

A study on the impact of cultural dimensions on occupational stress of managerial level employees in hotel industry

(Special reference to star hotels in Kandy district, Sri Lanka)

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Abstract- Human activities have become more complex and rush in today's world. Therefore, human activities and organizational activities are changing too much faster. As the result of that the word "stress" has become a frequently used word in today. Occupational stress is one of the most common topics which is taken in to consideration when discussing about any organizational context. Hospitality industry is continually challenged in coping with stress due to the nature of the industry. According to many evidences, occupational stress has a significant occurrence in Sri Lankan hotel sector which is covered a major area of hospitality industry. The aim of this study was to find out whether there is an impact of Hofstede's cultural dimensions namely individualism - collectivism, uncertainty - avoidance, power distance and masculinity - femininity on occupational stress of managerial level employees in hotel sector as different cultural contexts and practices in hotel industry may have an influence on occupational stress. Further, it was expected to identify the most influential factor from cultural dimensions on occupational stress. This study was a quantitative study where occupational stress acted as the dependent variable and Hofstede's cultural dimensions were the predictors of the study. Regression analysis was performed to investigate the impact of the variables interested. Moreover, the demographic factors were analyzed by using descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation analysis was used to identify the relationship between selected variables. The researcher considered 150 managerial level employees as the sample based on stratified sampling. Data were collected through structured questionnaires developed by previous authors. This study brought evidence of significant impact of Hofstede's cultural dimensions on occupational stress of managerial level employees in hotel industry. Moreover, the impact of power distance could be identified as the most influential factor comparatively. This study created a novel contribution to the existing literature as

well as to the managerial level employees in hotel sector who are expecting to avoid occupational stress in their organizational context.

Index Terms- Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions, Occupational Stress, Hotel Industry

I. INTRODUCTION

Human activities have become more complicated in today's world. Their lives are changing rapidly. Therefore, all individuals in public and private organizations have to cope with these changes as fast as possible. As the result of that the word "occupational stress" has become a frequently used word in today. Occupational stress is a very significant factor in current competitive and changing environment (Cotton & Hart, 2003). Occupational stress can be defined as "the harmful physical and emotional responses occur when job requirements do not match the workers' capabilities, resources and needs" (National Institute of Occupation Safety & Health Report, 1999).

Sri Lanka has become one of the top tourist destinations in the world in past few years (Fernando, Bandara & Smith, 2017). Currently, Sri Lanka's hotel industry is a key driver of economic growth. Its' direct contribution to GDP is 4.3 % (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority Statistics Report, 2019). The past year recorded nearly 2.3 million visitors to Sri Lanka, with tourism earnings reaching \$ 3.5 billion (The Hotels Association of Sri Lanka, 2019). Therefore, Hotel industry takes a valuable position in Sri Lanka. The nature of working environment within hotels such as hard deadlines, unexpected interactions with guests, long working hours, night and evening work, repetitive work, work demands, intensive customer interactions, rapidly changing work environment, high emotional demands, unpredictable shifts, few breaks, ambiguity, work overload and

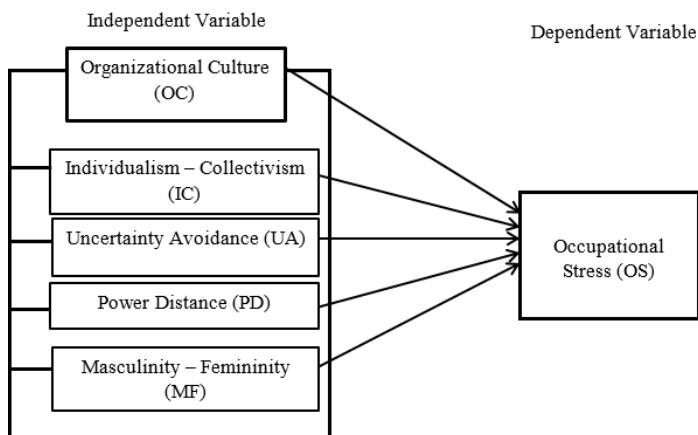
organizational changes (Mohan, 2017) can be recognized as some factors leading to occupational stress.

