

WORK STRESS OF EMPLOYEE: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

As Richard Carlson says that, "Stress is nothing more than a socially acceptable form of mental illness". Stress has been defined in different ways over the years. It was conceived of as pressure from the environment, then as strain within the person. The generally accepted definition today is one of interaction between the situation and the individual. It is the psychological and physical state that results when the resources of the individual are not sufficient to cope with the demands and pressures of the situation. Thus, stress is more likely in some than others and in some individuals than others. Stress can situations undermine the achievement of goals, both for individuals and for organizations. Acute responses to stress may be in the areas of feelings (anxiety, depression, irritability, fatigue), behaviour (being withdrawn, aggressive, tearful, unmotivated), thinking (difficulties of concentration and problem solving) or physical symptoms (palpitations, nausea, headaches). Stress is the way human beings react both physically and mentally to changes, events, and situations in their lives. People experience stress in different ways and for different reasons. The reaction is based on your perception of an event or situation. If you view a situation negatively, you will likely feel distressed i.e. overwhelmed, oppressed, or out of control. Distress is the more familiar form of stress. The other form, Eustress, results from a "positive" view of an event or situation, which is why it is also called "good stress." Stress is your body's response to change.

KEY WORDS: Stress, Stressors, Types, Effect of Stress, stress coping Mechanism.

1. INTRODUCTION

We all talk about stress and feeling stressed, usually when we feel we have too much to do and too much on our minds, or other people are making unreasonable demands on us, or we are dealing with situations that we do not have control over. The situation which makes us to become stress is known as Stressors. Signs expression of stress can be seen in people's changing behaviour. Acute responses to stress may be in the areas of feelings (anxiety, depression, irritability, fatigue), behaviour (being withdrawn, aggressive, tearful, unmotivated), thinking (difficulties of concentration and problem solving) or physical symptoms (palpitations, nausea, headaches). If stress persists, there are changes in neuroendocrine, cardiovascular, autonomic and immunological functioning, leading to mental and physical ill health (anxiety, depression, heart disease) The Situations which cause stress are those that are unpredictable or uncontrollable, uncertain, ambiguous or unfamiliar, or involving conflict, loss or performance expectations

1.1 Theoretical Framework:

Stress is the way human beings react both physically and mentally to changes, events, and situations in their lives. People experience stress in different ways and for different reasons. The reaction is based on your perception of an event or situation. If you view a situation negatively, you will likely feel *distressed*—overwhelmed, oppressed, or out of control. Distress is the more familiar form of stress. The other form, *eustress*, results from a "positive" view of an event or situation, which is why it is also called "good stress." Stress is your body's response to change. The body reacts to it by releasing adrenaline (a hormone) that causes your breathing and heart rate to speed up, and your blood pressure to rise.

1.2 Sources of Stress:

The Environment: – The environmental stressors such as weather, noise, crowding, pollution, traffic, unsafe and substandard housing, and crime.

Social Stressors: –Social stressors such as deadlines, financial problems, job interviews, presentations, disagreements, demands for your time and attention, loss of a loved one, divorce, and co-parenting. These stressors arising due to demands of the different social roles such as parent, spouse, caregiver, and employee.

Physiological: –Physiological stressors include rapid growth of adolescence, menopause, illness, aging, giving birth, accidents, lack of exercise, poor nutrition, and sleep disturbances.

Thoughts: – Human brain interprets and perceives situations as stressful, difficult, painful or pleasant, in such situation our brain determines whether they are problems to us or not.

1.3 Types of Stress:

- Eustress:** These are also known as Positive Stress, which makes us to feel good and exerting healthy effect. This type of Stress occurs short period of time. Eustress gives ability to person to generate optimum output by performing best. In such situation person may thrilled, excited while watching Horror Movie, Excited when won the Prize, Zeal for purchasing first car, happiness in accomplishing challenges, etc.
- Distress:** This is called as Negative Stress, bad stress. This is opposite to Eustress. Death of someone you love, Illness, Financial crisis, Heavy work load etc, leads to Distress. It has two types such as Acute Stress and chronic Stress.
- Hyper-Stress:** If the person pushed beyond what one can handle, which turns in to Hyper-stress. More times it occurs because workload or over worked. This type of stress occurs when constant heavy financial difficulties, work both at home and office, Continuous tension, travelling day and night etc.
- Hypostress:** This is directly opposite to Hyperstress. This type of stress experienced by people when they constantly feel bored, same task over and over again, restless work and lack of inspiration.

