



IMPACT OF STRESS ON EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

In the decade of unrivalled growth, companies have enjoyed the morning sun. This sun has empowered their monetary growth, helped them develop new market niches and focus on expansion/improvement of the business. As a result of management failure, companies have immensely failed to understand their employees. They treat their employees as mere workers who contribute to the profits but often fail to consider them as one of the greatest assets of the organisation. The result of this leads to increased levels of stress among employees and this leaves them with what is known as burnout. This situation of burnout often leads to higher level of stress among employees. Stress is a general component and people from practically all social statuses need to confront it. Organisations today are investigating the reasons behind higher levels of stress that ultimately lead to unsatisfactory job performance among employees. The primary motive is to do an extensive study on the impact of stress on employees' performance. Moreover, this research paper will throw light upon few factors that lead to an increased level of stress among employees and how their productivity is hindered due to the same. There is an immense need for employers to treat their employees as their assets and be all ears to their problems. Stress and employees' performance are directly proportional to each other. One of the major reasons behind employees being stressed is the lack of appreciation and motivation by their superiors.

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INTRODUCTION

Stress is inevitable; which means it cannot be avoided. It is an element that every person experiences in every phase of life. It can be either emotional or physical. The productivity and performance of an employee is an integral part of the success of an organization. The performance of an employee can be fundamentally postponed by significant degrees of stress experienced at the workplace. In the current corporate environment, there exists a great deal of rivalry among organizations. Employees' performance turns into a significant and fundamental component for an organization's prosperity. This performance is essentially blocked by unnecessary stress experienced in the workspace and this has stimulated the consideration of numerous businesses.

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Realizing the elements prompting work stress and its effect on employee performance is essential for any business to guarantee its prosperity and smooth working. Consequently, it is crucial for an organization to devise generous strategies to keep their employees fulfilled and stress-free. In today's corporate scenario, employees are by and large needed to put in their blood and sweat to work for longer durations to live up to the expectations of their superiors. The demands of their superiors increase tremendously, which in turn leads to burnout or what we refer to as higher levels of stress. Recently, with the dynamic growth and competition in the economy and the constant changes taking place, a lot of articles and journals have been written regarding organisational stress to make people realise the situations when the workplace environment tends to become disheartening. As stress continues to drift over employees, the organisations are reluctant to take up suitable measures to address them. An employee's personal satisfaction can be influenced by two or three occupation stress factors which can make an allotted task troublesome and stressful for him to carry out regardless of the work culture. Work stress may happen due to various factors like individual, financial, and family matters.

LITERATURE REVIEW

S. T. Arike (2021) examined the interrelation between individual traits, stress and productivity of the employees. This quantitative study was done using primary data. The study concluded that there is a positive relationship between individual traits and significant levels of stress among employees. Such type of research recommended to go for personality tests and recruit people who would not get stressed easily.

Dennis Swarant and Kristi Endah Ndilosa Ginting (2021) conducted a research to study the impact of occupational stress, competence and training on the performance of the employees. This quantitative research was done using saturated sampling technique. It concluded that occupational stress contributed towards employees' performance in a significant manner.

Sumiati (2020) studied that employees are considered as catalysts in the organization and are expected to perform well to contribute towards the growth of the company. The objectives of her research were to examine the impact of quality work-life, job stress on performance of the employees. This quantitative study used random sampling technique and concluded that job stress variables contribute dominantly towards the performance of the employees.

Slamet Riyadi (2019) analysed the impact of job satisfaction, workplace environment, personal traits and remuneration towards the performance of the employees. She concluded that workplace environment and personal traits do not really contribute to the performance of the employees in a negative manner whereas the other factors do.

Sharmilee, Abdul Basit and Zubair Hassan (2018) studied that prolonged working hours with deadlines and job uncertainty have huge and negative impact on performance of the employees. They concluded that it is important for managers to ensure job security and communicate job roles with clarity to employees to increase their productivity.

Thomson (2006) studied various sources that increase stress levels among employees. He articulated that by reducing the pressure of work, improving the functioning of the management and supervising better compensation packages and incentives would help reduce stress.

Glazer and Beehr (2005) led an exploration to discover the relationship among stressors and how it prompts a person to leave the work. These stressors can incorporate working environment conditions, job vagueness, job over-burden and job clashes or other issues that can cause tension and strain among employees at work. The motivation behind the research was to notice the impact of these stressors from social perspective.

The outcomes upheld the theory that turnover is identified with stress at some degree. Anyway, culture influences the resilience level of the stress. Yet, at certain spots stress has an extraordinary impact over employee and it influences their performance just as assumptions from their working environment. Whatever the explanation might be to this reality, scientist proposes more examination in this line.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is completely conceptual in nature and is entirely based on secondary data. The data has been collected from numerous journals, websites, and related articles. The sampling technique for selecting secondary data is purposive sampling. Keeping in mind the objectives, descriptive research is adopted to gain precise analysis of the study.

