

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between occupational stress and personality traits of Thai married working women. The study also attempted to examine differences in these two phenomena as a function of the respondents' demographic characteristics, namely: age, educational level, number of children, work shift, job level, and type of company.

The research instrument used was a self-administered survey questionnaire, in Thai, in three parts: (1) Personal Information--to obtain the respondents' demographic profile; (2) Job Stress instrument--to measure five factors of occupational stress (role conflict, role ambiguity, work overload, physical environment, and time pressure); and (3) Personality Trait instrument—to measure the Big Five personality traits (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism).

The study has found that out of the five occupational stress factors (role conflict, role ambiguity, work overload, physical environment and time pressure), there were significant differences in role conflict, role ambiguity and physical environment as a function of at least one of the selected demographic variables (age, educational level, number of children, work shift, job level and type of company). No significant differences were found in work overload and time pressure. In terms of personality traits, the finding shows that out of the five traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience), there were significant differences in conscientiousness and openness to experience in relation to at least one of the selected demographic variables. No significant differences were found in extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism.

Finally, this study found nine weak relationships between the five occupational stress factors and the big five personality traits. From which all five occupational stress

factors were found to correlate with at least one of the personality traits explored in this study.

An overriding implication of this study is the need for organizations to be more sensitive to the needs of married working women who, by their nature, are already engaged in multiple roles and exposed to a number of stress-inducing factors, both at work and at home. The study also points out that, in terms of personality factors, Thai married working women's conscientiousness is a prime mover in helping themselves to be less vulnerable to stress, especially at work. In view of this, married working women need to be encouraged to develop a stronger sense of competence, achievement-striving, and self-discipline to keep them in the niche of being useful members of their family unit, their workplace, and of society.

