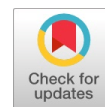


A Study on Occupational Stress Among Faculty in Higher Educational Institutions in Northern Coastal Districts of Andhra Pradesh

Tedlapu Narayana Rao, Sunkara Rajani, Jaladi Ravi



Abstract: This study investigates occupational stress among faculty members in autonomous higher educational institutions located in the Northern Coastal Districts of Andhra Pradesh. With increasing academic, administrative, and mentoring responsibilities, faculty members are exposed to a range of stressors, including excessive workload, role ambiguity, job insecurity, poor work-life balance, and insufficient institutional support. Using a quantitative and descriptive research design, data were collected from 331 valid responses through a structured questionnaire comprising 17 stress-related variables. Statistical tools such as correlation analysis, factor analysis, and reliability testing were applied. The findings indicate significant correlations between demographic factors—specifically age and monthly income—and occupational stress. Factor analysis confirmed that workload, compensation, and working hours are major contributors to stress, with strong reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.914). Despite positive aspects such as peer collaboration and manageable workloads for the majority, a considerable portion of faculty members continue to experience stress due to unclear roles, limited recognition, and interference with personal life. The study recommends targeted institutional interventions, including workload management, improved communication, equitable compensation, role clarity, and faculty participation in policy decisions to reduce stress and enhance organisational well-being.

Keywords: Occupational Stress, Faculty Members, Higher Educational Institutions, Workload, Role Ambiguity, Compensation, Work-Life Balance, Stress Management, Stressors, Demographic Factors.

Abbreviations:

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin

I. INTRODUCTION

Occupational stress among faculty in higher educational institutions has emerged as a critical area of concern in recent years, given its far-reaching implications on academic

performance, health, and institutional effectiveness. Faculty members often face multiple stressors, including heavy workload, role ambiguity, administrative demands, and the challenges of balancing teaching, research, and service obligations (Shrivastava, 2021 [1]; Junça Silva & Rodrigues, 2024) [8]. Studies indicate that such pressures can significantly affect job satisfaction, psychological well-being, and physical health, often leading to burnout, hypertension, and other stress-related disorders (Rana & Soodan, 2019 [2]; Balachandran et al., 2025) [4]. The COVID-19 pandemic further amplified these stressors by imposing a sudden shift to virtual teaching, which intensified the psychological burden on faculty while impacting their performance and well-being (Prasad et al., 2022) [3]. Research also highlights that occupational stress not only influences faculty attitudes and commitment but also contributes to turnover intentions, undermining institutional stability and the quality of education (Bist et al., 2022 [5]; Impact of Role Stressors, 2025) [9]. More recent investigations underscore the need to identify work stress indicators and remedial measures to safeguard faculty health and sustain productivity in higher education institutions (Sushma et al., 2024 [6]; Impact of Stress on Faculties' Attitudes, 2024) [7]. Moreover, the prevalence of hypertension and prehypertension among teaching professionals reflects the serious physiological consequences of prolonged occupational stress (Prehypertension and Hypertension among School Teachers, 2024) [10]. Collectively, these studies emphasise that occupational stress among faculty is a multifaceted issue with psychological, physiological, and organisational dimensions, necessitating comprehensive interventions to promote both individual well-being and institutional growth.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A. Research Design:

This study employs a quantitative and descriptive research design, allowing for the measurement and analysis of stress-related variables numerically and systematically.

B. Sampling Technique:

A convenience sample of faculty working in various higher education colleges. Simple random sampling was used to ensure each faculty member had an equal chance of being selected.

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Total Population Size	2374
Category	Sample size
Strata 1 (Degree Colleges)	28
Strata 2 (Engineering Colleges)	167
Strata 3 (Engineering and Management Colleges)	136
Total Sample Size	331

C. Sample Size:

Faculty members working in 14 autonomous higher educational institutions located in the Northern Coastal Districts of Andhra Pradesh, with a population size of approximately 2,374 faculty members. Out of the total responses received, 331 were found to be filled appropriately and valid for analysis. Based on statistical requirements (a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error).

D. Data Collection Tools:

A structured questionnaire consisting of three sections and 56 items was developed in alignment with the study's objectives. It measured causes, consequences, and coping Strategies of occupational stress. Responses were recorded using Likert's Five-Point Scale (ranging from Strongly Disagree to Agree Strongly). The reliability of occupational stress among the faculty in higher educational institutions (Autonomous) in this study was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha and is 0.914. (Table 1.)