OBJECTIVES

-) To ascertain the effect of occupational stress on employees' performance
-) To examine the causes that hinder the productivity of employees
-) To study the influence of employee motivation over stress

OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Occupational stress is ordinarily characterized as an enthusiastic, intellectual, social and physiological reaction to the forceful and destructive parts of work, workplace and hierarchical environment. It happens when an interest surpasses a person's adapting capacity and disturbs their mental balance. It also happens in the work environment when an employee sees a circumstance to be too demanding to even consider dealing with, and hence threatening to their prosperity. Since it is observed that stress occurs at work, it is an employer's duty to help an employee overcome it. The employer should be well-versed with various coping strategies and viewpoints that might be unique to every employee. Therefore, varying individual traits like personality, coping styles, etc. can be some of the important factors to determine different stress level. Hence, what is stressful for one individual may not be an issue for another person.

CATEGORIES OF STRESS AT WORK: Work can get a little overwhelming at times. This feeling of being overwhelmed is referred to as stress. The various categories of stress are as follows:

-) **Time Stress:** This is the most well-known kind of pressure at work. One normally experiences this when they believe there's insufficient time for them to complete an assigned task. Panic sets in and one battles to complete however many things as they can. They hurry until they get stressed, complete half of it, or more terrible, not complete any work whatsoever.
-) **Anticipatory Stress:** This stress is related with the sensation of expecting the future excessively. One expects so much that vulnerabilities of what could occur later overpower them. It usually caused by fear of failure.
-) **Situational Stress:** This stress takes place when everything begins to go out of one's own control. Such a type of stress can occur unexpectedly and one has no idea on what to do. It is the point at which one believes that everything is going easily, however, out of nowhere, in a flicker of an eye, everything goes downhill. It very well may be the time where one's manager abruptly ridiculed them before numerous collaborators.

-) **Encounter Stress:** This stress includes the sensation of being overpowered by meeting new or such a large number of individuals. We all can be overpowered by many individuals, regardless of whether we are self-observers or social butterflies. It very well may be on the grounds that one doesn't care for them or they don't care for one, however, one needs to initiate a small talk with them. It may likewise imply that it's the first occasion when they'll meet them and one stresses over how they will respond or how they will see them.

SOURCES OF STRESS

The basic sources of stress are as follows:

Environmental Stressors: The environment in today's scenario can pressurize you with intense competition and demands to maintain pace and adjust well to the surroundings. Some examples of environmental stressors include – noise, traffic, pollution, crimes, etc.

Social Stressors: Stress can sometimes arise from the needs of the various individual roles a person plays. This can be of a mother/father, husband/wife, son/daughter, sole bread winner, etc. The examples include – loss of a loved one, too many demands, repayment of loans, separation from spouse, etc.

Physiological Stressors: These are physical factors that an individual's body experiences. The examples are – adolescence, pregnancy, poor diet, sickness, aging, menstrual cramps, improper sleep cycle, etc.

Psychological Stressors: The brain elucidates and recognizes few things as stressful, troublesome, challenging and unpleasant. It is one's thought process that considers such things as stressors. These include – fear of rejection, validation from peers, etc.

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO STRESS AT WORK: Work is significant and fundamental. It is part of life. It is a give-and-take measure that benefits the two players for the advancement of society. It is a solace to individuals who have it since it is the solution to their necessities. However, not all positions fit everybody. Some are terrible to find some work they loathe while others just drop out of affection from their positions. Hence, work can get a little overwhelming and tiresome. Few of the factors that contribute to stress are as follows:

Workload: Some of the factors like heavy workload and unrealistic expectations from supervisors can contribute a lot to stress. The organisational climate in which employees are delegated with excessive work and the superiors come up with conflicting expectations end up making the job extremely stressful. Investigations in the past have shown various components that are related to stress at work. For instance, when the employee is over-burdened with work, he/she is expected to deliver exceptionally great results. The outcome of such expectations is higher level of stress. There are a few components which cause stress in employees at work and these variables are work timings, compensation,

rewards, higher targets and responsibility, companion mentality, appraisals, no job security, etc.

Role Conflict: This factor contributes to stress when unclear roles and responsibilities are delegated to an employee from his/her co-workers or supervisors. The specifications of the task to be completed are not stated clearly. Conflicting roles can sometimes lead to unsatisfactory performance and dissatisfaction among employees. The employee fails to prioritise his work and doesn't know which one to perform when. This factor, however, should be avoided as such type of environment is not great for organizations as well as employees. For instance, role conflict occurs when a human resource personnel doesn't know how to conduct recruitment for entry-level openings.

Role Ambiguity: Another factor which contributes to stress is role ambiguity. It arises when the job descriptions do not align with the job role. Hence, it is observed that the roles and responsibilities often do not match with the expectations, leading to unsatisfactory performance. Difficult tasks, lack of proper breaks between working hours, poor ergonomic conditions, prolonged working hours, etc. are some of the examples.

