Organisational Strategies for Mitigation and Management of Stress of Women Garment Workers in Bangalore

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Research Scholar - University of Mysore, B. N. Bahadur Institute of Management Sciences,

University of Mysore, Manasagangotri, Mysore - 570006. Karnataka, India.

** Prof. Aisha M Sheriff., MBA, Ph.D., Miste.,

Senior Professor (Retd.) - B.N. Bahadur Institute of Management Sciences,

University of Mysore, Manasagangotri, Mysore - 570006. Karnataka, India.

Abstract

The garment industry is a large economic activity in the Indian economy and Bangalore can be termed as one of the garment industries with major workforce being women. Despite the numerous employment opportunities, the sector has to offer, the high workloads, long working hours, low welfare support and high production pressures are typical of the sector which shapes high organizational pressures among the workers. The paper will discuss the implications of organizational stress management amongst women garment workers in Bangalore. We adopted a descriptive research design and survey 100 women who work in various functional capacities using a structured questionnaire. The tool consisted of questions related to demographic, work-related, organizational stress management practices and organizational stress levels that included workload, work conditions, pay and benefits, organizational support, work life balance, job insecurity and work supervisor relationship.

Data analysis involved descriptive statistics and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to find the correlation between mitigation strategies and stress in organizations. Root Mean Square Error of Approximation RMSEA and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual SRMR model fit indices indicated an excellent model fit. The findings demonstrate that low stress levels are also linked to an excellent mitigation and management strategies within organizations. They were identified as organizational variables and found to play a significant role in stress reduction: they were structured training program, grievance redressal, supportive supervision and participatory communications. These results highlight the importance of shifting towards a paradigm of applying personal coping responses to institutionalized stress response strategies.

The study contributes to the research literature by combining organizational strategies systematically in an analytical approach and giving managerial recommendations to factories, policy makers, and labour welfare authorities. It shows the importance of gender sensitive workplace responses in order to enhance the well-being, job satisfaction, and sustain the productivity of the workforce in the garment industry.

Keywords - *Organizational Stress, Mitigation Strategies, Garment Workers in Bangalore, Women Workforce and Structural Equation Modelling.*

1   Introduction

The garment industry plays a significant role in the Indian economy whereby the nation contributes significantly in employment and exports. It also coincidentally happens to be one of the largest employers of women particularly in cities and urban fringe such as Bangalore which is the garment capital of India. The garment industry alone is estimated to have 1200 garment factories in Bangalore alone, employing over five lakh workers, of which over 80 per cent are women (Begum & Asha, 2019). These women belong mainly to small earner families who have various working situations such as stitching, cutting, pressing, and packing. Even though the industry is providing people with a livelihood, it is also characterized by heavy workload, work hours, low wages, and few welfare services which makes it a high-stress working environment (Sharma and Srivastava, 2022).

Stress at the work place has risen to high priority concern in the garment industry not just to the well-being of employees but also the effectiveness of the organization. A South Asian literature review highlights monotony of work, unrealistic

production targets, and inadequate facilities and inadequate supervisory relationships as stressors among garment workers, leading to psychological stress and physical health problems (Yuan et al., 2022; Jayaratne, 2019).

In Bangladesh, too, approximately 68 per cent of garment workers reported moderate to severe levels of stress, and excessive workloads and poor working conditions continued to make them in high demand (Rahman, 2023). Similarly, the problem of organizational stress has also affected job satisfaction and overall increased turnover levels among the employees of the apparel factory in Sri Lanka (Rajapakse et al., 2023).

Garment workers in the Indian context particularly in Bangalore must work 9-10 hours plus overtime and cannot work flexibly. As Sharma and Srivastava (2022) determined, the most significant sources of stress among garment worker women are the work conditions, pay and benefits, workload, and boss-subordinate relationships. However, despite the similarity of stress, few formal management steps are being implemented or applied, such as training interventions, guidance, or redressal grievance mechanisms (Santhose et al., n.d.). Rather than institutional support structures, peer support (personal support or resilience) is the main support that many workers receive (usually emotional) (Begum & Asha, 2019).

