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IS WORK STRESS CAUSING TO ORGANIZATIONAL SILENCE: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY AMONG SELF FINANCING COLLEGE FACULTIES

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ABSTRACT

In this fast-growing academic sector, college teachers endure high work stress due to heavy workload as besides teaching, they are forced to do administrative work and extra-curricular activities and also due to shifting roles and accelerated technological progress. Work stress is particularly high in self-financing colleges, where institutional support is limited. Work stress has a reflective impact on employees, leading to emotional responses, such as fear, frustration and anxiety. The technological growth in the educational sector leads to partial inefficiency among faculties as they are unable to cope with the upgradation. This is due to lack of technical knowledge and inability to adapt. Such faculty members experience work-related stress while implementing new technologies, which, in turn, may also lead to organizational silence. Organizational silence refers to withholding of information, facts and issues from the management because of various reasons, like fear of job loss, retaliation or lack of security, etc. This study aims to examine the relationship between work stress and organizational silence among faculty members in self-financing colleges. The findings indicate that work stress significantly contributes to organizational silence. Based on the findings, it is recommended that the management of self-financing colleges may take steps to reduce work stress among teachers by facilitating open and free communication, stress management programmes and counseling in colleges.

KEYWORDS: Work stress, Organizational silence, Self-financing college teachers

1. INTRODUCTION

Work stress is a common phenomenon that has significant effects on the performance and efficiency of employees. This problem is rampant in the academic field, especially in self-financing colleges. The teaching profession is mired in high level of work load with constrains in resources. Teachers have the responsibility to shape the future generation in a good way. The relevance of this is more in

today's world, where rapid changes are taking place, especially in technological field. Teachers have the pressure of managing large number of students in one class, meeting academic targets besides dealing with administrative work. It affects their mental and emotional well-being and it may lead to increased stress in their work place. Work stress can have wide-ranging consequences, including decreased productivity, reduced job satisfaction and may lead to a tendency among employees to remain silent about job-related concerns. If the entire teachers suffer from stress, it may cause organizational silence. — “A situation where employees withhold work-related opinions, or feedback” (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Organizational silence not only undermines faculty job satisfaction and morale, but also hampers institutional growth and overall success “Work stress, often characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment, can create a climate of fear or resignation that discourages open communication”. (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). Previous studies have indicated that work stress can lead to organizational silence. Faculty members experiencing high levels of stress may become fearful, anxious, or emotionally exhausted. As a result, they may withhold ideas or concerns related to their work and begin to disengage by reducing interactions with colleagues and management. This form of withdrawal not only limits communication but also diminishes collaboration and institutional responsiveness. This study aims to examine the relationship between work stress and organizational silence among faculty members in self-financing colleges.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Amin, Shah, and Tatlah (2013) examined occupational stress among university teachers and found significant stressors related to administrative pressure, workload, and lack of professional autonomy. They conducted an important empirical study focusing on the impact of job stress on university teachers—a group often overlooked in stress-related organizational research. Recognizing that university teachers play a critical role in shaping the intellectual and social growth of a nation, the authors emphasize that occupational stress among this group can have serious consequences not only for their own health and well-being but also for the quality of education imparted to students.

Angela Mazzone etc. ((2024) studied the Witnessing bullying at work: Employee silence in higher education institutions. The authors conducted this study to investigate employee reluctance to take action when witnessing workplace bullying, to investigate the associations between employee silence and several predictors in a sample of employees working across Irish HEIs and also to investigate the association between employee silence and workplace bullying assessed respondents' general tendency to remain silent in relation to various organisational issues. They found a negative association between team psychological safety and employee silence, indicating a reluctance to report bullying among respondents with low levels of team psychological safety. A positive association was found between victimisation and employee silence.

Belal Panahia etc. (2012) conducted an empirical analysis on influencing factors on organizational silence and its relationship with employee's organizational commitment to to investigate factors affecting obligations of employees and organizational silence. They studied attitude of super manager, the attitude of supervisors and the relational opportunities for measuring employee silence. They found direct relationship between the aspects of silence climate and the employees' silence behaviour. There is direct relationship between employees silence behaviour and organizational commitment. And also Communicational opportunities are decreasing due to increase in employee silence.

