

“An Analysis of the Research on the Effects of Workplace Stress”

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Abstract

Anxiety about meeting deadlines or completing tasks is a common response to a growing workload.. Now-a-days, more and more people are suffering from stress brought on by their jobs. It is critical that this problem be addressed, and action taken to resolve the potential problems this may cause for individuals and the organisations in which they are involved. This study examines the concept of stress in the workplace, as well as several theories of stress in the workplace, and shows how stress impacts an organization's productivity and efficiency. The goal of this paper was to examine the many works written about the topic of "work stress," including a variety of definitions, populations studied, research approaches, and sectors studied.

Keywords: Anxiety, Organization's Productivity and Efficiency, Workplace Stress,

INTRODUCTION

Definition of Occupational Stress

The term "Occupational stress" refers to the emotional reaction an individual may have when faced with work expectations and pressures that are above his or her current level of competence. A lack of social support from superiors and peers, as well as the feeling that one has little say over one's work, can amplify the effects of stress in the workplace. However, stress is sometimes misunderstood as pressure or challenge, which can lead to poor management being justified.

Due to the nature of today's workplace, stress is inescapable. Depending on their strengths and the circumstances, some people can operate better under pressure than others. However, stress develops when that strain becomes overwhelming or unmanageable. Employee health and productivity can both suffer when workers are under stress.

Poor work organisation (how we design jobs and work systems, and how we manage them), poor work design (for example, a lack of control over work processes), poor management, unsatisfactory working conditions, and a lack of support from coworkers and superiors can all contribute to stress in the workplace.

According to studies, the most stressful jobs are the ones where people are subjected to unreasonable expectations that are out of line with their skills and experience, have little room for autonomy, and receive minimal social support.

When workers' skills and abilities are appropriately challenged, when they have agency over their work and how it is done, when they have social support from their superiors and peers, and when they have a voice in workplace choices, they are less likely to experience stress on the job.

Various definition of Stress and Work stress: To have a better understanding about the work stress, various definitions of stress and work stress has been compiled by different authors .(below in the Table I).

Table I: Various definition of stress and work stress.

| Sl. No. | Author(s) | Stress definitions |
|---------|-------------------------|---|
| 1. | Jit, S. Chandan, (1995) | Stress is a state of mind which reflects certain biochemical reactions in the human body and is projected by a sense of anxiety, tension and depression and is caused by such demands by the environmental forces or internal factors that cannot be met by the resources available to the person |
| 2. | Levi (1996) | Stress is cost by a multitude of demands (stressors) such an inadequate fit between what we need and what we capable of, and what our environment offers and what it demands of us. |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| 5. | Bernik (1997) | Stress designates the aggression itself leading to discomfort, or the consequences of it. It is our organism's response to a challenge, be it right or wrong. |
| 8. | Kristensen et al, (1998) | Stress is an individual, arousal, psychophysiology, and subjective state, characterized by a combination of high arousal and displeasure. |
| 9. | The Health and Safety Executive (1999) | Stress is the reaction that people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed upon them. |
| 11. | Moorhead, G., & Griffin, R. W. (2001) | Stress is caused by a stimulus, that the stimulus can be either physical or psychological, and that the individual responds to the stimulus in some way |
| 12. | Leka, et al., (2004) | People may feel stressed when their resources in the form of their comprehension and capabilities about the situation are found to be inadequate to cope with the hassles and difficulties in environment. |
| 14. | Siegrist J, Rodel A., (2006) | Stress as a latent construct that indicates a state of elevated activation of the autonomic nervous system with coordinated manifestations at the affective, cognitive, and behavioral levels. |
| 15. | Stephen P. Robbins et al (2007) | A dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint or demand related to what he/she desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important |
| 16. | R. Abualrub et al., (2008) | Stress is the key component and has positive significant correlation with high turnover and turnover intentions, absenteeism and costs substantial health problems. |
| Work stress definitions | | |
| 18. | Comish R. & Swindle B. (1994) | Occupational stress, in particular, is the inability to cope with pressures in a job, because of a poor fit between someone's abilities and his/her work requirements and conditions. It is a mental and physical condition which affect an individual's productivity, effectiveness, personal health and quality of work |
| 19. | European Commission, DG, guidance on work-related stress (1999) | Work stress is "the emotional, cognitive, behavioral and physiological reaction to aversive and noxious aspects of work, work environments and work organizations. It is a state characterized by high levels of arousal and distress often by feelings of not coping". |
| 20. | European Commission, Directorate- General for Employment and Social Affairs | Job stress refers to the emotional, cognitive, behavioral and physiological reaction to aversive and noxious aspects of work, work environments and work organisations. It is a state characterized by high levels of arousal and distress and often by feelings of |

