



# What Factors Affect Job Stress in Apparel Industry? (An evidence from Sri Lanka)

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**Abstract:** This study examined the factors affecting to the job stress among the employees in Apparel industry in Sri Lanka by selecting 100 production level employees in four selected Apparel factories in Kurunagala District by using stratified sampling employing a self-completion questionnaire. The study assessed five variables as factors unique to the job, Organizational structure, Relationships at work, Career development, Role in the organization along with the job stress by employing five point Likert scale. Data analysis was performed by using descriptive statistics, ANOVA, correlation and regression analysis by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 21.0 version. According to the findings, the correlation analysis between the job stress and independent variables were significant at 0.05 level of significance which specify positively influences on job stress. The finding of the regression analysis revealed that only factors unique to the job, barriers to career development and role in the organization have a positive and significant effect on job stress at a 0.05 level of significance with an adjusted R square value of 0.464. Thus, the study highlights the need for developing a sound stress controlling mechanism among the employees by focusing on factors unique to the job, barriers to career development and role in the organization among the production level employees in apparel industry in Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** Apparel Industry; Job Stress; Factors affecting to Stress, Production Level Employees.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Employees' stress act as one of the main issue in the modern business world as the occupational stress affects the employees' productivity, performance and ultimately the performance of the organization as well (Arnold, 2010). Stress can be defined as an adaptive response to any external situation that may result in psychological, physical and behavioural deviation for organizational participants (Luthans et al, 2015). Moreover, job stress is a harmful physical and

emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker (Braaten, 2000).

When considering the issue of job stress in the Sri Lankan context, the apparel industry act as a main contributor of the Sri Lankan economy that records a high level of stress related issues regarding work practices and the working environment among employees (Fonseka, 2006; Fernando et al, 2010). As job stress among employees cause huge cost to the corporations all around the world (Vogel, 2006), in order to maintain and retain a workforce characterized by good physical, psychological, and mental health it is important to understand the factors that affect for these physical, psychological, and mental health among the employees.

Even though there are many factors contribute to stress as duties, responsibilities, work load, role conflict and role ambiguity (Cooper and Cartwright, 1994, McVicar, 2003, Michie and Williams, 2003, Colligan and Higgins, 2006) in the Sri Lankan context still there is an unsolved question regarding the factors which affect for occupational stress among the employees in the apparel industry. Accordingly in order to fill the research gap, the main objective of the research was backed by several sub objectives. The main objective of the study was to identify the factors affecting to the job stress among the production level employees in Apparel industry in Sri Lanka where the sub objectives of the study was to,

- Identify the level of job stress among the production level employees in Apparel industry in Sri Lanka
- Identifying the most influencing factors affecting to the job stress among the apparel industry.

Accordingly, this study intended to examine the factors affecting to the job stress among the employees in Apparel industry in Sri Lanka in order to address the question of “What factors affect to the job stress among the production level employees in Apparel industry in Sri Lanka?” base on the main objective of establishing an effective mechanism for controlling the stress among the employees.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Stress can be considered as a universal phenomenon and as a as the main threat of health (Kinman & Jones, 2005). There is no universally accepted definition for defining the concept of stress and as a result many scholars have given many definitions all around the world. According to Silverman, et al. (2010), stress is a bodily reaction to a change which needs response, regulation, and/or physical, psychological, and or emotional adaptation. Stress could derive from any situation, condition, thought, and/or state; just need to cause frustration, anger, nervousness, and or anxiety. As per the World Health Organization's (WHO) definition, occupational or work-related stress is the reaction of people may have when dealing with work demands and pressures that are not combined with their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their capability to handle.

