

Combating Workplace Stress for increasing Efficiency in Organisations

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ABSTRACT

Stress is emerging as global phenomenon affecting all countries, professions and all categories of workers and there is substantial evidence that the workplace can have an impact upon employee health – both positive and negative. The reasons which in turn as a source of consequent stress are many like technology upgradation, information revolution, fast changing and materialist lifestyle, innovations, peer pressure and growing competitions. Thus stress acts a barrier in the progression of any employee. It is an inevitable factor in the life of an employee and has the possibility of affecting the performance of an employee and detracts the ability of the employee to contribute to the organization and can also create serious life threats like unprecedented turmoil, traumas and physical and mental disorders and that is why it is becoming a matter of concern for many organisations. This study tries to find out the causes of stress and its impact on the employees in an organisation. It also examines various coping strategies that can be adopted for a healthy environment. As a healthy and stress free environment can help in achieving optimum output from its employee in an efficient way.

Keywords: Stress, Efficiency, Organization, Coping Strategies, Employee, Productivity, Stress Management Interventions.

INTRODUCTION

‘Stress’ word has been borrowed from physics and mechanics where it means the physical pressure exerted upon, and between parts of a body, when deformation occurs as result it is called strain. The stresses and strains of life mean something, which distorts our comfortable way of living. In common language stress is associated with distress, meaning any kind of burden, pressure or hardship. The stress of modern living usually means any conditions that give rise to worry, tension and frustration.

Stress has been a negative consequence of modern living. People are stressed from poor health, individualism, materialism, overwork, speed, insecurity, information overload and the increasing competition in life.

Occupational Stress have become a reality today it is difficult to deny from the fact that we all are currently sustain under its cover and we have to deal with it. Occupational Job stress is meant negative environmental factors associated with a particular job. It is the characteristic of the job environment, which poses a threat to the individual in terms of efficiency and performance on the one side and health on the other.

It is of course an important factor that reduces the productivity of an employee therefore its earlier detection and management becomes a necessity looking at the current changing scenario in the workplace.

Adopting stress management strategies and self-care approaches to develop positive coping mechanisms can be a positive way out to come out of such situations. Educating employers and organizations on the importance of stress management and stress reduction in operating a successful is another notable point towards the creation of a healthy business entity. Specific objectives include supporting employee health and wellness through health promotion activities and education. Self-care has become an important factor in career satisfaction and career longevity for those in helping professions and implementation of such policies and standards can help in creation of a healthy and enthusiastic workforce.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Stress is basically an adaptive response to a situation that is perceived as challenging or threatening to the person's well-being. It is person's reaction to a situation not the situation itself. Moreover we experience stress when we believe that something will interfere with our need fulfilment. Stress has both psychological as well physiological dimensions. Psychologically people perceive a situation and interpret it as challenging or threatening. This cognitive appraisal leads to a set of physiological responses, such as higher blood pressure, sweaty hands, and faster heartbeat.

These events often produce lot of tension and panic situation, the degree of physiological, psychological and behavioural stress often distracts an employee concentration and focus from efficient functioning.

A lesser known fact about the stress is that it also have a positive side of stress called eustress that refers to the healthy, positive, constructive outcomes of stressful events and the stress response. However this study will focus on distress because it is a significant concern in organisational settings. Employees frequently experience enough stress to hamper their job performance and increase their risk of mental and physical health problems.

Providing self-care education and stress management education opportunities can help to prevent burnout and compassion fatigue, therefore potentially reducing employee turnover and fostering increased satisfaction and well-being in the workplace.

