

## Organizational Behavior and Increasing Burden of Obese Employee in India

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### Abstract

An employee with any form of ailment may not be able to contribute productively for the company and as a whole it affects adversely the country economy. There are evidences coming across India that overweight and obesity are significantly associated with adverse work conditions which is further origin of many diseases. In India, globalization has created new paradigm in organizational culture as prolonged working hours and sedentary lifestyle to achieve the organizational targets have become part of the day for employee especially working in corporate sectors. By doing this study, researcher wanted to understand the organizational behavior and identify the occupational hazards causing overweight and obesity. Researcher measured the sociodemographic and behavior related variables among selected samples to understand the employee perception. Two stage sampling method was adopted to identify the samples on set inclusion criteria. After analyzing the response received through qualitative and quantitative questionnaire, study suggests that there is significant relation between organizational behavior and overall wellbeing of the employee. Findings of this study may help the policy makers, public and private organizations to revisit their organizational policy and develop pro health work culture. As the companies have employee of diverse background therefore further study is required to establish correlations.

**Keywords:** Overweight, Obesity, Malnutrition, Organizational Behavior, Office Hazards, Ergonomic Hazards,



## **Introduction**

Worldwide, at least 2.8 million people die every year because of being overweight or obese. 13% of the world's adult population (11% of men and 15% of women) were obese in 2014. Lancet findings also say, India is just behind US and China in this global hazard list of top 10 countries with highest number of obese people. They account for 38 million deaths in 2012, and the same number is expected to go 52 million by 2030.

Globalization has contributed significantly in economic growth of the India through plenty of jobs created by multinational companies where employees spending 60-70% of their time in offices. An Australian study shows that working adults spent up to one half of the workday sitting down, indicating occupational sitting is a one of the main contributors to total daily sitting time (Brown WJ, 2003). During the job hours, sitting for prolonged hours adversely affect the body which is actually not wired to be shiftless. Scientific papers also highlighted that lack of movement slows digestion process by reducing the amount of food that is converted to energy and thus promoting fat accumulation results into overweight and obesity which further leads to many non-communicable diseases like diabetes, cardiovascular disease, sleep apnea and arthritis.

Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations says that although India's economic boom has brought rise in corporate profits and higher incomes for employees, it has also led to a surge in workplace stress and lifestyle diseases. ASSOCHAM'S corporate employees' survey result says, 36% of the sample population are suffering from obesity which is itself a risk factor for corporate employee working in sitting condition. The average office worker sits about 10 hours a day. There are all those hours in front of the computer, plowing through emails, making calls or writing proposals and eating lunch and even at home there are hours sitting in front of the TV or surfing the internet.

A private firm, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company conducted a survey with 1,100 working professionals in the age group of 23-35 years in New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Pune, Hyderabad, Gurgaon and Goa. Study says, 45% of young professionals suffer from some kind of lifestyle disorder. The most widespread problem was chronic body pain (40%), obesity (20%).

In the past two decades, research on workplace psychosocial risk factors has produced a range of theoretical and empirical research (Theorell, T., 2000). An extensive range of health end points, especially cardiovascular diseases have been associated with the psychosocial work environment.

## **Purpose of the Study**

Journal of sports science published (Ross SE, 2016) a paper and said, currently no consensus exists across published literature reviews regarding the primary cause of the obesity and more research using advance measurement system is necessary. In context of organization behavior, there is also a gap in terms of studies, how corporate companies are creating enabling environment for their employees to adopt healthy habits, highlighted in a study (Jans MP, 2007), conducted in Netherlands where employees sit on average 7 hours in a day on and off the working place. On the other hand, in a systematic review, (Van Uffelen et al. 2010) found limited evidence on adverse association between occupational sitting and different health outcomes. Since Indian employee working in same company comes from diverse background, proposed study was designed to understand how organizational behavior affecting the health of the employees.

## **Objectives Of the study**

1. To study the organizational behavior in the context of office hazards causing health problems
2. To identify the risk factors associated with obesity among working adults in corporate sector

**Significance of the study**

This research aims to educate not only health practitioners but to those organizations having interest in improving the organizational behavior and the health of their workforce to increase work productivity. By doing the study, researcher came up with the association among identified variables related to the employee and organization which is adversely affecting the health of the employee and organization as well.

