

Investigating The Dynamic Relationships Among Occupational Stress, Parenting Satisfaction, And the Pursuit of Meaning in Life Among Doctors in Bangalore

Rosemol Thamby^{1*} and Dr. Shreelakshmi P²

^{1*}Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, CMR University

Email: rosemol.thamby@cmr.edu.in

²Assistant Professor School of Liberal Studies CMR University, Bangalore.

Email: shreelakshmi.p@cmr.edu.in

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ABSTRACT

Doctors often face high levels of occupational stress due to the demanding and emotionally charged nature of their medical practice. This stress can have far-reaching consequences, affecting their roles as parents and their pursuit of meaning in life. This study seeks to unravel the intricate interplay between occupational stress, parenting satisfaction, and the quest for meaning among doctors in Bangalore. Employing a mixed-methods research approach, this study will engage a purposive sample of 80 from diverse healthcare facilities in Bangalore to participate in the study. A structured survey questionnaire, including validated scales such as the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) by Sheldon Cohen 2007, Kansas Parental Satisfaction Scale (KPSS) by Dr. David R. Black and Dr. Joseph R. Lamey and Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) by Steger et.al 2007, will measure levels of occupational stress, parenting satisfaction, and the pursuit of meaning. Semi-structured interviews will provide in-depth insights into participants' experiences. Quantitative data will be analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. This study aims to uncover the novel relationships between these variables, Coping mechanisms, resilience, and the role of support systems will be explored to understand how doctors navigate these dynamic relationships. Understanding these complex dynamics is vital for healthcare institutions, policymakers, and medical leaders to develop focused interventions and support systems that promote the well-being of doctors. This research has the potential to contribute to strategies that improve a healthier work-life balance, increased job satisfaction, improve quality patient care and a more enriched sense of purpose among doctors in Bangalore.

Keywords: Doctors, Mental Health, Meaning in Life, Parenting Satisfaction, Occupational Stress



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In the ever-evolving landscape of healthcare, the role of doctors has become increasingly demanding, complex, and stressful. Doctors, often regarded as the lifesavers, confront numerous challenges on a daily basis, ranging from intricate medical diagnoses to emotionally charged interactions with patients and their families. These multifaceted demands have not only redefined the nature of their profession but have also brought about a host of stressors that permeate their personal and professional lives. Occupational stress among doctors is a growing concern worldwide, with implications not only for their individual well-being but also for the quality of healthcare services they provide. Doctors, like many other individuals, aspire to find meaning and satisfaction in their personal lives. Beyond their medical responsibilities, they navigate the complex terrain of

parenthood, striving to maintain a work-life balance while ensuring the well-being of their families. Parenting, in particular, presents a unique set of challenges and rewards, adding another layer of complexity to their already demanding lives. This research seeks to investigate the dynamic relationships among occupational stress, parenting satisfaction, and the pursuit of meaning in life among doctors. By examining how these constructs interrelate, aim to shed light on the intricate tapestry of doctors' lives, both within and outside the healthcare setting. Understanding the complex interplay between occupational stress, parenting satisfaction, and the pursuit of meaning can have profound implications for healthcare organizations, policy makers, and doctors themselves.

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Occupational stress among doctors can have far-reaching consequences, not only impacting their mental and physical health but also potentially leading to burnout, reduced job satisfaction, and suboptimal patient care. Occupational stress, often referred to as work-related stress, is a psychological and physiological response to the demands and pressures that individuals experience in their workplace. It results from a misalignment between the demands of the job and an individual's ability to meet those demands. Occupational stress can affect employees in various professions and industries, but it is particularly prevalent in high-stress occupations like healthcare, emergency services, finance, and the military. Parenting satisfaction and the pursuit of meaning in life are integral to doctors' overall well-being, influencing their motivation, job performance, and ability to maintain a fulfilling family life. Parenting satisfaction, also known as parental well-being or parental contentment, refers to the overall sense of happiness, fulfillment, and satisfaction that individuals experience in their role as parents. It reflects how parents feel about their parenting responsibilities, their relationship with their children, and the impact of parenting on their overall quality of life. Parenting satisfaction is a multifaceted concept influenced by a variety of factors, both individual and contextual. The pursuit of meaning in life is a universal human endeavor, an aspiration to find significance, purpose, and fulfillment in one's existence. The concept of "meaning in life" refers to a person's perception of the significance, purpose, and fulfillment of their existence. It involves the belief that one's life has value, a sense of direction, and a reason for being. Finding meaning in life is a fundamental and deeply philosophical question that has intrigued thinkers, theologians, psychologists, and individuals throughout history. It is a complex and multifaceted aspect of human existence, and different people may find meaning in various ways. For doctors, this quest is uniquely intertwined with their professional identity and the profound impact they have on the lives of others. While their work provides an opportunity for profound meaning, it can also expose them to profound existential challenges, including the confrontation with human suffering, ethical dilemmas, and the relentless demands of the healthcare system.

