



STRESS COPING STRATEGIES OF WORKING WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Job stress is on the rise with the turbulence of economy in India and it would do well for any kind of Organizations to accept this fact and invest time and effort to address the issue. Work stress and rehabilitation are important issues for individuals, employers and policy makers committed to reform of the public services. With the introduction of the Stress Management Standards and the commitment to improving vocational rehabilitation provision, there is a developing national policy framework but whether this will be matched with existing practices in organisations remains open to doubt. Quality of work life improves the performance as well as reduces the stress among employees. Against this background, the present study analyzes the stress coping strategies adopted by the working women. It is suggested that stress free environment be provided to employees so as to improve their level of job satisfaction and commitment to the organization. Further, it is suggested that employers can increase the employee satisfaction level and decrease the employee absenteeism and turnover by understanding the role and importance of individual and organizational variables in minimizing the organizational stress.

KEYWORDS : stress, working women, coping strategies**INTRODUCTION:**

Job stress is on the rise with the turbulence of economy in India and it would do well for any kind of Organizations to accept this fact and invest time and effort to address the issue. Work stress and rehabilitation are important issues for individuals, employers and policy makers committed to reform of the public services. With the introduction of the Stress Management Standards and the commitment to improving vocational rehabilitation provision, there is a developing national policy framework but whether this will be matched with existing practices in organisations remains open to doubt. Quality of work life improves the performance as well as reduces the stress among employees. Against this background, the present study analyzes the stress coping strategies adopted by the working women.

Angeliki Douvaras and Wilfred I. Ukpere (2014) investigated the causes of stress in an organisation and its effects on individuals in the organizations. It is opined that stress pervades every aspect of organisational work life and is a real issue in the workplace. Stress is essentially factors in or outside the organisation which inflicts a dramatic threat on how individuals cope within the organisation, their performance levels and essentially their well-being, and how the organisation copes as a whole to reach its objectives. It is found from their study that every single participant of the study showed signs of stress and there were even a handful of those who demonstrated signs of extreme stress.

Deepti Pathak (2012) pointed out the impact of organizational stress on job satisfaction level of the individuals. The study shows that there is a negative relationship between organizational role stress and job satisfaction. Stress level of the employees is found to be lessened by perceived organizational support which in turn indirectly affects job satisfaction.

Objectives and Methodology:

The main objective of the study is to examine the stress coping strategies of the working women. The study is based on primary data collected through questionnaire from 500 working women in Andhra Pradesh. After collecting the primary data, the output is taken using SPSS Software. Percentage analysis is given. The study is also used secondary data collected from journals and articles.

Review of Literature:

Haim H. Gaziel (1993) evaluated the stress coping strategies of Jewish and Arab school teachers. Jewish teachers frequently use active behavioural strategies in coping with occupational stress, while Arab teachers usually employ inactive behavioural strategies in coping.

The study made by Andrew R. Arthur (2000) found that Employee Assistance Programmes provided by United Kingdom employers were reducing the effects of 'stress' on individuals. Further, workplace performance and productivity are found to be improving due to employee assistance programmes. David Neary (2007) examined

work-related stress and rehabilitation in the light of the introduction of Stress Management Standards in the United Kingdom.

Balakrishnan et al., (2011) probed the coping patterns of occupational stress among executives in an automobile organization. It is reported that job stress is likely to continue to present a major threat to the individual's health and organizational productivity. Bazgan Magdalena-Camelia and Bazgan Marius (2011) analyzed the impact of stress management on work performance. The study found that there is a significant relationship between the stress management and the intensity of overall professional satisfaction. Anil Kumar and Neelam Rathee (2012) made an attempt to identify stress among teachers and its effect on job satisfaction. The study also analyzed the attitude of sample towards stress management.

The study made by Adigun Abel and Okoye O Emmanuel (2012) attempted to analyze the effects of emotional intelligence and stress management training on job performance of non-academic staff in a University. The study shows that job performance will be improved with effective intervention of emotional intelligence and stress management. The study made by Bushara Bano and Parvaiz Talib (2012) aims to identify the concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI). The study further examined the role of emotional intelligence as the moderator of occupational stress. It is reported that emotional intelligence has a strong moderating role in reducing stress and emotional intelligence plays a very significant role in accomplishing personal and organizational objectives.

Eric S. Parilla (2012) attempted to identify the level of stress experienced by the different levels of employees of a University. Hira Aftab and Anam Javeed (2012) aims to find out the impact of job stress on the Counter-Productive Work Behavior (CWB) and to quantify the relationship between job stress and counter-productive work behavior. Aniket Shukla et al., (2013) assessed the level and source of stress, coping mechanisms and influencing factors in student nurses. It is found that nursing students had high levels of perceived stress. The major source of stress was found to be academic load and interface worries.

