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Mindfulness, occupational stress and work-life balance: A correlational study among university faculty of district Kangra, Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract

The present investigation aims to assess the levels of mindfulness, work-life balance, and occupational stress among respondents in the educational sector and to examine the interrelationship among these variables. Total sample of 200 respondents from CSKHPKV and CUHP in the age group of 30-50 years were selected randomly. A stratified sampling method was used to select the sample. Out of 200 employees 100 were taken from CSKHPKV and 100 were from CUHP. Out of 200 employees, 100 were male and 100 were female employees from both universities. Self-structured questionnaire was developed to analyze the level of mindfulness and work-life balance among respondents. The occupational stress index prepared by Dr. A.K Srivastava and Dr. A.P. Singh (1981) was used to measure the occupational stress among employees. The results indicate that majority of the respondents (41%) have high level of mindfulness from both universities. In case of work-life balance majority of respondents (34%) of both universities fall in average category. Female respondents of the both institutes have low work-life balance because they experience dual tasks and responsibilities. In case of occupational stress majority of the respondents (39.5%) fall in moderate category. Female respondents experienced high level of occupational stress as compared to their male counterparts. Extremely significant correlation was found among all three dependent variables. A positive correlation was observed between mindfulness and work-life balance. Whereas, mindfulness was observed to be negatively correlated with occupational stress. A negative correlation was found among work-life balance and occupational stress in respondents of both universities.

Keywords: Mindfulness, work-life balance, occupational stress, teaching

Introduction

Mindfulness has recently gain popularity as a practice or activity that helps to enhance concentration and improve overall health of an individual. It is defined as a mental state of being fully attentive and present in the current moment without any judgment. It helps in managing stress, mental health and workload by improving concentration, reducing stress and regulate emotions of the individual. Mindfulness practices like breathing, body scanning and relaxation techniques is a method that can help individuals to develop a higher sense of self-awareness and emotional regulations by enhancing their ability to being aware at present moment (Nardi *et al*. 2020) [10]. Mindfulness also increases well-being, life satisfaction and job performance among employees of different sectors. It is close association between job performance and life satisfaction in the sector of business administration (Gupta and Verma 2020) [7]. The equilibrium between work and personal life refers to work-life balance but in today's scenario employees face various problems to maintain their professional and personal life balance because challenges increase day-by-day and results in health problems, decreases productivity, family conflicts, work-related stress, less time for family and children and less involvement in social and personal life etc. Women employees are more affected by this problem because they perform dual tasks and responsibilities like household chores (cooking, take care of family members and children, cleaning and washing) and they earn money also. Work-life balance has been found more in male counterparts than female because women have more responsibilities at home, especially when they become wife and mother (Nair *et al*. 2017) [1]. Female population have more responsibilities that leads to burnout, stress, less balance between personal and professional life and less emotional regulations. Work-life balance increase happiness in their life and enhance the quality of life of the employees. In case of women employees support from family members and partner help to maintain balance in their professional and personal life. Long working hours, aged family members, taking care of spouse and children not only make it difficult for employees to maintain personal and work life, but also increase the risk for health problems like stress, burnout, intake of alcohol

and drugs, weight gain, feelings of depressed, physical and mental health problems. There is variety of techniques are helpful in achieving work-life balance in employees. Occupational stress is a major problem for organization and their employees in terms of health problems, stress, well-being and low work-life balance. Workplace stress are impactful for employees and their health and affects job performance, life satisfaction, absentees and productivity. Job demands increases pressure and burnout in employees. Job stress refers to harmful physical and emotional responses that are not match with their capabilities and need of the employee, which leads to poor mental health and low work-life balance. Work related stress has become more common problem on today's life leads to mental health problems, burnout, reduce productivity and increase absentees, that affects the work life balance. Therefore, this study was planned with the objectives to assess the levels of mindfulness, Work life balance and occupational stress and the interrelationship between these three variables.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh. From district Kangra, three blocks were selected purposively for the study. The sample consisted of 200 employees in the age group of 30-50 years. The age group was further divided into two subgroups i.e. 30-40 years and 41-50 years. A stratified random sampling method was used to select the respondents. A total of 200 government employees were selected. From these, 100 were from CSKHPKV, falling under one block and remaining 100 were from CUHP, from Dehra and Rait block. Further, out of 100 respondents selected from CSKHPKV, 50 were male and 50 were female. Similarly, among the 100 respondents from CUHP, 50 were male and 50 were female. All the employees belonged to the education sector (Group A).

Tools used for data collection

Data collection was done through questionnaire method where each respondent was contacted personally and questionnaire was administered. Data were collected by personally visiting the offices of respondents from both universities. Tools are questionnaire on mindfulness, Work-Life Balance and Occupational Stress Index (OSI) are used to analyse the data and get the results.