Hospitality industry is a service oriented industry that has the higher stress level (Mohan, 2017). Employee stress is a significant problem in the hospitality industry, and it is costly for employers and employees (Neill, 2011). In hotel and hospitality industry, the staff turnover ratio is very high and the major reason behind this is stress and work pressure (Cotton & Hart, 2003). Compared to the other industries, hotel managers' stress has been increased rather than managerial employees in other industries (Mohan, 2017).

But, the occupational stress within the hotel industry is less investigated (Zohar, 1994). For managers to address the problems of occupational stress, they need a good appreciation of the concept of stress, its causes, its consequences and the variety of management techniques and tools available (Cleg, 2001). Furthermore, Kandy area takes valuable position in Sri Lankan hospitality industry due to the reasons such as the highest tourists occupancy rate among other ancient cities (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority Statics Report, 2019), being a developing city, the second largest city in Sri Lanka etc. and UNESCO has declared as a world heritage site in 1988. Rich cultural heritage and ancient cities will provide a wide range of tourism opportunities in future. Therefore, in order to address for the above mentioned stress factor, the researcher had taken star hotels in Kandy district and identified a research problem to investigate whether there is an impact of organizational culture on occupational stress of managerial level employees in hotel industry with special reference to star hotels in Kandy.

The conceptual framework for the study was derived as follows.

Conceptual Framework



Source: Developed by the author based on the literature

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

According to the above conceptual framework, following hypotheses were addressed by the research;

H1: Organizational culture has an impact on occupational stress of managerial level employees in hotel industry

H2: Individualism – Collectivism has an impact on occupational stress of managerial level employees in hotel industry

H3: Uncertainty Avoidance has an impact on occupational stress of managerial level employees in hotel industry

H4: Power Distance has an impact on occupational stress of managerial level employees in hotel industry

H5: Masculinity – Femininity has an impact on occupational stress of managerial level employees in hotel industry

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational Culture

Employees in an organization are affected by many factors in term of determining their occupational stress. When it considers about the organizational culture, the beginning of formal writing on the concept of organizational culture with Pettigrew in 1979. Pettigrew (1979) introduced the anthropological concept of culture and showed how related concepts like "symbolism", "myth" and "rituals" can be used in organizational analysis (as cited in Lee & Yu, 2004). According to the Dandridge et al. (1980) showed how the study of these myths and symbols help in revealing the "deep structure" of an organization by developing the concept introduced by Pettigrew in 1979 (as cited in Lee & Yu, 2004). Moreover, organizational culture on being traditionally determined and socially structured that involves beliefs, behaviors, values and morals allied with different levels of the organization and incorporates to all aspects of organizational life (Pettigrew, 1990; Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohau & Sanders, 1990 as cited in Uddin, Luva & Hossian, 2013). More recent researchers including Denison and Mishra (1995); Schein (1985); Siehl and Martin (1988, 1990) and Wallach (1983) introduced various definitions of the culture concept (Lee & Yu, 2004). Organizational culture is conceptualized as shared beliefs and values within the organization that helps to shape the behavior patterns of employees (Kotter & Heskett, 1992 as cited in Uddin, Luva & Hossian, 2013). Organizational culture is the way of people do things around organization (Deal & Kennedy, 1982 as cited in Lee & Yu, 2004) or expressive non-rational qualities of an organization (Lee & Yu, 2004). According to Hofstede (1991) organizational culture means mindset of people which distinguishes them from others within or outside of the organization (as cited in Shahzad, 2014). According to Denison et al. (2006) Organizational Culture can be defined as values, beliefs, and assumptions that are held by the members of an organization and which facilitates shared meaning and guide behavior at varying levels of awareness. Consequently Culture can be defined as a pattern of shared values and beliefs that help individuals to understand organizational functioning and provide them with the norms for behavior in the organization (Deshpande and Webster, 1989 as cited in Agbejule, 2011). Schein (2004) has noted that some organizations have no important culture because those organizations do not carry a common history within the organization for a long time period whereas some organizations can be presumed to have strong culture because they have long shared history or shared intense experiences. When a group holds common assumptions, it results to a unique way of perceiving, thinking, feeling and behaving within the group. The anxiety that emerges because of inability to understand or predict event happening around the group is reduced by the shared learning (Schein, 2004). According to the Hofstede (1980) four dimensions of organizational culture can be named as power distance, individualism, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity. Power distance can be defined as the degree of

