



Stress Among Marketing Executives: A Review of Literature For Conceiving a Conceptual Model And Structuring A Scale For Measurement of Stress.

KEYWORDS

stress, stress management, on-the-job stress, off-the-job stress

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ABSTRACT *The most common problem found in every individual, irrespective of age, sex, cast, creed or any other thing is 'stress'. It is universally accepted that optimum levels of stress can act as a creative, motivational force that can drive people to achieve incredible feats (eustress). Chronic or traumatic stress (distress) on the other hand, is potentially very destructive and can deprive people of physical and mental health, and at times even of life itself. Stress these days has become distress and its impacting the overall performance and health of people. This study is conducted to figure out the major reasons behind stress among marketing executives, who actually face a lot of stress and could not cope well with it. The major purpose of this study was to examine the existing literature for conceiving a model and structuring a scale for measurement of stress. After studying the literature it was found that stress can be divided into two parts namely; on-the-job stress and off-the-job stress.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The world of work in 21st century is very different from what it was as recently as a decade ago. A satisfying life is now defined as striking a balance between work and non-work. Globalization, mergers, acquisitions, downsizing, outsourcing, and radically changing technologies have all made the idea of "life-long employment" at one company, or even in one occupation, an elusive dream. All this is due to stress only. A lot of people leave their jobs due to a problem of stress. Evidences suggest that stress is the major cause of turnover in organizations. And amidst all the employees in the organization, the marketing/sales executives are the persons who are facing stress more than anyone else in the job. Stress develops when an individual feels he is not competent enough to undertake the role assigned to him effectively.

Selye (1956) defined stress as "The force, pressure or strain exerted upon a material object or person which oppose these forces and try to keep up its original state".

A report (2004) "Employment Relations and Union Services: Health and Safety" said workplace stress discuss factors which causes stress at work place in which poor relationship with the managers and unsympathetic management. Another research report (2000) by "Centre for Occupational and Health Psychology", examined demographic variables showed that gender had little overall effect although it interacts with other factors, such as full-time/part-time employment. The middle-aged workers (30-35 years old) had slightly higher proportions in the high reported in the high reported stress category than those at the extremes of the age range. Educational attainment was found to be an important factor with those educated to degree level having a higher proportion in the higher reported stress category. Marital status also influenced the reporting of stress, with those who were widowed/divorced or separated having a greater stress. The occupational variables were also found to have a large impact on reporting of stress. Another research made by "The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health" (NIOSH) in Jan. 1999, studied psychological aspects of occupational safety and health, on the basis of experience and research, NIOSH favors the view that working conditions play a primary role in causing job stress. However, the role of individual factors is not ignored.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The major objective of current is to formulate a conceptual model in order to conduct a further study on stress measurement among marketing executives.

3. EXTENSIVE REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kahn (1964) explained that individual perceive role expectations with varying degrees of accuracy, and then attempt to enact that role. However, errors can creep into this process, resulting in stress-inducing problems called role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload.

House (1974) revealed several objective and/or subjective indicators of occupational stress (i.e., low job satisfaction, job pressures such as work overload, status inconsistency, and/or job mobility).

Cobb (1975) had the opinion that, "The responsibility load creates severe stress among workers and managers."

Caplan et al., (1975) concluded that lack of participation in the decision making process, lack of effective consultation and communication, unjustified restrictions on behavior, office politics and no sense of belonging are identified as potential sources of stressors.

French and Caplan (1975) "Pressure of both qualitative and quantitative overload can result in the need to work excessive hours, which is an additional source of stress." Having to work under time pressure in order to meet deadlines is an independent source of stress.

Cooper and Marshal (1976) stated that occupational stress includes the environmental factors or stressors such as work overload, role ambiguity, role conflict and poor working conditions associated with a particular job.

Mcgrath (1976) explained that the role ambiguity is a most common source of job related stress. According to him, role ambiguity occurs when people are uncertain about the scope of their responsibilities, what is expected of them and how to divide their time between various duties.

Miles and Perreault (1976) identify four different types of role conflict: 1. Intra-sender role conflict 2. Inter sender role conflict. 3. Person- role conflict; 4. Role-overload. The use of role concepts suggests that job related stress is associated with individual, interpersonal, and structural variables.

Randall (1988) stated that if a person is told to do something unethical or illegal, or if the work is distasteful (for example, sacking a close friend) person-role conflict is likely.

Frankenhaeuser et. al. (1989) in their study 'Stress On the job

and Off the Job as Related to Sex and Occupational Status in White-Collar Workers', studied the attitudes towards work, total workload and sex role identity were examined by questionnaires. After work, however, interesting group differences emerged, suggesting slower unwinding in female managers. Differences related to occupational level and/or sex were found for autonomy and social support at work, competitiveness, sex role and reported conflict between demands from paid work and other responsibilities. The stress profile of the female managers was considered in terms of possible long-term health risks.

Wilson et. al. (1993) examined the effects of employee versus spouse of employee status, age, emotional well-being, physical health, number of marriage and family problems, and job stress on general perceived stress.

Cluskey (1994) found the main causes of stress to be (1) Reporting to more than one boss, (2) Heavy workload under time constraints, (3) Work relations in the organization, and (4) A perceived lack of career progress.

Raju and Madhu (1994) examined that higher level employees experienced lesser role conflict and role ambiguity than their middle and lower level counterparts.