Table 1: Validity of the Questionnaire

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.914	17

E. Data Analysis

This study analyses primary data collected from 331 faculty members working in autonomous colleges of the northern coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh to understand the prevalence, causes, consequences, and coping strategies related to occupational stress. Using a structured questionnaire, information was gathered on demographic factors, including experience, gender, discipline, and designation, as well as the psychological and physiological effects of stress and the coping mechanisms employed. Both descriptive and inferential statistical tools, including frequency distribution, percentages, mean, ANOVA, correlations, and regression, were applied to identify patterns and differences across groups. The findings provide empirical insights that help in understanding how occupational stress manifests among faculty and offer a basis for formulating strategies to reduce stress and promote well-being.

III. RESULTS

Overall, 331 faculty members participated in the study, and the results are presented in two parts. The first part includes demographic characteristics and other environmental and personal variables that influence the most common stressors experienced by faculty, and the second part examines the Association between the causes of stress and demographic factors.

A. Demographic Characteristics

Table 2

Designation	Frequency	Percentage
Assistant professor	307	92.7
Associate professor	15	4.53
Professor	9	2.72
Total	331	100
Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	144	43.5
Male	187	56.5
Total	331	100
Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Married	287	86.7
Un Married	44	13.3
Total	331	100
Family Type	Frequency	Percent
Joint family	155	46.8
Nuclear family	176	53.2
Total	331	100
Age	Frequency	Percent
21 - 30 Years	75	22.7
31 - 40 Years	172	52
41 - 50 Years	65	19.6
51 - Above	19	5.7
Total	331	100
Job Experience	Frequency	Percent
Less than 5 Years	47	14.2
5 - 10 Years	99	29.9
11 - 15 Years	104	31.4
16 - 20 Years	38	11.5
More than 20 Years	43	13
Total	331	100
Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Doctoral Degree	89	26.9
M.Tech/M.Phil	163	49.24
Master's Degree (MBA/MCA/MSc)	79	23.86
Total	331	100
Monthly Income	Frequency	Percent
15000 - Less	12	3.6
15001 - 30000	38	11.5
30001 - 45000	137	41.4
45001 - 60000	96	29
60001 - Above	48	14.5
Total	331	100

B. Causes of Stress:

The study assessed the causes of occupational stress among faculty in autonomous colleges of the northern coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh by grouping 17 items into three categories: Job-Related, Relationship-Related, and Competency-Related Factors. Job-related items focused on workload, compensation, job security, working hours, and growth opportunities, while relationship-related items examined workplace dynamics, peer interactions, and work-family balance. Competency-related items addressed role clarity, resource adequacy, and alignment with personal growth. Analyzing these responses helped identify the key sources of stress and their variation across demographic and institutional contexts.



Table 3: Significance of the Research Questions

Research Question	Significance
The amount of work assigned is reasonable.	Helps assess workload as a potential stressor, indicating whether faculty perceive their assigned tasks as balanced or excessive.
Compensation for the work done is fair.	Identifies perceptions of fair or inadequate pay, a significant determinant of job satisfaction, motivation, and stress levels.
The number of hours worked per week is appropriate.	Highlights concern about excessive work hours and their impact on job-related stress and work-life balance.
Employee feels secure in their job position.	Examines job security as a critical stressor, influencing morale, commitment, and emotional well-being.
Employee is comfortable with the possibility of transfer	Reflects adaptability to organisational transfers, while discomfort signals stress linked to mobility and stability.
Opportunities for growth and advancement are sufficient	Assesses the availability of career development opportunities, noting that a lack of growth is often linked to stress and reduced motivation.
Organisational policies are fair and reasonable.	Identifies perceptions of fairness in institutional policies, which directly impact trust, satisfaction, and stress.
Availability of necessary resources to perform effectively	Examines adequacy of institutional resources; lack of support increases stress and hinders performance.
Contribution to the organisation is valued and appreciated	Recognition and appreciation reduce stress and enhance motivation; a lack thereof contributes to dissatisfaction.
Comfort in raising grievances about workplace problems	Indicates openness of communication channels; discomfort signals barriers leading to isolation and stress.
Presence of conflicts between employees	Evaluates workplace harmony; conflicts act as relationship-related stressors affecting collaboration and morale.
Working relationship with peers is good.	Strong peer relationships reduce stress and foster collaboration; strained relations contribute to stress.
Conflicts with family members due to work	Highlights work-family interference as a major external stressor impacting personal well-being.
Overtime work affecting family time	Reveals work-life imbalance where extended hours reduce family interaction, contributing to stress.
Job demands restrict social life outside work.	Shows how professional demands affect social engagement, with restrictions creating stress and imbalance.
Lack of scope for hobbies or personal growth	Indicates how limited opportunities for personal interests increase stress and affect overall well-being.
Frequent conflict or role ambiguity at work	Role conflict and ambiguity cause uncertainty and stress, impacting performance and satisfaction.