1.1 Problem Statement

Although a lot is known regarding occupational stresses in garment industry, very little is known regarding how organizational management mechanisms can be designed to reduce organizational stress among working women in Bangalore in particular. Most of the current literature is focused on identifying stressors or individual coping strategies, rather than outcomes of organizational interventions. In addition, the majority of the women working in this business are women, whereas the research on gender in organizations is still not ample. The distance is necessary because the socio-economic and culture of women in the garment industry define the degree of stress and the ability of employees to use support services (Sharma and Srivastava, 2022).

The absence of effective organizational strategies not only influences the health and well-being of workers, but also productivity, absenteeism and workforce retention. Stress can result in burnout, decreased job satisfaction and lower attrition, which ultimately affects the competitiveness of the industry. As the garment industry expands and faces competition internationally, it is important to study and react to organizational stress through the application of proper management techniques as a sustainable way of managing workforce.

1.2 Rationale for the Study

It is on this basis that the present research is targeted at analysing the impact of Organizational management intervention on organizational stress among women working in garment industries in Bangalore. The study will help close the existing research gap by providing evidence-based information that will guide policy and workplace intervention using a systematic modelling process. It emphasizes how personal coping mechanisms will be forced to yield to systematic, organisation-based approaches that can transform work environments into safer, supportive and stress resistant ones.

2 Review of Literature

- **Nisar (2025),** the interactive wearable therapy was investigated as a stress intervention via design based-research method.
  Findings are: These findings suggested that wearable technology can possibly grant the user control over their anxiety and stress, demonstrating the innovative potentials of workplace well-being programs in the garment industry.

- **Santhose, Sudha, and Kumar (2024),** have studied the stress management of textile workers in Coimbatore using a descriptive research design and structured questionnaires.
  Findings are: The findings revealed how employee welfare could be improved by regularly counselling employees, a supervisor support system, grievance redressal system and stress conscious program to reduce stress at the shop floor level.

- **Hasnat (2024),** reviewed a quantitative study to investigate the impacting variables on occupational stress among sewing machines operators.

Findings are: The findings showed that work intensity, the nature of supervision, and monotonous work were important stressors, and that ergonomic intervention, as well as practices of supportive management were core elements of improving the mental health of employees.

- **Rahman (2023),** conducted a quantitative survey study in which he examined work-related stress among garment workers in Bangladesh.
  Findings are: These findings implied that job insecurity, poor working conditions, and organizational support are some of the determinants of stress and influence job satisfaction and worker morale negatively.

- **Sharma and Srivastava (2022),** Through exploratory and confirmation factor analysis, the authors created and validated a scale to measure stress in organizations in female employees working in the garment industry.
  Findings are: The findings indicated that the organizational stress was multidimensional and consisted of the following elements: workload, role conflict, physical working conditions, and interpersonal relationships. It was found that the scale was valid and suitable in situations of the study of garment sector.

- **Yuan et al. (2022),** conducted an empirical study of occupational stress and health risk among the workers in the garment industry in Bangladesh using structured questionnaires and statistical analysis.
  Findings are: As it was discovered, biologically and psychologically, there are immense health impacts of long-term exposures to occupational stressors hence the urgency to avert occupational health by way of preventive policies.

- **Suresh and et al., (2020),** conducted a case study and quantitative research to assess how many employees in the apparel industry were stressed.
  Findings are: The findings showed that monotonous job, targets, and the absence of control led to the elevation of stress among the working staff more than administrative employees and thus, the stresses are supposed to be handled differently.

