

# A Study on Work Stress



## Management

**KEYWORDS :** Stress, impaired health, stress and behavioural stress.

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### ABSTRACT

*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. The term stress and research on its causes, consequences and management have reached the peak of popularity in modern times. The reactions to intense psychological and behavioural stress have become major concerns of psychological, psychiatric, medical and managerial investigations. So, the author has made a genuine attempt to study the major causes of stress and its effects on a few important aspects of the organization and the family and on the individual worker.*

### WORK STRESS - A New Perspective

Present day researchers and practitioners visualize the phenomenon of stress in a new perspective. As Kets de Vries (1979) had noted, each individual needs a moderate amount of stress to be alert and capable of functioning effectively in an organization. Organizational excellence and individual success are achieved through well managed stresses.

### Stress Terminology

A stressor is any event or situation that is perceived by an individual as a threat causing the individual to either adapt or initiate the stress response. Therefore, a stressor is a stimulus and stress is a response. Stressor is the cause and stress is the effect. The effects of stress upon a person are cumulative and can cause serious harm if experienced over a long time.

Dr. Selye Hans (1979b) was the first to study the effects of stress. He suggested that stress had four basic variations

1. Good Stress – Eustress
2. Bad Stress – Distress
3. Overstress – Hyperstress
4. Understress – Hypostress

### 1) Good Stress – Eustress

It is the positive, desirable stress that keeps life interesting and helps to motivate and inspire people. Eustress involves successfully managing stress even if the individual is dealing with a negative stressor. It implies that a certain amount of stress is useful, beneficial and even good for health. There is increased energy, high motivation, shared perceptions and the performance improves quantitatively as well as qualitatively. Moderate doses of eustress help to improve an individual's performance.

### 2) Bad Stress Distress

Distress refers to the negative effects of stress that drains an individual out of his energy and goes beyond his capacities to cope. This is a situation of high stress distress showing a drastic negative change in performance. The possibility of role overload may force the individual to commit errors, make him indecisive and cause irritation in him at the slightest pretext.

There may be a case of no stress distress also. Role underutilization creating boredom, decreased motivation, absenteeism and apathy are all signs of no stress distress. It is undesirable negative stress.

### 3) Over Stress - Hyperstress

It means too much stress. It can lead to physical and emotional breakdown. Work overload can be a common source of over stress.

### 4) Under Stress - Hypostress

Under stress refers to too little stress leading to boredom, lethargy and frustration. Work under load and no work at all may lead to hypostress in some situations.

According to another classification given by Selye Hans, stress can be acute and chronic in its effects.

### Acute Stress

It is the result of short term stressors. It is usually quite intense initially and then disappears quickly. It can be exciting and stimulating in small doses, but too much leads to fatigue. People, who experience this stress, tend to be over aroused, irritable, anxious and tense. Its symptoms include tension, headaches, migraines, digestive disorders, hypertension, chest pain and heart disease.

### Chronic stress

It is a long term stress usually resulting from nagging problems. In case of chronic stress, a person's physical and mental resources are depleted. Chronic stress can lead to suicide, heart attack and violence. Long term chronic stress results in stress related disease and reduces the quality of life.

### METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in a private concern in the union territory of Puducherry, South India. The study aimed at finding out the causes of stress and the impact it has on the individual, family and the organisation.

A total of 50 samples were selected through simple random sampling. This is a diagnostic study.

### ANALYSIS

**TABLE NO. - 1 Table Showing The Mode of Conveyance of The Respondents.**

Sl No.	Mode of Conveyance	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Cycle	03	6 %
2	Two-Wheeler	26	52 %
3	Bus	13	26 %
4	Walk	08	16 %
	TOTAL	50	100%

The table points out that 52% of the respondents reach office in their two wheeler; 26% of them come to office by bus, 16% of the respondents come to office by walk and 6% use their bicycle to reach the factory.

**TABLE NO. - 2 Table Indicating Respondents Previous Experience**

SL No.	Previous Experience	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	33	66 %
2	No	17	34 %
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100 %</b>

The table shows that 66% of the respondents had previous experience before joining this factory and 34% of them did not have any previous experience before joining this factory.