employee and management behavior that have been based upon perfect relationship between formal and informal set of planning action. Individualism means perfect match the difference between organization interest and self-interest. Uncertainty avoidance can be defined as the uncertainty and ambiguity based upon tolerance helps in mitigating willingness of people. Masculinity comes in avoidance of caring and promotion rather than level of success based upon challenges, insolence and ambition (as cited in Awadh & Saad, 2013). According to the literature, there are four dimensions of organizational culture can be identified; named as Individualism - Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance, Power Distance and Masculinity - Femininity (Denison & Mishra, 1995).

Occupational Stress

Occupational stress is defined as the "harmful physical and emotional response that occurs when job requirements do not match the worker's capabilities, resources and needs" (National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health Report, 1999). Job related stress is an uncomfortable feeling which is experienced by the individual, who is required to change his or her desired behavior related with the work objectives (Dette, 2008). The leading stress expert discusses stress as a dynamic activity of individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint or demand (Selye, 1936 as cited in Dette, 2008). The experience of stress level is depending on individuals. According to characteristics, intelligence and other individualistic qualities different the level of feeling stress in each one (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Work stress affect the performance of all levels of staff, from senior management to the operational staff and newly employed. Many workers in their daily experiences are aware that conflict and it does differ from person to person (Ross, 1995). Organizational culture influences to develop the negative outcomes of workers and organizations (Gardner, 2005). Occupational stress influence to reduce work output and increase accidents, absenteeism and employee turnover (Spector, 2003). Job stressor has grouped into the following six categories: physical environment, role stressors, organizational structure and job characteristics, relationships with others, career development, and work-family conflict (Burke, 1983, Fairbrother & Warn, 2002). In life situations, the workplace stands out as a potentially important source of stress purely because of the amount of time that is spent in this setting. Over the years, a large number of workplace stressors of varying degrees of gravity have been identified (Vokic & Bogdanic, 2006). And specific conditions that make jobs stressful can be categorized either as exogenous (i.e. inappropriate working conditions, heavy workload, lack of collaboration, etc.) or endogenous pressures (i.e. individual personality characteristics, etc.) (Antoniou, 2006 as cited in Dette, 2008). Furthermore, there are main three causes associated by the occupational stress as extra organizational factors, organizational factors and group factors. Extra organizational factors are refers to the factors that are more personal and related more to individual (Societal patterns, Technological changes, Changed lifestyle, Relocation of work or family, Unexpected happening or changes in life). Organizational Factors are refers to factors that related to organization or job assigned to individual (High stress job, Job role, Improper working condition, role ambiguity, instability and dissatisfaction

and Competition within departments). Group Factors are refers to three areas of Lack of group cohesiveness, Lack of social support and Intra individual, interpersonal & inter group conflict (Shankar and Keerthi, 2010). Furthermore, there are three main causes associated with the occupational stress as individual, interpersonal and structural. These are suggested through the investigation of Miles and Perreault regarding four types of role conflicts as intra-sender role conflict; inter-sender role conflict, personal role conflict and role overload which create stress (Malik, 2011).

Organizational Culture and Occupational Stress

When an organization holds a strong culture, it is very helpful to reduce the work stress of the employees that leads to the goal achievement and increases the overall performance of the organization. And also when a new employee enter in to the organization, that employee has different mindset and strong culture directs employees to a common pathway to achieve organizational goals and provide opportunity to grow in the organization by performing better in the way of managing stress (Deal & Kennedy, 1982 as cited in Shahzad, Iqbal & Gulzar, 2013). According to the findings of Marchand, Haines, and Dextras-Gauthier (2013), organizational culture needs to be considered as a relevant factor in occupational health studies. Content analysis of the study of Chang and Lu (2007) revealed that characteristics of organizational culture could either alleviate or aggravate stress, depending on employees' perception and attribution. In the same study, it has cited that recent studies of organizational management have addressed the significance of organizational culture on stress formation, since sources of stress can depend on the characteristics of the culture existed in organizations.

