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An Overview on the Employees Stress Causing Factors and Ways to Manage Stress

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A B S T R A C T

Stress is a psychological feeling which affects an individual by making a change in his behaviour and mental health. The major issue the employees face and find difficult to overcome is stress. Thus, this paper intends to find out the basic problems which create stress in employees. Many Internal interruptions and some external disturbances causing stress are to be evaluated. This paper could be basic study on what the employees feel as stress factors such as work pressure, interpersonal relationships, workload and so on towards the company. Through this research work the companies could find a solution to manage their employees in a right way avoiding stress. This study mainly focuses on the major factors for stress among employees as well as to find on how they cope up to manage those stress. This study also finds additional factors which companies adopt to reduce the stress among their employees. Since the population is random by picking various employees from various companies the findings can vary depending on the type of organization and job roles.

Keywords: Internal interruptions, Interpersonal relationships, workload

1. INTRODUCTION:

The word stress is derived from a Latin word "stringere", meaning to draw tight. From the view point of physical sciences, the phenomena of stress are evident in all materials when they are subjected to "force, pressure, strain or strong-front". Every material steel, rock or wood has its own limit up to which it can withstand stress without being damaged. Similarly human beings can tolerate certain level of stress. Stress is highly individualistic in nature. Some people have high levels of stress tolerance for stress and thrive very well in the face of several stressors in the environment. In fact, some individuals will not perform well unless they experience a level of stress which activates and energizes then to put forth their best results.

20TH century has been regarded as the period of incredible change in human history. Philosophers and scientists have been various names to this period. Peter Drucker has called it "The Age of Discontinuity", John Galbraith has called it "The Age of Future Shock" and Hare Albrecht called it "The Age of Anxiety". Stress has become the 21 century buzz word, from the high pervading corporate echelons to the bassinets of teaching infants' nurseries we find this world liberally used. Stress is part of modern life. Various events in life cause stress, starting with the birth of a child and enduring with the death of a dear one. Urbanization, industrialization and the increase scale of operations in society are some of the reasons for rising stress. It is an inevitable consequence of socio-economic complexity and to some extent, its stimulant as well. People experience stress as they can no longer have complete control over what happen in their lives. The telephone goes out of order, power is shut down, water supply is disrupted, children perform poorly at school etc, we feel frustrated and then stressed.

1.1 DEFINITION OF STRESS

Stress is defined as *"a state of psychological and physiological imbalance resulting from the disparity between situational demand and the individual's ability and motivation to meet those needs."*

Dr. Hans Selye, one of the leading authorities on the concept of stress, described stress as *"the rate of all wear and tear caused by life."*

According to the current **World Health Organization's (WHO)** definition, occupational or work-related stress *"is the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope."*

A formal definition of work related stress is: *"The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them at work."*

1.2 OBJECTIVE OF STRESS MANAGEMENT

A certain level of stress is always present in any workplace. As soon as the level of stress escalates to a point that it becomes dangerous for the well-being of the organization as well as employees, stress management becomes important. The objectives of managing stress are as follows:

Enables you to motivate employees better: Stressful situation can have a devastating effect on employees' morale that causes increased absenteeism and employee turnover however, good stress management skills help the morale of employees to stay intact so that they are more motivated and better focused on their jobs and performance

Reduced chances of workplace conflicts: Among many other factors contributing to workplace conflicts such as differences in opinions, backgrounds and personalities, the increased level of stress also plays a major role. It shatters the workplace relationships, undermining the overall culture. However, effective stress management skills prevent such distractions and builds teamwork, making everyone's lives easier and fun.

Improves productivity even in stressful situations: Since the employee morale and workplace relationships remain intact, stress management skills are considered to be one of the major contributors to the improved productivity with ideal stress management skills, there will be lesser chances of customer complaints or poor decision-making even in the most stressful circumstances

1.3 CAUSES OF STRESS

The major causes of stress at work or in organization

Career Concern: If an employee feels that he is very much behind in the corporate ladder, then he may experience stress. If he seems that there are no opportunities for self-growth, he may experience stress. Hence, unfulfilled career expectations are the significant source of stress.

Role Ambiguity: It occurs when the person doesn't know what he is supposed to do, on the job. His tasks and responsibilities are not clear. The employee is not sure what he is expected to do. It creates confusion in the minds of the worker and results in stress.

Rotating Work Shifts: Stress may occur in those individuals who work on different work shifts. Employees may be expected to work on day shift for some days and then on the night shift. That may create problems in adjusting to the shift timings, and it can affect not only personal life but also family life of the employee.