TYPES OF JOB STRESS

- 1. Physical Environment Stressor:** These some stressors are found in the physical work environment, such as excessive noise, poor lighting, and safety hazards etc. It is the stress that comes from a direct disturbance to one's body by the immediate environment. It affects the human body. Stressed people are more susceptible to diseases. For example, anxiety leads to colds and other illnesses, tension, headaches due to stress, muscle pain and related back problems.
- 2. Psychological Stressors:** These are also called role related and work related stressors. It is caused by person's own thought processes. Idea perception, values and attitude. Psychological symptoms of work related stress are lower job satisfaction, moody and depressed.
- 3. Behavioural Stressors:** These stressors are caused by either physiological or psychological stresses disturbing person's normal behaviour may be with regard interpersonal or organisational expectations. Low job performance more workplace accidents, absenteeism, quits, disobedience, shouting at subordinates, irritation, overspending machine, unexpected response are more common. High stress levels results impair in ability to remember information, make effective decisions and take appropriate action.
- 4. Organisational Stressors:** These stressors encompasses physical environment, psychological and behavioural aspects as causes as well consequences of stress in the organisation and adversely affecting its functioning, efficiency, effectiveness and moreover profitability.

OBJECTIVE

- 1) To analyze the causes of stress and its impact on the productivity of among employees.
- 2) To analyze stress reduction/management interventions that can be used in individual level.
- 3) To recommend stress management interventions that can be used in organisational level.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) What do employees in organisation today identify as stress in their life?
- 2) How do employees cope with stress including the various personal and organizational coping strategies?

3) What effect does a stress management intervention have on employees?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research the researcher have used Qualitative Data and Secondary data. Around fifty employees have been interviewed working in different organisations. Their responses were taken on the basis of open-ended questions to be filled through online questionnaire also in-depth interviews of some of the employees were also taken into consideration. Secondary Data mainly includes use of internet, books, magazines etc. Important information and facts were taken with the help of these sources.

FINDINGS

After analysing the data it revealed that work related stress has become a very common phenomena in the Indian work culture, however employee may differ in degree and level of experience. Thus it is of utmost importance to identify and determine the victims. Some of the signs are as follow:

Always Eating, Changes in eating and sleeping habits, drug and alcohol abuse, Easily loose temper, failure to achieve targets, Interrupts others, Shouting Loudly

Withdrawal from friends and activities, thoughts of death or suicide, Silence loving, Shift job frequently, Poor performance, Negative attitude, Lack of concentration

Persistent sadness, Hopelessness, Poor or over confidence, Guilt feeling, Impatient, Forgrtfulness, Physical complains like headache, stomache etc.

CAUSES OF STRESS

Occupational stress is a reality today and one cannot avoid it but have to deal with it. Stress has become a universal phenomenon affecting all countries, professions and all categories of workers. Below are some of the major causes of stress, employees are facing in an organisation.



**JOB STRESS COPING STRATEGIES
INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVES**

- **Remove the Stressor:** Stress at work place caused by any individual, task or process can be reduced or removed by distancing from the stressor or rationally regulating the operations of different segments.
- **Developing Interpersonal Skills:** It is advised to develop interpersonal skills that can dissipate the aggression in customers and co – workers.
- **Balancing Work and Domestic Roles:** Help employees to balance their work and non- work roles. Most of these programs began as family – friendly benefits that provided a more flexible workplace for women employees with children.
- **Self -Leadership:** Several elements of self- leadership can alter employee perception of job related stressors. Positive self-talk can potentially change stress perceptions by increasing self - efficiency and developing a more optimistic outlook.
- **Physical Exercise:** One of the most obvious ways to do this is by keeping fit. Physical exercise helps employees lower their respiration, muscle tension, heartbeat and stomach acidity thereby reducing the physiological consequences of stress.
- **Healthy Lifestyle:** Learning how balanced diet and good sleep habits combat the adverse effects of stress.
- **Relaxation:** Research suggests that relaxation and meditation programs are effective, particularly in reducing blood pressure levels, muscle tension and increasing peace. One can also practice yoga and meditation.
- **Employee Assistance Programmes:** EAPs are counselling services that help employees overcome personal or organizational stressors and adopt more effective coping mechanisms.
- **Receiving Social Support:** Social support from co- workers, supervisors, family, friends and others is one of the more effective stress management practices.
- **Adequate Sleep:** Sleep is the natural gift to take rest but sometimes worldly experience makes person sleepless. But sound sleep is must for good health.

