

A Study on the Occupational Stress Experienced by Single Parents with Reference to Select Professions

Dr. Sabina Rachel Harold¹ & Katta Kiranmai²

¹Assistant Professor, ²Research Scholar,

^{1,2}Department of Business Management, Mahatma Gandhi University, Nalgonda, Telangana State, India.



DOI: <http://doi.org/10.38177/AJBSR.2023.5101>

Copyright: © 2023 Dr. Sabina Rachel Harold & Katta Kiranmai. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Article Received: 05 December 2022

Article Accepted: 24 January 2023

Article Published: 05 February 2023

ABSTRACT

Over the past 20 years, single-parent families have become even more common than the so-called "nuclear family" consisting of a mother, father, and children. Today we see all sorts of single-parent families: headed by either the mother or the father, raising their children. Individuals of all ages experience stress, but single parents are particularly vulnerable. Single parents often complain that they have too much to do, not enough time, and not enough money to maintain themselves and their families. As a consequence of a life-altering catastrophe, such as death or divorce/separation, single parents confront extra difficulties as they cope with the painful emotions that are often associated with such an occurrence.

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

One of the most challenging aspects of being a single parent is juggling two sets of responsibilities that need equal levels of energy, time, and attention. It is possible to describe a single parent family as a household headed by a single mother or father and their dependent children.

According to the article *The Effects of Stress on Single Parents. (2022, February 21)*, "Whatever the reason for being a single parent, raising children alone comes with its challenges as well as its rewards. Add to that the responsibility of being a working parent, and things can get even more difficult. Work/job and childcaring duties are major stressors for single parents."

As a result of being a single parent, the vast majority of parents report having more responsibilities, facing more financial hardships. Families, particularly those headed by a single parent, feel an increasing amount of strain as they try to strike a balance between their job and family obligations.

A review of existent literature reveals that there is not much research forthcoming regarding the single parents' family households, and their relationship to working environments.

1.1. Need for the Study

There are many studies related to Occupational Stress covering with different areas like theory and practices, Occupational Stress its effects on family environments, its management among different department (Educational, Medical, Financial services and IT services sector) occupational Stress intervention its strategies.

In India there clearly exist a lacuna in research regarding Occupational Stress and Single parenting. Hence the concentration of this study is to understand Occupational Stress in the context of how it varies in different family structures especially Single Parent Households', and how it varies across professions.

Working single parents are prone to suffer from professional stress, driving work-life imbalance. It is necessary to investigate the difficulties of single parents from the standpoint of stress. Specifically, this research will look to investigate and assess the level of occupational stress experienced by working single parents'.

Studies regarding occupational stress indicate that the stress that working individuals face are related to the following factors: work/job stress, organisational stress, family stress and personal stress.

An assessment of stress factors: work/job related stress, organisational related stress, family related stress and personal related stress is undertaken, and tested for if there is a significance difference in the stress levels faced by the single parent household working across the four major select professions: educational, medical, financial and IT sectors. Studying the factors that cause stress can help alleviate the problems faced by single parent households.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Upasna Sharma (2012): Studying the stress that single parents and parents in Lucknow feel is the primary goal of this study. To find out how different areas deal with stress, researchers utilised a questionnaire to gauge the level of stress experienced by single parents and by families with children who have both parents at home. There was no statistically significant difference in stress levels between parents and carers, according to the study's findings.

Glendinning, Emma (2015): Single parents in Singapore experience a lot of stress, according to the author. The findings of this research shed light on the unique difficulties faced by families with a single parent. As well as being sole caregivers for their children, single parents are often also the primary breadwinners for their families. They have to cope with time limits, money constraints, and their personal assumption of what they should be able to offer for their kids while balancing their other responsibilities.

Dries Van Gasse (2020): The goal of this study is to find out what single parents think about juggling a career and raising a family in a challenging work-life balance. According to the author's research, single parents' experiences with work-life balance are shaped by the degree of wiggle room they have in their parenting philosophy and/or the demands of their jobs. Governments, companies, and practitioners should concentrate on policies that enhance the work-life balance of single parents by reducing financial and role constraints, according to these results.

Bhatnagar & Bansal (2013): Financial crunch and load of dual responsibilities are the two main problems faced by single parents whereas for children, need fulfilment is the main problem.

Craig (2004): Households provide their members with both financial support and caring services. In sole parent households, the vast majority of which are headed by women, the functions of earning money and caring for children fall to one individual.

