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STRESS AT WORKPLACE – AN OPINION SURVEY

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Abstract

Stress at work is a relatively new phenomenon of modern lifestyles. The nature of work has gone through drastic changes over the last century and it is still changing at whirlwind speed. They have touched almost all professions, starting from an artist to a surgeon, or a commercial pilot to a sales executive. With change comes stress, inevitably. Professional stress or job stress poses a threat to physical health. Work related stress in the life of organized workers, consequently, affects the health of organizations. The workplace had become a high stress environment in many organizations cutting across industries. Employees were experiencing high level of stress due to various factors such as high workload, tight deadlines, high targets, type of work, lack of job satisfaction, long working hours, pressure to perform, etc. Interpersonal conflicts at the workplace, such as boss-subordinate relationships and relationships with peers, are also a source of stress.

Experts believed that the dysfunctional aspects of stress could directly impact an organization's performance and also affect the well-being of its employees. Stress at the workplace was linked to absenteeism, higher attrition, and decreased productivity. Stress led to fatigue, irritability, poor communication, and quality problems/errors.

High stress levels also affected the morale and motivation of the employees. Prolonged exposure to stress without effective coping mechanisms could lead to a host of physical and mental problems. Stress could lead to stress-induced gastrointestinal problems, irritable bowel syndrome, acidity, acid reflux, insomnia, depression, heart disease, etc. Moreover stress could push the victim toward high risk behavior such as smoking, drinking, and substance abuse. Stress-related illness led to increase in absenteeism and attrition affecting the profitability of the organizations. Organizations cutting across industries were gearing up to provide employees with a stress-free healthy environment. The efforts to address this issue were more pronounced in some industries than others. Experts felt that, though stress at the workplace is a global phenomenon, professionals in some industries were more susceptible to stress than others.

Even in India, organizations had woken up to this menace and are resorting to novel methods including teaching the employees dancing and music, trekking, etc, to reduce stress at the workplace.

This paper aims at describe the stress at workplace. 250 members of different organizations are contacted by direct approach method.

Keywords: *Correlation, Research, Stress, Weighted Average & Workplace*

Introduction

Stress is an experience that creates physiological and psychological imbalances within a person. It is a body reaction to any demands or changes in its internal and external environment, such as temperature, pollution, humidity and working conditions, it leads to stress. In these days of competition when one wishes to surpass what has been achieved by others, leading to an imbalance between demands and resources, it causes psychological stress. Thus, stress is a part and parcel of everyday life. Selye has defined stress as "the non-specific response of the body to any demand made upon it".

Statement of the Problem

Today, the rules of workplace are rapidly changing and a new yardstick is being used to judge people. This is not merely in terms of one's academic achievements or work experience, but also how well one is able to handle his or her own emotions and others. Surprisingly enough Indian who deal with a variety of tension in their daily lives seems to zipper up their emotive side as soon as they enter their workplace and these negative emotions adversely affect the organizations climate and their performance in the workplace. Thus taking into account all these, research was initiated in knowing the factors which contribute towards emotional quotient of the employees.

Objectives

In view of the above, the objectives of this study are:

- To study and analyses the effectiveness of stress management in the workplace of the employees in varied organizations.
- To find the causes of stress,
  - (1) Due to management.
  - (2) Harassment.
  - (3) Long hours of work.
- To analyse the impact of stress in performance of the employee.
- To find out how to handle stress by employees and by employer.
- To suggest effective HR practices related to stress management.
- To suggest suitable measures to reduce stress

Purpose of the Study

Job stress can occur for everyone in any position in any industry. Stress can affect high level executives, upper and middle level managers. The various stress relating problems like coronary heart disease hyper tension, diabetics, gastrointestinal disorders, peptic ulcer, asthma, migraine, alcoholism, drug addiction, depression etc., are accountable for poor health. These problems are further affecting organizational performance adversely by contributing to poor productivity, high employee turnover and

higher degree of job satisfaction. The increased stress related costs are fostering the organization to identify the various approaches to study stress at work.

The present research is designed to investigate the relationship and impact of work related stress on employees by testing various relationships by framing hypotheses.

Review of Literature

A literature review is a body of text that aims to review the critical points of current knowledge including substantive findings as well as theoretical and methodological contributions to a particular topic. It is a synthesis of the literature that describes what is known or has been studied regarding the particular research question. The review is guided by the variables that have been identified in the research purpose and aim to give the reader an over view of what is known about those variables, how these variables have been studies in the past and with whom they have been studies.