Chad t. Brinsfield studied the Employee silence motives; Investigation of dimensionality and development of measures through his research. He had undertaken this research as four studies. In study 1, they studied the nature and scope of silence motives. Study 2 develops measures of these motives and explores their factor structure. In Study 3 the author refines the measures and provides confirmatory evidence of factor structure. And at last in Study 4 he examined relationships between the new measures and related factors. He found six dimensions of silence motives ineffectual, relational, defensive, diffident, disengaged, and deviant emerged from the data, which is reliably measured and provide incremental value for understanding and assessing employee silence.

Cooper, Dewe, and O'Driscoll (2001) provide an inclusive review and assessment of the existing theories, approaches, and applications related to work stress. They contributed a foundation to workplace stress by understanding various causes and consequences of stress. They examined the theoretical models of stress like the Person-Environment Fit Model, Job Demand-Control Model and Transactional Model. The researchers also analyzed different sources of organizational stress like poor interpersonal relationships, lack of support from supervisors, work overload and organizational change and restructuring. They opined that stress is not only a psychological issue but also it has behavioral and physiological issues.it includes absenteeism, burnout and decreased job performance and satisfaction. They also suggested three intervention strategies; they are primary interventions, secondary interventions and tertiary interventions.

Detert and Edmondson's (2011) study on Implicit Voice Theories (IVTs) explores the taken-for-granted rules or assumptions that influence employees' decisions to speak up or remain silent in the workplace. IVTs can lead to self-censorship, preventing employees from sharing valuable ideas or concerns. The authors identify different types of IVTs, including those related to futility, danger, and job requirements, which can impact employee behavior and organizational outcomes. Understanding IVTs is crucial for promoting open communication, leadership, and employee engagement. The study's findings have implications for organizational communication, leadership, and employee well-being, highlighting the need for further research on IVTs and their impact on organizational performance and innovation.

In the study of Khattak et al. (2011) explored the concept of occupational stress within the context of banks in Pakistan. They opined that banking sector is a field with long hours, high work pressure and increased competition. The researchers started their work by discussing the theoretical base of occupational stress by studying Person-Environment Fit Model and Job Demand-Control Model. They found that when employees face high demands with poor control between organizational and personal values, stress and burnout will arise. They highlighted some important stressors specific in banking field. They are Role conflict and ambiguity, Lack of managerial support, time pressure, limited opportunities for personal advancement, work load etc.

Maslach and Leiter's (2008) studied the concept of burnout as an organisational problem rather than an individualistic problem. They tell that burnout is causing from the situation of work place stress which is not managed successfully in organisations. The researchers bring six areas of work life; they are control, reward, workload, values, fairness and community. These are contributing to burnout. If these factors are not managed properly there will be emotional exhaustion and reduced professional efficiency. Their framework highlights the organisation's role in preventing burnout. They also gave importance to employee silence. They opined that lack of support; recognition and open communication are the main factors causing employee silence and burnout. When employees feels speaking up is dangerous in their workplace, silence compounds stress and isolation. Maslach and Leiter gives emphasize on the importance of systematic organisational change for better communication system and fairness in the organizations. It will reduce the burnout by creating safe and good work atmosphere.

Wenyi Cao and Lu Chen (2024) had undertaken Research on the Influencing Factors and Improvement Strategies of Employee Silence Behaviour. The researchers had undertaken this study to investigate primary factors influencing employee silence behavior and to propose appropriate strategies. They considered individual, leadership and organizational factors affecting employee silence. They found that corporate hypocrisy, narcissistic traits, perceived organizational politics, emotional exhaustion is the major factors contributing to employee silence. They suggested various strategies for managing such silence in the organization.

2.1 Research Gap

Despite the growing body of research on organizational silence and work stress, there is a need for exploratory studies focusing on self-financing college faculties. Now a days the concept of organizational silence holds significant importance in research, but the studies examining its relationship with job stress are understudied. Understanding the association between organizational silence and work stress can help the management to develop strategies to reduce its negative impacts and promotes a good and peaceful work environment. Further, in the context of Kerala, there are few studies exploring the relationship of work stress with organizational silence. So, this study aims to

bridge that gap by empirically examining how work stress lead to organizational silence among self-financing college faculties.