Job Demand-Control Model (Karasek's Model):

This model, developed by Robert Karasek, posits that occupational stress is a result of the interaction between job demands and job control. High job demands and low job control (e.g., decision-making authority) lead to high levels of stress. The model also introduces the concept of job strain, which is associated with adverse health outcomes.

Attachment Theory (John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth):

Attachment theory focuses on the emotional bonds between children and their caregivers. According to this theory, a secure attachment to a primary caregiver is essential for healthy child development. Attachment styles, such as secure, anxious-ambivalent, and avoidant, influence children's social, emotional, and

cognitive development. Mary Ainsworth's "Strange Situation" experiment helped identify different attachment patterns.

Viktor Frankl's Logotherapy

Viktor Frankl, a psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor, developed logotherapy, which is based on the belief that the primary human drive is to find meaning in life. Frankl argued that individuals can find meaning through their experiences, relationships, and work, even in the face of suffering. He emphasized the importance of a "will to meaning" and the idea that life's meaning can be discovered or created by the individual.

Positive Psychology and Well-Being Theories

Positive psychology, led by researchers like Martin Seligman, emphasizes the pursuit of well-being, happiness, and life satisfaction. Meaning in life is considered one of the key components of well-being. The theory suggests that people who have a sense of meaning are more likely to experience higher life satisfaction and overall happiness.

Through rigorous empirical analysis and thoughtful interpretation, this study seeks to provide valuable insights that can inform policies, practices, and interventions aimed at supporting doctors in their pursuit of both professional excellence and a meaningful life.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Occupational stress, parenting satisfaction, and the pursuit of meaning in life are three central facets of human existence, each profoundly impacting an individual's well-being and overall quality of life.

Occupational Stress

Research has consistently shown that factors such as long working hours, high patient loads, emotionally charged patient interactions, and ethical dilemmas contribute to elevated stress levels among medical professionals (Dyrbye et al., 2014; Shanafelt et al., 2002). Studies have also highlighted the consequences of occupational stress on doctors, including burnout (Rotenstein et al., 2018), decreased job satisfaction (Perry et al., 2015), and adverse mental health outcomes (Ruitenburg et al., 2012).

Parenting Satisfaction

Balancing the demands of a medical career with the responsibilities of parenthood is a unique challenge for doctors. Research in this area has begun to shed light on the complexities doctors face in achieving parenting satisfaction. Studies have explored the impact of work-life balance, support systems, and the role of personal values and priorities on doctors' parenting satisfaction (O'Mahony et al., 2018; Dimou et al., 2020). Occupational stress can have a direct impact on parent-child relationships. Studies have suggested that high levels of work-related stress can lead to increased irritability and reduced emotional availability in parents, which, in turn, can affect the quality of parent-child interactions (Crnic et al., 2005).

Meaning in Life

The pursuit of meaning in life, often rooted in a sense of purpose, significance, and fulfillment, is a fundamental human aspiration that transcends professional and personal domains. The pursuit of meaning in life among doctors may be closely linked to their values and ethical commitment. Research has explored the relationship between work-related values, such as altruism and service orientation, and the pursuit of meaning in medical practice (Kaldjian, 2005).

This research paper seeks to examine the dynamic relationships among occupational stress, parenting satisfaction, and the pursuit of meaning in life among doctors. There is limited research exploring how they intersect. A comprehensive examination of all three variables within the unique context of doctors' lives is a novel and critical endeavor. Limited research has delved into potential gender differences or cultural variations in the experiences of doctors concerning these dimensions. Given the diversity within the medical profession, more research is needed to understand how occupational stress, parenting satisfaction, and the pursuit of meaning may differ across genders and cultures. There is a research gap in exploring how doctors' ethical dilemmas and personal values might impact their pursuit of meaning in life and their parenting satisfaction. This review of the literature provides the foundation for this research paper, which aims to advance our understanding of these dynamic relationships and their implications for doctors' personal and professional lives.

