

Analysis of Stress Management at work place- With special reference to Institutions

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Abstract

While some workplace stress is normal, excessive stress can interfere with your productivity and performance, impact your physical and emotional health, and affect your relationships and home life. It can even mean the difference between success and failure on the job. You can't control everything in your work environment, but that doesn't mean you're powerless—even when you're stuck in a difficult situation. Whatever your ambitions or work demands, there are steps you can take to protect yourself from the damaging effects of stress, improve your job satisfaction, and bolster your well-being in and out of the workplace. Today's workplaces are stressing us out, and adversely impacting our health and well-being, according to research by a Business School. We are working too many hours, and too many hours of work have been shown to be related to high-blood pressure and a host of other diseases. Workplace stress might be affecting your health more than you think.

Keywords- Job Satisfaction, Stress, Mindset

Introduction

Absence of job control, work-family conflict and economic insecurity are all stressors. The combination of working too much and having too much stress can literally kill people. People's minds affect their bodies. Stress is a mental state. It's not surprising that things that make you stressed, nervous, anxious and feel out of control have enormous physiological impact.

Some research works has long-shown the negative impact of work place stress in our lives. The study brought all of the previous research on the topic together in an effort to create that estimates the total effects on population health and health-care costs.

Stress in Today's Workplace

The longer he waited, the more Moorthy worried. For weeks he had been plagued by aching muscles, loss of appetite, restless sleep, and a complete sense of exhaustion. At first, he tried to ignore these problems, but eventually he became so short-tempered and irritable that his wife insisted he get a checkup. Now, sitting in the doctor's office and wondering what the verdict would be, he didn't even notice when Rajamani took the seat beside him. They had been good friends when she worked in the front office at the plant, but he hadn't seen her since she left three years ago to take a job as a customer service representative. Her gentle poke in the ribs brought him around, and within minutes they were talking and gossiping as if she had never left.

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“You got out just in time,” he told her. “Since the reorganization, nobody feels safe. It used to be that as long as you did your work, you had a job. That’s not for sure anymore. They expect the same production rates even though two guys are now doing the work of three. We’re so backed up I’m working twelve-hour shifts six days a week. I swear I hear those machines humming in my sleep. Guys are calling in sick just to get a break. Morale is so bad they’re talking about bringing in some consultants to figure out a better way to get the job done.”

“Well, I really miss you guys,” she said. “I’m afraid I jumped from the frying pan into the fire. In my new job, the computer routes the calls and they never stop. I even have to schedule my bathroom breaks. All I hear the whole day are complaints from unhappy customers. I try to be helpful and sympathetic, but I can’t promise anything without getting my boss’s approval. Most of the time I’m caught between what the customer wants and company policy. I’m not sure who I’m supposed to keep happy. The other reps are so uptight and tense they don’t even talk to one another. We all go to our own little cubicles and stay there until quitting time. To make matters worse, my mother’s health is deteriorating. If only I could use some of my sick time to look after her. No wonder I’m in here with migraine headaches and high blood pressure. A lot of the reps are seeing the employee assistance counselor and taking stress management classes, which seems to help. But sooner or later, someone will have to make some changes in the way the place is run.”

Not Moorthy and the receptionist like these two good colleagues many more are under these perceptions.

What is the effect of all of this stress?

Many researchers found that there are about lakhs in numeric deaths annually take place worldwide related to excess stress. Close to some billion is spent in healthcare costs as a consequence of exposures to harmful workplace conditions. These conditions include:

- absence of health insurance
- shift work
- working too many hours
- job insecurity
- work/family conflict
- not feeling things are fair and just
- lack of social supports, among others.

The mortality rate for excess stress is comparable to some of the largest causes of death, namely heart disease and accidents. It’s more than the death rate from Alzheimer’s, diabetes or the flu.

What are the worst workplace stressors?

The biggest contributors to healthcare costs are chronic stressors, such as absence of healthcare, economic insecurity, too many work hours and work/family conflicts.

How much is in our control?

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Employees need to understand that jobs that don't offer healthcare, require long hours, shift work and are economically insecure are more than an inconvenience. These types of stressors will have a profound impact on their lives and should be taken into account when considering a position.

