

A STUDY ON OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG EMPLOYEES SELECTED IN PUBLIC SECTOR UNDERTAKING

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Abstract

Occupational stress occurs when there is a discrepancy between the demands of the environment or workplace and an individual's ability to carry out and complete these demands. The stress induced by the role of performed by the front line employees of steel companies is a matter of worth attention too, as it is emphasized that role stress occurs in employees jobs that involve direct interaction with customers, relationship with co-workers and such employees are prone to relatively greater level of role stress. 384 respondents were selected randomly at steel company through self-administered questionnaire. The analysis has been made on the opinion of the causes of stress according to age and gender of the respondent tested with the help of chi-square test. The result concludes that the Company has good interpersonal communication between the management & the employees and also the study recommends that the management can concentrate on conducting stress management programs to reduce the stress among the employees. It will help the employees to fulfill the management objectives by satisfying and delighting the customers.

Key words: Occupational Stress, individual ability, communication, stress management

Introduction

Stress has become a major concern of the modern times as it can cause harm to employee's health and performance. Different psychologists and physiologists have defined stress differently. In simple words, stress refers to pressure or tensions, people feel in life. As living human makes constant demands, so it produces pressure, i.e., stress. Stress is, therefore, a natural and unavoidable feature of human life. Stress management warrants much attention nowadays, particularly in the corporate sector, more so in the IT sector. While a minimum level of stress is harmless, even necessary to bring out the best in human beings at work, too much of stress will wear the employee out, upset his work life balance and simply damage him totally. Occupational Stress is stress involving work. Stress is defined in terms of its physical and physiological effects on a person, and can be a mental, physical or emotional strain. It can also be a tension or a situation or factor that can cause stress. Occupational stress occurs when there is a discrepancy between the demands of the environment / workplace and an individual's ability to carry out and complete these demands. Often a stressor can lead the body to have a physiological reaction which can strain a person physically as well as mentally. One of the main causes of occupational stress is work overload.

Every responds to stress in a different way, it is only by understanding the nature of individual responses that you can start fighting stress yourself and others. Reduction or elimination of stress is necessary for psychological and physical well being of an individual. Efficiency in stress management enables the individual to deal or cope with the stressful situations instead of avoidance. Strategies like tie management, body-mind and mind-body relaxation exercise, seeking social support help individual improve their physical and mental resources to deal with stress successfully.

Need for the Study

Stress, an integral part of the human existence, is said to have an immense influence over the lives of individuals and the organization. In the present era, the nature and intensity of stress is too turbulent that the present age has been "Age of Anxiety, Stress and Depression". As individuals spend most of their time at work, the work place has been conceived to be a potent contributor and influencer of stress. At the work place, various roles are performed which have to be in synchronization with the roles at home and other places. The stress induced due to roles performed by individuals as employees at work place, has been one of the most persuasive organizational stressors, the outcomes of which have been found to be costly to the organization. The Steel company has also witnessed relatively lack of efforts to analyze the role stress phenomenon exhaustively. The stress induced by the role of performed by the front line employees of steel companies is a matter of worth attention too, as it is emphasized that role stress occurs in employees jobs that involve direct interaction with customers, relationship with co-workers and such employees are prone to relatively greater level of role stress.

