

The impact of Stress Management on University Employees

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ABSTRACT

The productivity of the employees is the most important element in the achievement of an organization's goals. This productivity, in turn, depends on the physical and psychological well-being of the employees. The common phenomenon of worldwide at Workplace is a stress. The source of stress could be any occurrence or thought that makes you restless, frustrated or annoyed. Every employee cannot face up with the changes taking place in the organization as with the ongoing time with the use of advance technology systems and techniques are getting complicated day by day which comes to stress. Workplace stress can affect the health, performance, social life and relationship of the employees. One of the organizations that are expanding the most quickly in India is the university system. The university system in India has grown more competitive with National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Therefore, it is impossible for all individual to adjust to the changing obstacles that they face in the university system field, which comes to stress. The majority of an individual's life is spent dealing with stress. This paper examines the level of workplace stress on university employees and also to find out how the university employees feel their stress levels, and the stress management practices and techniques in individual and organisational context, to combat with these stresses. This paper concludes that workplace stress on university employees should be minimized by providing a conducive working environment and opportunities for sustainable professional development.

Keywords: Stress Management, Workplace Stress, University Employees.

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Introduction:

Workplace is the sources of maximum stress. Workplace stress is experienced by employees in different manners with different backgrounds. They have a different perception about workplace stress. There are many organisations where workplace is in poor conditions and it gives immense stress to their employees. The stress occupied at workplace, further, discards the environment at home and it affects the social life with spouse and children to a great extent. Workplace stress effect an individual in the physical and psychological well-being of the employees. It takes away the charm of life and the individual starts making complain about it. The impact of the aforesaid workplace stress is entire disturbing and mind boggling. Workplace stress is natural, common, and widely prevalent yet is controllable, tameable and manageable. Every individual is confronted with some workplace stress; it may be in the form of small or big problem.

Lussier (2009) stated that "the five most

common contributors to workplace stress are: type of work, organisational culture, personality type, interpersonal relations and management behaviour". Robbins and De Cenzo (2004) groups these sources of stress in two main categories, namely workplace and individual stress.

JE Fielding (1984) conceptualised a new model which was response based model of stress. This study also focuses on company promoting the importance of health and prevention of diseases at workplace. Results show that promoting safe programs are very distinct and have a distinct incentive from the typical concerns regarding workplace health and mandatory environmental inspection and analysis.

Choudhury, Khoushiki (2013) conducted a detailed study on managing workplace stress thereby keeping in mind various independent & dependant aspects as in: the mental set required for a particular job & dependence upon personality & mental stress

of the employees. Results came up with a problem-solving method which suggested for conducting researches & studies in the area of internal marketing, psychological counselling & workplace stress.

Swaminathan, P.S. & Rajkumar S. (2013)- He conducted a study that focused on the levels of stress among the age group, profession, different varieties of jobs, hours of work and the influence of work environment on the degree of stress faced by employees. Stress in an employee is very individual in nature. His study indicates about an optimum level in which every individual can perform with his full efficiency. He has identified three conditions responsible for workplace stress they are (a) Role overload (b) Role self-distance (c) Role stagnation.

Karthik, R. (2013) Employee's performance at work is influenced by stress that can be either positive or negative work stress. The employees perform better if they face low to moderate amount of stress. Hence, it aims at reducing the level of stress rather than eliminating stress completely we have to conduct some program to the employees in working organization to reduce workplace stress.

Morris (1990) asserts that stress is only present in painful or life-and-death circumstances. According to Morris (1990), both positive and terrible things that happen to us can lead to stress since they frequently have an adductive demand that necessitates modification or adaptation in order for the individual to satisfy their requirements.

Stress is as old as human existence:

Stress management means various practices and techniques to control workplace stress at individual level. Stress management would determine whether it can be distress (dysfunctional) or eustress (functional) to individuals and the organisation as a whole. Stress management encompasses techniques or facing mechanisms for dealing with physiological stress (Jayakumar & Sumathi, 2014). Some stress management practices and techniques which includes time management, medication, and relaxation among others have been adopted (Soegoto & Narimawati, 2017; Robbins, 2004). However, it appears that individual employees have the challenge of effectively deploying appropriate stress management practices and techniques.