Performance: This can be defined as the ability of an employee to produce work as per the instructions given by the employer. The employees are expected to produce results according to the set standards or sometimes beyond it. Performance can be characterized as a proportion of the amount and nature of work done keeping in mind the expense of the asset it took to finish the work. It is valuable from an administrative point of view to consider a few types of counterproductive conduct that are known to result from delayed stress. No two individuals respond to a similar occupation in exactly the same manner, since individual factors additionally impact stress. For instance, workaholics tend to be put themselves under higher levels of stress because they feel the need to complete work within the deadline and with utmost sincerity.

EFFECT OF STRESS ON EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE: Stress at work generates from various sources. These can be arduous superiors, annoying colleagues, monotonous work, etc. Employees' performance can greatly be influenced by stressors like family problems, health and wealth, anxiety issues, etc. The way one handles stress greatly influences the impact it can have on him/her.

-) **Poor Efficiency:** Stressed employees often end up getting frustrated over petty things, which in turn hamper their productivity. This, however, affects the way they work leading to poor efficiency in whatever task they are entrusted with.
-) **Poor Health:** Hypertension, increased blood pressure, nausea, headaches, etc. are some of the common symptoms of stress. These symptoms do not let one work properly. Hence, stress can disrupt the normal functioning of the body and have a huge impact on the performance of the employees.
-) **Lack of Concentration:** Poor health may in turn lead to poor concentration at work. Employees who are stressed are hardly able to focus at work. They find

excuses to delay their tasks and focus on unnecessary things.

-) **Missing Deadlines:** The inability to meet deadlines and complete the work within the provided time is one of the common effects of stress. This demotivates the employees leading to procrastination and not being able to complete further tasks within the deadline too.

MEASURES TO PREVENT STRESS AT WORK: In the event that employees are encountering unfortunate degrees of stress, an employer can recruit an advisor or a psychologist to propose new strategies or methodologies to overcome stress. A blend in hierarchical structure and strategies to mitigate stress can be the best strategy. Few of the measures to prevent stress are:

Purposeful Job Design

-) Designing job descriptions that give significance and incitement to employees just as promising circumstances for them to utilize their abilities.
-) Set up work plans that are viable with requests and obligations outside the work.
-) Think about adaptable timetables—numerous associations permit working from home to decrease workload and allow flexible working hours (which empowers individuals to all the more likely equilibrium their own lives).
-) Screen every employee's responsibility to guarantee it is in accordance with their abilities.

Transparent Communication

-) Show employees stress mindfulness and advance an open exchange.
-) Avoid confusion – clearly state roles and responsibilities.
-) Decrease vulnerability about profession advancement and future business possibilities.

Healthy Workplace Environment

-) Give ample opportunities to employees to create social cooperation
-) Watch for indications of disappointment or harassment at work to battle prejudices (in light of race, sex, public cause, religion, or language).

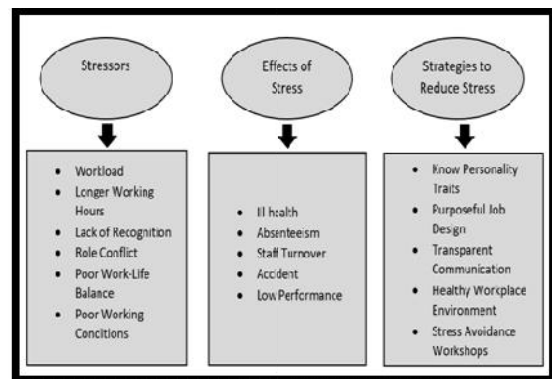
Accountability

-) Give employees the freedom to take an interest in choices and activities that influence their positions.
-) Present a participative initiative style and include however many subordinates as would be prudent in settling stress-creating issues.

Stress Avoidance Workshops

-) Employers should invest their time and money conducting various workshops that is beyond their daily responsibilities.
-) Employee engagement activities that promote leisure among employees can also be conducted.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL



CONCLUSION

Employees should be treated as the most valuable assets of an organization. Therefore, their problems should not be ignored. The fundamental objective of this research paper is to ascertain the impact of occupational stress on employees' performance. Hence, the study has subsequently shown that every individual, regardless of personality, gets stressed at work. This stress not only influences the way we work but also the way we live.

It has been observed that the temperaments and the needs of an employee and the employer change at such a rapid pace that it sometimes becomes extremely difficult to avoid stress. Moreover, increasing levels of stress in employees hamper their day-to-day activities. Occupational stress is unavoidable and there are four categories of stressors at work – time stress, anticipatory stress, situational stress and encounter stress. These categories differ from one another and help in identifying the feeling of being overwhelmed. The sources and factors of stress have also been taken into consideration in this research and the steps to mitigate stress have also been elaborated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Employers are failing at improving the retention rate of their organisations. As a result, increasing stress level contribute to increasing attrition rates. Employers should forget the ideology of 'customer is the king' and shift to treating their employees as the king. These employees by and far help them mint money and their needs/wants/desired should be given due consideration. Employee engagement activities should be conducted every month to boost their productivity and to help them come out of their monotonous schedule. It is recommended that researchers in future should perform extensive research to gain better insights into the factors that hinder employees' performance and find out various variables that analytically would help in a positive way.

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