| | (2000) | not coping. |
|---------|---|--|
| 22. | Dollar et al., (2001) | Work stress is transitional arousal state between objective stressors and strain where strain is reaction to the condition of stress. |
| 23. | Malta, (2004) | Occupational stress is any discomfort which is felt and perceived at a personal level and triggered by instances, events or situations that are too intense and frequent in nature so as to exceed a person's coping capabilities and resources to handle them adequately. |
| Sl. No. | Author(s) | Stress definitions |
| 24. | Holmlund-Rytkenen, M., & Strandvik, T. (2005) | It's as an inability of an individual to meet the demands from job due to the imbalance in the 'person-environment' perceptions. It is the situation where individuals' job performance, both physical and mental health, is affected poorly |
| 26. | P. Anna Raja and Nima M Joseph., (2007) | Work stress means "the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of a job do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of the worker". |
| 27. | Chen, J. C., & Silverthorne, C. (2008) | Labeled job stress as a work related psychological pressure and a worker's ability to respond and grip the specific situation at work place skillfully. |
| 29. | Salami O. S. (2010) | Occupational stress can be defined as the experience of unpleasant negative emotions such as tension, anxiety, frustration, anger and depression resulting from aspects of work |
| 30. | Yan, H., & Xie, S. (2016) | Work stress define as a series of physiological, psychological and behavioral responses due to the continuing effects of one or more stressors on individuals in an organization |

Stress Model

Dr. Hans Selye, who is commonly referred to as the "Father of Stress," in the year 1936, when he first introduced the concept of stress. Through with a model of stress that is depending on physiology & psychobiology and is known as the Generalized Adaptation Syndrome (GAS), he offered the following 3 stages of the stress response:

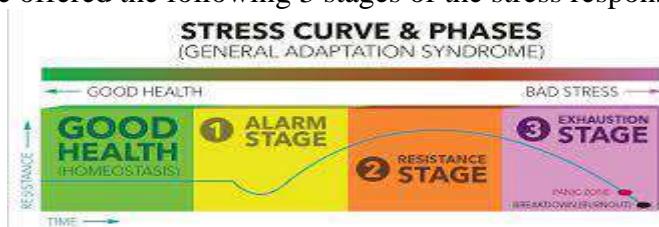


Fig : 1 Stages of Stress

Important Ideas

Workplace stress, occupational stress, or employee stress are just a few of the many names that have been used to describe the emotional toll that being an employee may take. In addition, its significance grew as time passed. In the beginning, it was thought that it was due to the stress that comes from working in a certain place. In the end, though, it was discovered that he actually had a worker living inside of him. It has recently been defined as the connection between workplace circumstances and workers' responses. A worker will

experience stress if he or she is unable to meet the expectations set by the company or the outside world. This requirement could be mental or physical in nature. It's also a negative response to overwhelming stress or an unreasonable request. Employees will be better able to deal with work-related stress if they are provided with a supportive work environment and encouragement from management. As was previously said, a stressful workplace can have negative effects on an employee's mental and physical health. The strain on workers is exacerbated, according to Anderson (2002), by problems at home and in the office. When an employee realises that the demands of a scenario are more than they are capable of meeting, and when those demands persist for an extended length of time, stress may result. (Selye, 2006). One of stress's distinguishing features is that it affects various people in different ways, even when exposed to the identical circumstances. Some people will manage, and others will react adversely. Others, though, won't be so lucky when faced with the same challenges. Naturale (2007) explains that stressful situations arise whenever an individual is forced to respond in a novel way to an exciting opportunity. According to Steve (2011), an employee's stress levels rise when he or she is confronted with demands, pressures, and professional aspects at work that are beyond his or her skill set, thereby posing a challenge and threat to the employee's capabilities and resulting in a struggle for existence in terms of remaining employed at a place. A job is considered to be "healthy" if it provides the worker with sufficient autonomy over their work and is a good fit for their skills, interests, and resources. As a result, it can get the backing of those who truly matter to them.

Stress, according to Selye (2006), is the body's generic reaction to pressure. A worker will experience stress if they are given more work than they are able to complete. Each worker seems to be experiencing stress at a unique level. Mental, bodily, and behavioural issues might develop if stress lasts for a long enough time. Research from Sri Lanka (Opatha, 2011) suggests that stress may play a role in the development of nicotine and alcohol dependence. Although stress can have a beneficial effect on workers at times, the opposite is true when they push themselves too far.