The introduction and implementation of NEP 2020, Stress in universities is mostly due to over work pressure and work life imbalance in the organization should support and encourage taking up the roles that help them to balance work and family. Workplace Stress on employees in the university system is seen for quite a long time. Productivity is said as a measure of the efficiency of a person, machine, factory, system etc., in converting inputs into useful outputs. The universities that understand the significance of productivity at the workplace has higher chance of success. Productive employee is assets to organization, where maximize the utilization of human resources capacity happen. It is important to recognise the stress level of its employees, curb it and in return increase their productivity.

Today, Human Resource (HR) leaders understand the value of stress management programs. Providing stress management training at workplace helps to enhance morale, productivity, loyalty and commitment to the organization. An employee will experience stress when they are given impossible aims to work toward and is unable to effectively handle a specific situation. The modern, high-pressure environment that we live in makes stress an extremely regular occurrence. The excessive work load and, as a result, the excessive amount of time spent at workplace are the primary contributors to the stress that is experienced. It had been prevalent in the university system in this era because of changes in technology, improved levels of competition, and increased levels of complexity in the work. University administration must contribute in the reduction of workplace stress by following various practices and techniques like redesigning of the jobs, organizing various counselling programs, increasing employee participation, personal control and organizing various health promotion programs.

Empirical Review:

Studies have identified stress management and its programmes in different contexts stating different levels such as individual and organisational (Pritchard, Elison - Bowers & Birdsall, 2010; Grant & colleagues, 2009; Gyllensten & Palmer, 2005). Klink et al., (2001) study identified individual interventions as one of the programmes through

which organisations manage workplace stress. However, the study failed to show how effective individual interventions programme could be in the management of stress.

Extant studies have advocated for stress management programmes as one of the ways of improving the performance of the employees in the organisation. (Enyonam, Opoku, Addai & Batola, 2017; Soegoto & Narimawati, 2017; Nawaz & Muhammad, 2016; Nyangahu & Bula, 2015). For instance, Enyonam, Opoku, Addai & Batola (2017) affirmed that stress management is a major tool through which employees' performance could be enhanced. Theories of person-environment fit and demand control have also supported this claim. The case of the person-environment theory as explained by French and Kahn (1962), emphasizes how to mediate and ensure cordiality between the individual and environment, while the demand control theory of Karasek (1979) emphasises how workplace stress can be reduced and managed.

Employees Performance

Performance is defined as a concept that entails the achievement and how much has been achieved. The performance of employees tends to be high when they are happy, and pleased and the organization find it stress-free to motivate high performers who have been able to accomplish firm goals. (Kinicki and Kreitner, 2007).

The competency of the employee will make the satisfaction of the work performance which is achieved through an enhanced training program. Many organizations adopted incentive of monetary incentives to enhance performance of their employees who worked out beyond workplace time. It should be well known that making use of monetary incentives alone to serve as incentives may not be sufficient to achieve enhancement of employees' performance in organization but until such incentives are combined with other sorts of incentives that their performance could be felt positively. If limited to monetary incentives alone, it will not assist to manage stress being experienced by the employees and their effects may be confined to meeting employees' biological and basic needs, with just a minor effect when needs are met Abdelhay, Abdulrahim & Marie (2023).

Workplace stress:

Robbins & Coulter (1999:15) identify a number of sources of workplace stress that are faced by employees in an organisation, including:

Role overload this refers to having to do too many things and having too many roles to play in the work situation. The use of project management within organisations results in a team leader having to manage a department while also having to contribute to the project. Time management and allocation become a difficult task.

Technological advancements things work quicker and easier now than in the past due to technological development. This means there are greater changes that require adaptation, causing stress. There is also the stress associated with keeping up to date with new systems continually being introduced. Fear (responsibility) this refers to fear of failure in the job with respect to other people and being held responsible for the actions of others. Working conditions this refers to difficult working conditions that arise from lighting, temperature or noise (and for some this may refer to the open plan offices in which they work). Working relationships there are stresses between the people in the organisation such as between team leaders and colleagues. The causes of these stresses are varied and can include management style and communication breakdowns.