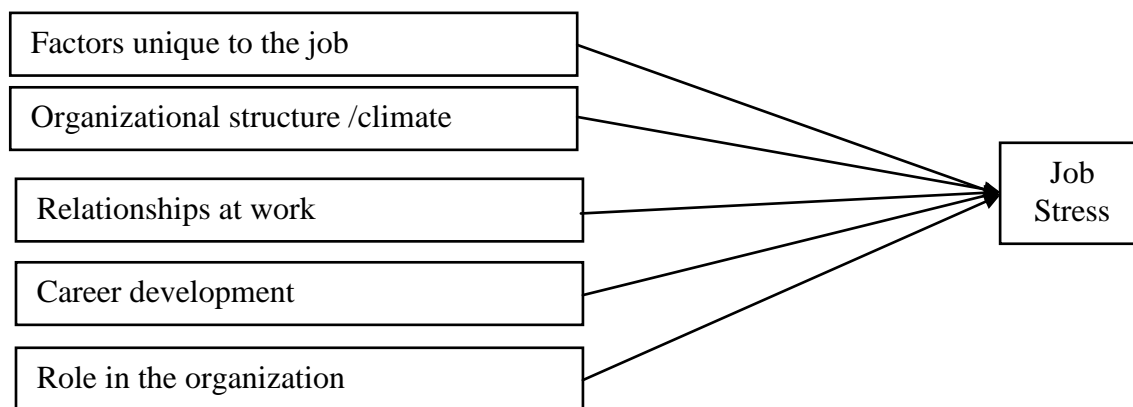
Further, Falsetti et al., (2005) has been defined the stress as any unkind emotional experience which is accompanied with predictable biochemical, physiological, and behavioral changes. Literature clearly shows that professional pressure exerts influence over physical and mental health (Schirmer & Lopez, 2001). Occupational stress is an increasingly important professional health problem. However, it appears to be an environmental nuisance that can affect the person's well-being and productivity (Jayashree, 2010). Adverse effects from occupational stress less performance or a reducing productivity, reducing customer service level, absence, incidental behavior, accidents, alcohol and drug use and targets (Cook & Mitchell, 2013). In addition, it leads to a health problem, such as heart attacks, Migraine, blood pressure, headache, etc. Various studies have been shown employees who suffer from stress are less likely to exhibit less accidents comforts and actions with colleagues and high officials (Cranwell and Abbey, 2005).

When reviewing the empirical literature it is quite evident that the job stress is a common health issue among the employees irrespective of the industry they are encountered in (Paul Majumder, 2003; Nigam et al., 2007). According to a study conducted in Paul Majumder (2003) on physical and mental health status of garment workers and how problem affect labor productivity, competitiveness of the garment industry in the world market and the working life of the workers, particularly of female workers have found that various illnesses and diseases were highly prevalent amongst the garment workers that highlight the large number of labours were still continue their work even they were distressed from various diseases and illnesses. Moreover, according to study workload, role conflict, and inadequate monetary reward are recognized as the main factors of causing stress in employees that leads to reduced employee efficiency (Usman Ali et al., 2014).

### 3. HYPOTHESIS AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Based on prior research and on theoretical reasoning, this study developed following conceptual framework and hypothesis as follows.

Figure 1 : Conceptual Framework



- H<sub>1</sub>: The factors unique to the job have significant effect on job stress among production level employees in Apparel companies in Kurunegala District.
- H<sub>2</sub>: The Organizational structure /climate have significant effect on job stress among production level employees in Apparel companies in Kurunegala District.
- H<sub>3</sub>: The Relationships at work have significant effect on job stress among production level employees in Apparel companies in Kurunegala District.
- H<sub>4</sub>: The Career development has significant effect on job stress among production level employees in Apparel companies in Kurunegala District.
- H<sub>5</sub>: The Role in the organization has significant effect on job stress among production level employees in Apparel companies in Kurunegala District.

### 4. METHODOLOGY

The study is pronounced to be a quantitative deductive one which is complemented by explanatory research strategy. Accordingly, a cross-sectional design was used with self-administered questionnaires to examine the relationship between the study variables by collecting data from 100 production level employees in four selected Apparel companies in Kurunagala District in Sri Lanka. The study was conducted among the production level employees in Sri Lanka by considering the unit of analysis as individual level. The job stress scale developed by Parker and Decotiis (1983) was

used to measure the job stress. It consisted with 13 items with five Likert – type scale 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to measure the job stress along with two dimensions as time stress and anxiety. Moreover, as the independent variables the five stressors of workplace stress introduced by Cooper and Marshall’s in 1976 as factors unique to the job, role in the organization, career development, interpersonal work relationships and organizational structure/climate was used as the factors of job stress. Data analysis was performed by using Descriptive statistics, ANOVA, correlation and regression analysis by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 21.0 version.