C. Associations Between Demographic Characteristics and Causes of Stress:

The present Study was further conducted to know whether demographic factors have an impact on the causes of stress among faculty members working in higher educational

institutions (Autonomous colleges). For this purpose, the researcher used 'Correlation Analysis, which tries to establish the relationship among the variables. The correlation coefficient is a degree of linear association between 2 variables. 'Values of the correlation coefficient are generally between +1 and -1.

Ho: "There is no significant correlation between demographic factors and causes of occupational stress".

H1a: There is a significant correlation between faculty members' opinions on whether age affects their work and causes stress, and their opinions on the overall impact of occupational stress in higher educational institutions (Autonomous).

Table 4: Relationship Between Occupational Stress and Age

Age (in Years)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	P-Value
21-30	1	4	16	40	14	0.008
31-40	4	9	64	77	18	
41-50	0	0	26	38	1	
51-above	0	2	10	6	1	

Inference: Table 4 reveals a significant correlation between age and occupational stress among faculty members in autonomous higher education institutions. With a p-value of 0.008 (less than 0.05), the result is statistically significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This confirms that age is a key factor influencing work-related stress among faculty members.

H0b: There is a significant correlation between faculty members' opinions on whether monthly income affects their work and causes stress, and their opinions on the overall impact of occupational stress in higher educational institutions (Autonomous).

H1b: There is a significant correlation between faculty members' opinions that monthly income affects their work and causes stress, and their opinions on the overall impact of occupational stress in higher educational institutions (Autonomous).

Table 5: Relationship Between the Occupational Stress and Monthly Income

Monthly Income (in Rs.)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	P-Value
15000-less	2	0	0	6	4	0.001
15001- 30000	0	2	18	17	1	
30001-45000	3	7	46	65	16	
45001-60000	0	5	31	51	9	
60001-above	0	1	21	22	4	

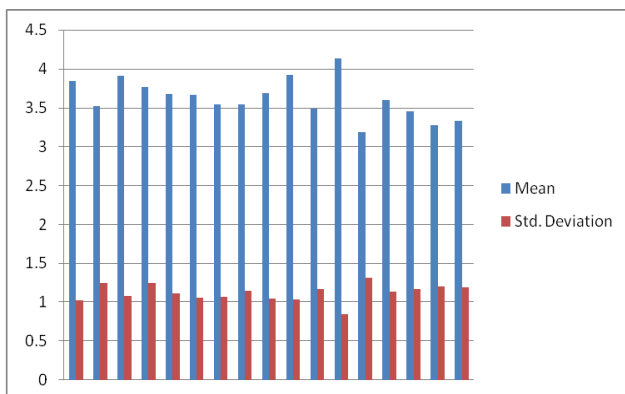
Inference:

Table 5 indicates a significant correlation between monthly income and occupational stress among faculty in autonomous higher educational institutions. With a p-value of 0.001 (below 0.05), the result is statistically significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This confirms that monthly income is a key factor influencing faculty stress levels.

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Table 6: Faculty Stress Index of the Respondents (N=331)

	Mean	Std. Deviation
The amount of work I am assigned is reasonable	3.84	1.023
I believe my compensation is fair for the work I do	3.52	1.244
The number of hours I work each week is appropriate	3.91	1.078
I feel secure in my job position.	3.77	1.247
I am comfortable with the possibility of being transferred within the organisation.	3.68	1.112
I feel there are sufficient opportunities for growth and advancement in my organisation.	3.67	1.058
I feel comfortable raising grievances about problems at work.	3.54	1.07
I find the organisational policies to be fair and reasonable.	3.54	1.144
I have the necessary resources to perform my job effectively.	3.69	1.052
I believe that my contributions to the organisation are valued and appreciated.	3.92	1.04
There are a few conflicts between employees in my workplace.	3.49	1.174
I have a good working relationship with my peers.	4.13	0.85
I experience conflicts with my family members due to my work commitments.	3.19	1.315
Working overtime beyond general work hours affects the time I spend with my family.	3.6	1.138
Demands of my job restrict my social life outside of work.	3.45	1.173
My job does not provide scope for the pursuit of hobbies/ personal growth.	3.27	1.199
I often experience conflict/role ambiguity at work.	3.33	1.189