Change in an organisation Change in an organisation also leads to employee stress. The kind of change influences the level of stress experienced by each different individual at the workplace. Hellriegel et al (2005:316) describe organisational change as "any transformation in the design and functioning of an organisation". De Frank and Ivancevich (1998) identify at least two types of change that effect on stress in organisations, namely competition and technological change. Other sources of workplace stress identified by De Frank and Ivancevich (1998) include: increased diversity in the workforce, employee empowerment and teamwork, and violence in the workplace.

Individual stress:

The term "individual stress" is used to describe the stress experienced by individuals based on factors that are unique to them due to

their life experiences and circumstances. Personality type affects the nature of the workplace stress experienced by individuals. Two main personality types have been identified with regard to the stress experienced by a person. Type A personalities are more likely to be goal driven, have an urgency to get things done and are competitive. They are impatient to get things done and struggle to face with leisure time. Type B personalities are relaxed, easy going and non-competitive. Family matters such as divorce and death have been identified in research as being contributors to workplace stress levels. Previous research has acknowledged the effect of these factors on the stress levels experienced. Financial problems affect the stress levels of individuals and their ability to function adequately. The various roles that people have to play in the various aspects of their life such as mother, father, employee, friend, etc. also influence stress.

Effects of workplace stress on individual:

While a certain amount of stress is natural, the work situation can result in too much stress. The consequences of excessive stress can be seen in three main ways in the lives of employees:

Physiological (physical health) problems:

Heart disease, changes in the metabolic and breathing rates, blood pressure problems as well as headaches (migraines) and heart attacks are some of the physical conditions that are identified in people who experience high workplace stress levels. These conditions are potentially life threatening, and impact on the quality of life (Stöppler 2005).

Psychological problems Psychological symptoms of workplace stress can be seen in the negative emotions experienced by individuals, such as depression, anxiety, apathy and anger (Newell 2002). Other consequences include tension, irritability, boredom and job-related dissatisfaction

(Robbins & Coulter 1999:15)

Behavioural consequences: Behavioural effects of workplace stress can be seen in the way in which employees act when they feel they are under stress. These behaviours can serve as clues to the stress levels being experienced. In an organisational context, it is important to understand the meaning of workplace stress as it results in strain, and this

manifestation can be psychological or physiological. In the workplace, high stress levels can be seen in absenteeism, reduced levels of productivity and the job turnover levels (Robbins & Coulter 1999:15).

Stress Management Practices and Techniques:

Excessive workplace stress has been shown to have negative effects on individuals. This has resulted in the use of various stress management practices and techniques in order to bring stress levels to "manageable levels".

Stress Management Practices:

Action is what we refer to as practice. Ejifugha (2004) stated that a definition of an indication or thought is conventional when placed into action towards a precise result. Practice, according to Ademuwagun, Ajala, Oke, Moronkola, and Jegede (2002), is the key objective of health education. As well as practicing, there is also doing, normal, regular, or to do or achieve often (Webster, 2000). Practice using the perspective is the most popular and regular method of stress management adopted by any organization or profession as of the time of this study. However, practice cannot be treated independently; practice and stress management must be connected for effective treatment. When practice and stress management are connected, stress management practice is created. Therefore, a stress management practices is a person's habit or capacity to maintain control when a circumstance, a person, or an event place an excessive number of demands on them. Using physical and psychological strategies, stress management practices are frequently used to deal with stressful events in daily life (Opara, 1993).

In the current study, stress management practices will be examined as the application or adherence to practices used to lower both professional and personal stress. Management according to Hornby (2007) is the means or ability to coping with situations successfully. It involves making plans, managing tasks, developing strategies, and making the most use of available resources (Lucey, 1996). Stress management, according to Nnamani (2001) and Onuzulike (2006), is the capacity of a person to face with ongoing stressful conditions.

Stress Management Techniques:

The training that is offered to reduce workplace stress offers a potent combination of cognitive exercises and relaxation methods that have been shown in clinical studies to effectively manage stress. Sing (2001). The basics and techniques required for effective leadership, self-mastery, attention, and the capacity to effectively interact with others are given to the stress management program's participants. The programs that the University administration offer include stress management training for employees, training for executives and your top management, employee appreciation events or programs, training that specifically addresses conflict resolution, rapid change, and customer service, as well as a motivational speaker for your conference. (Arnetz1992).