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Philosophy

This study is focused on the philosophy of positivism because the researcher conducts an objective research study which is independent of social factors (Saunders et al., 2009). Moreover, the researcher concerns about the observable phenomena which can provide credible data and facts. In addition to that generalizability of the results of the research study was highly concerned. Also, the researcher developed hypotheses and those hypotheses were tested and confirmed for development of a theory which may be tested by future research.

Research Methodology

According to Saunders et al., (2009), quantitative is used for any data collection technique (Such as questionnaires) or data analysis procedure that generates or uses numerical data and in contrast, qualitative is used for any data collection or analyzing procedure that generates non-numerical data. In the present study, the researcher intended to find out whether there is an impact of organizational culture and its dimensions on occupational stress. As that study dealt with numerical values, in its collection and analyzing process, the researcher used quantitative method for the present study.

Population and Sample

The sample which was selected by the researcher was manageable as there were only 150 managerial level employees who are working in Star Hotels in Kandy area. The sample was selected out of the population by using stratified sampling technique. The sample was stratified according to the star category of working hotel and designation.

Table I – Population and Sample

Star Category of the Hotel	Population (Total number of population)	Sample (Population of each category/ Total number of population)*150
5 Star Hotel (Includes 3 Hotels)	Executives – 61 Supervisors – 95	41 Executives 16 + Supervisors 25
4 Star Hotel (Includes 2 Hotels)	Executives – 28 Supervisors – 39	17 Executives 7 + Supervisors 10
3 Star Hotel	Executives – 75	42

(Includes 4 Hotels)	Supervisors – 85	Executives 20 + Supervisors 22
2 Star Hotel (Includes 5 Hotels)	Executives – 46 Supervisors – 68	30 Executives 12 + Supervisors 18
1 Star Hotel (Includes 3 Hotels)	Executives – 31 Supervisors – 44	20 Executives 8 + Supervisors 12

Validity and Reliability

Validity of the instrument of cultural dimensions is already tested by the authors and it is validated (Hofstede, 2008). According to (Puri, 2011), validity of the occupational stress instrument is 0.82 and therefore, the validity of the instrument can be identified as good. To measure organizational culture and its' dimensions, it was used Value Survey Model (VSM) 08, built by Hofstede (2008). The total reliability of this construct is high and recorded as 0.95. The reliability value of occupational stress is 0.89 according to the occupational stress index (Puri, 2011).

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

Test of Normality

The researcher has carried out a normality test for the dependent variable of occupational stress in order to measure the normality of its data distribution. If the output P value of the normality test is greater than the critical P value ($P > .05$), distribution of the sample is not differ from the normal distribution (Field, 2009). According to the results, the output P value is 0.140. Therefore, with 95% confidence, the researcher concluded that occupational stress follows a normal distribution (See Table II).

Table II – Test of Normality

Dependent Variable	P Value (KS Test)
Occupational Stress	0.140

Source: Census Data (2020)

Correlation Analysis

As per the table III, it can be concluded with 95% level of confidence that there are relationships between all the dimensions of organizational culture and occupational stress. Moreover, all the dimensions of organizational culture were positively correlated with occupational stress as with the Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) of 0.473, 0.373, 0.415 and 0.437 of Individualism - Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance, Power Distance and Masculinity - Femininity respectively (P value<0.05). As all Pearson correlation coefficients are between 0.5 and 0.3, there is a low degree of positive correlation between each pair of variables under 95% confidence level (See Table III).