The data were subjected to statistical tests. Karl Pearson Correlation Test was used to find out the corelation with respect to mindfulness, work-life balance and occupational stress.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of background information of the respondents

Sr. No.	Background details	CSKHPKV (n=100)		CUHP (n=100)		Total (N=200)
1.	**Age**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	
	30-40 (years)	18(36.00)	26 (52.00)	15 (30.00)	22 (44.00)	81 (40.50)
	41-50 (years)	32 (64.00)	24(48.00)	35 (70.00)	28 (56.00)	119 (59.50)
	Total	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	200(100)
2.	**Category**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	
	General	45 (90.00)	48 (96.00)	36 (72.00)	37 (74.00)	166 (83.00)
	Schedule Caste	3 (6.00)	-	5 (10.00)	6 (12.00)	14 (7.00)
	Schedule Tribe	2 (4.00)	2 (4.00)	-	-	4 (2.00)
	OBC	-	-	9 (18.00)	7(14.00)	16 (8.00)
	Total	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	200(100)
3.	**Family Type**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	
	Nuclear	32 (64.00)	37 (74.00)	29 (58.00)	28 (56.00)	126 (63.00)
	Joint	16 (32.00)	12 (24.00)	20 (40.00)	21 (42.00)	69 (34.50)
	Extended	2 (4.00)	1(2.00)	1 (2.00)	1 (2.00)	5 (2.50)
	Total	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	200(100)
4.	**Educational Status**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	
	Post Doctoral	4 (8.00)	3 (6.00)	6 (12.00)	1 (0.50)	14 (7.00)
	PhD	38 (76.00)	42 (84.00)	41 (82.00)	37 (74.00)	158 (79.00)
	Post Graduation	8 (16.00)	5 (10.00)	3 (6.00)	12 (24.00)	28 (14.00)
	Total	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	200(100)
5.	**Designation**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	
	Professor	8 (16.00)	9 (18.00)	14 (28.00)	9 (18.00)	40 (20.00)
	Associate professor	1 (2.00)	1 (2.00)	8 (6.00)	5 (10.00)	15(7.50)
	Assistant professor	38 (76.00)	36 (74.00)	28 (56.00)	36 (72.00)	138 (69.00)
	Scientist	3 (6.00)	3 (6.00)	-	-	6 (3.00)
	Ext. Specialist	-	1 (2.00)	-	-	1 (0.50)
	Total	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	200(100)
6.	**Monthly Income**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	
	Below 50,000	3 (6.00)	4 (8.00)	4 (8.00)	6 (12.00)	17 (8.50)
	50,000 - 1lakh	17 (34.00)	21 (42.00)	9 (18.00)	17 (34.00)	64 (32.00)
	1lakh - 2lakh	11 (22.00)	14 (28.00)	24 (48.00)	19 (38.00)	68 (34.00)
	2lakh above	19 (38.00)	11 (22.00)	13 (26.00)	8 (16.00)	51 (25.50)
	Total	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	200(100)

Age
It can be seen from the table that nearly half of the respondents (59.5%) were in the age group of 41-50 years, whereas 40.50 per cent belonged to 30-40 years of age.

Category
Majority of respondents 83% were from general category, followed by 8% who belonged to OBC category, 7.00 per cent from the schedule caste.

Family type
It can be seen from the table that 63 of respondent belonged to nuclear families, followed by 34.5% who belonged to joint families and remaining 2.50 per cent respondents belonged to extended families.

Educational status
Majority of the respondents (79%) were qualified up to Ph.D., followed by 14% respondents who were post-graduate.

Designation
From total responses more than half of respondents (69%) were working as assistant professor (69%), followed by 20% who were professor, 7.50 per cent were associate professor, 3.00 per cent were scientists.

Monthly income
It can be seen from the table that one third of the respondents (34% and 32%) were having monthly income up to Rs 1 lakh-2 lakh and Rs 50,000-1lakh respectively, followed by one fourth of the respondent (25.50%) having income up to above Rs 2 lakh.

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution regarding level of mindfulness among respondents

Mindfulness	CSKHPKV (n=100)		CUHP (n=100)		Total (N=200)
	M	F	M	F	
Very low	-	-	-	-	-
Low	-	27 (54.00)	-	27 (54.00)	54 (27.00)
Average	8 (16.00)	21 (42.00)	5 (10.00)	22 (44.00)	56 (28.00)
High	38 (76.00)	2 (4.00)	41 (82.00)	1 (2.00)	82 (41.00)
Very high	4 (8.00)	-	4 (8.00)	-	8 (4.00)
Total	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	200(100)

