



WORK STRESS – A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Stress has become a pervading feature of people's life in modern world. The modern world which is said to be a world of achievements is also a world of stress. Stress is everywhere, whether it is in the family, business organization, enterprise, institute or any other social or economic activity. Right from birth till death, an individual is invariably exposed to various stressful situations. Despite tremendous advancements in science and technology, and remarkable growth of economy and sources of luxury, people all over the world seem to experience stress in various spheres of their lives. In the past also, the societies were not entirely free from stress. However the causes of stress in those societies were episodic in nature, low in severity and frequency. But during the last two decades the span of psychosocial stress has drastically increased. The basic reason is the changed physical and socio-cultural environment of the contemporary societies and life style of the people. People's life has become more demanding, complicated, mechanical and dependent running by the clock. Ever increasing needs and aspirations, high competition, pressures of meeting deadlines, uncertainty of future and weak social support system have made the life of people stressful in modern societies. This article would certainly highlight the various causes of stress and ways to reduce work stress.

KEYWORDS : Stress, Cultural Environment, Effects of stress.

Introductory Note

A number of concepts were developed by ancient Indian Scholars related to the phenomenon of stress even though the concept of stress in modern sense is not easily found in traditional texts of Indian culture and tradition. It is interesting to note that the body-mind relationship, a characteristic of modern stress studies, is emphasized in Ayurvedic Indian System of medicine.

Rao S.K.R. (1983) has traced the origin of stress in ancient Indian thought. It mentions three types of stresses: personal, situational and environmental. Personal stresses can again be of two types, namely physiological and psychological.

"Physiological stresses are born out of imbalances between physiologic constituents. Psychological stresses are caused by various emotional states of mind. Situational Stresses are caused by unwholesome interpersonal transactions" which may include conflicts, aggression and competition etc. "Environmental stresses are occasioned by natural calamities".

The stress operates through different modes of stressors. The model proposed in Yoga Sutra is a comprehensive one incorporating cognitive structuring, affective or emotional stages and adaptive reactions. It presents the concept of "Kriya Yoga" which aims at reducing number and intensity of the stressors and facilitates conservation of mental energy devoid of tension defined as Samadhi Bhavana. The system of Yoga is analytical and helps the individual in understanding his own stresses by leading him to the root causes of these stresses.

Indian Scholars (Pestonjee, 1987 a, Mathew, 1985) in their conceptual papers agreed with this connotation. Pestonjee and Singh (1987) while studying stress and job satisfaction noted that managers and system analysts in private organizations scored higher on both stress and satisfaction as compared to their counterparts in public organizations.

Mathew (1985) in his conceptual study on role stress of a creative manager studied the relationship between creativity and stressors. He noted that creativity and innovation in organizations have a top priority. Therefore stressors are associated with creative activities. Interaction among various sub system of organizations such as person, task, role, behaviour setting, physical and social environment are seen as causal factors of stress. A teacher's role in management institute is similar to that of a manager in an organization. Management teachers are also associated with many creative teaching learning activities.

The concept of stress was first introduced in life sciences by

Selye Hans in his pioneering work in 1936. This concept is borrowed from natural sciences and is derived from the Latin word 'Stringere' which means to draw tight. In psychophysiology, stress refers to some stimulus resulting in a delectable strain that cannot be accommodated by the organism and which ultimately results in impaired health or behaviour. In common parlance, however, the terms Stress and Strain are used synonymously in a non-scientific manner. The popularity of this concept was established in the physiological field where it was first introduced but the use of stress terminology continues to flourish in psychology and social sciences.

Work Stress may be caused due to disharmonious domestic circumstances, commuting and various other pressures of city life. Work stress may be related to stress in the office environment and nature of job. Work stress may become pressing to the extent that the individual lacks autonomy and sense of purpose in the tasks he performs along with boredom and monotony.

The need for this study is explained from the following few lines supported by relevant literature.

India being a large country with high population and quite a large number of people employed in the industrial sector, only modest efforts has been found in assessing the work stress. Therefore it is worthwhile to investigate and analyze the factors responsible for work stress. A recent survey conducted in India among employees found 57% rise in work related stress in India, due to global recession compared to the previous years, which in turn affected their performance (The Economic times, 2009). It is also reported that the intensity of work stress varies with type of industry and occupation (Shimizu et al., 1997). Investigations carried out in developed countries reveal that work stress varies with age, designation, educational qualification, gender difference, language etc. (Shields, 2006). Therefore there is a wide scope for analyzing the factors responsible for work stress among the employees in the Indian industries by using reliable and valid instruments. Many earlier research findings projected the influence of work environment on work stress (Thayer et al., 2009; Jennings, 2008). It is worth while in analyzing the factors responsible for work stress in different type of industries in India. So, with this idea in mind the researcher had to proceed with this research work.