Role Conflict: It takes place when people have different expectations from the person performing a particular role. It can also occur if the job is not as per expectation, or when a job demands a certain type of behavior that is against the person's moral values.

Occupational Demands: Some jobs are more demanding than others. Jobs that involve risk, and danger are more stressful. Research findings indicate, job that cause stress needs constant monitoring of equipment and devices, unpleasant physical conditions, making decisions, etc.

Lack of Participation in Decision-making: Many experienced employees feel that management should consult them on matters affecting their jobs. In reality, the superiors hardly ask the concerned employees before taking a decision. That develops a feeling of being neglected, which may lead to stress.

Work Overload: Excessive workload leads to stress as it puts a person under tremendous pressure. Work overload may take two different forms:

Qualitative work overload implies performing a job that is complicated or beyond the employee's capacity.

Quantitative work overload is a result of many activities performed in a prescribed time.

Work Underload: In this, case, too little work or very easy work is expected on the part of the employee. Doing less work or jobs of routine and simple nature would lead to monotony and boredom, which can lead to stress.

Poor Working Conditions: Employees may be subject to poor working conditions. It would include bad lighting and ventilation, unhygienic sanitation facilities, excessive noise, and dust, presence of toxic gasses and fumes, inadequate safety measures, etc. All these unpleasant conditions create physiological and psychological imbalance in humans thereby causing stress.

Lack of Group Cohesiveness: Every group is characterized by its cohesiveness, although they differ widely in its degree. Individuals experience stress when there is no unity among work group members. There are mistrust, jealousy, frequent quarrels, etc., in groups and this lead to stress to employees.

Interpersonal and Intergroup Conflict: These conflicts take place due to differences in perceptions, attitudes, values and beliefs between two or more individuals and groups. Such conflicts can be a source of stress for group members.

Organizational Changes: When changes occur, people have to adapt to those changes, and this may cause stress. Stress is higher when changes are significant or unusual like transfer or adoption of new technology.

Lack of Social Support: When individuals believe that they have the friendship and support of others at work, their ability to cope with the effects of stress increases. If this kind of social support is not available, then an employee experiences more stress.

1.4 IMPACT OF STRESS

The major impact of stress in the workplace includes:

Individual Impact

Individual consequences affect the person, mostly. However, this may also affect the company directly or indirectly.

Individual consequences may be divided as follow:

- ✓ *Behaviour consequences* are reactions which can be harmful to the person and the others.

- ✓ *Mental consequences* depend on person's mental and physical health.

- ✓ *Physical consequences* would affect the person's physical state. Stress may result in physical disorders.

Organisational Impact

It is clear that, as mentioned before, individual consequences can affect the organization, but stress has other consequences which may have effects on institution more directly.

- ✓ Functional consequences which is lack of proper and correct function

- ✓ Quitting, the most important kinds of quitting are absence and resign

- ✓ Attitudes, job satisfaction, mood, organizational commitments get accordingly affected along with the personal motivation accordingly.

Personal - Organization Impact

Exhaustion is the final impact of stress that either affects person or organization. Exhaustion is the feeling of fading. It appears when the person is bearing many pressures and little satisfaction

1.5 TYPES OF STRESSORS

The following are types of stressors that affect an employee at the workplace.

Job role: this exists when the employee is confused as to what task he/she should be doing or when the employee has overwhelming amount of work to be done with so little time. Stress could also arise as a result of ambiguity. This situation is likely to happen at any type of occupation.

Underutilization: This means that the worker has insufficient work to encourage his/her motivation.

Responsibility for others: This increases stress level, if employees face high responsibility for others. Those who are in charge of others at the workplace and people higher up the organizational hierarchy are often prone to more stress because of expectations from their coworkers.

Poor working conditions: these conditions are also major contributors to stress, these include extreme heat, cold, noise and overcrowded

1.6 NEED:

Today in this technological era, employees are not ready to work in an unhappy environment. They are not mentally prepared for undergoing pressure in the company. Through my report, I am going to find out the causes of happiness quotient the company can concentrate and make its employee's face thereby improving their performance. This pressure at work leads them to a mental and physical illness. "Stress is a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances and it is also an individual's response to a disturbing factor in the environment". This study will help the organization (employees) to know what causes stress and how to reduce the same in the employees. Yet, the stress level of an employee is beyond the prediction of anyone. These work pressures among employees cause physical, emotional and intellectual disorders. Henceforth this research would aid to know the factors causing stress to employees besides advising certain methods to lessen the stress among employees.