There will be times of stress in any profession, and that includes yours. An individual's ability to deal with stress in the face of repeated exposure is mentioned in the Maltese text [3]. Employees will stay motivated and educated thanks to workplace pressure. But the employee's ability to cope up will vary depending on his or her personality and the resources at his or her disposal.

Many studies have shown that when a person is overburdened at work, he or she is more likely to experience stressful situations. Workplace stress is common if an employee's skill set is inadequate to do his assigned tasks. Sometimes an employee has to do their job even though they don't want to since they have no other option. There is a high probability of workplace stress developing under these conditions. Occupation stress can also develop if an employee is in a work that isn't a good fit for his or her personality. The terms "work stress," "occupational stress," and "organisational stress" will be used interchangeably in this investigation.

Table II: Workplace Classification

| Year | Authors | Author's Profile | Country | Methodology | Type of industry/ Research unit |
|------|----------------------|------------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 2012 | Ipsen, C., et al. | Academic | Denmark | Conceptual | Consulting companies |
| 2012 | Smith, A. P., et al. | Academic | UK | Cross Sectional | Cardiff University |
| 2012 | Huss, E. | Academic | Israel | Conceptual | Social workers |
| 2012 | Wells, C. R., et al. | Academic | USA | Cross Sectional | Clerical Profession |
| 2013 | Julià, M., et al. | Academic | Spain | Empirical | Mutual Insurance Company |
| 2013 | Kath, L. M., et al. | Academic | USA; Germany | Cross Sectional | Nurse & managers |

| | | | | | |
|------|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 2013 | Mackenzie, S. H., et al. | Professional | USA; Canada | Longitudinal | Tourism guide's |
| 2013 | Steinisch, M., et al. | Academic | Germany; Bangladesh | Cross Sectional | Ready-Made garment |
| 2013 | Lucas, T., et al. | Academic | USA | Empirical | Police officers |
| 2013 | Jain, A. K., et al. | Academic | Denmark; UK | Empirical | Call centres |
| 2014 | Huss, E., et al. | Academic | Israel | Empirical | Health professionals |
| 2014 | Sznajder, K. K., et al. | Academic | USA; China | Cross Sectional | Chinese working women |
| 2014 | Steinisch, M., et al. | Academic | Germany, Bangladesh | Cross Sectional | Readymade garments |
| 2014 | Liu, S., et al. | Both | China; USA | Conceptual | Teachers |
| 2014 | Johnson, S. J., et al. | Academic | UK | Cross Sectional | Pharmacists |
| 2014 | Honda, A., et al. | Academic | Japan | Cross Sectional | Japanese workers |
| 2014 | Kraan, K. O., et al. | Academic | Netherland | Cross Sectional | EWCS |
| 2014 | Avdija, A. S. | Academic | USA | Empirical | Law enforcement officers |
| 2014 | Lian, S. Y., et al. | Academic | Malaysia | Conceptual | Working females |
| 2015 | Fiori, M., et al. | Academic | Switzerland | Longitudinal | SFSO |
| 2015 | Van Laethem, M., et al. | Academic | Netherland, Sweden | Longitudinal | Dutch employees |
| 2015 | d'Ettorre, G., et al. | Academic | Italy | Empirical | Doctors and nurses |
| 2015 | González-Quintanilla, et al | Both | Spain | Cross Sectional | Migrane patients |
| 2015 | Wang, S. M., et al. | Professional | Taiwan, USA | Cross Sectional | Psychiatric nurses |
| 2015 | Smyth, E., et al. | Professional | UK, Ireland | Empirical | Disability support staff |
| 2015 | Ronchetti, M., et al. | Academic | Italy | Conceptual | — |
| 2015 | Sailaxmi, G., et al. | Both | India | Empirical | Nurses |
| 2015 | Yang, S., et al. | Professional | Australia; Singapore | Cross Sectional | Healthcare professionals |
| 2015 | Ma, C. C., et al. | Professional | USA | Cross Sectional | Police officers |
| 2015 | Ninaus, K., et al. | Both | Austria; Hong Kong | Exploratory | Journalism industry |
| 2015 | Li, J., et al. | Both | Germany; China | Descriptive | — |
| 2016 | Huet, V., et al. | Academic | UK | Exploratory | Staffs in health care |

Scientific Data Connecting Anxiety and Workplace Efficiency

Workers are more likely to leave their jobs when they are stressed (Mead, 2009). Companies have different turnover rates. The commercial sector often has more employee turnover than the public sector. Turnover rates also differ greatly between areas. Locations with a low unemployment rate and plentiful job opportunities tend to have the highest rates. There are situations when a company actually benefits from an employee leaving. This can occur when a younger, more energetic worker replaces an older, less productive worker, or when a retiree is hired to fill a vacant position.