Table 2 shows the level of mindfulness among respondents. It can be seen from the table that 41.00 per cent of the respondents fall in high level of mindfulness, followed by 28.00 per cent of the respondents who had average level of mindfulness, whereas 27.00 per cent fall in the category of having low mindfulness and only 4.00 per cent of the respondents had very high level of mindfulness. In case of CSKHPKV employees, majority of the male respondents i.e., 76.00 per cent fall with high range of mindfulness whereas more than half of the female respondents (54%) had low level of mindfulness, followed by 42.00 per cent who had average mindfulness level. In case of male respondents 16.00 per cent had average level of mindfulness. In CUHP, majority of male respondents i.e., 82.00 per cent had high level of mindfulness, whereas 10.00 per cent were at average level. In case of female respondents 54.00 per cent had low level of mindfulness. Less than half of the female respondents i.e., 44.00 per cent and 10.00 per cent of male respondents had average level of mindfulness. However, 8.00 per cent of male respondents from both universities had very high level of mindfulness. Mindfulness helps in improving cognitive appraisals, mental health, attention span, enhances coping mechanisms and also help to reduce the stress. Dzakaiah and Widyasari *et al.* (2021), reports that someone who has a high level of mindfulness is able to observe better and display behavior that is more appropriate to the situation at hand, not just in the form of an automatic response or reaction without thinking.

Table 3: Frequency and percentage distribution of level of Work-life balance among respondents

Work-Life Balance	CSKHPKV (n=100)		CUHP (n=100)		Total (N=200)
	M	F	M	F	
Very low	-	2(4.00)	-	-	2 (1.00)
Low	2 (4.00)	29 (58.00)	-	28 (56.00)	59 (29.50)
Average	17 (34.00)	17 (34.00)	13 (26.00)	21 (42.00)	68 (34.00)
High	28 (56.00)	2 (4.00)	29 (58.00)	1 (2.00)	60 (30.00)
Very high	3 (6.00)	-	8 (16.00)	-	11 (5.50)
Total	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	200(100)

Table 3 shows the level of work-life balance among respondents. Nearly one third of the respondents i.e., 34.00 per cent had average level of work-life balance, followed by 30.00 per cent who had high level of work-life balance whereas, 29.50 per cent reported low level of work-life balance. Very small percentage of respondents (5.50%) had very high level of work-life balance. In CSKHPKV, 58.00 per cent of the female respondents reported low level of work-life balance, on the contrary only 4.00 per cent of the male respondents had low level of work-life balance. On the other hand, 56.00 per cent and 4.00 per cent of male and female respondents respectively were found to have high level of work-life balance. Whereas 4.00 per cent of the female respondents were in the category of very low work-life balance and 6.00 per cent of male were having very high level of work balance in their lives. In CUHP, 58.00 per cent of male respondents had high level of work-life balance. On the other hand, only 2.00 per cent of female respondents had high level of work-life balance, followed by 42.00 per cent and 26.00 of female and male respondents

respectively had average balance in their work and life. It is further clear from the table that 56.00 per cent of female respondents fall in the category of low level of work-life balance. This might be due to disproportionate household duties, family responsibilities, child-care, workload and long hours on the job. Even lack of emotional support from family leads to stress, depression, burnout, self-doubt and a poor work-life balance. The result of our study is consistent with the findings of Boren and Veksler (2011) [4], who report that there is a relationship between a lack of social support, a poor work-life balance and excessive emotional tiredness. Individuals who experience the good effects of social support are less influenced by stress.

Table 4: Frequency and percentage distribution regarding level of Occupational Stress Index among respondents

Occupational Stress Index	CSKHPKV (n=100)		CUHP (n=100)		Total (N=200)
	M	F	M	F	
Low	21 (42.00)	7 (14.00)	32 (64.00)	4 (8.00)	64 (32.00)
Moderate	26 (52.00)	16 (32.00)	17 (34.00)	20 (40.00)	79 (39.50)
High	3 (6.00)	27 (54.00)	1 (2.00)	26 (52.00)	57 (28.50)
Total	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	50(100)	200(100)

Table 4 presents the occupational stress index of respondents. Out of total respondents 39.50 per cent of the respondents faced moderate level of occupational stress in their workplace, followed by 32.00 per cent who experience low level of stress in their job and remaining 28.50 per cent of the respondents faced high level of stress in their occupation. In case of CSKHPKV, more than half of the male respondents i.e., 52.00 per cent and 32.00 per cent of the female respondents reported moderate level of stress in their workplace, followed by 54.00 per cent of female and 6.00 per cent of male respondents who faced high level of stress in their occupation. About 42.00 per cent of the male respondents and only 14.00 per cent of the female respondents experienced low level of stress. In CUHP, more than one third of the male respondents i.e., 34.00 per cent and 40.00 per cent of female respondents experienced moderate level of stress, followed by 64.00 per cent and 8.00 per cent of male and female respondents respectively faced low level of occupational stress index. More than half of the female respondents i.e., 52.00 per cent and only 2.00 per cent of male respondents had high level of occupational stress. The finding of the current study complements the research by Malik and Verma (2025) [9], who report that the majority (72%) of respondents experiencing moderate to high level of occupational stress, followed by 8% who reported low level of stress.

