Abstract

Neither total lack of stress nor stress to excess is good. Over stress can lead to inefficiency of human resource in achieving personal and organizational goals. The area of study has been limited to work place. This paper highlights the meaning of stress, its sources and consequences on performance at work place. It also distinguishes between its two types: Eustress and Distress. ‘Majority of people who are easily stressed are the ones who think too much about the problems instead of solutions’. So some approaches and techniques to overcome stress and to bring it at optimum level are also brought into spotlight.

1 Introduction

There is no life without stress but as per a famous saying ‘excess of everything is bad’, so in case of stress. Stress at the workplace is a result of changing and competitive work environment which can be seen at all the levels. As per medical explanations “stress is the body’s general response to environment situations” which can lead to physiological and psychological discomforts. Stress may be defined as “a state of psychological and / or physiological imbalance resulting from the disparity between situational demand and the individual's ability and / or motivation to meet those demands”. Stress can be positive or negative. Stress can be positive when the situation offers an opportunity for a person to gain something. It acts as a motivator for peak performance. Stress can be negative when a person faces social, physical, organizational and emotional problems. As per a saying ‘stress is like spice- in the right proportion it enhances the flavour of a dish. Too little produces a bland, dull meal; too much may choke you’ clustering results by hiding clusters in noises. To alleviate this problem, one of the most extensively used methods is feature selection. The objective of feature selection is threefold: improving the performance of clustering, providing fast and cost-efficient solution, and providing a better understanding of the underlying process that generates the data.
2 Sources Of Work Stress

I. Individual stressors: it includes job concerns, career changes, economic problems, personality of a person.

II. Group stressors: it includes group cohesiveness, lack of social support & conflicts.

III. Organizational stressors: it includes job related factors like routine, dull and boring work, duties & responsibilities and work load, role related factors like role conflict, ambiguity, overload, organizational structural factors, leadership factors, and life cycle.

IV. Extra organizational stressors: it includes political, economical and technological factors.

3 Common causes of excessive workplace stress

- Fear of being laid off
- More overtime due to staff cutbacks
- Pressure to perform to meet rising expectations but with no increase in job satisfaction
- Pressure to work at optimum levels- all the time

Figure 3.1: Stress level and consequences

4 Stress Management

If you are internally stressed free no external force can exert pressure on you.” As we know stress is not what we allow to pressurize our mind and neither total lack of stress nor too stress is good, so it is necessary that this stress must be kept in limits which can be done by its proper management. Stress management refers to the mechanism which brings stress under control and relieves the damage it can cause and can be defined as interventions designed to reduce the impact of stressors in the workplace. These can have an individual focus, aimed at increasing an individual’s ability to cope with stressors. The goal of Stress Management is to help you to manage the stress of everyday life.

5 Types Of Stress

In daily life, we often use the term “stress” to describe negative situations. This leads many people to believe that all stress is bad for you, which is not true. There are primarily two types of stressors:
Table-5.1: Types of stressors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EUSTRESS</th>
<th>DISTRESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivates, focuses energy</td>
<td>Causes anxiety or concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is short-term</td>
<td>Can be short- or long-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is perceived as within our</td>
<td>Is perceived as outside of our</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coping abilities</td>
<td>coping abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feels exciting</td>
<td>Feels unpleasant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improves performance</td>
<td>Decreases performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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6 Manage Stress Before It Manages You

Coping with stress at work:

INDIVIDUAL APPROACHES: Some of the stress reducing strategies at individual level are:-

1. Time Management: ‘By simply breaking down the task into more manageable pieces much can be accomplished in reasonable time’. A few principles are -
   - Be active, not just reactive
   - Set goals.
   - Prioritize actions.
   - Keep your focus.
   - Create realistic deadlines.
   - Balance your life.

2. Assertiveness: A person should not say ‘Yes’ when he wants to say ‘No’. He should learn to say no to people if they demand much from his capacity.

3. Social support network: Good friends become highly supportive during times of stress and crisis. Social networks include friends, family or work colleagues or any person upon whom you can trust.

4. Sleep: It is a vicious cycle. Stress can make it hard to sleep. Not sleeping makes it harder to focus on work in general, as well as on specific tasks. Tired folks are more likely to lose their temper, upping the stress level of others.

5. Realistic goals: If a person finds that the goals set by him seem to be unattainable or beyond his capacity then he must be wise enough to revise his goals to make them attainable.

6. Psychological fitness: Non-competitive physical exercises such as aerobics, walking, jogging, swimming and riding a bicycle have long been recommended by physicians as a way to deal with excessive stress levels. These forms of physical exercise increase heart capacity lower the at-rest heart rate provide mental diversion from work pressures, and offer a means to ‘let off steam’.

7 Organisational Approaches

I. Selection and placement: If the job is of stressful nature then only those persons must be selected who are able to bear that stress, this can be known by having their personality, aptitude and situational tests.

II. Challenging goals: People perform better if realistic and challenging organizational goals are set. They feel motivated and do hard labour to achieve the goals to get satisfaction of their higher level needs.

III. Employee’s participation in decision making: One can achieve only that what he has set. If employees are given opportunity to give their suggestions in decision making then they work with great zeal and enthusiasm and never feel overstressed.
IV. Reducing the chances of group conflict: The management can do it by building team work and eliminating the causes which can lead to loosening the strength of group cohesiveness.

V. Recreational activities: Organizations can provide various facilities to employees for maintaining their physical and mental health like gyms, swimming pools, tennis courts, psychological counseling, trips, seminars, workshops etc.

VI. Give Employees Autonomy: Giving employees a sense of autonomy is another thing that organizations can do to help relieve stress. It has long been known that one of the most stressful things that individuals deal with is a lack of control over their environment. Researches have proved that individuals who feel a greater sense of control at work deal with stress more effectively.

VII. Effective communication: There should not be any role ambiguity in an organization which is a result of poor communication. Effective communication with employees reduces the uncertainty of role demand by lessening role ambiguity and role conflict.

8 How To Burst Stress:

Stress can be reduced up to an optimum level by adopting some techniques like:

I. Keeping a diary to share your secrets with
II. Meditation, yoga and exercise to get mental peace.
III. Balanced diet
IV. Career advancement opportunity
V. Having optimistic attitude
VI. Suitable organizational policies
VII. Upgrading as per the needs of environment

9 Conclusion

Adopting the right attitude can convert a negative stress into a positive one. A little stress is necessary to bring positive results but excess or unmanaged stress is a great hindrance in the achievement of personal as well as organizational goals. A variety of stress-management techniques can be used in workplace like muscle relaxation, meditation, cognitive-behavioral skills, and combinations of these techniques. Some of the techniques prove best for physical health and some for mental health. In general, studies using a combination of techniques (e.g., muscle relaxation plus cognitive-behavioral skills) seem to be more effective across outcome measures than single techniques. It can be said that stress management in work settings can be effective in enhancing worker physical and psychological health, but the choice of which stress-management technique to use should be based on the specific health outcomes that are targeted for change.

References