1.4 Causes of Stress: Causes can be broadly divide in to three,



Table N. 1. Causes of Stress:

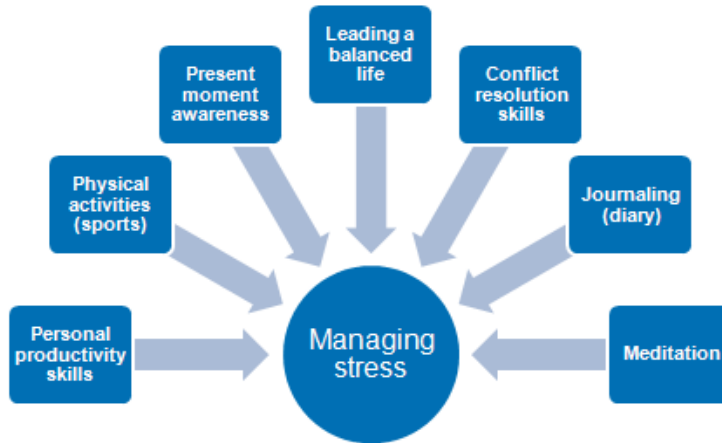
Organizational Factors	Personality Factors	Work family interaction Factors
Job it shelf	Age	Work demands
Poor physical working conditions	Sex	Family demands
Work overload	Headache	Work flexibility
Time pressures	personality	Pressures at work
Long working hours	Control & decision making capacity	Support at work
Job Instability	Physical agents	Work & Family life
Job Clarity.	Depression	

2. RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF STRESS:

Head ache, Fatigue, Increased absenteeism , Altered performance, Changes in attitude, mood or behaviour, Becoming irritable, volatile or aggressive , Conflict with others, Diminished work relationships, Tiredness /lethargy/lack of interest, Difficulty in concentrating or making decisions, Changes to appearance or personal

hygiene, Becoming withdrawn or isolated, Demonstrating unrealistic standards or Expectations for self or others and Uncharacteristically labile.

2.1 Combating Stress:



Source: Google Images (Strategies Business Online)

Physical Skills

- Breathing exercises
- Progressive relaxation
- Stretching exercise
- Walking and Sleeping

Mental Skills

- Meditation
- Yoga Practicing

Social Skills

- Meeting people
- Keeping pets

Diversion Skill

- The activity which makes your mind off from problem.

Spiritual Skill

- Introspection exercise which helps you to connect you with yourself, which helps to find out meaning for life.

2.2 Coping with Stress:

Table No.2- Coping with Stress.

Stress management techniques	Description
Undertake a stress audit	Organization decides to take a peep into mental cum physical health status of its employees. Questionnaires and interviews are used to collect data on various stressors, coping techniques and outcomes.
Use scientific inputs	Spread awareness and information about effective dealing with stress, both inside and outside the organization.
Check with the company doctor	The medical officer can conduct stress management programs.
Spread the message	The importance of regular work habits, leisure, diet, exercise and practicing personal relaxation should be emphasized.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW:

“Books are carriers of civilization. Without books, history is silent, literature is dumb, science crippled, thought and speculation at a standstill”.

-Barbara W Tuchman.

1) Kavitha in her research titled “Role of stress among women employees forming majority workforce at IT sector in Chennai and Coimbatore” (2012), she has focuses on the organizational role stress for the employees in the IT sector. She found in her research that, women face more stress than men in the organization and she viewed to be more specific married women faces more stress than the unmarried women.⁵

2) P.S. Swaminathan,& Rajkumar S. in their work on “Stress levels in Organizations and their Impact on Employees’ Behaviour” (2013). They have conducted a study that focused on the levels of stress among the age group, profession, different varieties of jobs, hours of work and the influence of work environment on the degree of stress faced by employees. Stress in an employees’ individual in nature. This study indicates that, an optimum level in which every individual can perform with his full capacity and identified three conditions responsible for work stress they are 1) Role overload 2) Role self distance 3) Role stagnation.⁶