- **To identify the impact of *workload* on occupational stress of employees**

- **To study the influence of *work interpersonal relationship* of employees**

- **To understand the perception of employees on *job insecurity* causing stress**

- **To know the *company wide stress management techniques* adopted by the company for managing stress among employees.**

1.7 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

Primary Objectives

To study the stress management among the employees

Secondary Objectives

- ✓ To identify the impact of *workload* on occupational stress of employees

- ✓ To study the influence of *work interpersonal relationship* of employees

- ✓ To understand the perception of employees on *job insecurity* causing stress

- ✓ To know the *company wide stress management techniques* adopted by the company for managing stress among employees

1.8 SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

- ✓ The existing employees will get benefit from this research as this research provide better understanding on stress and the impact towards employees.

- ✓ This research is aimed to contribute to the academic field of research regarding stress, strategies in coping with stress, and other related matters.

- ✓ The research also may enrich the researcher's knowledge in the subject matter and help in career development.

- ✓ Through this study the employees will be aware of the factors causing stress and can identify the right coping strategies so that they can manage their stress efficiently.

2. Review of literature:

Weiss M. (1983) The Author investigated the sources of Job stress that is linked to Job dissatisfaction, Job related tension and anxiety and reduced productivity and effectiveness. He tried to reduce sources of stress so that he can prevent the deleterious health consequences. Through his study he determined the potential of social support that alleviate the deleterious consequences of stress.

Michailidis M. and Georgiou Y. (2005) The author focus on the degree of occupational stress that is influenced by the factors like level of education, various patterns of their relaxation and any other habits like drinking or smoking. The implications say that consuming alcoholic drinks is the main factor that determines the degree of occupational stress in an individual.

According to Dianna Kenny (2006), Stress management interventions arose in the 1960s with the growth of the community mental health and crisis intervention movements, disenchantment with medical model approaches to mental health and dissatisfaction with traditional psychiatry, the development of behavioral and cognitive-behavioral therapies, the growing acceptance of psychological problems within the community, and the surgence of self-help approaches to psychological well-being. There is a vast and truly daunting literature on occupational stress, one that can at times generates more heat than light. A number of recent editions of journals have been devoted to the topic of occupational stress and its management.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. The research methodology in the present study deals with research design, data collection methods, sampling methods, survey, analysis and interpretations.

A research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. A well-structured questionnaire is framed. Data is collected from the employees from various companies. Findings are made and necessary suggestions and recommendations are given.

3.1 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Descriptive approach is one of the most popular approaches these days. In this approach, a problem is described by the researcher by using questionnaire or schedule. This approach enables a researcher to explore new areas of investigation.

3.2 SOURCES OF DATA

There are two types of data collection namely primary data collection and secondary data collection.

Primary Data

The primary data is defined as the data, which is collected for the first time and fresh in nature, and happen to be original in character through field survey. It was collected through questionnaire (personally administered) by field survey.

Secondary Data

The secondary data are those which have already been collected by someone else and have been passed through statistical process. The secondary data for this study are already available in the firm's internal records, annual report, brochures, and company's website.

3.3 Structure of Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire has been prepared to get the relevant information from the respondents. The questionnaire consists of a variety of questions presented to the respondents for their despondence. The various types of questions used in this survey are:

- ✓ Open ended questions
- ✓ Closed ended questions
- ✓ Multiple option questions

3.4 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Sampling is that part of statistical practice concerned with the selection of individual observations intended to yield some knowledge about a population of concern, especially for the purposes of statistical inference. Each observation measures one or more properties (weight, location, etc.) of an observable entity enumerated to distinguish objects or individuals. Survey weights often need to be applied to the data to adjust for the sample design. Results from probability theory and statistical theory are employed to guide practice.

The sampling process comprises several stages:

- ✓ Defining the population of concern
- ✓ Specifying a sampling frame, a set of items or events possible to measure
- ✓ Specifying a sampling method for selecting items or events from the frame
- ✓ Determining the sample size
- ✓ Implementing the sampling plan
- ✓ Sampling and data collecting
- ✓ Reviewing the sampling process

Sample Unit

The employees of various companies are the sample unit in the survey.

Sample Size

The sample size chosen for this study is 80.

Type of Sampling

The sampling type is non-probability which involves deliberating selections of particular units constituting a sample, which represents the universe.

Stratified sampling:

Stratum means a layer population from which samples are to be selected may contain a number of layers from each layer a few samples are selected that is why this method is called stratified sampling.