2.2 The Problem Statement

Self-financing colleges form an important part of our higher educational system and the faculties faces lot of challenges like technological upgradations, changing attitude of students, changes in expectation etc. These factors are collectively contributed to increased level of work stress. Their productivity and satisfaction will be affected by these stressors. They will be less motivated and sometimes they suffer from the problem of disengagement. Self-financing college faculties have lesser salary scale and incentives. They are mainly facing the problem of job security. They may experience fear of job loss and retaliation, which can discourage them from openly expressing their opinions. As a result, there is a tendency to withhold information or feedback from higher authorities. The deliberate concealment of facts or opinion is termed as organizational silence. This study investigates whether work stress leads to organizational silence. It also studies the relationship of demographic factors with work stress.

2.3 Significance of the Study

The study titled “Is work stress causing to organizational silence? An empirical study among self-financing college teachers” in Malappuram district. Organizational silence and work stress are closely associated. If the college teachers are more stressed, the employee silence will also be more. By examining this relationship, the study will provide insights to the management for facilitating an open atmosphere to disclose their concerns and thereby reducing work stress. The study's findings will contribute to understand work stress lead as a factor for organizational silence or not. The researcher wants to evaluate the effect of stress on employee silence of college faculties and to suggest ways and means to reduce the negative stress.

3. OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

3.1 Objectives of the Study

Present study has the following objectives:

1. To analyze the demographic differences in work stress among faculties of self-financing colleges.
2. To examine the effects of work stress on employee silence among self-financing college faculties.

3.2 Hypothesis Formulated and Tested (H1)

1. There is a significant difference in work stress among faculties in self-financing colleges based on gender.

2. There is a **significant difference** between NET-qualified and non-qualified faculties in self-financing colleges in respect of work stress
3. There is a significant difference in work stress between married and un-married faculties.
4. There is a significant difference in work stress among faculty members of self-financing colleges based on their age.
5. There is a significant difference in work stress among faculty members of self-financing colleges based on their educational qualifications.
6. There is a significant difference in work stress among faculties of self-financing colleges based on salary
7. There is a significant difference in work stress among faculties of self-financing colleges based on experiences
8. There is a significant difference in work stress among faculties of self-financing colleges based on working hours
9. **Work stress has a significant effect on employee silence among faculties of self-financing colleges.**

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study examines the relationship between work stress and organizational silence among self-financing college teachers. Here organizational silence is taken as dependent variable and work stress is taken as independent variable.

4.1 Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive and quantitative research design to investigate the relationship between work stress and organizational silence among faculty members of self-financing Arts and Science colleges in Malappuram District, Kerala. The descriptive approach provides a detailed understanding of the variables, while the quantitative method allows for hypothesis testing through statistical analysis. The study relies on primary data collected directly from the respondents.

4.2 Research Instruments

Data is collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The instrument included demographic questions and Likert scale items designed to measure work stress and organizational silence. To facilitate data collection, the questionnaire was converted into an online Google Form, allowing respondents to complete it electronically, ensuring convenience and efficient data gathering.

4.3 Sampling

The study employed purposive sampling to select faculty members from self-financing Arts and

Science colleges in Malappuram District, Kerala. A total of 85 respondents participated in the study, forming the sample for analysis.

4.4 Statistical Analysis

Quantitative analysis techniques, including regression, one-way ANOVA and Independent sample t-test are applied to analyze the data and assess the relationship between work stress and organizational silence.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study aimed to examine the relationship between work stress and organizational silence among faculties in self-financing colleges. Data analysis was carried out using independent sample t-tests, One-way ANOVA, and Regression analysis to test the formulated hypotheses.

Table No. 1 Reliability Statistics: Employee Silence

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.932	19

The Cronbach's Alpha value for the variable Employee Silence is 0.930. It is the result of Reliability analysis by consisting 19 items for measuring employee silence. It expresses an excellent level of internal consistency among the items used to measure the construct 'Employee silence'. It suggests that the items are well correlated and consistent to measure employee silence.

Table No. 2 Reliability Statistics: Work stress

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.957	15

The Cronbach's Alpha value for the variable work stress is 0.957. It is the result of Reliability analysis by consisting 15 items for measuring work stress. It expresses an excellent level of internal consistency among the items used to measure the construct 'work stress'.