Table III – Correlation Testing

Variable	Correlation Coefficient (r)	P Value
Individualism - Collectivism	0.473	0.001
Uncertainty Avoidance	0.373	0.043
Power Distance	0.415	0.012
Masculinity - Femininity	0.437	0.034

Note: Dependent variable: Occupational Stress

Source: Census Data (2020)

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is used to assess the strength of relationship between a numerical dependent variable and one or more numerical independent variable (Saunders et al., 2009). As the researcher tested the impact of the independent variable and its dimensions on occupational stress, it was used simple regression analysis and multiple regression analysis for the study. Multicollinearity poses a problem only for multiple regressions. Normally multiple regression consists with two or more predictor variables. Multicollinearity exists when there is a strong correlation between two or more predictor variables in regression model (Field, 2009). According to Field (2009) SPSS produces various collinearity diagnostics, one of which is the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and VIF indicates whether independent variable has a strong linear relationship with the other independent variables. VIF value should be less than 10 (VIF<10). Then it can be concluded that particular model is not suffering from multicollinearity effect. As all the VIF values of dimensions of the independent variable of the selected model is less than 10, it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity issue in the present study (See Table IV).

As per the Table V, constant term or the β_0 is 1.175. This emphasizes that, it is expected to have 1.175 units of occupational stress when there is no effect of organizational culture. Moreover, 1.065 is the regression coefficient of the organizational culture and it means that occupational stress can be increased by 1.065 units, if organizational culture increases by 1 unit while keeping other factors as constant.

Results of multiple regression analysis show that constant term or the β_0 is 0.737. This emphasizes that, it is expected to get 0.737 units of occupational stress, when there is no effect of any variables. The regression coefficient of Individualism - Collectivism is 0.145 and that means occupational stress can be increased by 0.145 units, if Individualism - Collectivism increases by 1 unit while keeping other factors as constant. If Uncertainty Avoidance increases by 1 unit, it could be able to increase occupational stress by 0.042. In the same manner occupational stress can be increased by 0.743 units, if Power Distance increases by unit while keeping other factors as constant as the regression coefficient of Power Distance takes 0.743. Finally, Masculinity - Femininity shows 0.468 of regression coefficient. Therefore, it can be concluded that Occupational Stress can be increased by 0.468 units when Masculinity - Femininity increases by 1 unit while keeping other factors constant (See Table V).

As per the Table VI, 73.9% variation of the occupational stress can be explained through the fitted model 01. Therefore remaining 26.1% changes of occupational stress can't be explained through the fitted regression line. Moreover, adjusted R square value (0.789) emphasizes that 78.9% of the variation of occupational stress is going to be explained by Individualism - Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance, Power Distance and Masculinity - Femininity of managerial level employees in hotel industry. Therefore, remaining 21.1% changes of dependent variable can't be explained through dimensions of organizational culture and there might be other factors that can be explained this variation.

Table IV – Test of Multicollinearity

Variables	VIF Value
Individualism - Collectivism	1.342
Uncertainty Avoidance	1.131
Power Distance	1.279
Masculinity - Femininity	1.089

Source: Census Data (2020)

Table V – Regression Analysis

Type of Analysis	Model	Variable	B	P Value	95% Confidence Level	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Simple Regression Analysis	1	(Constant)	1.175	0.000	0.709	1.641
		Organizational Culture	1.065	0.000	0.992	1.209
Multiple Regression Analysis	2	(Constant)	0.737	0.028	0.081	1.393
		Individualism - Collectivism	0.145	0.000	0.401	1.084
		Uncertainty Avoidance	0.042	0.012	-0.309	0.393
		Power Distance	0.743	0.041	-0.422	0.120
		Masculinity - Femininity	0.468	0.001	0.200	0.737

Source: Census Data (2020)

Table VI – Goodness of Fit

Type of Analysis	R Square	Adjusted R Square
Model 01	0.739	-
Model 02	-	0.789

Source: Census Data (2020)

V. CONCLUSION

This study brought evidence of significant impact of Hofstede's cultural dimensions on occupational stress of managerial level employees in hotel industry. Moreover, the impact of power distance could be identified as the most influential factor comparatively.

VI. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

It is suggested for future researchers to conduct their research on organizational culture with occupational stress in different contexts and to investigate whether cultural dimensions significant in that contexts and different levels of an organization. Moreover, other than the organizational culture it suggested to refer another variable which effect on occupational stress. Present study is based on managerial level employees' (middle management) perspective, it is suggested for future researchers to conduct their studies in the perspectives of superiors. Also, researcher suggests future researchers to carry out on a large scale in the country to find out the impact of cultural dimensions on occupational stress of employees in hotel industry.

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