3.5 ANALYTICAL TOOLS

- ✓ Percentage analysis
- ✓ Chi-square Test
- ✓ Mean square analysis

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

4.1 Mean Rank Analysis to find the best for the Satisfactory factors in the company

Particulars	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Salary	2.83	1.21	4
Recognition	3.27	1.30	2
Awards and rewards	3.41	1.29	1

Other Facilities (Canteen, Cab, Restrooms, Cabin, Chairs)	3.03	1.37	3

Inference:

Most of the respondents chose awards and rewards to be good compared with other factors like salary, recognition & other facilities where **"Awards and Rewards"** is the first factor with the highest mean value of 3.41 **"Recognition"** gets the second highest mean value 3.27, the next highest mean value is 3.03 which is **"Other facilities"** and finally **"Salary"** with 2.83 mean value.

4.2 Chi-Square Test To Find The Significant Relationship Between The Gender Of The Respondent And His/Her Stress Level:

Ho = There is no significant relationship between the gender and the stress level

H1 = There is a significant relationship between the gender and the stress level

ANOVA		
	Value	**Approx Sig.**
Nominal by nominal Phi	327	.014
Cramer's	.327	.014
N of Valid Cases	80	

Inference:

We can see that the significance level is 0.014 ($p = .014$), which is lower than 0.95, so we accept alternate hypotheses H1 and reject null hypothesis H0, thus **there is a significant relationship** between the gender of the respondents and the stress level in the company.

5.1 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- In this study there are 80 respondents and there are more number of male customers than female   customers

- The respondents age covers from 20 to above 50 but most of the age group working in companies were between the age of of 27-32

- The experience of the employees covers 3-5 years

- Most of the respondents are married

- In general, most of the employees are satisfied with their company

- The employees feel they feel highly stressed due to the top management pressure

- Most of the respondents have said that their company don't take any steps to reduce the stress of the employees

- Regarding the salary of the employees most of them feel neutral about their salaries

- Most of the respondents are not feeling happy with the recognition the company is showing towards them.

- Most of the respondents are feeling Dissatisfied with the awards and rewards provided in their company.

- The respondents feel neutrally satisfied with the other facilities which is being provided in the company

- When compared with overall satisfaction factors most of the respondents feel awards and rewards to be a good factor.

- Through analysis it is found that gender has an impact in the stress level of the employees.

5.2 SUGGESTIONS:

➢ Most of the employees feel that the top management pressure is casing them to get stressed out some simple tasks can be delegated to subordinates without losing effectiveness so that we can reduce the overload of work.

➢ Adopting the work to home transition strategy. It means instead of carrying the pressures of the work to home, the suggestion is to start the unwinding process during the work day and enter the home in a relaxed and peaceful mind.

➢ Since many employees fail to discuss the stress problems with the HR some effective measures could be taken like giving them with counseling when they face problems, because counseling is the discussion of a problem that usually has emotional content with an employee in order to help the employee cope within better.

➢ A special counseling cell in addition with HR team could be created for employees who seek assistance on how to deal with alcohol and drug abuse, managing personal finances, handling conflicts at the work place, dealing with marital and other family problems, and coping with health problems.

➢ Many employees are not properly recognized in the company so honoring the employees with awards and rewards could be a motivator to work better without stress.

➢ Engaging the bored employee in aerobic exercise, because it stimulates the brain and the body. Also, the employee can do meditation and yoga in their daily life.

5.3 CONCLUSION

Stress in the work place has become the black plague of an organization. Much of the stress at work is caused not only by work overload and time pressure but also by lack of rewards and praise, and more importantly, by not providing individuals with the autonomy to do their work as they would like. Most of the employees were happy with the stress coping strategies of the company which was found by the structured interview. The research was primarily focusing on identifying the factors causing stress mainly focusing at work overload, top management pressure, career advancement, work interpersonal relationship, and demographic factors (age, gender, salary scale, academic background and years of experience).

Future research can be based on qualitative approach. This is because usually qualitative approach very useful in capturing emotions and behavior related factors. As the stress more on psychology and behavioral, in order to capture the difficult to be studied area, qualitative should be used. Moreover, this research only focuses on work interpersonal relationship, work overload, career advancement, and job insecurity as the factors causing the stress. However, there could be other factors that can cause stress such as organizational policies, complexity of the tasks, deadlines, work-life balance and others. Thus, it is recommended to carry future research considering all the dimension of stress. In addition, this research only focuses few demographic factors. Maybe the future researcher should also consider marital status, number of children, types of works handled, and other similar relevant points.

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