Testing of Hypotheses

1. H0: There is no significant difference in work stress among faculties in self-financing colleges based on gender.
2. H0: There is **no significant difference** between NET-qualified and non-qualified faculties in self-financing colleges in respect of work stress

3. H0: There is no significant difference in work stress between married and un-married faculties.

Table No. 3 Independent sample t test of work stress of college faculties based on gender and NET qualification

Particulars	Items	Mean	Standard deviation.	t -value	p-value	Decision
Gender	Male	3.3883	0.3926	2.523	0.014	Significant
	Female	3.6206	0.3715			
NET qualification	Yes	3.5722	0.3835	0.485	0.629	Not significant
	No	3.5284	0.4051			
Marital status	Single	3.51	0.57	2.60	0.011	Significant
	Married	3.63	0.41			

Source: Primary data

- The result of independent sample t-test for gender and work stress indicates the t-value of 2.523. The p- value is 0.041, which is lower than 0.05 and hence null hypothesis is rejected. So there is statistically significant difference in work stress between male and female faculties of self-financing colleges. Male and female faculties experiences different levels of work stress. Female faculties reports higher work stress than male faculties with an average difference of 0.232.
 - The t-value for NET qualification and work stress is 0.485 and p-value is 0.629. Since p- value is greater than 0.05, null hypothesis is accepted. It means that there is no significant difference between NET qualified and not qualified faculties in experiencing work stress among self-financing colleges.
 - The result of Independent samples t-test explains that **married faculties (M = 3.63, SD = 0.41)** have significantly **higher work stress** than **single faculties (M = 3.51, SD = 0.37)**. Here the **t value is 2.60 and p value is 0.011**, it shows that marital status is a significant factor in defining work-stress among self-financing college faculties.
4. H0: There is no significant difference in work stress among faculty members of self-financing colleges based on their age.

5. H0: There is no significant difference in work stress among faculty members of self-financing colleges based on their educational qualifications.
6. H0: There is no significant difference in work stress among faculties of self-financing colleges based on salary
7. H0: There is no significant difference in work stress among faculties of self-financing colleges based on experiences
8. H0: There is no significant difference in work stress among faculties of self-financing colleges based on working hours.

Table No. 4 One-way Anova analysis showing work stress of self-financing college teachers with regard to various demographic features

Factors	Items	Mean	Std.dev.	F value	Sig	Decision
Age	Below 25	3.4407	0.2245	0.729	0.537	Not significant
	25-35	3.6086	0.3611			
	35-45	3.5066	0.462			
	Above 45	3.5578	0.3889			
Educational Qualification	PG	3.5786	.3835	0.564	0.571	Not significant
	M.Phil	3.544	0.348			
	Ph.D	3.4148	0.5545			
Monthly salary	Below 15000	3.6497	0.3998	2.732	0.049	Significant
	15000-25000	3.3830	0.2900			
	25000-35000	3.3922	0.3998			
	35000-45000	3.3370	0.3240			
Experience	Below 5 years	3.5402	0.0614	0.648	0.587	Not significant
	5-10 years	3.6217	0.0749			
	10-15 years	3.4788	0.1029			
	Above 15 years	3.7486	0.0269			
	Below 16 hours	3.2303	0.4103			

Working hours	16-19 hours	3.5069	0.3505	1.114	0.039	Significant
	19-22 hours	3.5742	0.4009			
	22-25 hours	3.7351	0.2383			

Source: Primary data

- ANOVA results indicate there is no significant difference in experiencing work stress among different age groups of self- financing college faculties as p-value (0.537) is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is not rejected, which means that age does not have a significant impact on work stress levels among self-financing faculties.
- Educational qualification does not have a significant impact on the level of work stress experienced by faculty members in self-financing colleges. The p-value is 0.571 which is greater than 0.05, so there is no significant difference in level of work stress based on educational qualification. The faculties having PG qualification reports slightly higher average of work stress than PhD and M.Phil holders, but the differences are small and not statistically significant.
- The analysis revealed a significant difference in work stress among faculty members based on salary levels. Faculties earning below ₹15,000 reported higher work stress, with a mean score of 3.6497, indicating that lower salary groups experience more work-related stress compared to higher salary groups.
- Experience shows the F-value of 0.648 and p-value of 0.587, it suggests that there is no significant difference in work stress among faculties with different levels of experience. Faculties having more experience in self-financing colleges have same level of work stress that of faculties having less experience.
- The analysis of working hours showed a significant effect on work stress, with an F-value of 1.114 and a p-value of 0.039. Faculties working between 22 to 25 hours per week exhibited higher levels of work stress compared to other groups, with a mean score of 3.7351, indicating that working hours are an important factor influencing stress among faculty members.