- **Jayaratne (2019),** conducted a mixed-method study, including a survey and interviews, regarding the reasons of stress among the workers in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka, effects and possible solutions to the problem.
  Findings are: It was discovered that the major causes of stress included too much workload, poor communication, poor management practices and worker involvement. Stress reduction was achieved through intervention in the organization such as improved managerial communication and work redistribution.

- **Begum and Asha (2019),** examined the coping strategies of women working in garment factory in Bangalore by descriptive survey.
  Findings are: The findings showed that staff members were more likely to apply emotional and social coping strategies through peer support, informal support group and self-resilience rather than formal organizational procedures.

2.1 Research Gap

Although several studies have been conducted in the textile sector on occupational stress and coping strategies, most have focused on identifying the stressors or personal coping mechanisms, nothing much has been done to address the intervention at the organizational level. Research is lacking to investigate the causal relationship between organization strategies on one hand and organizational stress on the other with the application of structured models within Indian context. Research studies on women garment workers are few in Bangalore but their contribution to the labour force is enormous. In addition, the literature at hand is descriptive or cross-sectional and there is a gap in knowledge regarding the impact of systematic organization plans on the positive effect of organizational stress among this population.

2.2 Research Objectives

- To evaluate the extent of organizational management strategies adopted by garment factories to address workplace stress.
- To analyse the relationship between organizational strategies and organizational stress among women garment workers using a structural equation modeling approach.

- To identify key organizational factors that influence stress levels and provide suggestions for effective stress management practices in the garment sector.

3   Research Methods

3.1   Research Strategy

The research design involved a descriptive research design to examine the impacts of organizational management measures on stress in the organization of the women garment workers in Bangalore. The objective of the study was to obtain information on present day stressors in workplace, intensity of stress management programs developed by the employers and their impact on the perceived stress levels among the employees.

3.2   Sample Design

The sample population was that of women employed in various clothing factories in Bangalore city. Purposive sampling was used to select a sample of 100 respondent women among the various functional operational departments that incorporated tailoring, packing, cutting and timekeeping. This method was useful in excluding those respondents who lacked relevant work experience, and those with no exposure to organizational practices.

3.3   Questionnaire Development

A questionnaire was developed to capture primary data in a systematic manner. It was subdivided into three parts (A) Demographic profile - age, education, marital status, annual income and family structure (B) Work related information - job position, experience, working hours, overtime and shift system (C) information about factory - type of garments, size of factory and channels of sale. The second section also included standardized scales which measured Organization Management Strategies (9 items), and Organizational Stress (7 factors: job insecurity, workload, organizational support, work conditions, pay and benefits, work life balance, and boss-subordinate relations). Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) through to 5 (strongly agree).

3.4   Plan of Analysis

Data were analysed by using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic variables and major constructs. Hypothesis and test on structural relationships among organization strategies and organizational stress were conducted using SEM. Model fit indices, i.e., 2df, CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR, were used to evaluate adequacy of the model. The quantitative method was objective and gave an overall view of the relationship between organization interventions and work stress.

It is an organized method that provided an effective empirical ground on organizational measures on stress applied in the garment industry.

4   Results and Discussion

4.1   Demographic Profile of The Respondents

The sample included 100 women working in garment industries across Bangalore. The majority of participants fell within the age range of 25-35 years (58%), under 25 (22%) and over 35 (20%). Educationally, 34% were of basic school with 28% having completed SSLC, 16% illiterate, and 22% PUC or higher. There were 72 percent married women, of whom 48 percent had 1 to 2 children. There were 68% nuclear families with an average of 2 earning individuals in 62% of the households. 84% were employed in operational positions, predominantly tailors and packing personnel, of which 46% had less than 5 years of experience, and 52% worked 9-10 hours per day, with 41% doing overtime on alternate days. 66% were employed in factories aged 5-15 years, mostly making ladies garments (59%), selling in retail units (63%).