The researcher would like to point out in clear and specific terms the significance of the study in the following few lines.

1. It helps to find out the major factors causing job stress among the employees.
2. The study also helps to find out the various ways of reducing job

stress.

- To suggest a few measures to overcome work stress.

Limitations And Scope For Future Research

In drawing conclusions it is important to note the limitation of the self-reporting nature of survey responses. Future research could usefully incorporate an analysis of the impact of role stress on physiological, behavioural, performance and other organizational behavioural, performance and other organizational outcomes. There is further scope to replicate the study in different environments and locations.

Hypothesis:

- Greater the years of experience higher the level of work stress.

The researcher has gone for diagnostic design by adopting simple random sampling. The size of the sample is 50 workers from a factory in Union Territory of Puducherry.

ANALYSIS

APPLICATION OF STATISTICAL TOOL (MEAN FORMULA) TO DETERMINE THE AVERAGE AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS

AGE X	No. of Respondents F	ASSUMED MEAN (Mid Point)	d	Fd
21-30	38	25.5	-1	-38
31-40	07	35.5	0	0
41-50	05	45.5	1	05
	N=50			-33

$$\bar{X} = A + (\sum fd / N) \times C$$

A= 35.5

f d = -33

N= 50

C= 10

$$\bar{X} = 35.5 + (-33 / 50) \times 10$$

35.5 + (-.66) x 10

35.5 - 6.6

$$\bar{X} = 28.9$$

ANSWER: The average age of the respondents is 28.9 years.

TABLE NO. - 1 Table Showing The Gender of The Respondents.

SL No.	Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Male	40	80 %
2	Female	10	20 %
	TOTAL	50	100 %

The above table shows that 80% of the respondents are male and 20% of them are female.

The main reason for having the most number of male in this study is that the data were collected from departments where male dominate the female. Since the organization is a production oriented concern the scope for employing female is very less, hence the number of female is less when compared to male.

TABLE NO. - 2 Table Showing The Marital Status of The Respondents.

SL No.	Marital Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Single	30	60 %
2	Married	20	40 %
	TOTAL	50	100 %

The above table shows that 60% of the respondents are single and 40% of them are married.

The reason for 60% of the respondents being still single, can be correlated with the fact that 76% of the respondents are in the age group of 21-30 which could be considered an early age for marriage before settling down in life. Moreover, it is also found that 76% of the respondents earn Rupees 5001- 8000/- per month which is not sufficient to manage a married life. Hence, 60% of the respondents are still unmarried.

TABLE NO. - 3 Table Showing The Residence of The Respondents.

SL No.	Residence	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Rural	32	64 %
2	Urban	18	36 %
	TOTAL	50	100 %

The above table shows that 64% of the respondents hail from rural background and 36% of them hail from urban background.

Since the factory is located in PIPDIC Industrial Estate at Mettupalayam which is surrounded by many villages and most of the respondents come from these villages, the workers belonging to rural areas nearly 64%. The table no. 4 clearly indicates that 64% of the workers travel 4-15 kilometers to reach the workplace.

TABLE NO. - 3 Table Indicating Respondents Opinion About The Cause of Role Stress.

SL No.	Causes	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Quantitative Work	08	16 %
2	Qualitative Work	20	40 %
3	Work Overtime	19	38 %
4	Working at Home	03	06 %
	TOTAL	50	100 %

The table pin point that 40% of the respondents are of the view that it is the qualitative work which leads to role stress, 38% of them opine that it is overtime which causes role stress, 16% of them say that quantitative work causes role stress and 6% say that working at home is the cause of role stress.

In a study conducted by Theorell and Rahe (1971) and French and Caplan (1970) came out with the findings that quantitative and qualitative work and work overload produces physical strain. Since 94% of the respondents experience these issues they have a greater scope of being affected by role stress.

HYPOTHESIS

- Greater the years of experience higher the level of work stress.

$$\chi^2 = \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

6.2

$$\chi^2 = \frac{6.2}{50}$$

0.12

The calculated value is 0.12.

df = R-1 X C-1

df = 3-1 x 3-1 = 4

The table value for df 4 at 0.05 level is 9.488.

FINDINGS:

Since the table value is high than the calculated value it is proved that Greater the years of experience higher is the level of work stress.

TABLE NO. - 4 Table Indicating The Extent of Stress Owning to Key Responsibilities.

SL No.	Extent	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	To a Great Extent	10	40 %
2	To Some Extent	15	60 %
	TOTAL	25	100 %

NOTE: Only few respondents are eligible to answer this question.