Corporate companies engaging employee for long working hours may use the findings of this study to develop healthy and employee friendly organizational space and culture. This research will also bridge the gap between employer and employee by examining health interventions within the workplace. In bridging this gap, both employer and employee gets benefit by reducing both direct and indirect costs as it relates to overall health and the cost associated with the risks of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes as it relates to obesity within the workplace.

**Materials and Methods**

An exploratory study was designed where respondents were recruited through two stage sampling method. A sample frame of corporate employees was identified through set inclusion criteria and further 200 sample units were selected through random methods. This study collected the quantitative data and qualitative information of 200 employees working in multinational companies through a set of questionnaires. 3 points Likert scale was also used to measure the level of satisfaction among respondents. After subtracting the data of 20 respondents given invalid responses, sets of 180 samples were evaluated through Descriptive statistical tool.

During the first stage of identifying a sampling frame, following inclusion criteria were set and based on the 400 units in sampling frame, researcher has randomly selected 200 respondents. 20 respondents presented invalid response in questionnaire hence excluded from the study.

**Inclusion Criteria for first stage sampling**

- a) Respondent working in corporate sectors
- b) Male employee

**Inclusion Criteria for second stage sampling**

- a) Respondent in age of more than 20 years
- b) Respondent having mostly sitting job profile

**Questionnaire Variables**

<b>Area of enquiry</b>	Respondent Socio Demographic Data	Office Hazards
<b>Variables</b>	Age, Qualification, working Experience, Job Profile, Industry profile	Psychosocial Hazards, ergonomic hazards, work organization

- a) Office Hazards
  - a. Psychosocial
  - b. Ergonomic hazards
- b) Respondents Health Determinants

**Results**

**Socio Demographic Data**

**Age of respondents**

In socio demographic section, researcher collected information around age, qualification, years of experience, type of industry where respondents work and job profile. Out of total 180 respondents, more than 56% were in age group of 30-39 years, while 29% were in age group of 40- 49 years.

Age group	No of Respondents
20-29	28
30-39	100
40-49	52

**Qualification of Respondents**

In terms of qualification, 40% of respondents were either doctorate or pursuing doctorate (Ph.D./M.Phil.) along with work while 43% have completed masters comprising MBA, M.Tech, M.Sc. Only 17% of the respondents were from bachelors (B.Tech., B.E., B.Sc., B.A.) background.

Respondents Working Industry	No of Respondents
Ph.D./M.Phil.	72
Management Graduate	78
Bachelors/ Engineering	30

**Total working Experience (Years)**

When explored on the years of experience in job, around 41% of the respondents have found having 11-15 years of experience. Total 38% of the respondents were having more than 15 years of experience. Around 21% has spent equal or less than 10 years of experience.

Respondents Working profile	No of Respondents
Less than 5 Years	14
5 – 10 Years	23
11-15 Years	74
More than 15 Years	69

### Job Profile (Designation)

When researcher explored the work profile of the respondents, 37% were in Senior Manager position while 27% were in clerical & administrative work which includes finance assistants, data entry operators or executive level job holders. 18% of the total respondents were Director and Manager separately.

Respondents Job Profile	No of Respondents
Director	33
Senior Manager	66
Manager	32
Clerical and Administrative Workers	49

### Industry profile

In this study respondents were working with private firms mostly having sitting job profile. Out of total respondents 48% were in Management/Consulting Firm including organizations like Human resource management, Business development and BPOs. 34% of the respondents were working in research industry where researcher captured the companies engaged in social research, health and educational research. In engineering forms where project management companies were included, only 17% of the respondents captured.

Respondents Working Industry	No of Respondents
Management/Consulting Firm	87
Engineering Company	31
Research & development Industry	62

### Office Hazards

Office environments are generally assumed as low-risk workplaces, but in reality there are tangible and intangible practices that adversely affects health and safety of employee which need to be monitored and controlled. In this research paper, researcher tried to figure out the key factors of office hazards and explored the respondents on two variables named psychosocial hazards and ergonomic hazards.