Review of Literature

Richard Lazarus (1986), had researched enormously on the physiological, psychological and the sociological aspects of stress. "Stress, appraisal and coping" is a monumental work that continues in the tradition pioneered by co-author Richard Lazarus in his classic book "Psychological stress and the Coping Process". **McGrath, Joseph E (1970)**, in his work, social and psychological factors in stress", identifies crucial issues in the area of stress and seeks potential research approaches to those issues as the focus of the basic contract research program. It gives a conceptual formulation for research on stress, major substantive and methodological issues, an integrative review of some research on social-psychological factors in stress, and a discussion of strategic considerations for future research on stress. **Lawrence R Murphy (1996)**, has compiled his findings based on sixty four different studies. He has studied in detail the effects of worksite stressors on the employees and also stress coping strategies that best control or rather contain the ill-effects of stress. In general, studies using a combination of different stress management techniques seemed to be more effective across outcome measures than single techniques. **Srivastava. U.R. (2010)**, has researched elaborated by comparing 100 day workers ad 100 night workers employed in the dairy industry. The major stressors affecting them and coping methodologies are also discussed here in depth. The study adds additional support to the notion that shift and night shift work is a potent source of stress. Shift work is opposed to the human circadian system and this conflict creates multiple physiological, psychological and psychosocial problems for shift workers. **Spector and others M. (1988)**, have studied the relation of job stressors to performance outcomes. It is widely accepted that job conditions are a casual factor in stress outcomes for employees. This conclusion, however, is based almost entirely on single data source, self-report studies, which demonstrate correlations between environmental perceptions and stress outcomes. This study collected stressor data from two sources, the job incumbent and her supervisor. **Richardson, Katherine M.; Rothstein, Hannah R. (2008)**, in their research work, "effects of occupational stress management intervention programs: A meta- analysis", conducted a meta – analysis to determine the effectiveness of stress management interventions in occupational setting. Thirty – six experimental studies were included, representing 55 interventions.

Statement of the Problem

Stress is now common among all human beings. Stress is strain, force, tension, emphasis, difficulty, break down, anxiety, depression. A men's life today faces all sorts of challenges and obstacles that hamper his normal functioning, and most of the times, the pleasure is too hard to handle, when we are expected to meet of the changing demands, we undergo stress. At, times stress could be beneficial as it can give you that push you need, thereby, encouraging you to put in your best and to stay focused and

alert. People can relax and reduce stress by various means. Stress in the work place reduces productivity, increases management pressure, and makes people ill in many ways, evidence of which is still increasing works place stress affects the performance of brain, including function of work performance, memory, concentration and learning. Stress is believed to trigger 70% of visits to doctors, and 85% of serious illness, stress at work also provides a serious risk of litigation for all employees and organizations, carrying significant liabilities for damages, bad publicity and loss of reputation, so there are clearly strong economic and financial reasons at work, aside from the obvious humanitarian and ethical consideration. Individual factors are various expectations which the family members peer, superior and subordinates have from the employee. Failure to understand such expectations or to convey such expectations lead to role ambiguity/role conflict which in turn causes employee stress. Other individual factors causing stress among employees are inherent personality traits such as being important, aggressive, rigid, feeling time pressure always, etc. Similarly, the family issues, personal financial problems, sudden career changes all lead to Stress. People are all vulnerable to stress, depending on the pressure people are under at any given time: even people who are usually very hardy. As an employer, people are responsible for making sure that work doesn't make your employees ill. However, unless people know otherwise, people could assume that all employees are mentally capable of withstanding reasonable pressure from work.

Objectives of the study

1. To analyze the variability of the opinion of employees towards occupational stress at work place in Steel company.
2. To find out the causes of stress among the employees in Steel company.

Methodology: The study is based on both the primary and secondary data. Primary data have been collected from the field survey through structured questionnaire to the employees of Public sector units of steel company. The secondary data were collected from books, journals, web portal, the well equipped libraries at IIM Bangalore, records from the steel company.

Sampling Design: This study is descriptive in nature. The area of the study is Steel Authority of India Limited which has Public Sector unit of government of India. Simple random sampling technique has been used to select the sample 384 employees for the study.

Statistical Tools Used: The data were collected and consolidated, tabulated and analyzed by using relevant statistical tools like percentage, mean and Chi - Square test were analyzed. The interpretation of the study is done by using tables to give meaningful results.

Employees Stress Management in Steel company – An Analysis

There are many problems faced by the employees while do their work. In this regard the comparison of stress scores of employees between the employees of male and female.

Table 1: Gender of the respondents and opinion towards Occupational Stress

Gender	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
Male	57	224	68	9	358
	15.9%	62.6%	19.0%	2.5%	100.0%
Female	5	14	7	0	26
	19.2%	53.8%	26.9%	.0%	100.0%
Total	62	238	75	9	384
	16.1%	62.0%	19.5%	2.3%	100.0%

The above Table 1 reveals that gender of the respondents which is 62.6% of the male employees opined that agreed for their feel according to their occupational stress and 62% of the female employees are opined that 'Agree' they are faced different dimension of occupational stress in working time.