The exploratory study was conducted in Bangladesh with a view to assess the view of employee's on job satisfaction through a structured questionnaire. The research was conducted over 250 samples using judgmental sampling technique. Result shows that P values are less than the significance level that is 0.05.H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted which means that the employees are dissatisfied in those cases of services.

A Study was conducted in Italy with an objective to study job stress in a factory producing high fashion clothing. A total of 3000 workers (2545 women &455 men) were investigated to determine anxiety, occupation stress (using the Italian version of the Karasek Job Content Questionnaire) and perception of symptoms (using the Italian version of the Somatization scale of Symptom Checklist SCL-90) results shows that perception of low decision latitude seems to play a major role in determining job strain and workplace intervention aimed at reducing the risk of adverse health effects.

A Comparative study was conducted in Hong Kong with the objective to measure and compare the level of stress among factory workers in Hong Kong and china, the samples for the study included 342 factory workers in china and 238 workers from Hong Kong. The result shows that by the use of t- test "intrinsic to the job" was more a source of stress among Chinese workers than the Hong Kong workers (t-4.05, $p<0.0005$) and support was a coping strategies more adopted by the Hong Kong worker than Chinese worker ($t=2.46, p<0.01$). The logical relationship between job satisfaction , mental well- being and physical well-being that were found in the two groups have provided support to the findings obtained in the western countries.

A Study was conducted in university of agriculture, Faisalabad. With an objective to assess the level of satisfaction of working women in export garment factory, the sample was selected by purposive sampling technique. The data was collected from the sample of 150 female workers by using well defined interviewing schedule. The result shows that respondents were facing the problems of bad behavior of supervisors, harassment, mental

torture which leads to depression. Based on research findings it was concluded that the majority of the respondents felt their job was not secure. Mostly factory workers agreed that they were offered job promotion on the basis of sexual favor.

A Study was conducted in China with an objective to investigate the occupational stress and influential factors of the peasant workers in factory.410 peasant workers in factory are tested by revised work requirement control table and occupational stress measurement tools and the data were statistically analyzed by analysis of covariance. The result shows that the score of everyday sense of stress in female workers are higher than the male workers (P<0.O5,ORP<0.01). Workers with higher education level scored more in decision making and less in mental health than ones with lower education levels (P <0.05). The workers divorced scored more in occupational stress factors, everyday nervous sense of stress and work future prospects than other marriage status workers (P < 0.05). Living with the family scored more in self-respect sense, mental health than other living styles (P < 0.05). The findings shows that gender, educational level, marriage status, living styles and work environment have some influence on occupational stressors and strains. Self-respect sense and occupational stress factors can impact mental health and depression symptoms.

A Study was conducted in BRAC University in Thailand .This study aims at identifying the factors of global technological change on female textile and garment workers. It covers three impacts area such as job security, job satisfaction and work relations. Multivariable analysis such as factor analysis and multiple regression was used to analyses the data. Result shows that factors concerning job security, job satisfaction and work relation together are significantly related to the overall socio economic living in female garment workers in Thailand.

A Study was conducted in Tirunelveli in Tamilnadu with the objective to determine how work related factor enhances better quality of life among textile manufacturing workers. The study was conducted on the sample of 210 workers. The respondents were selected on the stratified random sampling. The result shows that insecurity of job leads to discouragement, anxiety and even bitterness for negative perception of quality of work life.

A study was conducted in university of the Philippines; Manila to investigate the impact of organizational factors on perceived job stress among women workers in the IT dominated garment and electronic industries. The sample included 630 women respondents. Structured questionnaire and interview technique is used to collect the data. The Chi-square analysis showed that there were interactions among the organizational factors (P=0.05 and 0.10). These factors included the need for better quality and new products; tasks requiring intense concentration; exposure to radiation, chemical, noise, and vapor hazards; standing for prolonged periods of time; and highly monitored, repetitious work. Workers experienced job stress (P=.05) when they were subjected to low job autonomy, poor work quality, close monitoring, and hazardous work pressure.