Janice (1995) The Singapore executive: stress, personality and wellbeing" Examines the Singapore executive in the service sector – insurance, financial and banking – in terms of the level of stress experienced, coping styles, and personality (Type-A/Type-B) tests the relationship between personality type, perceptions of stress and psychological wellbeing. Also examines the level of stress and psychological wellbeing across the three industries. Although Type-A executives reported a significantly higher level of stress than Type-B executives, they were not psychologically less healthy than their Type-B counterparts. Executives across the three industries did not differ in terms of reported stress; executives in the finance sector tended to be more worn out and uptight than executives in the banking and insurance sectors. Work overload, role ambiguity and relationships with colleagues were cited to be the major stressors, while switch-off, exercise and quiet control were the most common coping techniques. Discusses interventions aimed at changing work and task variables and changing characteristics of executives.

Satyanarayana (1995) revealed that role erosion, personal inadequacy, resource inadequacy and role stagnation were experienced as dominate contributors of role stress in executives and supervisors. The two groups differed significantly in respect of role overload and role ambiguity dimensions.

Chand and Sethi (1997) conducted a study to examine the organizational factors as predictors of job related strain and found Role conflict, strenuous working conditions and role overload were found to be the dearest and most significant.

Upadhyay and Singh (1999) found that executives experienced more stress than teachers did and they differ in factors like role overload, intrinsic impoverishment and status.

Pestonjee (1999) explained that optimum level at which stress is functional is different for different persons and is dependent on variety of factors like the personality of an individual, self-esteem, his educational background, authority to make decisions, control over organizational and environmental variables and so on.

A Canadian study (1999) found that demanding job plus lack of power equals stress. According to the study, women report a higher degree of job stress than do men as they have less decision making powers and they feel less supported by their co-workers than men do.

Kaushal (2001) described that job stress perceived by employ-

ees are not so much. However female employees found highly stressed for their dual responsibility at workplace as well as at home. Higher qualified employees felt more stress in comparison to graduate ones, for their increased expectations. Younger employees opine more stress in view of their under-utilization of energy, fresh view points, lack of proper inputs and pending promotions and urban background employees perceive strain caused by dual career constraints and nuclear family problems. It is heartening to mention that job stress in the bank is average. However the major stressor identified is role stagnation, role erosion; inter role distances which all are inter-related with each other, one giving way to another.

Manshor et. al. (2003) found that workloads, working conditions, and relationship at work and certain demographic variables were the main concern of the managers that lead to stress at the work place.

Kulkarni (2006) said that rapid change of the modern working life is associated with increasing demands of learning new skills, need to adopt to new types of work, pressure of higher productivity and quality of work, time pressure and hectic jobs are increasing stress among the workplace.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study has been conducted utilizing the secondary data collected from various sources such as published statistics, reports, journals, thesis, websites, etc. To understand the developments till now in order to frame a conceptual model for further study, descriptive and case study approach has been used to reveal the facts.

5. FINDINGS

Researches indicate that nearly a third of the working population in developed countries report high to very high levels of stress. Similarly, evidence for newly industrialized countries is also indicative of the prevalence of stress. Time pressures, excessive demands, role conflicts, job security and interpersonal relationships are particularly common stressors amongst employees in the financial services sector.

After examining the existing literature, it is found that most of the people find their lives stressful due to their jobs and at the same time there are few factors present in their family cum personal lives that produce stress. After analyses we found that we can differentiate the stress into two sorts:

- a) On-the-job stress
- b) Off-the-job stress

5.1 On-the-job stress: On-the-job stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional response that occurs when the requirements of the job do not match with the capabilities, resources or needs of the workers. Job stress is the strain, anxiety or the pressures that an individual faces at workplace while coping with the incessant and numerous demands or expectations put before him. Situation worsens when the capabilities fall short of the expectations or demands. Job stress is the product of mismatch between potential of an individual and the job demands made upon him; it is manifested in the form of harmful physical and mental reaction. It could also be a result of poor match between resources and requirements of an individual at work. Job stress results from the interaction of the worker and the conditions of work. Job stress is widely prevalent, omnipresent and a costly issue. Every third executive at workplace reports a high level of stress and every fourth employee views his job as the principal cause of stress in his life. The factors that came out of analysis under head of On-the-job stress are:

- i. Role conflict
- ii. Interpersonal Relationship
- iii. Workload/ overtime
- iv. Role ambiguity
- v. Performance pressure

5.2 Off-the-job stress: Off-the-job stress can be defined as the stress occurred not due the work, workplace or working conditions but from his/her personal or family reasons. It occurs when the expectations of body, self and family are not met. Off-the-job stress is a mismatch between how an individual actually behave and how an individual is expected to behave, and such expectations are from the side of self, family and friends. It can occur due to poor relationships with family and friends, income of family, size of family and other demographic and psychographic factors. The factors that came out of analysis under head of Off-the-job stress are:

- i. Position in family
- ii. Relationship with family/friends
- iii. Family size/ type
- iv. Family/personal income
- v. Demographics/psychographics

After reviewing the above literature, the following model (fig-

ure 1) has been conceived for further research. This model is not exhaustive; the factors chosen are based on extensive survey of literature.

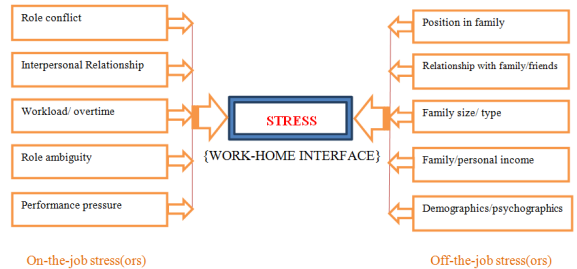


Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Model for Further Research

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