

Work related stress of employees: A review

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Abstract

This study is to know about Work related stresses of the employees and how it impact on their personal life. Now a day's Stress has become a Black Plague at a work place and getting more & more attention. Stress can be defined as the psychological & physiological reaction which takes place at the work place, which is in the result of imbalance in employees work life & personal life of the employees. The Stress at work place not only causes because of time pressure & over load of work but also lack of rewards, co-operation of co-worker, work environment, Pressure from the top management, employee health condition and so on. So we can say that, Stress is an unavoidable in the organizational work life.

Keywords: Work Stress, Stressor, Coping Mechanism.

Introduction

Work related stresses of employees at a work place and getting more & more attention. Stress can be defined as the psychological & physiological reaction which takes place at the work place, which is in the result of imbalance in employees work life & personal life of the employees. Hans Selye (1936) Defined Stress as "the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change" [1]. Stress is always being used as synonymous with Distress, which defined as "Physical, mental or emotional Strain or a tension". It is also defined as "a condition or feelings experienced when a person perceives that, demand exceeds the personal or social resources the individual able to mobilize". The term stress is as negative, people ignores its positive effect. The positive stress motivates people to accomplish more [2].

Theoretical Background

The word stress is derived from the Latin word "stringi", which means, "to be drawn tight". Stress refers to response of the organism to noxious or threatening condition (Pearlin, 1982). Stress is a feeling experienced when a person thinks that "the demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize.

"(Richard S Lazarus) Further it can be defined as "Stress is a part of a complex & dynamic system of transaction between the person and his environment" (Cox, 1985). Stress felt by the people in many circumstances in their lives. It comes in all sorts of packages such as large & small, pretty & ugly, simple & complex.

Demands & pressures of people is the core of Stress. Over the period of time it is defined in different ways. Some theorist defined stress as *Stimulus* event that present difficult demand, while others viewed that, stress is the *response* of psychological arousal elicited by a troublesome event (Whitehead 1994). Hence we can defined stress as any circumstances that threaten or are perceived to threaten one's well-being and thereby tax one's coping abilities [3]. Hans Selye (1976) defined

stress as psychological reaction to certain threatening environmental events. Stress is result from a lack of "fit" between a person's skills & abilities and demand of the job & the work place (French, Rogers & cob, 1974) [4].

Employees felt Stress because they may be anxiety about the future or worried about whatever happened in the past. Lazarus defines stress as, which encompasses a whole spectrum of factors such as stimulus (Stimulus means Stressor, which means, physical, psychological or social force that puts real or perceived demands on the body, emotions, mind or spirit of an individual and it is the situation which puts person in to a stress mode and A stressor is anything that causes the release of stress hormones. There are two broad categories of stressors: Physiological (or physical) stressors and Psychological Stressors), response, and cognitive appraisal, of threat, coping styles, psychological defenses, and social milieu (Social settings or environment) [5]. Stress is a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, demand, or resource related to what the individual desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be the both uncertain & important [6].

2.1. Stress at Work Place: Physical and emotional response which occurs because of poor coordination between job demands and capabilities of workers, available resources & needs of the workers can be called as Stress at work place. High level of stress is felt by 1/3 of the workers at the work place, because it is considered to be a major stressor. The causes of work lace stress is due to several reasons such as misplacement of tools, papers, files, etc, poor salary, personality clashes, incompetent subordinates, superior, boring work, negative attitude towards management, lack of social security, high targets and many more [7].

Stress at Work: Stress at work can be categorized in to 4 major categories, such as,

Table 1: Categories of Stress

Occupational	Individual	Group	Organizational
Physical Stress	Role conflict	Poor peer-relations	Poor Structural design
Noise	Role ambiguity	Subordinates	
Light	Work overload	Boss	No specific policy
Temperature	Responsibility	Communication	
Polluted air	Working condition.		

2.3. Types of Stress

The Stress can be dividing in to the following types such as, ^[8]

- a) **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.
- b) **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.
- c) **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.
- d) **Hypo-stress:** 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.

2.4. Causes of Stress ^[9]

2.4.1. Stress at Home

- ✓ Death of spouse, family, near relative or friend.
- ✓ Injury or illness of any family member.
- ✓ Marriage of self or son or daughter or brother or sister.
- ✓ Separation or divorce from partner.
- ✓ Pregnancy or birth of a new baby.
- ✓ Children's behavior or disobedience.
- ✓ Children's educational performance.
- ✓ Hyperactive children.
- ✓ Sexual molestation.
- ✓ Argument or heated conversations with spouse, family members or friends or neighbors.
- ✓ Not sufficient money to meet out daily expenses or unexpected expenditure.
- ✓ Not sufficient money to raise your standard of living.
- ✓ Loss of money in burglary, pick-pocketed or share market.
- ✓ Moving house.
- ✓ Change of place or change of city or change of country.