A Study was conducted in Institute of Behavioral Sciences, Semmelweis University, Budapest, Hungary, with a aim to determine besides the prevalence of dysmenorrhoea whether menstrual pain was associated with job control, co-worker social support, job security and dissatisfaction with the job. Data of 2772 working women aged 18-55 years, participants in the Hungaro study 2002 nation-wide representative survey was analyzed. Binary logistic regression was used to determine the association between work stress factors and menstrual pain. Altogether 15.5% of women reported to experience menstrual pain that limits their daily activity. Low job control, low co-worker social support and low job security were found to be associated with a higher risk for menstrual pain even after controlling for the effect of age, educational attainment, parity status, smoking, body-mass index and treatment for gynecological problems. Job dissatisfaction was also related to dysmenorrheal, albeit not significantly.

A Study was conducted in north china medical university with an objective to investigate the effect of occupational stress on menses and sex hormones. The study included 415 female knitting workers and investigated by using generic job stress questionnaire, their venous blood were collected and the six sex hormones were detected by using radio immune method .The result shows that The abnormal rate of menses, menstrual blood volume, menstrual cycle, menstrual period was 36.24%, 19.80%, 14.43%, 11.41% respectively. The prevalence rate of dysmenorrheal and premenstrual syndrome was 1.01% and 29.19% respectively. The more depression, the higher menses disorders in non-intrauterine device (IUD) group.

The more job demands, the higher daily stress in IUD group while the longer work time, the more abnormal menstrual period in two groups. More physical symptoms and deeper depression in non-IUD group were related to higher abnormal rate of menstrual blood volume. Prolonged daily work-time was the risk factor of menstrual period. It also shows that higher stress degree can lead to higher FSH and E2 and lower T level, and induce menses disorder.

Whilst there is little disagreement about the prevalence of stress there is considerable debate about what the word (stress) actually refers to. In ordinary conversation we seem to be willing to apply the word to both cause and effect. In other words, the common sense view of stress is that it is a combination of external stressors and our response in the early and highly influential research of Selye (1936). Stress is as the result of an interaction between an individual‘s emotional, intellectual, social, and physical resources and the demands on him or her. Marshall &Cooper (1981) argue that ‘stress is a different phenomenon form – pressure’. Stress is something more than mere pressure. It carries strong overtones of the breakdown of normal human performance. In an earlier work, Cooper & Marshall, (1978), the same two authors concluded that stress is essentially individually defined and must be understood with reference to characteristics of both the individual and his environment, as it is the outcome of the two (p.4)

Methodology

- The intended research design is descriptive by nature.
- Collection of data is done by referring literatures and collecting data from the respondents.
- Purposive sampling is done and 250 respondents are approached for primary data collection.
- A structured Questionnaire will be used for data collection.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

Data analysis and interpretation is an attempt to organize and summarize data in order to increase results in such a manner that enables the researcher to relate critical point with the study objective.

The information collections may be illegible, incomplete and inaccurate to a certain extent thus collected data in lying scattered in several data collections formats. The data lying in such a crude form are not ready for analysis. The researcher must take some measures to bring the data a term where it can be easily analyzed. Various steps which are required for this purpose are editing, coding and tabulating.

Editing refers to inspecting, correcting and notifying the collected data. Coding refers to assigning number or other symbol to each answer or placing them in categories to prepare data for tabulation.

The analysis of data in a general way involves a number of closely related operations to perform in a manner that they answer the research questions. In this study, the researcher followed above processes carefully and presented it with graphical representation whenever necessary in this chapter.

Analysis

Analysis is the process of placing the data in the ordered form, combining them with the existing information and extracting the meaning from them. The raw data becomes information only when they are analyzed and when put in a meaningful form.

Interpretation

If refers to the task of drawing inferences from the collected facts after the field study. In fact, it is a search for broader meaning of research findings. Thus interpretation is the device through the factor that seems to explain what has been observed by the researcher in the course of the study, can be better understood and it also provides a theoretical conception, which can serve as guide for further researches.

Analysis Methods

The collected data are analyzed by using simple percentage method, correlation, weighted average and one way anova and chi square tests.

Weighted average method

Table: Weightages for Employees' Stress Level

Factors	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total weight	Average weight	Rank
I thing stress is necessary to do my work	80	100	50	15	5	300	4	3
I do my work under considerable stress	66	130	38	10	6	301	4.01333333	2
I feel that I have been over loaded with too many jobs	28	57	90	50	25	232	3.09333333	6
My work related stress is manageable	39	80	105	20	6	263	3.50666667	4
Long working hours create a stress	55	69	68	40	18	302	4.02666667	1
I feel high mental work in my organization.	25	40	65	90	30	241	3.21333333	5

Interpretation

From the weighted average table, it is inferred that got long working hours create stress first rank, i do my work under considerable stress second rank. I thing stress is necessary to do my work ranks third, my work related stress is manageable got fourth rank, I feel high mental work in my organization got fifth rank and I feel that i have been overload with too many jobs remain sixth.