4.2   Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Management Strategies and Organization Stress

Descriptive statistics showed that organizational management strategies had a mean of 3.84 (SD = 0.62), which means that there was a moderate to high level of implementation among the surveyed garment units. Of all the nine items, training, grievance handling, and support system strategies had the highest mean values (more than 4.0) whereas the communication-based measures were comparatively low. The mean organizational stress was 3.26 (SD = 0.71) with the result indicating

moderate stress among employees. The dimensions of workload (M = 3.98) and work conditions (M = 4.12) were found to be more stressed whereas organisational support and boss-subordinate relations were lower in terms of mean stress scores.

4.3   Testing of Hypothesis

H1- Organization stress is significantly reduced by organizational management strategies adopted by garment industries in Bangalore.

Model Fit Statistics

The hypothesis structural equation model shows excellent fit to data gathered on garment workers in Bangalore. Chi-square ($\chi 2$) = 160.42, chi-square degrees of freedom = 103, and the p-value = 0.000, which is expected at large samples. Notably, the ratio of x 2/df = 1.56, which is significantly less than the acceptable level at 3.0, shows that the given model is parsimonious and only slightly different between the actual and estimated covariance matrices. Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is 0.963 and Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) is 0.951, which is above the recommended lower value of 0.90 and all too close to the ideal value of 0.95 (Hu and Bentler, 1999).

The following indices may indicate that the hypothesized model fits the data much better than an independent model with no relationships between variables. Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) equals 0.045, the 90% confidence interval lies between 0.036 and 0.053, and the p-close value is 0.152, which means that one cannot reject the hypothesis of close fit. The SRMR value of 0.037 is lower than the 0.08 threshold, and it shows that there are not many differences between the observed and predicted covariances. Collectively, these indices indicate superior model fit and as such, the sufficiency of the proposed structure to account for organizational stress and stress management strategies.

Figure 1 - Structural Equation Model - Impact of Organizational Stress Management Strategies on Stress Reduction
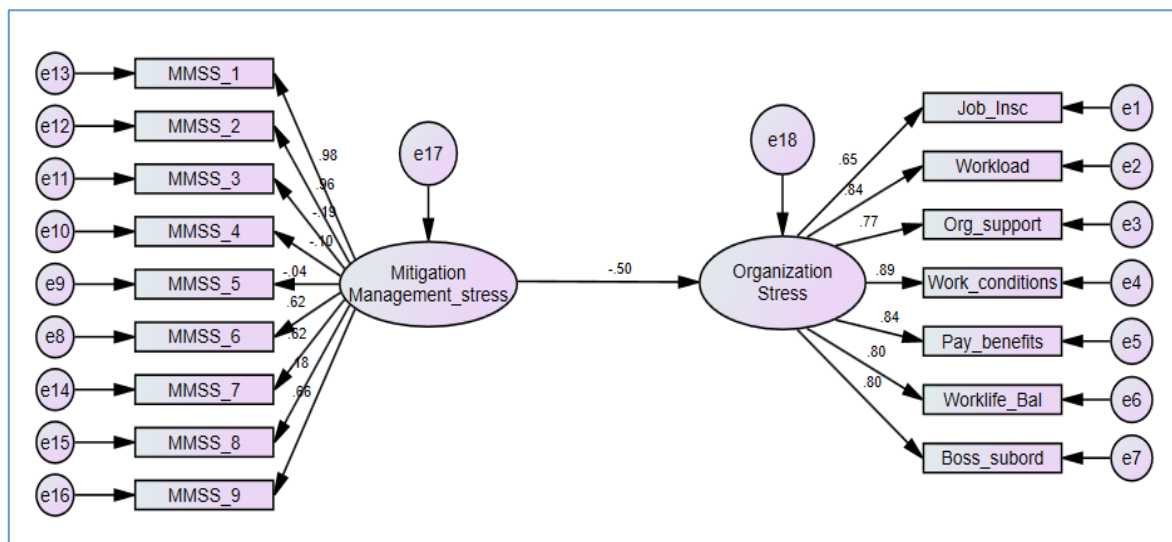
Structural Model Results

Organizational stress management strategies to organizational stress is negatively correlated (Estimate = -0.503, p = 0.000). This shows that with better management practices, there is less stress in an organization. The standardized path coefficient of -.50 indicates that when the organizational management strategies increase one standard deviation, organizational stress decreases by 0.50 standard deviations. The model describes a significant share of organizational stress (R 2 = 0.57), meaning that Organizational strategies explain 57% of the difference in organizational stress among garment workers.

