Abstract

The 21st century is also an era of stress. Individuals face job stress in their organization and daily lives due to globalization, information technology revolution, and speed of life. The most important effects of these can be seen in the business world, and they can manifest themselves as changes that organizations make in their structures, strategies, activities, and technologies. Constantly changing organizations impose new roles and duties on their employees which have effect on their work life balance, and the employees who want to handle new roles and duties need to have efficiency in intelligence quotient (IQ) and efficiency in emotional quotient (EQ) in the processes of decision making and problem solving. A completely stress-free life is impossible, and stress becomes a characteristic of human existence. Individuals have used various methods to handle stress, including using their intelligence, especially their emotional intelligence.

I. INTRODUCTION

Stress is an unwanted reaction people have to severe pressures or other types of demands placed upon them. A huge and multi fields literature points a lot of key factors such as work environment, management support, work load etc in determining the stressful the work can be and its effect on employee physical and mental health. Job stress in organizations is widespread. About half of all American workers feel the pressures of job-related stress. Extensive research shows that excessive job stress can adversely affect the emotional and physical health of workers. The result is decreased productivity, less satisfied, and less
healthy workers. This paper will first discuss the symptoms and causes of stress, and then explore ways in which managers might reduce stress in themselves and their subordinates.

II. JOB STRESS STATISTICS
Numerous studies examining job stress sound an alarming bell about the mental and physical health of American workers:

- A Northwestern National Life study found that 40 percent of workers report their job is “very or extremely stressful.” And that one-fourth of employees view their jobs as the number one stressor in their lives.
- A Families and Work Institute study found 26 percent of workers report they are “often or very often burned out or stressed by their work.”
- A Yale University study found 29 percent of workers feel “quite a bit or extremely stressed at work.”
- A Princeton Survey Research Associates study reports that three-fourths of employees believe the worker has more on-the-job stress than a generation ago.
- A Gallup Poll found that 80 percent of workers feel stress on the job, and nearly half reported that they needed help in learning how to manage it.
- According to an article in Shape Magazine, women are 60 percent more likely to suffer from job stress than men.

III. SYMPTOMS OF STRESS
Stress symptoms may be affecting your health, even though you might not realize it. You may think illness is to blame for that nagging headache, your frequent insomnia or your decreased productivity at work. But stress may actually be the culprit.

1) **Common effects of stress:**
   Indeed, stress symptoms can affect body, thoughts, feelings, and behavior. Being able to recognize common stress symptoms can give a jump on managing them. Stress that’s left unchecked can contribute to many health problems, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity and diabetes.

2) **Workplace Stress**
   The harmful physical and emotional responses that can happen when there is a conflict between job demands on the employee and the amount of control an employee has over meeting these demands. In general, the combination of high demands in a job and a low amount of control over the situation can lead to stress.

3) **Common effects of stress on body**
   - Headache
   - Muscle tension or pain
   - Chest pain
   - Fatigue
   - Change in sex drive
   - Stomach upset
• Sleep problems

4) Common effects of stress on mood
• Anxiety
• Restlessness
• Lack of motivation or focus
• Feeling overwhelmed
• Irritability or anger
• Sadness or depression

5) Common effects of stress on behavior
• Overeating or undereating
• Angry outbursts
• Drug or alcohol abuse
• Tobacco use
• Social withdrawal

6) Emotional Intelligence and Reducing Workplace Stress

Whether or not you are in a job where the environment has become increasingly stressful, you can keep a great measure of self-confidence and control through understanding and practicing emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is the ability to both manage and use your emotions in ways that are constructive and positive. In relation to work and success, emotional intelligence is just as relevant and important as intellectual ability. Emotional intelligence involves communicating with others in ways that draw them to you while overcoming difference, defusing tension, stress, and repairing wounded feelings.

7) The Four Major Components of Emotional Intelligence
• Self-Management: Self-management is the ability to control your emotions and your own behaviors, adapting to the circumstances you find yourself in.
• Self-Awareness: Self-awareness is the ability to recognize your own emotions as well as their impact, using your gut feelings in order to guide the decisions you make.
• Social Awareness: Social awareness involves the ability to sense, understand, and react to the emotions others are experiencing and the ability to feel comfortable socially.
• Relationship Management: Relationship management involves the ability to inspire, connect with, as well as influence others and the ability to manage conflicts that arise.

IV. WAYS TO REDUCE WORKPLACE STRESS

If the level of stress at work is interfering with your ability to do your job, is having a negative impact on your health, or is affecting your ability to manage your personal life, you need to take action and care for it. Begin by paying attention to your emotional and physical health, ensuring that your own needs are taken care of. When your own needs are taken care of, you are stronger and more able to...
deal with stress. As begin to feel better and will have an increased ability to manage workplace stress without feeling overwhelmed. Small things have the ability to lift mood while increasing level of energy, making feel more in control. Do things step-by-step, making more positive lifestyle choices, and before know it.

1) Employers, Managers, and the Reduction of Workplace Stress

As far as managers are concerned, it is in their best interest to keep the stress levels in the workplace to minimum levels. Managers can act as positive role models, particularly during times of high stress. If a manager has the ability to remain calm in work situations that are stressful it is far easier for their employees to remain calm. In addition, there are several organizational changes that employers and managers can make in order to reduce workplace stress, presented below.