Indu Rathee (2013) investigated the stress management of Government and Non-Government secondary school teachers. The study also attempted to find gender differences as to stress management. Senthil Kumar and Mohan (2013) examined the relationship between the level of stress and stress coping strategies among teachers. The study found that most of the coping strategies followed by the organizations to reduce stress are new skills development, meetings with staff, better physical working conditions, team work and encouraging staff tours. Career development and stress management are also found to be associated with level of stress at one per cent significant level. Vijay Francis Peter (2014) in his study on wellbeing of school teachers in relation to stress level and vulnerability found that the level of stress resistance is excellent among school

teachers in case of behavioral, psychological as well as social.

Dolly Dwivedi et al., (2014) examined the relationship between Emotional Quotient (EQ) and Stress Management. It is found from the study that there exists a direct positive relationship between EQ and stress management. Gopinath (2014) attempted to examine the relationship between development of Emotional Intelligence (EI) and reduction of Executive stress. It is found from the study that the behavioral intervention improved the stress management score and reduced the executive stress.

Findings of the Study:

Proper direction and control from superior to subordinate

It is revealed from the study that nearly 85 per cent of the sample respondents perceived 'proper direction and control from superior to subordinate' as stress coping strategy, while about 15 per cent of the sample respondents disagreed with the same.

Clearly defined roles:

It is evident from the study that as many as around 64 per cent of the sample respondents felt that 'clearly defined roles' would help to cope from stress, while about 36 per cent of the sample respondents disagreed with the same.

Adequate working hours:

It is obvious from the study that 'adequate working hours' would act as stress coping strategy in the opinion of nearly 70 per cent of the sample respondents, whereas the remaining about 30 per cent of the sample respondents disagreed with this coping strategy.

Improving interpersonal relationships:

It is noted from the study that about two thirds of the sample respondents perceived 'improving interpersonal relationships' as stress coping strategy, whereas the rest around one third of the sample respondents disagreed with the statement.

Relieving work pressure:

It is noticed from the study that 'relieving work pressure' is the stress coping strategy in the opinion of nearly 74 per cent of the sample respondents, whereas the rest about 26 per cent of the sample respondents are not considering 'relieving work pressure' as stress coping strategy.

Good Ambitious:

It is observed from the study that being 'good ambitious' is the stress coping strategy in the case of 76 per cent of the sample respondents, while the sample respondents, who didn't consider 'good ambitious' as stress coping strategy, account for 24 per cent of the sample respondents.

Recognition for every employee:

It is evident from the study that 'giving recognition for every employee' is perceived as the stress coping strategy by about 94 per cent of the sample respondents.

Effective Communication Policy:

It is deduced from the study that 'effective communication policy' is one of the stress coping strategy in the opinion of highest proportion of the sample respondents (72.20 per cent).

Meditation:

It is divulged from the study that huge chunk of the sample respondents perceived 'meditation' as stress coping strategy (87.20 per cent), whereas the rest merely around 13 per cent of the sample respondents didn't recognize it as stress coping strategy.

Developing an information system for awareness of programmes:

It is revealed from the study that 'developing an information system for awareness of programmes' is the stress coping strategy in the opinion of about two thirds of the sample respondents, while one third of the sample respondents didn't perceive it as the stress coping strategy.

Reinforcing and rewarding good standards of behavior:

It is obvious from the study that 'reinforcing and rewarding good standards of behavior' as stress coping strategy in the opinion of about 77 per cent of the sample respondents, while the rest around 23 per cent of the sample respondents didn't agree it as the stress coping strategy.

Encouraging collaborative problem-solving:

It is evident from the study that sample respondents, who perceive 'encouraging collaborative problem-solving' as stress coping strategy, account for 63 per cent of the sample respondents. Of the sample surveyed, 37 per cent of the sample respondents didn't perceive it as stress coping strategy.

Establishing committees and involve them in any change of management processes:

It is noted from the study that sample respondents, who perceive 'establishing committees and involve them in any change of management process' as stress coping strategy, consists of around 59 per cent of the sample respondents. As against this, about 41 per cent of the sample respondents didn't consider 'establishing committees and involve them in any change of management processes as stress coping strategy.

Frequent reviewing of workload and redesign:

It is found from the study that 'frequent reviewing of workload and redesign' as stress coping strategy is felt by around 82 per cent of the sample respondents, while the rest about 18 per cent of the sample respondents didn't accept it as the stress coping strategy.

Conclusion & Suggestions :

In conclusion, it can be said that majority of the sample respondents perceived various stress coping strategies like proper direction and control from superior to subordinate, clearly defined roles, adequate working hours, improving interpersonal relationships, relieving work pressure, good ambitious, giving recognition for every employee, effective communication policy, meditation, developing an information system for awareness of programmes, reinforcing and rewarding good standards of behavior, encouraging collaborative problem solving, establishing committees and involve them in any change of management processes and frequent reviewing of workload and redesign.

It is suggested that stress free environment be provided to employees so as to improve their level of job satisfaction and commitment to the organization. Employers can increase the employee satisfaction level and decrease the employee absenteeism and turnover by understanding the role and importance of individual and organizational variables in minimizing the organizational stress. Effective communication channel with management can reduce stress among employees; harmonial relations with subordinates and superiors can reduce stress; and good working environment can decrease stress.

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