Based on Means score, we observe that the sub factor, 'Having good relationship with my peers' is a good option for me' has the highest Means of 4.13 followed by 'The contribution to the organization is valued and appreciated.' with the Means of 3.94, 'The amount of work I am assigned is reasonable' with the means of 3.84. Thus, most of the respondents feel that causes of stress have a greater impact on 'Having a good relationship with my peers.

Factor Analysis: Factor Analysis was employed in this study to identify the latent factors influencing occupational stress by reducing the 17 variables into a smaller, more meaningful set of dimensions. Prior to applying factor analysis, the suitability of the data was tested using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. A KMO value above 0.7 confirms adequacy of the sample, while a significant Bartlett's test (high Chi-square value) indicates that the variables are sufficiently correlated to proceed with factor analysis. The results of KMO and Bartlett's test for the present study are presented below.

Table 7: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.902
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3624.456
	Df	136
	Sig.	.000

Table 7 indicates the value of sampling adequacy. For the present research, the value is 0.902, indicating that the sample is suitable for the research and that factor analysis can be used to provide indicative findings. The "Bartlett's Test of

Sphericity" indicates a significant value of "Chi square", i.e., 3624.456, and thus the null hypothesis can be rejected.

Communalities: After confirming the suitability of factor analysis, communalities were calculated to determine the percentage of variance in each variable explained by the extracted factors. Communality, derived as the sum of squared factor loadings, reflects the reliability of an indicator. While the initial value for all variables is 1.0, the extracted communalities are lower, as they represent variance explained only by the retained factors. The communalities for this study were computed using SPSS and are presented below.

Table 8. Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
The amount of work I am assigned is reasonable	1.000	.658
I believe my compensation is fair for the work I do	1.000	.549
The number of hours I work each week is appropriate	1.000	.612
I feel secure in my job position.	1.000	.639
I am comfortable with the possibility of being transferred within the organisation.	1.000	.719
I feel there are sufficient opportunities for growth and advancement in my organisation.	1.000	.691
I feel comfortable raising grievances about problems at work.	1.000	.649
I find the organisational policies to be fair and reasonable.	1.000	.666
I have the necessary resources to perform my job effectively.	1.000	.664
I believe that my contributions to the organisation are valued and appreciated.	1.000	.603
There are a few conflicts between employees in my workplace.	1.000	.566
I have a good working relationship with my peers.	1.000	.722
I experience conflicts with my family members due to my work commitments.	1.000	.682
Working overtime beyond general work hours affects the time I spend with my family.	1.000	.628
Demands of my job restrict my social life outside of work.	1.000	.803
My job does not provide scope for the pursuit of hobbies/ personal growth.	1.000	.803
I often experience conflict/role ambiguity at work.	1.000	.721

The value of communality of a factor indicates the interpretability of the factor. A



low communality across the set of factors indicates that ‘the factor model is not working well for the indicator and possibly may be removed from the model’. The generally accepted rule of factor communality is to take all the factors

with more than 0.6 communality as significant. It can be observed from the table that the majority of the factors have high communalities, indicating that they are significant in explaining the total variance.

Table 9: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigen Values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.33	43.119	43.119	7.33	43.119	43.119
2	3.024	17.788	60.908	3.024	17.788	60.908
3	1.022	6.011	66.918	1.022	6.011	66.918
4	813	4.785	71.703			
5	0.671	3.945	75.649			
6	0.644	3.791	79.44			
7	0.529	3.111	82.55			
8	0.473	2.785	85.335			
9	0.402	2.365	87.7			
10	0.382	2.245	89.945			
11	0.316	1.859	91.804			
12	0.311	1.831	93.635			
13	0.266	1.567	95.202			
14	0.237	1.393	96.595			
15	0.198	1.165	97.76			
16	0.195	1.145	98.906			
17	0.186	1.094	100			

Table 9 presents the eigenvalues of the 17 factors used in the research. As mentioned earlier, the factors with eigenvalues of more than 1.0 are considered to have a significant influence on the total variance of the set of factors. As per the results of SPSS done through Principal Component Analysis, the Eigen values of first three factors i.e, the amount of work I am assigned is reasonable, I believe my compensation is fair for the work I do and the number of hours I work each week is appropriate for Causes of stress were more than one, hence can be considered significant in the study.