RESEARCH METHOD

Aim

The aim of this study is to understand the intricate interplay between occupational stress, parenting satisfaction, and the quest for meaning among doctors in Bangalore.

Objectives

- To assess the levels of occupational stress experienced by doctors in Bangalore using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) by Sheldon Cohen 2007.
- To measure parenting satisfaction among doctors in Bangalore with the Kansas Parental Satisfaction Scale (KPSS) by Dr. David R. Black and Dr. Joseph R. Lamey.
- To Measure extent of the pursuit of meaning in life among doctors in Bangalore using the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) by Steger et al. 2007.
- To explore the novel relationships between occupational stress, parenting satisfaction, and the pursuit of meaning among doctors in Bangalore.
- To understand the potential implications of these complex dynamics for the well-being of doctors in Bangalore.

Hypothesis

H1: There is a Negative correlation between the levels of occupational stress and the pursuit of meaning in life among doctors in Bangalore.

H2: Higher levels of parenting satisfaction are positively correlated with lower levels of occupational stress among doctors in Bangalore.

H3: Parenting Satisfaction predicts meaning in life among doctors in Bangalore.

Research Design

A mixed-methods approach, which combines quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews.

Sampling

Purposive sampling is used to select a diverse and representative sample of doctors working in various healthcare facilities in Bangalore. With a Sample size of 80 doctors, distributed across various characteristics to ensure meaningful comparisons and a comprehensive view of the population.

Tools

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) 1983 is a widely used psychological instrument for assessing the perception of stress in an individual's life. It was developed by Sheldon Cohen, a prominent psychologist, and his colleagues. The PSS is designed to measure the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as stressful. It is a self-report questionnaire and is available in various versions with different numbers of items. The most common version consists of 10 items. Respondents rate each item on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "0" (never) to "4" (very often). The total score is calculated by summing the scores for all items. The PSS has demonstrated good reliability and validity. It has been widely used in research and clinical settings to assess stress and has been translated into numerous languages.

The Kansas Parental Satisfaction Scale (KPSS) 1985 is a psychological instrument designed to measure parental satisfaction. Developed by Dr. David R. Black and Dr. Joseph R. Lamey, the KPSS is a self-report questionnaire that assesses an individual's level of satisfaction with their role as a parent. It is particularly valuable in understanding the experiences and feelings of parents in various domains of their parenting responsibilities. Respondents rate each item on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "1" (strongly disagree) to "5" (strongly agree). The total score is calculated by summing the scores for all items. The KPSS is designed to be a reliable and valid measure of parental satisfaction. It is often used in research and clinical settings to assess parenting satisfaction and its potential impact on child development and family dynamics.

The Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ) is a psychological instrument developed by Michael F. Steger and his colleagues in 2007. It is designed to measure an individual's perception of meaning in life. The MLQ is a widely used self-report questionnaire that assesses the extent to which individuals feel that their lives are meaningful and purposeful. It has two main components: the Presence of Meaning and the Search for Meaning. Scores on the MLQ are calculated

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separately for the Presence of Meaning and the Search for Meaning subscales. Higher scores on the PML subscale indicate a greater presence of meaning, while higher scores on the SML subscale suggest a more active search for meaning. The MLQ has demonstrated good reliability and validity. It is widely used in research across psychology, counseling, and other fields to assess individuals' experiences of meaning in life.

Data Collection

Quantitative Data Collection

Employed structured survey questionnaires to gather quantitative data. Use validated scales, such as the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), Kansas Parental Satisfaction Scale (KPSS), and Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ).

Qualitative Data Collection

Conducted semi-structured interviews with doctors.

Statistical Analysis

A Pearson's correlation analysis will be conducted to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between levels of occupational stress and the pursuit of meaning in life. Same will be employed to examine the association between parenting satisfaction and occupational stress, assessing whether higher parenting satisfaction is linked to lower levels of stress. To investigate gender differences, an independent samples t-test will be used to compare the means of occupational

stress, parenting satisfaction, and the pursuit of meaning in life between male and female doctors. Multiple linear regression analysis will be conducted to assess whether parenting satisfaction serves as a predictor of meaning in life among doctors.

Inclusion Criteria

- Participants must be licensed medical doctors actively practicing medicine in healthcare facilities in Bangalore, India.
- Both male and female doctors are eligible to participate.
- Doctors from various specialties and career stages will be included to ensure diversity.
- Participants must be aged 30 years and above.