Sidey (2015): Single parent is often marked by challenges that include adopting sole responsibility for the child's education and care, alongside employment commitments, and the difficulties of reconciling work and family life. Moreover, despite comparatively high employment rates, single parents and their children are greatly affected by poverty. Single parenthood produces a repeated nature in which the families have a hard time removing themselves from the 32 patterns and problems of this cycle. This is due in large part to the financial issues that a family will face due to the divorce or loss of spouse. These financial issues affect not only the parent that is raising children alone, but it also affects the children who are living in one parent family.

Mathews (2013): Most of the single parents received support from their own parents and family members in comparison to their parenting. Regarding availability of material resources, single parents perceived their living

conditions and facilities to be very poor. Similar problems related to their resources were also faced by the Indian mothers who lived in Singapore.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Objectives of the study

1. To study the occupational stress levels experienced by single parent households' working in organisations across the four major professional sectors.
2. To study if there is significant difference in the occupational stress levels that single parent households' experience across the four major professional sectors.

Occupational stress is measured from the perspective of four sub factors: Work/Job stress, Organizational stress, Family stress and Personal stress.

3.2. Hypothesis of the Study

Based on the research objectives the following hypothesis has been formulated:

H0a: There is a no significant difference in the work stress that single parent household experienced across the four major professional sectors.

H0b: There is a no significant difference in the organizational stress that single parent household experienced across the four major professional sectors.

H0c: There is a no significant difference in the family stress that single parent household experienced across the four major professional sectors.

H0d: There is a no significant difference in the personal stress that single parent household experienced across the four major professional sectors.

3.3. Research Approach

The research follows the empirical approach. The study utilised the approach to understand the occupational stress levels experience by single parent households in organisations across the four major professional sectors.

3.4. Sampling Method

The present study has considered the convenient sampling method, collecting data from working single parents in four different sectors.

3.5. Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire was used to draw data from the respondents. 5-point likert scale was used to measure each sub factor of occupational stress across the four professions. 5-point likert scale was abbreviated as follows: **No Stress, Very Low Stress, Low Stress, High Stress** and **Very High Stress** represent as: N S, V L S, L S, H S, V H S.

- 1) Work/job stress – 18 number of items/factors used to measure.

- 2) Organizational stress – 6 number of items/factors used to measure.
- 3) Family stress - 9 number of items/factors used to measure.
- 4) Personal stress – 8 number of items/factors used to measure.

3.6. Sampling

For the purpose of the study the questionnaires were distributed sector wise in many organizations located across Hyderabad, Khammam, Nalgonda, Suryapet and Yadadri districts of Telangana State. The study adopted the snowball sampling method to distribute the questionnaire and collected the responses from them.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Based on the objectives of the studies the following data analysis is conducted using the ANOVA test, the data was analysed using SPSS (v28).

Single parent household respondents are: 425

Profession/Sector wise Sample Size

Professions	Frequency	Percent
Educational Sector	173	40.7
Hospital/Medical Sector	59	13.9
Financial Sector	73	17.2
Information Technology Sector	120	28.2
Total	425	100

Analysis of Objective 1

To study the occupational stress levels experienced by single parent households' working in organisations across the four major professional sectors.

Occupational stress levels experienced by single parent households measured on four sub factors work stress, organisational stress, family stress and personal stress is represented in table below using percentage.

Occupational Stress Levels Experienced by Single Parent Households

Working Department	Work Stress					Total
	N S	V L S	L S	H S	V H S	
Educational	5.90%	10.10%	7.50%	10.40%	6.80%	40.70%
Medical	0.50%	0.90%	3.80%	6.40%	2.40%	13.90%
Financial	1.90%	1.90%	3.80%	7.50%	2.10%	17.20%

IT	4.20%	4.20%	5.40%	11.10%	3.30%	28.20%
Total	12.50%	17.20%	20.50%	35.30%	14.60%	100.00%
Working Department	Organisational Stress					Total
Educational	4.90%	11.80%	7.30%	8.00%	8.70%	40.70%
Medical	3.30%	1.20%	3.10%	4.70%	1.60%	13.90%
Financial	2.60%	3.30%	2.80%	7.10%	1.40%	17.20%
IT	4.90%	6.40%	4.90%	7.30%	4.70%	28.20%
Total	15.80%	22.60%	18.10%	27.10%	16.50%	100.00%
Working Department	Family Stress					Total
Educational	6.40%	12.70%	7.80%	9.20%	4.70%	40.70%
Medical	1.20%	2.40%	2.40%	4.50%	3.50%	13.90%
Financial	0.90%	3.10%	3.30%	6.10%	3.80%	17.20%
IT	4.70%	6.10%	4.50%	7.50%	5.40%	28.20%
Total	13.20%	24.20%	17.90%	27.30%	17.40%	100.00%
Working Department	Personal Stress					Total
Educational	9.90%	8.50%	8.00%	10.10%	4.20%	40.70%
Medical	3.30%	2.40%	1.60%	4.50%	2.10%	13.90%
Financial	3.10%	4.90%	1.90%	5.60%	1.60%	17.20%
IT	7.10%	5.60%	4.20%	8.20%	3.10%	28.20%
Total	23.30%	21.40%	15.80%	28.50%	11.10%	100.00%