## 5. RESULTS

The sample of the study was consisted with 100 production level employees in four selected Apparel companies in Kurunagala District in Sri Lanka. Vast majority of employees represent (58%) female employees while 42% of employees were male. Moreover 63 of employees were belong to the age group of 20 to 29 years. When considering the education background most of the employees (66%) were completed the G.C.E Ordinary Level and most of the employees (51%) were arrived.

### 5.1 Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis

Descriptive statistics of the study variables are presented in Tables 1 where all the variables selected (Factors unique to the job, Organizational structure, Relationships at work, Career development, Role in the organization and Job Stress) were well above the average (average = 3) on the 1 to 5 scale.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	SD
Factors unique to the job	3.5540	.44025
Organizational structure	3.5620	.58167
Relationships at work	3.5840	.57044
Barriers to Career development	3.3380	.72957
Role in the organization	3.6650	.46752
Job Stress	3.1973	.45152

Moreover, the correlation analysis presented in Table 2, reveals that factors unique to the job ( $r = 0.264$ ), Organizational structure ( $r = 0.307$ ), Relationships at work ( $r = 0.497$ ), Career development ( $r = - 0.411$ ) and Role in the organization ( $r = 0.614$ ) were positively correlated with the job stress among production level employees in Apparel companies in Kurunegala District.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

	Factors unique to the job	Organizational structure climate	Relationships at work	Career Dev.	Role in the organization
Factors unique to the job	1.00				
Organizational structure	.435**	1.00			
Relationships at work	.335*	.524**	1.00		
Career develop:	.246*	.718**	.535**	1.00	
Role in the organization	.202*	.250*	.476**	.247*	1.00
Job Stress	.264**	.307**	.497**	-.411**	.614**

Correlation significant at  $p < .05$ \*\*

Correlation significant at  $p < .01$ \*

### 5.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

The multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis, presented in Table 3. According to the regression analysis all the variables of the model (Factors unique to the job, Organizational structure, Relationships at work, Barriers to Career development and Role in the organization) explained 46 % variation of job stress.

Moreover, the results reveal that only factors unique to the job ( $\beta = .167$ ,  $p < .05$ ), career development ( $\beta = -.166$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and role in the organization ( $\beta = .442$ ,  $p < .05$ ) have significant effect on job stress where other variables found to be insignificant.

Table 3: Regression Analysis

**R square = 0.491**  
**Adj. R square = 0.464**  
**Sig F = 0.000**

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(constant)	.170	.389		.436	.664
Factors unique to the job	.167	.079	.162	2.121	.037
Organizational structure climate	.048	.086	.062	.558	.578
Relationships at work	.120	.078	.152	1.540	.127
Career development	-.166	.068	-.268	-2.441	.017
Role in the organization	.442	.082	.458	5.383	.000

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study intended to identify the factors affecting to the job stress among the employees in Apparel industry in Sri Lanka by selecting 100 production level employees in four selected apparel factories in Kurunegala District. According the model it was evident that only factors unique to the job, career development and role in the organization have significant effect on job stress. Therefore, this study highlights the need for developing a better stress controlling mechanism among the employees by focusing on effective work assignments and shifting hours, designing friendly and flexible working environment, establishing the clarity regarding the duties and responsibilities, avoid



conflicting commands, job security and establishing a path to career development opportunities. The study was based on several limitations. Firstly, the study was limited to collect data from Kurunegala District, only one geographical region. Moreover, the sample consisted with 100 employees, a limited sample. And also it was focused only on production level employees in Apparel companies in Kurunegala District. For future research considerations it is recommended to investigate the impact of occupational stress on work place conflicts, grievances, productivity and the employee performance.

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