Employers who worry about healthcare costs should be more concerned about the work environment. Many studies found that employers tend to worry about individual decisions like employee eating, exercising, smoking, drinking, etc. Employers also tend to be concerned about broad social policy issues, like how we pay for healthcare in the India.

Most excess healthcare costs are a result of what people experience in the work environment. Employers need to understand the importance of reducing stress in the work environment; most of these issues are things the employer could improve or remedy if so desired.

How can we make things better?

Employers need to recognize the costs incurred when employees must live with excessive stressors and design a benefits program that, while supporting the company's priorities, reduces risk and controls costs, takes into account employee stress and morale.

When is workplace stress too much?

Stress isn't always bad. A little bit of stress can help you stay away focused, energetic, and not able to meet new challenges in the workplace. It's what keeps you on your toes during a presentation or alert to prevent accidents or costly mistakes. But in today's hectic world, the workplace too often seems like an emotional roller coaster. Long hours, tight deadlines, and ever-increasing demands can leave you feeling worried, drained, and overwhelmed. And when stress exceeds your ability to cope, it stops being helpful and starts causing damage to your mind and body—as well as to your jobsatisfaction.

If stress on the job is interfering with your work performance, health, or personal life, it's time to take action. No matter what you do for a living, or how stressful your job is, there are plenty of things you can do to reduce your overall stress levels and regain a sense of control at work.

Common causes of workplace stress include:

- Fear of being laidoff
- More overtime due to staffcutbacks
- Pressure to perform to meet rising expectations but with no increase in job satisfaction
- Pressure to work at optimum levels—all thetime!
- Lack of control over how you do yourwork

The of occupational stress has the same base as in the case of person environment fit theory. There are two basic arguments in the framework of occupational stress. First, stress 105 emerges when there is the misfit between person and environment and second, stress is generally determined by individual perceptions of working environment. The distinction between the two aspects is the definition of framework. Occupational stress is defined as a process containing the environmental causes of stress

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and the perceptions of individuals about them, physical, emotional, and behavioral reactions in the short run and long run and modifying determinants that affect the relationship of the variables in the process of stress. Concept of snowball effect is applied in case of perceiving stress and the resulting stress. Bad perceptions related to work environment increase stress, which leads to the more bad perceptions of work. There is interdependent connection exists. Physical, mental and behavioral stress is created which will lead to the lasting results i.e. depression, alcohol abuse, failure, physical diseases and other harmful outcomes (Bickford). The framework of occupational stress has five stages. The first stage shows the demands of working environment. The second stage show the perception of an individual of these job demands related to his ability to manage. Stress is considered a psychic condition which originates when there is imbalance between the perceptions of job demands and feeling of an individual about his ability to deal with it. The third stage is linked with the psychological and physiological changes experienced by an individual as a result of stress and involves secondary judgment and managing. Cox and Ferguson (1991) states that when a person is facing stress, psychological changes will occur in him like mood variation and emotional feelings. Anxiety, feeling of broken down and sadness etc are the signs of stress. If a person has knowledge of obstacles that cause stress, he tries to adjust in the situation or tries to adjust the situation. If a person is unable to do so, it will lead to adverse health outcomes. The fourth stage shows the results of managing and final and the fifth stage is response which results in association with the other stages (Mark, 2008). There is much research done on the influence of elements of individual characteristics i.e. locus of control, self-efficacy, hardiness etc, and its connection with the health. Information available on these elements, functioning as mediating and moderating variables, is considerably provisional (Cooper, Dewe, O'Driscoll, 2001; Spector, 2003; Parkes, 1994)

People have deep attachments to their work groups, organizational structures, personal responsibilities, and ways of accomplishing work. When any of these are disturbed, whether by personal choice or through an organizational process from which they may feel quite removed and not involved, a transition period occurs.

During this transition, people can expect to experience a period of letting go of the old ways as they begin moving toward and integrating the new.

When you consider stress in the workplace, understanding these components about stress, situations that induce stress, and employee responses to stress can help you help both yourself and your staff effectively manage stress and change.

Here are additional thoughts about what affects an employee's ability to cope with stress at work. Additional information about stress.