In a study conducted by Parsons (1973) came out with a findings that with the increases length of service, the level of stress appears lessen.

**TABLE NO. - 3 Table Indicating Respondents Opinion About Various Issues.**

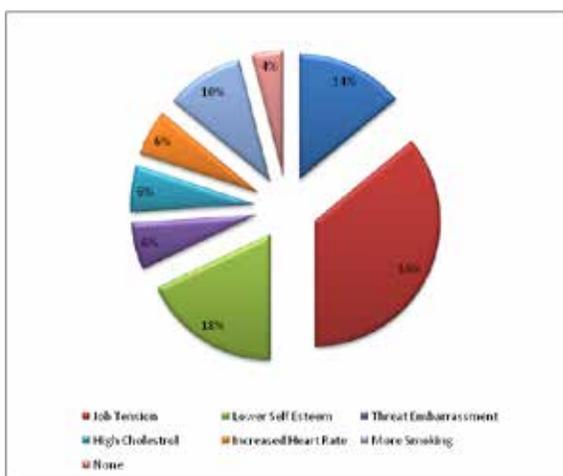
SL No.	Issues	No. of Respondents		Total & Percentage
		Yes	No	
1	Role overload and stress are correlated	24 48 %	26 52 %	50 100 %
2	Support services provided to overcome stress	24 48 %	26 52 %	50 100 %
3	Stress having a direct cost effect on the organization	20 40 %	30 60 %	50 100 %

The table shows that 48% of the respondents are of the view that role overload and stress are correlated whereas 52% of them do not feel so.

In response to the second statement, 48% of the respondents have come forward to say that support services are provided by the organization to overcome stress and 52% of them just said 'no' as a response to this statement.

40% of the respondents say that stress has a direct cost effect on the organization and 60% of them do not feel so.

**DIAGRAM NO. - 1**



**Round Shaped Pie Diagram Showing The Disastrous Effect of Role Stress**

The above diagram indicate that 14% of the respondents point out that job dissatisfaction is the disastrous effect of role stress, 36% point out at job tension, 18% point out at lower self esteem, 6% point out at treat embarrassment, another 6% point out at high cholesterol, similar 6% of them point out at in-

creased heart rate,10% of them point out at more smoking as a result of role stress whereas only 4% of the respondents say that there is no disastrous effect of role stress as such.

**HYPOTHESIS**

Workers hailing from rural areas have high stress compared to urban workers.

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

$$\chi^2 = \frac{2.42}{50}$$

$$\chi^2 = 0.05$$

Calculated Value is 0.05

df = R-1 x C-1

df = 2-1 x 3-1 = 2

The Table Value for df 2 is 5.991at 0.05.

**FINDINGS:**

Since the table value is higher than the calculated value the hypothesis stands proved. It is concluded that Workers hailing from rural areas have high stress compared to urban workers.

**Table No - 4 Table Indicating Respondents Opinion About Their Job.**

SL No.	Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Satisfied	39	78 %
2	Dissatisfied	11	22 %
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100 %</b>

It can be viewed from the table that 78% of the respondents are satisfied with their job whereas 22% of them are dissatisfied with their job.

**TABLE NO. - 5 Table Indicating Respondents Opinion About The Level of Involvement in Job.**

SL No.	Opinion	No.of Respondents	Percentage
1	To a Great Extent	18	36 %
2	To Some Extent	24	48 %
3	Not At all	08	16 %
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100 %</b>

The table shows that 48% of the respondents say that their level of involvement in job is to some extent, 36% of them say that it is to a great extent and 16% of the respondents say that they do not have any sort of involvement in job.

**TABLE No. - 6 Table Indicating Respondents Opinion About Their Attitude & Behavior.**

SL No.	Statements	No. of Respondents		Total & Percentage
		Yes	No	
1	Active Rest is beneficial to overcome work stress.	27 54 %	23 46 %	50 100 %
2	Are you thinking of quitting your job?	21 42 %	29 58 %	50 100 %
3	Do you carry your office work to home?	17 34 %	33 66 %	50 100 %

When asked, whether active rest is beneficial to overcome work stress, 54% of the respondents agreed to it and 46% of them did not agree to it.