Anova Test

A test for association between the internal and external stress.

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no association between the internal and external stress.

Alternate Hypothesis (H_a): There is an association between the internal and external stress.

Anova Table

I get Stress Mostly by External People

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.217	4	.304	.275	.893
Within Groups	77.450	70	1.106		
Total	78.667	74			

It is inferred from the above table, that the calculated ANNOVA VALUE (0.275) of the stress is less than the table value (1.9160) at 5% level of significance. Therefore alternative hypothesis is accepted and null hypothesis is rejected. Hence there is a significant relationship between internal and external stress.

Chi-Square Test – 1

Relationship between Age and I don't Have Roper Information about My Work

Age	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
20-30	22	42	36	27	25	**150**
30-40	7	20	10	10	13	**60**
40-50	8	9	5	6	2	**30**
ABOVE 50	0	4	4	2	0	**10**
Total	**35**	**75**	**55**	**45**	**40**	**250**

Degrees of freedom = (C-1) (R—1)

= (5-1) (4-1) = 12

Formula

$$x^2 = \Sigma \{(O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i\}$$

Where

x^2 = Chi-square; O = Observed value & E = Expected value

Calculation

O	E	O-E	$(O-E)^2$	$(O-E)^2 / E$
20	21	-1	1	0.048
42	45	-3	9	0.200
36	33	3	9	0.272
27	27	0	0	0
25	24	1	1	0.476
7	8.4	-1.4	1.96	0.233
20	18	2	4	0.222
10	13.2	-3.2	10.24	0.775
10	10.8	-0.8	0.64	0.059
13	9.6	3.4	11.56	1.204
8	4.2	3.8	14.44	3.438
9	9	0	0	0
5	6.6	-1.6	2.56	0.388
6	5.4	0.6	0.36	0.066
2	4.8	-2.8	7.84	1633
0	1.4	-1.4	1.96	1.4
4	3	1	1	0.333
4	2.2	1.8	3.24	1.473
2	1.8	0.2	0.04	0.022
0	1.6	-1.6	2.56	1.6
Total				**13.842**

Null Hypothesis (Ho)

There is no significant relationship between age and I don't have proper information about my work

Alternate Hypothesis (H1)

There is a close relationship between age and I don't have proper information about my work.

Chi-square Result

Calculated chi-square value = 13.842
Degrees of freedom = 12
Table value = 21.026
Level of significance = Sig. At 5% level

Conclusion

Since the calculated value is less than that of table value, the alternate hypothesis is accepted and there exists a close relationship between age and I don't have proper information about my work.

Chi square Test - 2

Relationship between Experience and I am Happy with my Job

Experience	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
0-5	30	94	10	4	2	**140**
6-10	34	33	8	4	1	**80**
11-15	15	2	5	3	0	**25**
Above 15	1	1	2	1	0	**5**
Total	**80**	**130**	**25**	**12**	**3**	**250**

Degrees of freedom = (C-1) (R—1)
= (5-1) (4-1) = 12

Calculation

O	E	O-E	$(O-E)^2$	$(O-E)^2 / E$
30	44.8	14.8	219.04	4.889
94	72.8	21.2	449.44	6.143
10	14	-4	16	1.143
4	6.72	2.72	7.398	1.101
2	1.68	0.32	0.102	0.061
34	25.6	8.4	70.56	2.756
33	41.6	-8.6	73.96	1.778
8	8	0	0	0
4	3.84	0.16	0.026	0.007
1	0.96	0.04	0.602	0.002
15	8	7	49	6.125
2	13	-11	121	9.308
5	2.5	2.5	6.25	2.5
3	1.2	0.8	0.64	0.533
0	0.3	-0.3	0.9	3
1	1.6	-0.6	0.36	0.225
1	2.6	1.6	2.56	0.985
2	0.5	1.5	2.25	4.5
1	0.24	0.76	0.578	2.408
0	0.06	-0.06	0.004	0.067
Total				**47.561**

Null Hypothesis (Ho)

There is no significant relationship between experience and I am happy with my job.

Alternate Hypothesis (H1)

There is close relationship between experience and I am happy with my job.