Action-orientated techniques:

The focus of these techniques is those that enable the individuals to face the stress by giving them power to use the situation to their advantage. This also increases the resources that can be used in the situation.

Emotionally-orientated techniques:

The focus of these techniques enables the individuals to change the way they think about the stress, and as a result, change the way we think and feel about the stress. This means that we adjust our perceptions of the situation.

Acceptance-orientated techniques:

There are certain stressful situations over which the individual has no power, such as in the case of the death of a loved-one. The focus of these techniques is thus to survive the situation as best as possible.

Lussier (2009:301-303) also proposes six general management techniques that can be used to decrease work related stress: These techniques include time management, relaxation, nutrition, exercise, positive thinking, and the creation of a support network. Based on the literature, various stress management techniques and practices were identified that could be used by individuals during times which are perceived as stressful.

Methodology:

The study basically has made use of review

of related literature as well as its analysis and synthesis. The method used for the literature search involved accessing scholarly literature available in the printed form as well as through electronic database - mostly those acceptable and popular in the contemporary management studies. It has applied the "keyword and key phrase search" technique for collecting sought information. These research articles and paper were subsequently screened according to relevance for the study purpose. Only articles, with explicit reference to Stress Management on university employees interlink or integration were considered. The articles that resulted from these screening was examined in detail and given the small number of relevant articles; each was reviewed in some detail as the basis of this literature review.

Overall, these data are consistent with studies showing that a university community at all levels experiences considerable stress in a variety of forms, and that such stressors impact on a host of reactions-behavioral, cognitive, and physiological- as well as on reported symptoms of physical illness.

Recommendations and Managerial Implications:

While there are differences, there is also a high degree of similarity with regard to the behaviours exhibited by the different groups of university employees. University Management needs to take cognisance of the stress levels experienced by their employees. High levels of stress are experienced by all different groups of university employees, although the type of stress can be different. University administration can, therefore, not generalise in their approach. Dominant personal activities to deal with stress are: meditation/prayer (spirituality); watching TV/movies; and relaxation with family and friends. Opportunity must be provided to all employees in terms of, for example, working hours and a spiritual conscious work environment. The strong need for meditation/prayer and socialisation with family and friends indicates specific needs of employees. A work environment supportive of this is crucial.

Conclusion:

Due to high levels of competition, increased levels of workplace complexity, advances in technology, and a variety of other factors, workplace stress is becoming more prevalent on the working employees in current era. An employee who are just starting out in their careers and who are working hard to make a name and fame for themselves sometimes struggle with stress. Stress is the body's reaction to environmental conditions. It is a state of facing up with emotional, physiological, psychological or social disturbances. This study reveals the causes and the level of stress on university employees. Workplace Stress leads to high absenteeism, high staff turnover, decrease in overall employee performance and poor quality of work among the employees which affects the goals of the organization.

Effective stress management is an issue that determines to reduce the workplace stress. Among all elements over work pressure is the main cause of stress among university employees. It is known facts that techniques namely individual and organisational approaches are best for the stress management among university employee. The individual practices and techniques of stress management were found to have a significant role to play in suppressing employee poor performance while the organisational stress management practices and techniques provide organisational support for employees to improve their performance at the workplace.

Therefore, university management should organize several trainings and counselling sessions for employees in order to tackle with workplace stress. Reducing stressful situations on university employees, keeps them in a healthy state of mind, physically and psychologically. By adopting the appropriate practices and techniques, stress management will help the university employees in managing their individual and workplace performance while keeping a healthy balanced life. In short, workplace stress and its effects were apparent at all levels in the university community indicating the value of continuing research in this area from the standpoint of both understanding and possibilities for stress management.

This study will also add value to body of knowledge because its outcome shows that without effective stress management practices and techniques, organization cannot meet up with its optimization level in terms of service delivery and achieving the goals of the University. The study also recommends that University management should redefine the stress management policy to fulfil the gaps in it and make it more durable.

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