Table 5: Correlation between mindfulness, work-life balance and occupational stress among respondents from CSKHPKV and CUHP (N=200)

Variables	Mindfulness	Work-life Balance	Occupational stress
Mindfulness	1		
Work-life Balance	.767**	1	
Occupational stress	-.603**	-.676**	1

**depicts extremely significant correlation at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 5 reveals the correlation between mindfulness, work-life balance and occupational stress among total respondents of CSKHPKV and CUHP. An extremely significant correlation was found among all three dependent variables. Positive correlation was found between mindfulness and work-life balance. Mindfulness was observed to be negatively correlated with occupational stress. On the other hand, a negative correlation was seen among work-life balance and occupational stress. This means that higher the WLB, lower would be the occupational stress. Similar results are interpreted by Palmer and Rodger et. al. (2011), who found that the higher level of mindfulness correlates with lower stress. The result aligns with the findings of Kien *et al.* (2021) [18], observe that the mindfulness has a significant positive impact on work-life balance and the significant negative impact on stress.

Table 6: Correlation between mindfulness, work-life balance and occupational stress among CSKHPKV respondents

Variables	Mindfulness	Work-life Balance	Occupational stress
Mindfulness	1		
Work-life Balance	.728**	1	
Occupational stress	-.536**	-.690**	1

**depicts extremely significant correlation at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 6 shows the correlation between mindfulness, work-life balance and occupational stress among CSKHPKV respondents. The correlation between mindfulness and work-life balance was found to be extremely significant at 1% level of significance. A negative correlation was observed between mindfulness and occupational stress. Similarly negative correlation was seen between work-life balance and occupational stress at 1% level of significance. The result of our study is consistent with the findings of Bartlett *et al.* (2021) [3], who reported that the higher mindfulness was correlated with lower stress.

Table 7: Correlation between mindfulness, work-life balance and occupational stress among CUHP respondents

Variables	Mindfulness	Work-life Balance	Occupational stress
Mindfulness	1		
Work-life Balance	.815**	1	
Occupational stress	-.666**	-.655**	1

**depicts extremely significant correlation at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 7 depicts the correlation between mindfulness, work-life balance and occupational stress among CUHP respondents. An extremely significant positive correlation was found between mindfulness and work-life balance at 1% level of significance. A negative correlation was found between mindfulness and occupational stress at 1% level of significance that means higher the mindfulness lower would be the OS. Similarly, negative correlation was seen between work-life balance and occupational stress. Results is supported by Anjana *et al*. (2024) [2], reports that significant relation is found between work-life balance domains and quality of life domains.

Conclusion

The findings clearly indicate that mindfulness, work-life balance and occupational stress are significantly interconnected variables that are influencing the well-being of university employees. With regard to mindfulness, a considerable proportion of respondents were found to be in the high category (41%), followed by average level (28%). However, a substantial segment (27%) still reported low mindfulness. Marked gender differences were observed in both universities, where the majority of male respondents fell in the high mindfulness category, whereas more than half of the female respondents were concentrated in the low mindfulness group. This pattern highlights the vulnerability of female faculty members to lower levels of present-moment awareness and emotional regulation. In terms of work-life balance, only one-third of the respondents reported an average level, while nearly one-third experienced low work-life balance. Very few respondents (5.5%) enjoyed a very high level of balance. Female respondents in both universities were predominantly represented in the low and very low categories of work-life balance, whereas a majority of male respondents reported high work-life balance. This imbalance may be attributed to the disproportionate burden of household responsibilities, child-care, family expectations and limited social and emotional support experienced by women faculty members. The occupational stress profile further substantiated these trends. While 39.5% of respondents experienced moderate occupational stress, more than one-fourth (28.5%) were found to have high stress levels. Again, female respondents from both universities showed alarmingly higher proportions in the high stress category compared to their male counterparts, pointing towards gender-based disparities in occupational well-being. The correlation analysis revealed extremely significant relationships among all the three variables. Higher mindfulness is associated with better work-life balance and reduced occupational stress, while improved work-life balance acts as a protective factor against stress. Overall, the study concludes that mindfulness serves as a crucial psychological resource for university faculty, enhancing their ability to maintain a healthier work-life balance and mitigating occupational stress. The gender-based disparities observed in mindfulness, work-life balance and occupational stress underscore the need for institution-specific and gender-sensitive interventions. Incorporating mindfulness-based programmes, stress management workshops, supportive workplace policies and family-friendly institutional practices may significantly improve the well-being and productivity of university employees.

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