All of these and other issues impact the ability to manage workplace stress and change, to continue to function productively. It is important to recognize that people who are experiencing serious stress and change may not be capable of performing exactly as they have in the past.

Stress can cause physical, emotional, and behavioral problems which can affect employees health, energy, well-being, mental alertness, and personal and professional relationships. It can also cause defensiveness, lack of motivation, difficulty concentrating, accidents, reduced productivity, and interpersonal conflict.

Too much stress can cause minor problems such as sleep-loss, irritability, backaches, or headaches, and can also contribute to potentially life-threatening diseases such as high blood pressure and heart disease.

During stressful times or situations, people often blame themselves for being weak or for their inability "to handle it." Often managers in organizations do not understand the normal progression of change or stress-producing situations and they expect employees to immediately return to total productivity after a stressful event. It doesn't happen.

Stress at work warning signs

When an employee feel overwhelmed at work, they lose confidence and may become angry, irritable, or withdrawn. Other signs and symptoms of excessive stress at work include:

- Feeling anxious, irritable, or depressed
- Apathy, loss of interest in work
- Problems sleeping
- Fatigue
- Trouble concentrating
- Muscle tension or headaches
- Stomach problems
- Social withdrawal
- Loss of sex drive
- Using alcohol or drugs to cope

Below are some suggestions to overcome daily Stress..

1: Beat workplace stress by reaching out

Sometimes the best stress-reducer is simply sharing your stress with someone close to you. The act of talking it out and getting support and sympathy—especially face-to-face—can be a highly-effective way of blowing off steam and regaining your sense of calm. The other person doesn't have to "fix" your problems; they just need to be a good listener.

Turn to co-workers for support. Having a solid support system at work can help buffer you from the negative effects of job stress. Just remember to listen to them and offer support when they are in need as well. If you don't have a close friend at work, you can take steps to be more social with your coworkers. When you take a break, for example, instead of directing your attention to your smart

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Lean on your friends and family members. As well as increasing social contact at work, having a strong network of supportive friends and family members is extremely important to managing stress in all areas of your life. On the flip side, the lonelier and more isolated you are, the greater your vulnerability to stress.

Build new satisfying friendships. If you don't feel that you have anyone to turn to—at work or in your free time—it's never too late to build new friendships. Meet new people with common interests by taking a class or joining a club, or by volunteering your time. As well as being a great way to expand your social network, being helpful to others— especially those who are appreciative—delivers immense pleasure and can help to significantly reduce stress. Support your health with exercise and nutrition

When you're overly focused on work, it's easy to neglect your physical health. But when you're supporting your health with good nutrition and exercise, you're stronger and more resilient to stress.

Taking care of yourself doesn't require a total lifestyle overhaul. Even small things can lift your mood, increase your energy, and make you feel like you're back in the driver's seat.

2. Make time for regular exercise

Aerobic exercise—activity that raises your heart rate and makes you sweat—is a hugely effective way to lift your mood, increase energy, sharpen focus, and relax both the mind and body. Rhythmic movement—such as walking, running, dancing, drumming, etc.—is especially soothing for the nervous system. For maximum stress relief, try to get at least 30 minutes of activity on most days. If it's easier to fit into your schedule, break up the activity into two or three shorter segments.

The Mental Health Benefits of Exercise: For Depression, Anxiety, and Stress and when stress is mounting at work, try to take a quick break and move away from the stressful situation. Take a stroll outside the workplace if possible. Physical movement can help you regain your balance.

Make smart, stress-busting food choices

Your food choices can have a huge impact on how you feel during the work day. Eating small, frequent and healthy meals, for example, can help your body maintain an even level of blood sugar, keeping your energy and focus up, and avoiding mood swings. Low blood sugar, on the other hand, can make you feel anxious and irritable, while eating too much can make you lethargic.

Minimize sugar and refined carbs. When you're stressed, you may crave sugary snacks, baked goods, or comfort foods such as pasta or French fries. But these "feel-good" foods quickly lead to a crash in mood and energy, making symptoms of stress worse not better.

Reduce your intake of foods that can adversely affect your mood, such as caffeine, trans fats, and foods with high levels of chemical preservatives or hormones.