- Offer rewards and incentives
- Show that individual workers are valued
- Provide opportunities for career development
- Establish a zero-tolerance policy for harassment
- Clearly define employees' roles and responsibilities
- Consult employees about scheduling and work rules
- Provide opportunities for social interaction among employees
- Make management actions consistent with organizational values
- Make communication friendly and efficient, not mean-spirited or petty
- Give workers opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their jobs
- Share information with employees to reduce uncertainty about their jobs and futures
- Promote an "entrepreneurial" work climate that gives employees more control over their work
- Be sure the workload is suitable to employees' abilities and resources; avoid unrealistic deadlines
- Praise good work performance, both verbally and officially, through schemes such as Employee of the Month

a. How to Reduce Stress?

It is of utmost importance that an organization takes this issue seriously. The organization can help reduce stress by:

- Reducing the number of hours for which their employees would have to work per week. This will, in the long run, contribute to a more efficient functioning of the organization, as employees would have more time to rest at home and will come back the next day feeling refreshed.
- Working hours should be flexible. This may also include shifts and the rotation of employees.
- A tried and tested technique that many organizations have begun using is the provision of lounges and other recreational facilities to help employees relax during the day should they require some time off.
Female employees may find that they do not have enough time to spend with their newborn if they have just had a baby. Providing longer maternity leave could help female employees to come back to work without having too much on their mind with regard to the baby and any postnatal depression.

Another idea would be to provide childcare facilities at the office so that mothers with young children could peek in and ensure their kids are okay every few hours.

As an employee, you should also make it a point to occasionally have a casual chat with employees to ensure that they are satisfied with their jobs and have no issues at work.

Also encourage them and appreciate and praise him/her for tasks carried out very well. This would reduce any worries they may have of the risks of losing their jobs and help them to feel more secure.

2) The Impact of Stress on Performance

![The Stress Response Curve](image)

- **Positive Effects:** As shown by the graph, performance levels increase when stress management is effective. Stressors such as pressure and demands can facilitate better stress response and thus, higher levels of performance.

- **Negative Effects:** When stress is perceived as uncontrollable or unmanageable, the person begins to experience a gradual to drastic decrease in performance levels, causing a decline in productivity and enthusiasm to respond to the stress.

V. STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING STRESS

Stress experienced by the employees in their job has negative impact on their health, performance and their behaviour in the organization. Thus, stress needs to be managed effectively so as to set off these harmful consequences. Strategies for managing stress are as follows:
1) **Organizational Strategies For Managing Stress**
   i. Encouraging more of organizational communication with the employees so that there is no role ambiguity/conflict. Effective communication can also change employee views. Managers can use better signs and symbols which are not misinterpreted by the employees.
   ii. Encourage employees’ participation in decision-making. This will reduce role stress.
   iii. Grant the employees greater independence, meaningful and timely feedback, and greater responsibility.
   iv. The organizational goals should be realistic, stimulating and particular. The employees must be given feedback on how well they are heading towards these goals.
   v. Encourage decentralization.
   vi. Have a fair and just distribution of incentives and salary structure.
   vii. Promote job rotation and job enrichment.
   viii. Create a just and safe working environment.
   ix. Have effective hiring and orientation procedure.
   x. Appreciate the employees on accomplishing and over-exceeding their targets.

2) **Individual Strategies For Managing Stress**
   i. The employees should make a “to-do” list daily, prioritize the acts in the list and plan the acts accordingly. Take regular breaks during work to relax you. By effective time management, the employees can achieve their targets timely and can meet work pressures and, thus, avoid stress.
   ii. Do hard work. Strive to achieve your goals but do not do it to the harm of family, health, or peer.
   iii. Indulge in physical exercises. It helps in effective blood circulation, keeps you fit, diverts mind from work pressures.
   iv. Encourage a healthy lifestyle. Take a regular sleep, have plenty of water, have healthy eating habits. Promote relaxation techniques such as yoga, listening music and meditation.
   v. The employees should have optimistic approach about their work. They should avoid connections with negative approach employees.
   vi. The employees should have emotional intelligence at workplace. They should have self-awareness, self-confidence and self-control at workplace.
   vii. The employees should build social support. They should have close connections with trustworthy peer who can listen to their problems and boost their confidence level. This social network will help the employees to overcome stress.
   viii. Employee counselling is a very good strategy to overcome employee stress. Through counselling, employees can become aware of their strengths and how to develop those strengths; their weaknesses and how to eliminate them; and they can develop strategies for changing their behaviour. Employees are also given career counselling which helps in reducing their ambiguities with regard to career.
ix. Find a fun way to release stress, such as, cracking jokes, playing tennis, golf, etc.

x. Do not remain pre-occupied with yourself. Turn your focus outwards. Help others. This will release some stress.

VI. CONCLUSION

To summarize, the various factors responsible for job stress can be broadly classified into external factors relating to organisation and work-family conflicts, and internal factors. Certain occupations are more stressful, especially those in which there is high emotional involvement. The holistic view of antecedents to job stress should take into account the interaction between the three categories of factors and the impact of socialization which has proved to be a significant moderator in stress perception and in coping with it. Further, qualitative and empirical studies are required to prove the importance of the factors in an Indian context to study the culture specific dimensions of the “person-stress” interaction.

VII. REFERENCES


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