### Psychosocial Hazards

In series no 3 of Protecting Workers' Health, Leka, Griffiths & Cox (2003) has described ten types of psychosocial hazards. In this study, researcher has picked selected variables given in following table

### Psychological Hazard

2.1.1 Job content

2.1.2 Work schedule & Workload

2.1.3 Interpersonal relationships at work

## Variables

Job design, Work variety, Role ambiguity

Shift works, Work overload, deadlines,

Poor relationships with co-workers and superiors

## Ergonomic Hazards

Ergonomic hazards refer to workplace conditions that pose risk of injury to the musculoskeletal system of the worker. Ergonomic hazards include repetitive and forceful movements, vibration, temperature extremes, and awkward postures that arise from improper work methods and improperly designed workstations, tools, and equipment.

2.2.1. Work stations

2.2.2. Cafeteria

2.2.3. Technology

### 2.1.1 Job Contents

Researcher has captured the data on the Job design, work variety. Out of total irrespective of job profile, 59% of respondents reported to have monotonous work while 41% have said to have diversity in the nature of work. When it comes to apply creativity at work, data highlights that 59% of the respondents from Director and senior Manager grade apply creativity to improve the work quality while only 19% of the Manager and administrative workers uses creativity at work. When research further explored on work allocation and role clarity, around 79% reported that the work assigned to them does not match with their job descriptions. Thus role ambiguity has been identified as one of the key barriers in psychological hazards.

Respondents Job Profile	Monotonous work	Work variety	Creativity in work
Director	61	119	77
Senior Manager	92	88	133
Manager	121	59	50
Clerical and Administrative Workers	153	27	18

## Work schedule and Workload

Researcher has explored the respondents on 3-point Likert scale on selected variables identified from the WHO report (Leka S., 2003) and found that 57% were working in shift works and shift changes on rotation basis. Out of 57% respondents working in shifts, only 32% were satisfied with the shifts jobs while 52% were dissatisfied. 16% of the respondents have chosen neutral response. When researcher discussed on workload, 76% reported that they spent equal or more than 2 extra hours in office at least 3 days in a week. On Likert Scale, out of those who spent extra hours in office, 63% were dissatisfied while 33% found satisfied. Only 4 % of them have chosen neutral response. On exploration with satisfied respondents, offerings like incentives and perks for extra working hours were the motivators for them. Reporting deadlines are also one the area, researchers explored and found that majority of the employees (52%) working on middle and executive level has expressed dissatisfaction over deadlines.

**Table: % response calculation on 3 points Likert scale**

<b>Area of enquiry (N = 180)</b>	<b>Satisfied %</b>	<b>Neutral %</b>	<b>Dissatisfied %</b>
As a shift-based employee, do you feel shift-based workings are convenient	32	16	52
Are you satisfied with equal or more than 2 hours extra working in office	63	33	4
Are you satisfied with the deadline related to deliverables	52	17	31

### **Interpersonal relationships at work**

Employee relations in horizontal and vertical cadre has been one of the contributors in the success of the organization. In a study (Johansson, 2003), said that to separate internal communication from an organization is more or less impossible since it is the communications that produce, maintain and reproduce the organization. One more study (Borca et al., 2014), highlighted that to achieve successful internal communication it's important to understand the purpose of an organization. In this study researcher has also tried to discover the relationship dynamics and found that the communication approach varies from organization to organization however a common findings was that the communication is management centric and employee at middle and executive level has limited opportunity to contribute in any decision-making process.

### **Ergonomic Hazards**

Ergonomics is the science of designing the workplace, keeping in mind the capabilities and limitations of the worker. Poor worksite design leads to fatigued, frustrated and hurting workers. This rarely leads to the most productive worker. More likely, it leads to a painful and costly injury, lower productivity and poor product quality.

### **Work stations**

Work station is one of the key variables in ergonomic hazards which hampers the health of employee unknowingly. Sitting arrangement and leg space in cubicles are the facilities, majority of the employees (57%) are not satisfied with. In terms of office facilities, researcher asked on the satisfaction level, 62% respondents were satisfied with the infrastructure available for the employee. 81% of the dissatisfied respondents expressed disappointment over the cafeteria within office. After exploration it has come that the cafeteria only offers tea/coffee and snacks. While asking on the facilities like yoga/indoor games within the office premises, 85% reported replied No.