Chi-square Result

Calculated chi-square value = 47.561
Degrees of freedom = 12
Table value = 21.026
Level of significance = Sig. At 5% level

Conclusion

Since the calculated value is greater than that of table value the null hypothesis is accepted and there is no relationship between experience and I am happy with my job.

Correlation Test-1

Correlation between gender of the respondents and long working hours create stress

		Gender	long working hours create stress
Gender	Pearson Correlation	1	-.197
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.091
	N	250	250
Long working hours create stress	Pearson Correlation	-.197	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.091	
	N	250	250

Interpretation

From the above table, it is clear that gender and stress due to long working hours are negatively correlated with each other.

Correlation test-2

Correlation between age of the respondent and satisfied with work environment

		Age	satisfied with work environment
Age	Pearson Correlation	1	-.016
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.893
	N	250	250
Satisfied with work environment	Pearson Correlation	-.016	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.893	
	N	250	250

Interpretation

From the above table, it is clear that age and stress are negatively correlated with each other.

Major Findings of the Study

- Majority (56%) is female respondents and 44% are male respondents.
- Majority of the respondents (60%) belong to the age group of 20-30, 24% of respondents fall under the category of 30-40 age group, 12% of them fall under the age group of 40-50 & 4% of the employees fall under the age group of above 50.
- Majority (56%) of the respondents have 10-5 years of experience, 32% of the respondents have got experience between 6-10 years, 10% of the respondents have got experience between 11-15years & 2% of the respondents fall under the category of above 15 years of experience.
- 54% of respondents agree to enjoy working with teams.
- 58% of respondents are satisfied with the work environment.

- 52% of respondents agree that they have enough time to do work without interruptions.
- 52% of respondent have agreed that stress is necessary to do their work.
- Many of the respondents agreed that they have enough time to spend with their family and friends each week.
- 52% of respondent have agreed that they feel considerable stress in their work.
- Minimum of the respondents strongly disagree about the availability of proper work information.
- 42% of respondents are neutral and 32% of respondents have agreed that job related stress is measurable.
- 52% of respondents agreed that they are happy with their jobs.
- 45% of respondents have strongly agreed sufficient opportunities for personal and professional growth.
- 48% of respondents felt satisfied with work.
- 45% of respondents are neutral and 23% respondents felt difficult to make decisions without supervisor.
- 26% of respondents have agreed that get very nervous when they don't meet organization commitments in job.
- 47% of respondents agreed that stress is caused mostly by external people.
- 30% of respondents neutral that stress is caused mostly by internal people
- 43% of respondents feel neutral with physical work in organization.
- 28% of respondents agreed that long working hours create stress.
- 42% of respondents have agreed that they maintain healthy relationship with their superiors and peer groups.
- 36% of respondents feel more stress in work place rather than home.
- 40% of respondents opined neutral and 26% of respondents have agreed that they feel uncomfortable with long working hour.
- 36% of respondents are not willing to move from this company because of various reasons.
- 39% of respondents have disagreed that lack of co-operation in work.
- 44% of respondents opined very adaptable to any changes in the organization.
- Majority (36%)of the respondents disagree with high mental work in organization.
- Long working hours create stress is ranked first.
- There is a significant relationship between the internal and external stress.
- It is so evident that there is close relationship between age and I don’t have proper information about my work.
- It is inferred that there is no relationship between experience and I am happy with my job.

- It is clear that gender and stress due to long working hours are negatively correlated with each other.
- It is clear that age and stress due to satisfied with work environment are negatively correlated with each other

Suggestions

On the basis of the study conducted, the researcher gives the following suggestions:

- Stress Management has gained good recognition among the individuals, but still the awareness level among all the employees has to be enhanced. Stress Management must be educated among the employees by regularly conducting Stress Management training programmes.
- The employees of the organization must develop emotional stability to ensure the physical and mental health of the self and that of the serving organization.
- Stress can negatively affect the performance of the employees in the organization. To avoid this, personally the employees should have the mental stability.
- Motivation improves job performance so training programmes should be conducted to enhance motivation.
- Organizations may think of recruiting more employees to reduce work load.
- Constant meetings have to be organized for reducing job stress and improving mental health.
- Companies may follow some stress management package programme which should consist the following:
    - Self-analysis and Personality type test.
    - Inter personal skills development.
    - Relaxation programme
    - Combination of yoga and meditation.
    - Time management.

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