IV. FINDINGS

- Provide administrative assistance, flexible scheduling, and time management training to reduce workload pressure.
- Regularly assess workload distribution, considering individual capacities and career stages, while ensuring equitable task assignments.
- Conduct periodic pay reviews, maintain transparency in compensation and promotions, and introduce merit-based rewards and tenure-track opportunities.
- Reduce role ambiguity and conflict by updating job descriptions, holding regular role-review meetings, and training supervisors for precise feedback.
- Promote work-life balance through flexible work hours, family-friendly policies, wellness initiatives, and support for personal interests.
- Strengthen workplace relationships by implementing conflict resolution mechanisms, communication training, and confidential grievance redressal systems.
- Involve faculty in institutional policy-making, ensure transparent communication of decisions, and implement structured career development plans.

V. SUGGESTIONS

- i. Provide structured administrative support, flexible scheduling, and time management training to reduce workload pressures.
- ii. Institutionalise periodic workload reviews to ensure fairness, transparency, and alignment with faculty capacities.
- iii. Implement regular salary reviews, transparent promotion policies, and merit-based incentives, including tenure-track opportunities.
- iv. Minimise role ambiguity through clear job descriptions, role-review meetings, and supervisor training.
- v. Promote work-life balance with flexible hours, family-supportive policies, wellness programs, and opportunities for personal growth.
- vi. Strengthen collegiality through conflict resolution mechanisms, communication training, and confidential grievance systems.
- vii. Encourage faculty participation in governance with transparent decision-making and structured career development frameworks.

VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The study on occupational stress among faculty in autonomous higher educational institutions in the North Coastal Districts of Andhra Pradesh reveals a complex picture. While a majority of faculty members (80.6%) find their workload reasonable and feel supported through peer collaboration (84.8%), several key stressors persist. Notable areas of concern include role ambiguity or conflict (52.9%), interference of work with family (65.5%) and social life (56.8%), and dissatisfaction with compensation (25.7%) and job security (17.3%). Additional stress sources include limited recognition, inadequate communication, and perceived unfair policies, affecting 15–25% of respondents. Although many



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faculty members report fair treatment and access to resources, the presence of interpersonal conflict (58.9%) and a lack of psychological safety for some (18.7%) further underscore the need for institutional improvements.

The research concludes that despite overall positive perceptions of workload and peer relationships, a significant proportion of faculty members face occupational stress driven by unclear roles, work-life imbalance, perceived inequities, and limited growth opportunities. To address these challenges, institutions should adopt a comprehensive strategy that includes more explicit role definitions, improved communication, fairer policies, enhanced recognition, balanced workloads, and greater faculty involvement in decision-making. Such interventions can significantly reduce stress, elevate job satisfaction, and foster a healthier and more productive academic environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Institutions should establish structured administrative support, flexible scheduling, and formal time management training to mitigate workload pressures.
- A systematic review of workload distribution should be institutionalised to ensure fairness, equity, and alignment with faculty capacities and career stages.
- Regular salary reviews, transparent promotion policies, and the introduction of merit-based rewards and tenure-track opportunities are essential for reducing financial and employment-related stress.
- Role ambiguity and conflict can be addressed through clear and updated job descriptions, periodic role-review meetings, and supervisor training for constructive feedback.
- Work-life balance must be promoted by introducing flexible work hours, family-friendly policies, wellness programs, and support for personal interests.
- Collegiality should be strengthened through conflict resolution mechanisms, structured communication training, and confidential grievance redressal systems.
- Faculty participation in institutional decision-making and governance should be actively encouraged through transparent policies and structured career development frameworks.

DECLARATION STATEMENT

After aggregating input from all authors, I must verify the accuracy of the following information as the article's author.

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- **Data Access Statement and Material Availability:** The adequate resources of this article are publicly accessible.
- **Author's Contributions:** The authorship of this article is contributed equally to all participating individuals.

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