The expenses associated with employee turnover include the time and money spent filling vacant positions, training new hires, and compensating for lost productivity while they are out of the office (Dessler, 2000).

There's a wide range of causes for employee turnover. Employees' loyalty to their current employers can wane if an enticing new job comes up. Of course, employees can also feel pressured to leave their jobs owing to factors like household obligations or discontent with their current employment. One of the main causes of people leaving their jobs is dissatisfaction with their interactions with management. Few people, even when presented with a larger income elsewhere, will leave a work for which they have developed a genuine affinity.

Another important contributor to employee turnover on a voluntary basis is a lack of training and advancement opportunities. Workplace stability is highly valued by employees. In order to reduce turnover, management should think about several preventative actions. Some examples of such measures include ensuring a safe and pleasant workplace for employees, preparing new managers for their positions, and enhancing existing managers' abilities to supervise effectively. The current managers may be offered retraining if they have a history of failing to keep their employees satisfied. Managers can be held liable for high rates of turnover within their own teams. Reducing employee turnover can be accomplished through a variety of means, including but not limited to accommodating employees' preferences for work hours, conducting regular performance reviews, and offering as much job security as feasible. Employees' stress levels may rise as a result of the aforementioned, which may ultimately result in their departure from the company. The company's bottom line will suffer if employee turnover is significant.

When workers are under pressure at work, their morale suffers. Massive layoffs, the elimination of overtime, the reduction or elimination of benefits, and the absence of union representation are all examples of workplace events that can have a significant impact on morale. Sick building syndrome, low earnings, and bad treatment from superiors are just a few of the other factors that might lower morale on the job. The following characteristics serve as examples of factors that affect workplace morale: A number of factors can influence an employee's outlook on their workplace experience, including the following: job stability, management style, staff's belief that their contribution is valued by employer, realistic opportunities for merit-based promotion, the social or economic value of the work being done by the organisation as a whole, the perceived status of the work being done by the organisation as a whole, team makeup, and work culture.

Employee morale is low when the aforementioned characteristics have a beneficial impact on stress and is high when the opposite is true.

Bruckner and his colleagues in 1992 studied the impacts of job insecurity and the economic need to work on employee attitudes to assess the impact of downsizing. Brockner used levels of effort at work to assess employee dispositions towards their jobs. According to the results, those with high levels of job insecurity and a strong desire to continue working responded to job loss by working harder than before. When job instability was high and motivation to work was low, workers didn't adjust their productivity. Staff members with a higher need to work put in more effort during times of severe job insecurity, such as might be expected during downsizing, while staff members with a lower need to work show no change in effort. The stress level in any given organisation is guaranteed to rise during a round of layoffs.

The consequences of stress on organisational performance have long been recognised, but the topic has been approached from a personal rather than a business perspective. Every study done on stress and its impacts has focused only on how it affects one person's productivity. An inverted U-shaped association between stress and performance has been shown to be the most researched pattern, as reported by Newstrom (2007). In other words, the body is motivated to perform better when under mild stress. This suggests that either too little or too much stress has a detrimental effect on productivity. The inverted U pattern, as proposed by Robbins (2003), may also characterise the response to stress across time and to changes in stress intensity. " Several authors[9,10] agree that stress is bad for people and can have a ripple impact on an entire organization's output.

Overtime stress response puts a widespread wear and tear on the body," Everly& Benson (1989) write; an unhealthy body does not aid in job performance. However, according to

Welford [11], the right amount of stress at work is what motivates people to give their all. Workers experience the "sweet spot" of stress when they are given just the right amount of challenging work. Welford [11] and Jing [6] both argue that under specific conditions a certain percentage of an organization's workforce will stress in a way that is both useful to the organisation and increases its revenues.

Lambert, Lambert, & Ito [3] state that stress is a major influence in business inefficiencies, high staff turnover, absenteeism, poor quality and quantity output, and increased health care costs for personnel. Ngeno [10] studied teacher burnout in Kenya's primary schools in 2007. Based on his findings, teacher fatigue is detrimental to classroom performance. Moreover, Munali (2005) found that hotel employees' productivity drops when they're under stress. Munali surveyed 300 hotel staff members for her study, and she found that stress-related sickness was a leading cause of employee absences.