2.4.2. Stress at Work

- ✓ To meet out the demands of the job.
- ✓ Your relationship with colleagues.
- ✓ To control staff under you.
- ✓ To train your staff and take work from them.
- ✓ Support you receive from your boss, colleagues and juniors.
- ✓ Excessive work pressure.

- ✓ To meet out deadlines.
- ✓ To give new results.
- ✓ To produce new publications if you are in research area.
- ✓ Working overtime and on holidays.
- ✓ New work hours.
- ✓ Promotion or you have not been promoted or your junior has superseded you.
- ✓ Argument or heated conversations with co-workers or boss.
- ✓ Change of job.
- ✓ Work against will.
- ✓ Harassment.
- ✓ Sexual molestation.

2.4.3. Other Causes of Stress

- ✓ Fear, intermittent or continuous.
- ✓ Threats: physical threats, social threats, financial threat, other threats.
- ✓ Uncertainty.
- ✓ Lack of sleep.
- ✓ Somebody misunderstands you.
- ✓ Setback to your position in society.

3. Symptoms of Stress

According to American Institute of Stress, There are numerous emotional and physical disorders that have been linked to stress. They found about 50 symptoms of Stress; some of them have cited here, ^[10]

Frequent headaches, grinding teeth, Stuttering, Neck ache, back pain, muscle spasms, faintness, Frequent blushing, sweating, Cold or sweaty hands, Dry mouth, Heartburn, stomach pain, Difficulty breathing, frequent sighing, Sudden attacks of life threatening panic, Chest pain, rapid pulse, Frequent urination, Excess anxiety, worry, guilt, nervousness, Increased anger, frustration, hostility, Depression, Increased or decreased appetite, Insomnia, nightmares, racing thoughts, Forgetfulness, confusion, Difficulty in making decisions, Frequent crying or suicidal thoughts, Loneliness or worthlessness, Nervous habits, Increased frustration, irritability, Reduced work efficiency or productivity, Problems in communication, sharing, Constant tiredness, weakness, fatigue, Frequent use of over-the-counter drugs, Weight gain or loss without diet, Increased smoking, alcohol or drug use, Excessive gambling or impulse buying.

4. Impact or Consequences of Stress

The Consequences of stress can be explained following way, ^[11]

- Subjective: anxiety, apathy.
- Behavioral: Alcoholism, Drug abuses, accident proneness.
- Cognitive: Poor concentration, mental blocks.
- Physiological: Increases blood pressure, heart rate etc.
- Organizational: Absenteeism, turnover, low productivity,

5. Coping Mechanism

Coping refers to, how a person deals with a stress. Stress coping strategies or techniques may be either oriented towards avoiding stress or dealing with stress. Coping is a dynamic process, to manage stressful situation have to practice proper coping strategies. It is a conscious effort by an individual to manage or overcome a stressful event (Holahan & Moos, 1987).^[12]

Organizational Coping strategies are those which are used by the organizations for reduce stress level of employee (Burke, 1993), because many of the work stressors are come from the organizational side. For that, strategies includes the following,

- ✓ Improve the person-job fit.
- ✓ Improve employee training & orientation program.
- ✓ Increase employees' sense of control.
- ✓ Remove Hazards & dangerous work condition.
- ✓ Provide a supportive team oriented work environment.
- ✓ Improve communication^[13].

6. Review of Literature

Mohla Charu, in his work on "Effect of Occupational Stress on QWL: Amongst the Associates of IT Industry" (2013). The study consists, sample size of 203 associates of IT industry, the age range between 20- 55 years. The sample was drawn using randomized sampling technique. In his study stated that higher stress is directly proportional to quality of work life for IT professionals. He stated few factors which are directly affect on QWL, namely fair pay structure, steady role demands, supervisory support, and congenial job environment, Capability fit of the job, role autonomy and stress. The rapid change in technology is the important reason for stress amongst the associates of IT industry^[14].

Afsheen. Khalid, in research work on Role of Supportive Leadership as a Moderator between Job Stress and Job Performance (2012). 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. Hence, a supportive leader can improve the performance of an employee even at unfavorable situations^[15].

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^[16].

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^[17].

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^[18].

Richardson & Rothstein in research titled "Effects of occupational stress management intervention programs: A meta-analysis" (2008). The researchers have selected sample size of 2,847, among those samples participants, 59% were female, with mean age was 35.4, and average length of intervention was 7.4 weeks. They are classified stress interventions as, primary, secondary and tertiary. They suggested all the employees have to adopt relaxation training intervention for stress management which is the easiest and least expensive approach to implement^[19].

Conclusion

As we know that, no organization is free from stress at work. Now a day's Stress has become a Black Plague at a work place and getting more & more attention. The Stress at work place not only causes because of time pressure & over load of work but also lack of rewards, co-operation of co-worker, work environment, Pressure from the top management, employee health, role ambiguity, role conflict, and so on. So we can say that, Stress is an unavoidable in the organizational work life.

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