It is visible from the table that 60% of the respondents are of the view that their extent of stress owing to key responsibilities is to some extent and 40% of them say that it is to a great extent.

In a study conducted French and Caplan (1975), came out with the findings that key responsibilities does result in stress for an individual employee. It is very interesting to note that 100% of the respondents, in this study have the same opinion and hence this particular finding does match with the finding of French and Caplan.

DIAGRAM NO. - 1

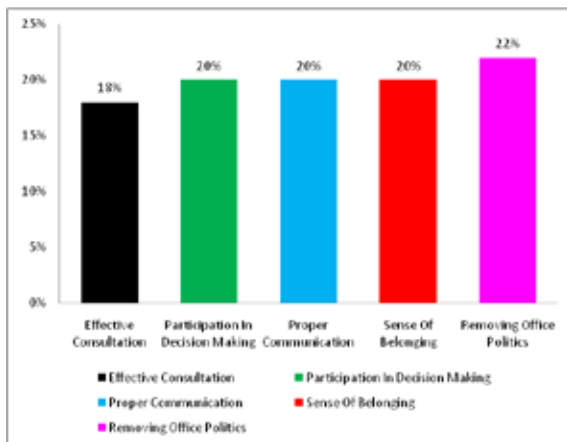


Diagram Indicating the Respondents Suggestions to Reduce Job Stress.

INDEX:



When the respondents were asked to give in their suggestions to reduce job stress, 22% of the respondents favored removal of office politics, 20% of them wanted to participate in decision making, proper communication and sense of belonging each and finally 18% of them favoured effective consultation to reduce job stress.

TABLE NO. - 5 Table Indicating The Extent of Effect on Work Owing to Role Stress.

SL No.	Causes	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	To a Great Extent	17	34 %
2	To Some Extent	29	58 %
3	Not At all	04	08 %
	TOTAL	50	100 %

58% of the respondents opine that the extent of effect of role stress on work is to some extent, 34% of them feel that it is to a great extent and only 8% of them feel that there is no effect of role stress on work.

DIAGRAM NO. - 2

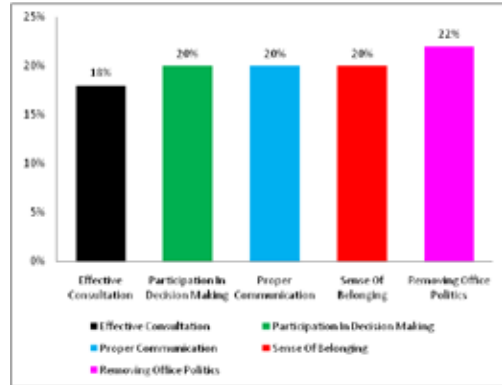
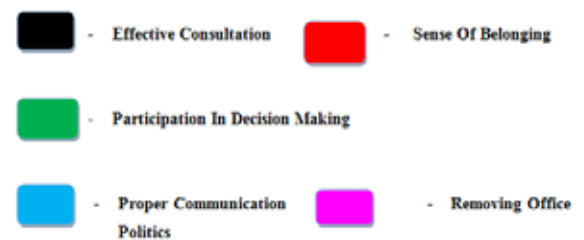


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CONCLUSION

The study undertaken in a private factory in the Union Territory of Puducherry shows that this manufacturing unit is no exception to work stress. The study shows that the average age of the respondents is 28.9 years and around 80% of them are male. Among the respondents 60% are single and 64% of them are residents of rural areas.

When it comes to the real causes of work stress 40% of the respondents pointed out that it is qualitative work which results in work stress and another cause is overtime. It is usually understood that overtime is an additional source of income for the labouring class and hence they always look forward to it. But, the study contradicts it and has found out that 38% of the respondents have opined that it is overtime which results in work stress for them.

Many studies have also shown that workers look forward to key responsibilities eagerly but here in this study, 60% of the respondents have said that it is the key responsibility, which results in work stress to some extent. Therefore, workers don't look forward to accept key responsibilities in the concern.

There are numerous ways to reduce work stress which has been suggested by many authors. But the author in this article would like to place on record a few ways to overcome stress as suggested by the respondents. And they are as follows:

- Effective Consultation with the workers – by the management
- Workers need to be involved in decision making process
- Proper Communication System to be in place
- Removal of Office Politics.

Though there are many ways to overcome work stress, all cannot be fruitful to everybody. Again it depends on the personality who adopts it. Those who really face work stress should not play with it and take it seriously and try to overcome it as early as possible. Otherwise it will entangle the whole family leading to serious consequences.