Table 1 - Standardised Estimates - Impact of Organizational Stress Management Strategies on Stress Reduction

			Estimate	P value
Organization_Stress	<---	Organization_Management_stress	-0.503	0.000
Job_Insc	<---	Organization_Stress	0.646	0.000
Workload	<---	Organization_Stress	0.845	0.000
Org_support	<---	Organization_Stress	0.772	0.000
Work_conditions	<---	Organization_Stress	0.885	0.000
Pay_benefits	<---	Organization_Stress	0.838	0.000
Worklife_Bal	<---	Organization_Stress	0.804	0.000
Boss_subord	<---	Organization_Stress	0.796	0.000
MMSS_6	<---	Management_Stress	0.619	0.000
MMSS_5	<---	Management_Stress	0.037	0.000
MMSS_4	<---	Management_Stress	0.097	0.000
MMSS_3	<---	Management_Stress	0.188	0.000
MMSS_2	<---	Management_Stress	0.962	0.000
MMSS_1	<---	Management_Stress	0.975	0.000
MMSS_7	<---	Management_Stress	0.616	0.000
MMSS_8	<---	Management_Stress	0.181	0.000
MMSS_9	<---	Management_Stress	0.657	0.000

Measurement Model Results

The measurement model suggests that most of the observed indicators load heavily on their corresponding latent constructs. In the case of organizational stress management, the most important loadings are MMSS_1 (0.975) and MMSS_2 (0.962), meaning that the two constitute this construct. There are acceptable levels of reliability in MMSS_6 (0.619), MMSS_7 (0.616) and MMSS_9 (0.657). MMSS_3 (0.188), MMSS_4 (0.097), MMSS_5 (0.037) and MMSS_8 (0.181) have lower loadings and might require revision or re-evaluation in further research to improve the construct validity. The Composite Reliability (CR) is 0.89 and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is 0.58, which are somewhat satisfactory results.

In the case of organizational stress, the range of the loading factors is 0.646 (Job Insecurity) to 0.885 (Work Conditions), and all of the loading factors are statistically significant with $p = 0.001$. CR of this construct is 0.93, AVE is 0.68, indicating high internal consistency. The most important indicators of stress are found to be Work Conditions (0.885) and Workload (0.845), indicating the dominant position of working environment and job demands in the development of stress levels.

In general, the model has good fit indices ($\chi^2 = 160.42$, $df = 103$, $\chi^2/df = 1.56$, CFI = 0.963, TLI = 0.951, RMSEA = 0.045, SRMR = 0.037), strong measurement measures and a large path structure, which prove the existence of the postulated relationship of effective organizational management strategies reducing organizational pressure among garment workers in Bangalore in a significant manner. The results highlight the significance of physical interventions within organizations, including the quality of support systems, communication, and customized stress management programs to reduce workplace stress in the garment industry.

4.4   Discussion

The present study reveals that organizational management activities are significant to ease the workplace stress among garment women in Bangalore. It is disclosed that the main causes of stress in the garment industry are high workloads, unfavourable working conditions, work insecurity, and absence of support by managers (Sharma and Srivastava, 2022; Jayaratne, 2019). These findings align with the findings of other researchers as well, who reported some workload, work hours, and the lack of communications to be the primary stressor factors, which affect the well-being of employees (Yuan

et al., 2022; Rajapakse et al., 2023). The results restate the premise that the measures at the organizational level and not those at the individual levels of coping play important roles in assisting to effectively cope with stress in the labour-intensive sectors like garments.