Inference

The tabulated result indicates that the IT sector single parent households face more work-related stress than other professions of single parents. The educational sector single parent households face more organisational-related stress than other professions. The educational sector single parent households face more family-related stress than other professions. The educational sector single parent households face more personal-related stress than other professions.

Analysis of objective 2

To study if there is significant difference in the occupational stress levels that single parent households' experience across the four major professional sectors.

Hypothesis Testing:

4.1. H0a: There is a no significant difference in the work/job stress that single parent household experienced across the four major professional sectors

ANOVA – Work Stress

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	17.948	3	5.983	3.912	.009
Within Groups	643.817	421	1.529		
Total	661.765	424			

Conclusion: P value tabulated $(_{0.05})$ sig. value is 0.009 which is lesser than 0.05, hence the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis accepted. Concluding, there is difference in the work/job stress of single parent household across the professions.

Since the ANOVA indicates significant difference in the work stress among the various occupational professions/sectors. The Tukey HSD test is used for multiple comparisons among the occupational professions/sectors.

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Family Stress

Tukey HSD

(I) Which department are you working	(J) Which department are you working	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Educational Sector	Medical Sector	-.609*	.186	.006	-1.09	-.13
	Financial Sector	-.304	.173	.293	-.75	.14
	IT Sector	-.123	.147	.837	-.50	.26
Medical Sector	Educational Sector	.609*	.186	.006	.13	1.09
	Financial Sector	.305	.216	.495	-.25	.86
	IT Sector	.486	.197	.066	-.02	.99
Financial Sector	Educational Sector	.304	.173	.293	-.14	.75
	Medical Sector	-.305	.216	.495	-.86	.25
	IT Sector	.181	.184	.757	-.29	.65
IT Sector	Educational Sector	.123	.147	.837	-.26	.50
	Medical Sector	-.486	.197	.066	-.99	.02
	Financial Sector	-.181	.184	.757	-.65	.29

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Based on the Tukey HSD test results, which compare multiple samples the following, can be inferred.

Inference: On the whole comparing the work-related stress across the four occupational sectors, there is a difference in the work-related stress between educational sector and medial sector.

4.2. H0b: There is a no significant difference in the organizational stress that single parent household experience across the four major professional sectors

ANOVA - Organizational Stress

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.553	3	.184	.102	.959
Within Groups	756.977	421	1.798		
Total	757.529	424			

Conclusion: P value (0.05): tabulated sig. value is .959 is greater than 0.05, null hypothesis accepted and alternative hypothesis rejected. Hence there is no difference at the organisational stress of single parent household across the profession: educational, medical, financial and IT. The single parent households' experience the same level of organizational stress across the four professions.

4.3. H0c: There is a no significant difference in the family stress that single parent household experienced across the four major professional sectors

ANOVA - Family Stress

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	33.420	3	11.140	6.700	.000
Within Groups	699.931	421	1.663		
Total	733.351	424			

Conclusion: P value (0.05) tabulated sig. value is 0.000 which is lesser than 0.05, hence the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis accepted. Concluding, there is a difference in the family stress that single parent household experience across the professions: educational, medical, financial and IT, the population means are not equal in these professions.

Since the ANOVA indicates significant difference among the various occupational professions/sectors. The Tukey HSD test is used for multiple comparisons among the occupational professions/sectors.

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Family Stress

Tukey HSD

(I) Which department are you working	(J) Which department are you working	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Educational Sector	Medical Sector	-.659*	.194	.004	-1.16	-.16
	Financial Sector	-.674*	.180	.001	-1.14	-.21
	IT Sector	-.268	.153	.301	-.66	.13
Medical Sector	Educational Sector	.659*	.194	.004	.16	1.16
	Financial Sector	-.015	.226	1.000	-.60	.57
	IT Sector	.392	.205	.225	-.14	.92
Financial Sector	Educational Sector	.674*	.180	.001	.21	1.14
	Medical Sector	.015	.226	1.000	-.57	.60
	IT Sector	.407	.191	.147	-.09	.90
IT Sector	Educational Sector	.268	.153	.301	-.13	.66
	Medical Sector	-.392	.205	.225	-.92	.14
	Financial Sector	-.407	.191	.147	-.90	.09

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Based on the Tukey HSD test results, which compare multiple samples the following, can be inferred.