Although the outcomes of an organisation can take numerous forms, according to Ivancevich et al. [12], they all have a few characteristics. Businesses lost money due to employees' stress. According to Ongori & Agolla [5], the greater the stress that employees face, the more likely it is that their productivity would suffer. They argue that this has a chilling effect on the company's productivity in the long run. Workplace stress, as reported by Elovainio et al. (2002), poses a concern for businesses because it increases absenteeism and decreases efficiency. He went on to say that stress in the workplace has a negative effect on workers' productivity and that companies should do something about it.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL ON STRESS

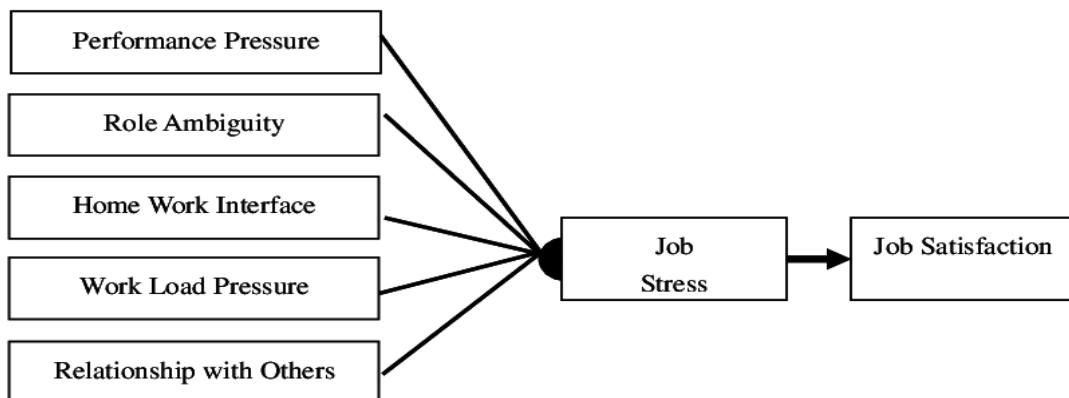


Fig. 2 Conceptual Model of Stress

Numerous books and articles have been written about the topic of workplace stress and the many elements, both internal and external, that contribute to it. Shrestha claims to have researched "the moderating effects of locus of control social support and perceived organisational support in the relationship between job stress and psychological strain" (Figure 2). Various models have been discussed in an effort to determine whether or not there is a correlation between job satisfaction and stress levels among workers in a variety of firms. Using job performance as a proxy for the effects of stress on performance, Ali et al. conducted their search in 2014.

Table III: Summary of the research studies particularly applicable for the present study.

| Author & Year | Method & Methodology | Findings | Short comes |
|-----------------|---|--|---|
| Siegrist (1996) | 1,100 factory workers | when the workload increases workers stress level, blood pressure and cholesterol level increase | Applicable for the developed countries |
| Goswami (2015) | 100 executives from the banks in the Pakistan | occupational stress brings about subjective effects such as fear, anger and anxiety among employees resulting in poor mental and psychological | Only applicable to the Rajasthan province of Pakistan |

| | | health | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Kotteeswari and Sharief(2014) | 100 employees who are working in number of different BPOs in Chennai city | BPO industry has been characterized by “ungodly hours, monotonous job, low perceived value, dispirited efficiency resulting to high attrition level.” | Only job stress is being taken account to identify the factors affecting the job performance, nevertheless the study is not taking into account the other factors which are correlated with the job performance. |
| Bashir and Ramay(2010) | Total number of 144 sample from graduate, senior employees including managers and customers services officers of well reputed growing bank in Pakistan | “Negative correlation between job stress and job performances and shows that job stress significantly reduce the performance of an individual” | Convenient sampling technique was used due to time and budget limitations |
| Ruyter(2001) | 1200 employees working in call centers in a large insurance provider in Netherlands | “The autonomy dimension of empowerment has a role-stress-reducing effect stress level” “Furthermore, it was found that job satisfaction reduces turnover intentions, directly and indirectly via organizational commitment” | Applicable for developed countries |

IMPLICATIONS

The study's primary focus was on the field of work stress, and it achieved this goal by presenting the concept and basic understanding of work stress through a survey of the existing literature. In addition, the article gives in-depth understanding of the study into workplace stress that has been conducted across a variety of countries and industries over the past quarter century. A number of stressors and methods for dealing with them have been identified in the workplace, but the study found that only a fraction of businesses are actively attempting to eliminate stress. More study may be done to determine how best to create a work environment that is both supportive of employee growth and low in stress for everyone involved. The literature suggests that frequent stress management seminars be held to help employees learn about the causes of stress, its negative effects on their well-being, and practical strategies for dealing with the problem. Practical stress reduction practices that employees can apply in and out of the workplace should be included.

CONCLUSION

When it comes to working with employees, job stress is one of the most difficult challenges facing modern managers. Stress in the workplace has been found to have a significant negative impact on worker output in a number of studies.

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