3) Satija S. & Khan W. in their research work titled “Emotional Intelligence as Predictor of Occupational Stress among Working Professionals” (2013). According to them Occupational Stress is as same as Job Stress that needs to be controlled at the workplace otherwise it will negatively affect on employee’s work attitudes & behavior. This study investigates that, the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Occupational Stress. This study revealed findings that, Emotional Intelligence is a most significant predictor of Occupational Stress.⁷

4) Amir Shani and Abraham Pizam(2009) “Work-Related Depression among Hotel Employees” have conducted a study on the depression of work among hotel employees in Central Florida. They have found that, incidence of depression among workers in the hospitality industry by evaluating the relationship between the occupational stress and work characteristics.⁸

5) Viljoen and Rothmann, have investigated the relationship between “occupational stress, ill health and organizational commitment” (2009). They found that organizational stressors contributed significantly to ill health and low organizational commitment. Stress about job security contributed to both physical and psychological ill health. Low individual commitment to the organization was predicted by five stressors, such as Work-life balance, Overload, Control, Job aspects and Pay.⁹

6) Schmidt, Denise Rodrigues Costa; and et al, in their work on “Occupational stress among nursing staff in surgical settings”. They aimed at evaluating the presence of occupational stress among nursing professionals working in surgical settings and investigating the relations between occupational stress and work characteristics.¹⁰

7) Li-fang Zhang have conducted a study on titled “Occupational stress and teaching approaches among Chinese academics” (2009). Researcher suggested that, controlling the self-rating abilities of the participants, the Favorable conceptual changes in teaching approach and their role insufficiency predicated that the conceptual change in teaching strategy is negative.¹¹

8) Kayoko Urakawa and Kazuhito Yokoyam in their work on “Sense of Coherence (SOC) may Reduce the Effects of Occupational Stress on Mental Health Status among Japanese Factory Workers” (2009) has found the result i.e. adverse effects on mental health due to the job demand and job stress was positively associated with SOC, the mental health status of males in managerial work was adversely negative, where as it was positive among the female co-workers. Finally they found that, SOC is an important factor determining the coping ability over the job stress for both the genders.¹²

9) J.E. Agolla in his research titled “Police Officers: The Case of Botswana Police Service”, (2009). He has conducted a study in Botswana, among the police to find out work stress symptoms and coping strategies among the police service. This study reveals that the police work stressors are; getting injured while on duty and the use

of force when the job demands to do so, etc. The coping strategies were identified as exercising, socializing, healthy eating or diets, career planning and employee training.¹³

10) Connolly, John F and Willock, Joyce and Hipwell, Michele and Chisholm, Vivienne in their research titled "Occupational Stress & Psychological Well Being following University Relocation" (2009) they describe and analyze that management standards for work related stress(demand, support, control, role, relationships and change) can be analyzed by examining 1) overall levels of psychological strain 2) job satisfaction, and 3) the psychosocial working conditions.¹⁴

11) Urska Treven, Sonja Treven & Simona Sarotar Zizek in their research titled "Effective approaches to managing stress of employees" (2011), have found that, where the workers are said to be stressed are more likely to be unsuccessful in their work. Various approaches of managing stress, good work organization and good management are the effective ways of preventing stress. They categorized stress broadly into three types; such as i) Transient Stress ii) Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD) and iii) Chronic Stress.¹⁵

12) Khalid A. in his research titled "Role of Supportive Leadership as a Moderator between Job Stress and Job Performance" (2012), have found that, there is a direct relationship between stress and job performance in any organization. To improve the performance of an individual in an organization an employee should receive good support from their leaders. Therefore, a supportive leader can improve the performance of an employee even at unfavorable situations.¹⁶

4. CONCLUSION:

The important aspect of every organization is, Stress. Stress has become the most common cause of employees in all the industries. Stress can make an individual productive and constructive when it is identified and well managed. Positive attitude and meditation will be helpful for coping the stress. Thinking in a broader perspective of life will definitely change stress. There are many ways for managing stress, such as meditation, Yoga etc. The Negative stress or Distress kills the employees' positive attitude and it turns to absent, turnover, immoral, anxiety, depression, aggressive and so on. Hence, we will be successful if we make distress into eu-stress, our healthy lifestyle as well as organizational well being will change.

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