As it has been discovered, the degree of stress developed among the employees in the instances where the organizations implement the properly structured training framework, grievance redress system, supervisor support systems, and participatory communication systems, is reduced, and the latter become more flexible (Venkatesh and Bansal, n.d.). These strategies can help create a psychologically safe and trusting environment, as a result of which workers will cope with work stresses more effectively. Moreover, Sharma and Srivastava (2022) emphasize that the stress which women workers face is multi-dimensional to indicate that the policies implemented by the organization should serve both physical and psychosocial aspects of the working environment.

4.5 Suggestions

The garment industry is suggested the following major strategies based on the results and the existing literature:

- Interventions in the workplace: Factories should strive to improve working conditions through proper lighting, ventilation, seating and ergonomically designed working stations. This is consistent with the recommendations by Yuan et al. (2022) who highlight the relationship between physical environments and health among employees.
- Capacity Building and Training: Stress management and frequent training: The workers can be trained on problem solving skills and coping mechanism. Venkatesh and Bansal (2020) assert that an adequate coping ability can significantly reduce stress and enhance pliability among the workforce.
- Support Systems: Enabling environment can be created by establishing redressal of grievances mechanisms, peer support groups and counselling facilities that are available.
- Communication and Participation: Bi-directional communication and engagement with the workers can aid in developing a sense of belonging and control, thereby reducing perceived stress (Jayaratne, 2019).
- Gender Sensitive Policies: since the workforce is predominantly comprised of women, they must be given gender specific benefits such as maternity benefits, work-flexibility and family-support services, as per the stress dimensions discussed by Sharma and Srivastava (2022).

4.6 Implications

The outcomes of this study are practical and theoretical. Theoretically, it contributes to the literature by integrating organizational strategies and stress outcomes into a framework of model construction, in the line of the previous descriptive research. Practically, the study has practical implications on factory management and policymakers and labour welfare agencies. Certain mitigating strategies can be adopted to promote the health and well-being of the employees, reduce absenteeism and improve the overall productivity. Hamja et al. (2019) state that by integrating stress management initiatives into the working systems, an initiative could also contribute to developing a safer and more sustainable workspace.

Lastly, organizational stress can solely be solved using a multi-dimensional approach whereby there is an integration of work environment enhancement, supporting mechanism, communication and gender sensitive policies. Through such interventions the garment industry can be made sustainable in the long run by creating healthy work places.

5 Conclusion

The research centred on the relationship between organizational management strategy and work stress among garment women in Bangalore. It emphasized the importance of structured interventions, positive practices in the workplace environment, and effective stress management techniques in providing a healthier and more productive work environment. The study used the working conditions, organizational support systems, and organizational employee well-being programs as criteria to determine the significance of organizational strategies as key to stress management problems at work within the garment industry. The findings highlight the rationale why managements need to take proactive approach which will enable them to introduce stress reduction measures in their business strategy.

Despite its contributions, the study has its limitations. The analysis was limited to a local village, and a relatively small sample of the participants, which may affect the extrapolation of the findings. Data were collected with self-report questionnaires and are subject to individual bias and perceptions. In addition, the cross-sectional study design is restricted

to providing an image of the current state of affairs and not actually capturing the transformation and evolution over time. The constructs also require to be narrowed down, especially in certain areas, to make them more reliable and clearer of concept.

Future research can address these limitations by developing a more comprehensive and broader sample in other regions of the world and other industry sectors in the future. It would take long-term research studies to study the effectiveness of organizational measures in the long-term. Further qualitative research can provide additional information on workers lived experience, and a comparative study across different demographic groups or types of organizations can increase knowledge. The expansion of the methodological and contextual framework will contribute to the development of more robust and contextualized models of coping with organizational stress.

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