- **Good Reading and Listening to Music:** Grasping scriptures, holy and good books thoughtfully provides strength to face challenges. Listening to good music can reduce boredom and monotony at workplace or home.

ORGANISATIONAL INITIATIVES

- **Flexible work Timings:** Time deadlines causes stress. Many firms let employees decide when to begin and end their workday so that they can more easily balance personal and work activities.
- **Job Sharing:** Monotonous and rigid time frame jobs results in stress. Job sharing splits a career position between two persons so they experience less time based stress between work and family.
- **Telecommuting:** With the advancement in technology work from home culture is getting popularity. There is growing evidence that employees are more productive with this arrangement and experience a healthier balance between work and non – work roles.
- **Personal Leave Programs:** To meet out the domestic and social needs personal leave facilities helps a lot employers typically offer extended or partially paid maternity, paternity and personal leaves to care for a family. Increasingly, employees are using personal leave to care for elderly parents and other relatives who need assistance.
- **Child Care Facilities:** On site or nearby child care facilities save parents time and worry and might allow them to spend a little time with children during the day.
- **Delegation and Decentralization:** Centralization of power and overload of responsibilities result in stress and strain. So in order to cope up with the job it is better to delegate some responsibilities to others.
- **Organising Stress Management and Controlling Workshop:** By Organizing individual stress reduction and controlling workshops for employees on biofeedback, sensitivity groups, transcendental meditation, career counselling, time management and interpersonal skills workshop.
- **Medical Health Check- ups:** Many people noticed to be ignoring health for one reason or the other the traditional proverb health is wealth deserves consideration. Therefore organisation should organise some provision of monthly health check- ups.
- **Cooperative Work Strategies:** Individualism and isolation adds to many tensions, monotony and strains. Sometimes an effective way of dealing with too much works is to cooperate with other people in the same situation
- **Development of Multicultural health education curriculum:** Development of a curriculum to understand the learning opportunities that are designed with sensitivity to diversity in an organisation in different languages. Guidelines for creating a culturally competent learning environment it should be included with a guide for facilitators.

A Way towards Creating a Stress Free Work Force

- **Framework, and the mapping of policies and standards** which are employer friendly in nature can provides a vehicle for encouraging employers to enjoy their job and workspace
- **Clarifying the manager behaviours** that are important for managing stress, ensuring managers have the appropriate skills, abilities and behaviours to manage employee stress effectively and implement the Management Standards.
- There are opportunities for **Government policy to integrate** campaigns on good leadership and management with those on Health and Safety to achieve maximum effect.
- The idea of **Highlighting ‘Empathy’** may be necessary to mitigate any potential stress risks of ‘Development’ on an employee.

- Further **research is required to translate** the research findings into practical tools and diagnostics for use in organisations.
- Drawing from the concurrent and predictive validity studies, there are opportunities to design a psychometrically **valid indicator tool that measures** the degree to which an individual exhibits the management competencies associated with preventing and reducing stress at work.
- Opportunities exist for this to be used either as a selfreport or an upward **feedback measure**. In the longer term, research should be conducted to design and test interventions that develop managers' management competence in the prevention and reduction of stress.
- **Design and Test training interventions** that can be used to developed managers' competence in managing stress in others.

CONCLUSION

It is a well- known fact that working environment of an organizations contributes to the well- being of an employee. A stress free environment leads to increase productivity at work and higher job satisfaction in the employees which will be beneficial for both the employee and the organization. The employee can face stress issues due to personal and professional reasons both. Therefore in the pursuit of better results and higher efficiency organizations can adopt improved practices that can increase satisfaction thus reducing the levels of stress and therefore improved performance. These typically emphasise the need for the organization to pay more attention to employee well - being, the importance of individual and organisational interventions can reduce the stress and the involvement of the employee in decision-making to meet the needs of the employee.

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