Eat more Omega-3 fatty acids to give your mood a boost. The best sources are fatty fish (salmon, herring, mackerel, anchovies, and sardines), seaweed, flaxseed, and walnuts.

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Avoid nicotine. Smoking when you're feeling stressed may seem calming, but nicotine is a powerful stimulant, leading to higher, not lower, levels of anxiety.

Drink alcohol in moderation. Alcohol may seem like it's temporarily reducing your worries, but too much can cause anxiety as it wears off and adversely affect your mood.

Don't skimp on sleep. You may feel like you just don't have the time get a full night's sleep. But skimping on sleep interferes with your daytime productivity, creativity, problem-solving skills, and ability to focus. The better rested you are, the better equipped you'll be to tackle your job responsibilities and cope with workplace stress.

Improve the quality of your sleep by making healthy changes to your daytime and nightly routines. For example, go to bed and get up at the same time every day, even on weekends, be smart about what you eat and drink during the day, and make adjustments to your sleep environment. Aim for 8 hours a night—the amount of sleep most adults need to operate at their best.

Turn off screens one hour before bedtime. The light emitted from TV, tablets, smart phones, and computers suppresses your body's production of melatonin and can severely disrupt your sleep.

Avoid stimulating activity and stressful situations before bedtime such as catching up on work. Instead, focus on quiet, soothing activities, such as reading or listening to soft music, while keeping lights low.

Stress and shift work

Working night, early morning, or rotating shifts can impact your sleep quality, which in turn can affect productivity and performance and leave you more vulnerable to stress.

- Adjust your sleep-wake cycle by exposing yourself to bright light when you wake up at night, using bright lamps or daylight-simulation bulbs in your workplace, and then wearing dark glasses on your journey home to block out sunlight and encourage sleepiness.
- Limit the number of night or irregular shifts you work in a row to prevent sleep deprivation mounting up.
- Avoid frequently rotating shifts so you can maintain the same sleep schedule.
- Eliminate noise and light from your bedroom during the day. Use blackout curtains or a sleep mask; turn off the phone, and use ear plugs or a soothing sound machine to block.

Prioritize and organize

When job and workplace stress threatens to overwhelm you, there are simple, practical steps you can take to regain control.

3. Time management tips for reducing job stress

Create a balanced schedule. All work and no play is a recipe for burnout. Try to find a balance between work and family life, social activities and solitary pursuits, daily responsibilities and downtime.

Leave earlier in the morning. Even 10-15 minutes can make the difference between frantically rushing and having time to ease into your day. If you're always running late, set your clocks and watches fast to give yourself extra time and decrease your stress levels.

Plan regular breaks. Make sure to take short breaks throughout the day to take a walk, chat to a friendly face, or practice a relaxation technique. Also try to get away from your desk or work station for lunch. It will help you relax and recharge and be more, not less, productive.

Establish healthy boundaries. Many of us feel pressured to be available 24 hours a day or obliged to keep checking our smart phones for work-related messages and updates. But it's important to maintain periods where you're not working or thinking about work. That may mean not checking emails or taking work calls at home in the evening or at weekends.

Don't over-commit yourself. Avoid scheduling things back-to-back or trying to fit too much into one day. If you've got too much on your plate, distinguish between the "shoulds" and the "musts." Drop tasks that aren't truly necessary to the bottom of the list or eliminate them entirely.

4. Task management tips for reducing jobstress

Prioritize tasks. Tackle high-priority tasks first. If you have something particularly unpleasant to do, get it over with early. The rest of your day will be more pleasant as a result.

Break projects into small steps. If a large project seems overwhelming, focus on one manageable step at a time, rather than taking on everything at once.

Delegate responsibility. You don't have to do it all yourself. Let go of the desire to control every little step. You'll be letting go of unnecessary stress in the process.

Be willing to compromise. Sometimes, if you can both bend a little at work, you'll be able to find a happy middle ground that reduces the stress levels for everyone.

5. Break bad habits that contribute to workplacestress

Many of us make job stress worse with negative thoughts and behavior. If you can turn around these self-defeating habits, you'll find employer-imposed stress easier to handle.