Inference: Comparing the family-related stress across the four occupational there is a difference in the family-related stress between educational sector and medial sector and there is a difference in the family-related stress between educational sector and financial sector also.

4.4. H0d: There is a no significant difference in the personal stress that single parent households' experience across the four major professional sectors

ANOVA - Personal Stress

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.367	3	.789	.425	.735
Within Groups	780.748	421	1.855		
Total	783.115	424			

Conclusion: P value $(_{0.05})$ tabulated sig. value is .735 which is greater than 0.05, so the null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected. Hence there is no difference in the personal stress of single parent households across the professions: educational, medical, financial and IT. Across the four professions the personal stress that single parent households' experience is the same.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS OF THE STUDY

The research paper examines the difference in the occupational stress levels experienced by single parent households. The occupational stress is a manifestation of the stress caused by sub factors work stress, organizational stress, family stress and personal stress.

The ANOVA test has been used to statistically test the difference between samples. The test results indicate the following:

Work related stress across occupational professions

Across professions with respect to the factor work related stress there is a significant difference among the samples i.e., professions. This indicates that work stress varies and it in all probability matches the work demands and pressures of corresponding profession. The work-related stress is the highest in IT sector and comparing the work-related stress across the four professions there is significant difference between educational sector and medical sector.

Organizational related stress across occupational professions

Across professions with respect to organization related stress there is no difference, which indicates across all professions the contribution of organizational stress to occupational stress is not much different based on professions. The respondents of the educational sector experience the highest level of organisation related stress.

Family related stress across occupational professions

Across professions with respect to family related stress there is a significant difference, which reiterates the fact that family situation contributes to occupational stress and measures that alleviate the situation faced by single parents shared be devised.

Personal related stress across occupational professions

Across professions with respect to personal stress there is no difference, which indicates across all professions an individual's personal situation is similar in each professional sector.

This study has helped to understand the occupational stress experienced by single parent households across four major professions. The study will help the single parent households to cope with the occupational stress they have been experiencing, an understanding of the differences in the stress levels across different the professions will help devise better coping mechanisms. It will help in balancing their personal and professional life leading to better productivity and above all take good care of their children.

Declarations

Source of Funding

This research work did not receive any grant from funding agencies in the public or not-for-profit sectors.

Competing Interests Statement

The authors declare no competing financial, professional, or personal interests.

Consent for publication

The authors declare that they consented to the publication of this research work.

Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to research and paper drafting.

Reference

- [1] Bhatnagar, N., & Bansal, I. (2013). Single parent families: Problems of parents and children- A multilevel analysis of role of human and material resources. (Doctoral thesis, University of Banasthali Vidyapith, Rajasthan, India). Retrieved June 20, 2017, from <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/142723/>.
- [2] Craig, L. (2004). Time to care: A comparison of how couple and sole parent households allocate time to work and children. Social Policy Research Centre, 1-133. Retrieved March 8, 2017, from <http://unsworks.unsw.edu.au/fapi/datastream/unsworks:1954/Source01?view=true/>.
- [3] Dries Van Gasse (2020). Single Mothers' Perspectives on the Combination of Motherhood and Work, 9(5): 85, Journal of Arts, Science and Commerce.
- [4] Glendinning, Emma (2015). Single-Parent Families in Singapore: Understanding the Challenges of Finances, Housing and Time Poverty, Pp 1-34. Lien Centre for Social Innovation: Research.
- [5] Mathews, M. (2013). Working with low-income Indian single mothers. Singapore: Singapore Indian Development Association. Retrieved from https://issuu.com/mysinda/docs/proj_athena_handbook.
- [6] Sidey, D. (2015). The economic and financial effect of single parent homes. Published thesis of School of Business, University of Liberty. Retrieved March 20, 2017, from <http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/honors/512/>.
- [7] The Effects of Stress on Single Parents' Work Life Balance. (2022). Edubirdie. Retrieved December 12, 2022, from <https://edubirdie.com/examples/the-effects-of-stress-on-single-parents-work-life-balance/>.
- [8] Upasna Sharma (2012). A study about stress among single parent and parenthood in Lucknow city, Thesis, [https:// www.researchgate.net/publication/272624024](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/272624024).