42% of the respondents are thinking of quitting their job and 58% of them do not have any such thinking.

34% of the respondents do carry their work to home and 66% do not carry work to home.

**TABLE NO. - 7 Table Indicating The Respondents Opinion About A Few Issues.**

SL No.	Statements	No. of Respondents		Total & Percentage
		Yes	No	
1	Do you feel that power is properly distributed in the organization?	14 28 %	36 72 %	50 100 %
2	Do you have any role ambiguity?	22 44 %	28 56 %	50 100 %
3	Do you feel your job stressful?	34 68 %	16 32 %	50 100 %

28% of the respondents say that power is properly distributed in the organization and 72% of them do not say so.

44% of the respondents do have role ambiguity whereas 56% do not have it.

68% of the respondents feel their job stressful and only 16% do not feel so.

In as research by French and Caplan (1975) they came out with the result that improper delegation of power results in stress. Here in this study, 76% of the respondents do feel that power is improperly distributed hence paving way for work stress.

**TABLE NO. - 8 Table Indicating The Respondents Various Symptoms.**

SL No.	Symptoms	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Avoidance of Work	09	18 %
2	Under Eating	12	24%
3	Aggression Towards Co-workers	13	26 %
4	Aggression Towards Family Members	11	22 %
5	None	05	10 %
	TOTAL	50	100 %

26% of the respondents say that they are aggressive towards co-workers, 24% of them have the symptom of under eating, 22% of them are aggressive towards their family members, 18% of them say that they have the attitude of avoidance of work, 10% of them do not have any symptom of stress as such.

In a study by Srivastava (1999) came out with the classification of symptoms of job stress which very well included all the above mentioned symptoms in the table. Therefore, in this study also around 90% of the respondents are found to have a symptom or other thereby reiterating the same findings of Srivastava.

**TABLE NO. - 9 Table Indicating The Respondents Worst Experiences.**

SL No.	Worst Experiences	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Memory Loss	13	25 %
2	Lack of Decision Making	08	15.1%
3	Feeling of Failure	03	5.6%
4	Insecurity	04	7.5%
5	Inability to Concentrate	04	7.5 %
6	Impatience	02	3.7 %

7	Isolation	04	7.5%
8	Shouting High Voice	09	16.9 %
9	Boredom	02	3.7 %
10	None	04	7.5 %
	TOTAL	53	100 %

**NOTE: Some of the respondents have given more than one response.**

The table shows some of the worst experiences of the respondents wherein 25% of the respondents suffer from memory loss, 16.9% of the respondents have the habit of shouting high voice, 15.1% of them do lack the skill in deciding, 7.5 % of them has the feeling of insecurity and an equal percent i.e. 7.5% are not able to concentrate, 7.5% of them suffer from isolation, 7.5% do not have any such experiences, 5.6% of them have the feeling of failure, 3.7% of them suffer from boredom and an equal percent (3.7%) of the respondents are impatient.

**CONCLUSION**

Many studies have been undertaken in a large scale to find out the issues pertaining to work stress. The present study has been undertaken, though a small one has come out with definite and clear findings.

The study shows that 16% of the respondents come to the factory by walk daily. 66% of them had previous experience.

It is found that the rural workers have high level of stress and 22% of them are dis-satisfied with their jobs. 16% of them say that they have no job involvement and nearly 42% wish to quit their job. 56% of them experience role ambiguity and 68% of them are experiencing stress in their jobs.

The impact of work stress on the family is that 22% of the respondents have started showing their aggressiveness towards their family members. Apart from this, the other effects of work stress on the individual worker are as follows:

- Memory Loss
- Feeling of Failure
- Insecurity
- Impatience
- Isolation
- Shouting High Voice
- Lack of Decision Making

In a very categorical statement 60% of the respondents say that work stress has a direct effect on the organisation.

If a worker and the management are able to realize these consequences of work stress, they would certainly come forward to take preventive steps to control work stress among its workforce and to provide a nice work environment and also build the required personal confidence among the greatest asset of all i.e. the human resource.