9. H0: Work stress doesn't have a significant effect on employee-silence among faculties of self-financing colleges.

Table No. 5 Model Summary - Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.759 ^a	.577	.572	.32365	2.415

Dependent variable: Employee Silence

The result of regression analysis shows R value as 0.759. It indicates a strong positive correlation between the predictors of work stress and employee silence. R Square shows 0.577 it indicates that approximately 58% of the variance in employee silence is explained by work stress. It supports the conclusion that higher employee silence is associated with higher work stress.

Table No. 5.1 Anova for Regression Analysis

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	11.845	1	11.845	113.078	.000
Residual	8.694	83	.105		
Total	20.539	84			

This table shows the overall significance of the regression model. It indicates a strong positive relationship between work stress and employee silence. The F-value (113.078) is comparatively large, and the p-value (Sig. = 0.000) is well below 0.01, indicating that the model is statistically significant.

Table 5.2: Results of Coefficients of Work Stress and Employee Silence

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-.239	.325		-.737	.463
WS	.966	.091	.759	10.634	.000

Dependent Variable: Employee Silence

From the table 6.3, it is found that the $t=10.634$ with a p -value (two-tailed) = 0.000. As the above table showed $p<0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected that work stress doesn't have a significant effect on employee silence among faculties of self-financing colleges. The **unstandardized coefficient (B)** for Work Stress is **0.966**, indicating that for each one-unit increase in work stress, employee silence increases by approximately 0.966 units, holding other factors constant. Therefore, it can be concluded that work stress is a significant predictor of Employee Silence. The predictor equation would be as follows:

$$\text{Employee Silence (ES)} = -0.239 + 0.177 \text{ Work Stress (WS)}$$

Findings:

- ❖ There is statistically significant difference in work stress between male and female faculties of self-financing colleges. Female faculties reports higher work stress than male faculties.
- ❖ Marital status is a significant factor in defining work-stress among self-financing college faculties. Married faculties have higher work stress than single faculties.
- ❖ There is significant difference in work stress among self-financing college faculties based on salary. High work stress can see among faculties having below 15000 salaries.
- ❖ There is significant difference in work stress among self-financing college faculties based on working hours. Faculties working 22-25 hours in a week has high level of work stress.
- ❖ There is no significant difference in level of work stress based on age, experience, educational qualification and NET qualification,
- ❖ The result of regression analysis indicates a strong positive correlation between work stress and employee silence. 58% of the variance in employee silence is explained by work stress.

Suggestions:

- Monthly salary is the most important factor which causes work stress of self-financing college teachers. So, the college management should increase their salary on par with that of government teachers.
- Working hours is an important factor which causes work stress. Teachers working more than nineteen hours in a week are experiencing high level of stress. So the college management should properly distribute working hours among teachers judiciously, so that no one is overloaded, which will make the teachers happy and that will lead to the good of the institution.

- Work stress leads to organizational silence. The management may not put unnecessary restrictions on teachers. They should be allowed free speech and the management may take their suggestions seriously in matters concerning students and education. Putting conditions and targets causes stress to teachers, which may lead to silence and will affect the health of the institution.
- College management may conduct periodic meetings, in which the teachers may be allowed to communicate openly and there should be a system to redress the grievances, if any, of the teachers in a fixed time frame.
- Appreciation of good work will do a wonder. There is a need to appreciate the good work done by teachers. They should be rewarded properly by awards or incentives.
- Counselling by professionals can also be arranged for the teachers for improving the standard of education and also to relieve the work stress.
- Overall it is necessary to create a good working atmosphere, where the teachers do not feel dissatisfied. There should also be proper coordination and cooperation among the teachers and management, which will help the institution to grow efficiently.

CONCLUSION

Work stress is an important factor contributing to organizational silence among self-financing college faculties. The findings indicate that work stress causes employees to remain silent. Employees withhold their opinion because of various reasons, such as fear of losing job, reprisal, etc. However, work stress is an important contributor to this phenomenon. The study reveals that faculties with low level salary experience high level of work stress than that of highly paid teachers. It is also found that faculties having more working hours feel higher work stress than those with less working hours, in their profession. The study also revealed that female faculties have high level of stress than male teachers due to problem of work life balance. In academic parlance, it can be concluded that there is relation between work stress and organizational silence. Stressed faculties express silence at work place and hence their efficiency may decline. It will affect teaching-learning process in educational institutions. So, the college management should take necessary steps to alleviate the problem of work stress among teachers by creating a conducive atmosphere to excel in their profession.

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