<b>Area of enquiry (N = 180)</b>	<b>Satisfied %</b>	<b>Neutral %</b>	<b>Dissatisfied %</b>
As a shift-based employee, do you feel shift-based workings are convenient	59	18	23
Are you satisfied with equal or more than 2 hours extra working in office	64	19	17
Are you satisfied with the deadline related to deliverables	8	14	78

Organizational behaviors play a significant, often neglected role in cuing the behaviors of individuals. It is only organization that make decisions about the availability and quality of food items in cafeteria and whether employees receive incentives to use cars but no incentives to use bicycles (Butland, B. Et. Al. 2007). Organization requires stringent communication system to inform and educate the employee on various aspects other than the training programmes. Researcher tried to understand in this study whether companies have a communication system (email/messaging/call/others) to educate the employee. 82% respondents reported there is no communication, employee receives on health and safety aspects. Only 39% of the respondents said the company has visuals in the office to highlight the health and safety among the employee. Only 8% employee reported that receive weekly/daily email on health and safety related topics through internal email. On exploration, 89% respondents said the company has health and safety policy, but adherence is limited. On Likert scale, 78% of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction in company's health and safety program implementation plan. While 8% are satisfied with the facility and 14% has chosen neutral response.

### **Respondents Health Determinants**

#### **Disease or signs of disease**

Researcher has also explored if the respondent has developed any ailment or related signs during the professional working period. On multiple response option (Table-1), 32% reported about eye problems, 57% about overweight/obesity, 81% says about any form of stress. 75% reported gastric problem while less than 30% respondent reported about cervical and arthritis problem. Researcher has also collected data on smoking and drinking habits and 38% of the respondents found smoking everyday frequently while 32% said occasionally. Almost similar percentage 30% were among non-smokers. Around drinking habits, only 17% expressed that they drink frequently (At least once in a month), while 52% reported that they drink occasionally, and 31% respondents were among non-consumer. On exploration with frequent smoker and drinker, it has come out that work stress is one of the key reason, takes towards the addiction which is further becoming illness causing factors.

<b>Types of problem respondent reported</b>	<b>% of respondents (N=180)</b>
Cervical problem	29%
Arthritis	21%
Overweight/Obesity	57%
Eye related ailment	32%
Wrist problem	22%
Gastric problem	75%
Any form stress	81%
Heart disease/Blood pressure	49%

#### **Dietary habits**

The study analyzed the received data on dietary habits of employee and found that during the week days, 86% of them consumes only one complete meal in form of dinner. Out of total respondents, 71% rely on the office cafeteria, local dhaba or restaurants for lunch or dinner during working hours. Out of



these eaters, 81% said they eat some snacks, Paratha or some stuffed items. 81% respondent reported that the office cafeteria does not carry the health friendly diets. There is only option of tea/coffee or some market-based snacks.

### **Physical Activity**

Researcher has also explored, how professionals are getting time to do physical activities and out of total respondents, 72% reported that they do not exercise even for half an hour in a month's time. Only 12% reported, doing half an hour moderate to intense physical activity five times a week. Around 16% of the respondents said they do exercise occasionally sometime indoor and outdoor. Asking about the average 5 minutes break every 2 hours (such as standing up or stretching or taking a short walk) at work, 38% respondents said yes while 35% says no break on every 2 hours. 27% respondents said they take break as and when feel required.

### **Implications of the Study:**

Since India has diverse category of workforce in various multinational companies and currently has limited research on the organizational behavior and rise in obesity, this research aims to educate not only health practitioners but organizations as well whose having interest in improving the organizational behavior and the health of their workforce to increase work productivity. By doing the study, research has come up with the association among identified variables related to the employee and organization which is adversely affecting the health of the employee and organization as well.

To motivate the employee, companies can use the findings to develop healthy and employee friendly organizational space and culture. This research can bridge the gap between employer and employee by examining health interventions within the workplace so that both direct and indirect costs associated with the heart disease, stroke and diabetes can be reduced which is promoting obesity within the workplace.

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