In order the find out the association between the gender of the respondent opinion towards occupational stress. For this purpose, stated a hypothesis that 'There is no significant association between gender of the respondents and their opinion towards occupational stress'.

Table 2: Association between Gender and Employee Problems (Chi-Square Test)

Demographic Variables	Chi-Square value	Df	Sig. Value	Remarks
Gender	1.896	3	0.594	Not Significant

The calculated chi-square value from the sample is 1.896 which is much less than the table value (i.e., 7.815 at 5%level of significance). Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence the study concludes that there is no difference between the employees of male and female with respect to their opinion towards the occupational stress at work place.

Table 3: Age of the respondents and opinion towards Occupational Stress

Age	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
Below 30 years	2	6	2	0	10
	20.0%	60.0%	20.0%	.0%	100.0%
31 –40 years	35	148	34	3	220
	15.9%	67.3%	15.5%	1.4%	100.0%
41 – 50 years	22	67	31	5	125
	17.6%	53.6%	24.8%	4.0%	100.0%
Above 50 years	3	17	8	1	29
	10.3%	58.6%	27.6%	3.4%	100.0%
Total	62	238	75	9	384
	16.1%	62.0%	19.5%	2.3%	100.0%

This is a comparison of stress score of employees between the employees of different levels of age. The Table 3.0 shows that 60% of the respondents are agree they are faced many problems in working time.

The age group between 31 – 40 years of the respondents about 53.6% opined towards agreed about the feel of the occupational stress among other age groups.

In order to find out the association between the ages of the respondent opinion towards occupational stress. For this purpose, stated a hypothesis that 'There is no significant association between age of the respondents and their opinion towards occupational stress'.

Table 4: Association between Age and Employee Problems (Chi-Square Test)

Demographic Variables	Chi-Square value	Df	Sig. Value	Significance or not
Age	10.701	9	0.297	Not Significant

The calculated chi-square value from the sample is 10.701 which is much less than the table value (i.e., 16.919 at 5% level of significance). Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted. It can be concluded that there is no significant difference in peculiar problems faced by employees between the employees of different levels of age with respect to their peculiar problems faced by employees thus based on the table different levels of age gives opinion on peculiar problems faced by employees is more or less same.

Comparison of stress score among employees of different department

The following table shows that comparison of stress score of employees between the employees of different department.

Table 5: Comparison about Experience and Score of the Stress Levels

Period of Experience	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Below 5 Years	5	1.60	.548	.245
5 to 10 Years	44	2.16	.834	.126
11 to 20 Years	281	2.33	.870	.052
Above 20 years	54	2.39	.834	.113

Table 5 exhibits that period of experience about 11 to 20 years of the employees has been scored that mean value of 2.33 with the standard deviation of 0.8 with the least standard error of 0.052. The experience at above at 20 years has scored highest mean score of 2.9 with the standard deviation of 0.834.

Further the data has been analysed to test the variability of the mean score of the stress and their opinion with the help of ANOVA.

Table 6: ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.941	3	1.314	1.784	.150
Within Groups	279.799	380	.736		
Total	283.740	383			

At 5% level of significance, computed p value from the sample is 0.150, which is much greater than 0.05 (level of significance). The calculated f value from the sample is 1.784 which is much smaller than the table value (i.e., 2.326 at 5% level of significance). Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted. It can be concluded that there is no significant difference in individual factors leading to stress in work between the employees of different department.

Conclusion

Stress in the work place has become the black plague of the present century. Much of the stress at work is caused not only by work overload and time pressure but also by lack of rewards and praise, and more importantly, by not providing individuals with the autonomy to do their work as they would like. Since the company is finance oriented, the management should arrange some stress managing programmes for their employee periodically. Organization must begin to manage people at work differently, treating them with respect and valuing their contribution. The Company has good interpersonal communication between the management & the employees. And there is a good relationship maintained among the employees. The Stress is an unavoidable factor in everyone's life in this world. But everyone has the ability to overcome the stress. So the management can concentrate on conducting stress management programs to reduce the stress among the employees. It will help the employees to fulfill the management objectives by satisfying and delighting the customers.

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