Exclusion Criteria

- Individuals who are not medical doctors, such as nurses, technicians, or administrative staff, are excluded.
- Doctors who are not actively practicing medicine, such as retired doctors, medical students, or those on extended leave, will not be included.
- Participants below the age of 30 are excluded from the study.
- Doctors who do not practice in healthcare facilities located in Bangalore are excluded.
- Participants who do not complete the survey questionnaires or interviews are not included in the final analysis.

RESULT

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Parental Satisfaction	79	7	21	12.67	2.123
Meaning in Life	79	5.4	59.0	52.815	6.2430
Occupational Stress	79	32	37	34.59	.941
Valid N (listwise)	79				

Table 2: Correlation Between Occupational stress and Meaning in Life.
Correlations

		Occupational Stress	Meaning in Life
Occupational Stress	Pearson Correlation	1	-.108
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.343
	N	79	79
Meaning in Life	Pearson Correlation	-.108	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.343	
	N	79	79

Table 2 indicates there is a Negative Correlation between Occupational Stress and Meaning in Life. Hence H1: There is negative correlation between the levels of occupational stress and the pursuit of meaning in life among doctors in Bangalore is Proved.

Table 3: Correlation Between Parental Satisfaction and Occupational Stress

Correlations

		Parental Satisfaction	Occupational Stress
Parental Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.099
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.384
	N	79	79
Occupational Stress	Pearson Correlation	.099	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.384	
	N	79	79

Table 3 indicates when Parental Satisfaction increases, it is correlated positively with lower levels of Occupational Stress and hence H2 is Proved.

Table 4: Regression Analysis ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.526	1	2.526	.064	.801 ^b
	Residual	3037.536	77	39.449		
	Total	3040.062	78			

a. Dependent Variable: Meaning in Life

b. Predictors: (Constant), Parental Satisfaction

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	51.741	4.304		12.023	<.001
	Parental Satisfaction	.085	.335	.029	.253	.801

a. Dependent Variable: Meaning in Life

H3 states that Parenting Satisfaction predicts meaning in life among doctors in Bangalore. The data indicates no significant values and parental satisfaction is not a predictor of meaning in life. Therefore hypothesis is rejected.

DISCUSSION

Results indicate that H1: There is a Negative Correlation between the levels of occupational stress and the pursuit of meaning in life among doctors in Bangalore is Proved and Accepted. This suggests that higher levels of occupational stress are associated with a diminished sense of purpose, which aligns with prior research highlighting the detrimental impact of chronic work-related stress on psychological well-being and life satisfaction among medical professionals (e.g., Shanafelt et al., 2012; West et al., 2016).

From the findings H2: Higher levels of parenting satisfaction are positively correlated with lower levels of occupational stress among doctors in Bangalore is accepted and has a connection with existing

Studies. This finding is consistent with existing literature that emphasizes the buffering role of fulfilling family roles and supportive home environments in mitigating work-related stress (Wayne et al., 2013; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Even though there are associations, this study couldn't say parental satisfaction is the predictor of life satisfaction among doctors in Bangalore. This non-significant finding highlights the complex and multifaceted nature of meaning in life, which may be influenced by broader professional, social, and personal factors beyond parenting.

This study bridges the underexplored existing gap in Literature by finding the interplay between three variables. Semi structured interviews conducted with doctors clearly indicate they have high level of stress and some cannot manage their personal lives. Parenting and meaning in life is a concerning factor for most of the doctors. Some doctors have stated that they don't find purpose to their lives and its very mechanical to work continuously. These narratives align with quantitative findings, reinforcing the detrimental impact of stress on life satisfaction and the existential

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LIMITATIONS

Study is Limited to Bangalore area. Only Doctors from Bangalore Region are Selected.

Doctors Below 30 years are not included in the study. Future research should consider longitudinal designs and explore additional factors, such as organizational support, professional autonomy, and personal values, that may influence the pursuit of meaning in life among healthcare professionals.

IMPLICATION

Findings of this study is helpful to understand how parenting, Occupational Stress and Meaning in Life is interconnected in Doctors lives. Interventions to reduce stress among doctors are necessary to bring a change. Sessions from psychologists can help doctors in managing their stress and enhancing meaning in life. Balancing parenting is possible with the help of Qualified Psychologists. This study brings practical insights to development of Psychological interventions to reduce occupational stress among doctors for policy makers and researchers.

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