Resist perfectionism. When you set unrealistic goals for yourself, you're setting yourself up to fall short. Aim to do your best, no one can ask for more than that.

Flip your negative thinking. If you focus on the downside of every situation and interaction, you'll find yourself drained of energy and motivation. Try to think positively about your work, avoid negative-thinking co-workers, and pat yourself on the back about small accomplishments, even if no one else does.

Don't try to control the uncontrollable. Many things at work are beyond our control—particularly the behavior of other people. Rather than stressing out over them, focus on the things you can control such as the way you choose to react to problems.

Look for humor in the situation. When used appropriately, humor is a great way to relieve stress in the workplace. When you or those around you start taking things too seriously, find a way to lighten the mood by sharing a joke or funny story.

Clean up your act. If your desk or work space is a mess, file and throw away the clutter; just knowing where everything is can save time and cut stress.

6. Be proactive about your job and your workplaceduties

When we feel uncertain, helpless, or out of control, our stress levels are the highest. Here are some things you can do to regain a sense of control over your job and career.

Talk to your employer about workplace stressors. Healthy and happy employees are more productive, so your employer has an incentive to tackle workplace stress whenever possible. Rather than rattle off a list of complaints, let your employer know about specific conditions that are impacting your work performance.

Clarify your job description. Ask your supervisor for an updated description of your job duties and responsibilities. You may then be able to point out that some of the things you are expected to do are not part of your job description and gain a little leverage by showing that you've been putting in work over and above the parameters of your job.

Request a transfer. If your workplace is large enough, you might be able to escape a toxic environment by transferring to another department.

Ask for new duties. If you've been doing the exact same work for a long time, ask to try something new: a different grade level, a different sales territory, a different machine.

Take time off. If burnout seems inevitable, take a complete break from work. Go on vacation, use up your sick days, ask for a temporary leave-of-absence—anything to remove yourself from the situation. Use the time away to recharge your batteries and take perspective.

7. Look for satisfaction and meaning in yourwork

Feeling bored or unsatisfied with what you do for large parts of the day can cause high levels of stress and take a serious toll on your physical and mental health. But for many of us, having a dream job that we find meaningful and rewarding is just that: a dream. Even if you're not in a position to change careers to something that you love and are passionate about—and most of us aren't—you can still find purpose and joy in a job that you don't love.

Finding the Right Career: How to Find Job Satisfaction. Employees are focusing on the concept of right career, perfect job etc. where these all are making an employee to feel stress.

Even in some mundane jobs, you can often focus on how what you do helps others, for example, or provides a much-needed product or service. Focus on aspects of the job that you do enjoy—even if it's just chatting with your coworkers at lunch. Changing your attitude towards your job can also help you regain a sense of purpose and control.

How managers or employers can reduce stress at work

Having your employees suffering from work-related stress can result in lower productivity, lost workdays, and a higher turnover of staff. As a manager, supervisor, or employer, though, there are things you can do to lower workplace stress. The first step is to act as a positive role model. If you can remain calm in stressful situations, it's much easier for your employees to follow suit.

Some times Effective Communication also improves the productivity level of an employee at work. Word of advice are given below to make an employee stress free at his workplace

Consulting an employee during his work time. Talk to them about the specific factors that make their jobs stressful. Some things, such as failing equipment, understaffing, or a lack of supervisor feedback may be relatively straightforward to address. Sharing information with employees can also reduce uncertainty about their jobs and futures.

Communicate with employees one-on-one. Listening attentively face-to-face will make an employee feel heard and understood—and help to lower their stress and yours—even if you're unable to change the situation.

Deal with workplace conflicts in a positive way. Respect the dignity of each employee; establish a zero-tolerance policy for harassment.

Give workers opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their jobs. Get employee input on work rules, for example. If they're involved in the process, they'll be more committed.

Avoid unrealistic deadlines. Make sure the workload is suitable to your employees' abilities and resources.

Clarify your expectations. Clearly define employees' roles, responsibilities, and goals. Make management actions fair and consistent with organizational values.

Offer rewards and incentives. Praise good work performance verbally and organization-wide. Schedule potentially stressful periods followed by periods of fewer tight deadlines. Provide opportunities for social interaction among employees.

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