that there will be significant difference between the stress levels of male and female employees stands partially confirmed for Inter Role Distance, Role Stagnation, Role Expectation Conflict, Role Isolation, Self-Role Distance and Role Ambiguity.

**Conclusion:**

The daily impact of Information Technology seems to continue among employees in all walks of life. As innovations and computer capacities are rapidly increasing, stress will continue to influence and grow in the coming years at an increasing rate. As technology advances, there is also increased stress that is associated with it called as "technology stress." The results of the above study clearly shows that stress affects both categories of gender irrespective of their sex. However the study reveals that there is a significant difference in the role dimension between male and female employees in the IT sector. It is further noticed that women employees experience

higher role stress compared to the men employees. With the increasing challenges in work environment, young and dynamic people adding to the IT profession, it is imperative for the organisations to formulate appropriate measures to combat stressful work life and support a stress free work life.

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**Table 1: Table showing the level of Stress among employees of IT Sector**

| Group Statistics[a] | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Stressors** | **Gender** | **N** | **Mean** | **Std. Deviation** | **Std. Error Mean** |
| Inter Role Distance | Male | 204 | 2.9520 | .51676 | .03618 |
| | Female | 214 | 3.0206 | .53423 | .03652 |
| Role Stagnation | Male | 204 | 2.9716 | .56235 | .03937 |
| | Female | 214 | 3.0710 | .53163 | .03634 |
| Role Expectation Conflict | Male | 204 | 3.0333 | .81855 | .05731 |
| | Female | 214 | 2.0449 | .59808 | .04088 |
| Role Erosion | Male | 204 | 2.9451 | .52609 | .03683 |
| | Female | 214 | 2.9514 | .51483 | .03519 |
| Role Overload | Male | 204 | 2.9333 | .55110 | .03858 |
| | Female | 214 | 3.9421 | .73236 | .05006 |
| Role Isolation | Male | 204 | 2.0225 | .54337 | .03804 |
| | Female | 214 | 2.9897 | .51136 | .03496 |
| Personal Inadequacy | Male | 204 | 3.9667 | .61963 | .03638 |
| | Female | 214 | 3.2336 | .60412 | .04130 |
| Self-Role Distance | Male | 204 | 2.9471 | .58851 | .04120 |
| | Female | 214 | 3.0019 | .54540 | .03728 |
| Role Ambiguity | Male | 204 | 2.9873 | .55375 | .03877 |
| | Female | 214 | 3.0224 | .55889 | .03820 |
| Resources Inadequacy | Male | 204 | 2.8284 | .60162 | .04212 |
| | Female | 214 | 2.9308 | .51209 | .03501 |
| a. Sector = Service (IT) | | | | | |

**Table 2: Independent Samples test among Employees of IT sector**

| Independent Samples Test[a] | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Levene's Test for Equality of Variances** | | **t-test for Equality of Means** | | | | | | |
| | | **F** | **Sig.** | **t** | **df** | **Sig. (2-tailed)** | **Mean Difference** | **Std. Error Difference** | **95% Confidence Interval of the Difference** | |
| | | | | | | | | | **Lower** | **Upper** |
| Inter Role Distance | Equal variances assumed | .484 | .487 | -1.333 | 416 | .183 | -.06860 | .05145 | -.16973 | .03253 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -1.334 | 415.910 | .183 | -.06860 | .05141 | -.16965 | .03245 |
| Role Stagnation | Equal variances assumed | 1.615 | .205 | -1.859 | 416 | .064 | -.09946 | .05351 | -.20464 | .00572 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -1.856 | 411.549 | .064 | -.09946 | .05358 | -.20478 | .00587 |
| Role Expectation Conflict | Equal variances assumed | .796 | .373 | 1.266 | 416 | .206 | .08847 | .06989 | -.04890 | .22585 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 1.257 | 370.695 | .210 | .08847 | .07040 | -.04996 | .22690 |
| Role Erosion | Equal variances assumed | .128 | .721 | -.124 | 416 | .902 | -.00630 | .05092 | -.10639 | .09378 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -.124 | 413.994 | .902 | -.00630 | .05094 | -.10644 | .09384 |
| Role Overload | Equal variances assumed | .264 | .608 | -.137 | 416 | .891 | -.00872 | .06363 | -.13379 | .11635 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -.138 | 394.975 | .890 | -.00872 | .06321 | -.13299 | .11554 |

| Independent Samples Test[a] | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Role Isolation | Equal variances assumed | .276 | .599 | .636 | 416 | .525 | .03283 | .05159 | -.06858 | .13424 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | .635 | 411.159 | .525 | .03283 | .05166 | -.06873 | .13439 |
| Personal Inadequacy | Equal variances assumed | 5.393 | .021 | .598 | 416 | .550 | .03302 | .05523 | -.07555 | .14160 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | .600 | 411.712 | .549 | .03302 | .05504 | -.07517 | .14121 |
| SelfRole Distance | Equal variances assumed | 1.418 | .234 | -.988 | 416 | .324 | -.05481 | .05547 | -.16384 | .05422 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -.986 | 409.726 | .325 | -.05481 | .05557 | -.16404 | .05442 |
| Role Ambiguity | Equal variances assumed | .078 | .780 | -.646 | 416 | .519 | -.03518 | .05444 | -.14219 | .07184 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -.646 | 415.377 | .518 | -.03518 | .05443 | -.14217 | .07182 |
| Resources Inadequacy | Equal variances assumed | 5.196 | .023 | -1.877 | 416 | .061 | -.10241 | .05456 | -.20966 | .00484 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | -1.870 | 398.897 | .062 | -.10241 | .05477 | -.21008 | .00526 |

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