A Study on Stress Management in Organizations with Special Reference to Eastern UP

Dr. Meraj Ahmad

Associate Professor, Ghanshyam Binani Academy of Management Sciences, Mirzapur

Abstract

Different people experience different level of stress. People who overact to stress situations get affected physiologically and behaviorally which ultimately affects their performance. This paper attempts to understand the traits of stress on professionals. They are experiencing stress at remarkable level, which has affected them physiologically as well as psychologically. This has lead to an adverse effect on their performance. Since the outcomes of stress are severe, the strategies to cope with stress can be adopted diligently as per the suitability of the individual. This article is a blend of conceptual framework regarding the causes of job stress and regarding the consequences of job stress on professionals. This paper also gives insights on stress coping strategies along with the models of stress coping.

Key Words: Job Stress, Stressors, Stress Coping Strategies

I. Introduction

Stress is defined as an organism's total response to environmental demands or pressures. When demand on an individual exceeds his capabilities, stress occurs. In psychology, stress is a state of bodily or mental tension resulting from factors that tends to alter an existing equilibrium. Stress is a state of mind that reflects certain biochemical reactions in the human body and is projected by a sense of anxiety, tension and depression. As stress is caused by either environmental forces or internal forces the individual might fall short of his resources to cope with it. Medical researcher Hans Selye has given the term 'stress' to describe the body's biological response mechanisms. He explained the concept of General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) which refers to the general development of responses to stressful events in the form of physiological, psychological and behavioral responses, which consists of three stages, viz., 'alarm' (first sign of stress leading to physiological changes), 'resistance' (body's energies tend to resist the stress so that physiological and psychological equilibrium can be maintained) and 'exhaustion' (the person is unable to cope with the stress and could be affected even behaviorally. Different persons respond to stressful situations differently. It is the individual's reaction to stress, which makes all the

difference. Therefore, a stressful situation for one may be pleasant situation for another. However, it is certainly wrong to conclude that stress is always bad. There is also positive pleasant side of stress caused by good things which is called as 'eustress', which triggers healthy defense mechanisms like urge to grow, learn and advance in life. This article tries to analyze the causative factors for the other form of job stress namely, 'distress' which is unhealthy for the individual and organization from point of view of performance and success.

Present study has been conducted on professionals from different fields like management and academics. This study examined sources of stress and satisfaction at work of professionals. The most stressful aspect of work for professionals was work overload. Major sources of stress for professionals were work overload, deadlines and time pressure. The most important source of satisfaction for them can be the motivation given to them by their superiors. Study concludes that the professional's work is needed to be tackled in order to reduce their stress and to increase their satisfaction and thereby decreasing the risk of burnout.

II. Objectives

1. To understand dynamics of stress and factors responsible for generating high stress amongst professionals.

2. To find out the impact of stress on health and happiness professionals.

3. To understand stress coping and stress management.

III. Literature Review

Quite a few sources of stress are caused due to organizational, environmental and personal sources. According to researches made on stress management, it was realized that employers should provide a free work environment, recognize where stress is becoming a problem for staff, and take action to reduce stress. Stress in workplace reduces productivity, increases management pressures, and makes people ill in many ways, evidence of which is still increasing. Workplace stress affects the performance of the brain, including functions of work performance; memory, concentration, and learning.

In UK over 13 million working days are lost every year because of stress. Stress is believed to trigger 70% of visits to doctors, and 85% of serious illnesses (UK HSE stress statistics).

Stress leading to behavioral change: Stress might lead to behavioral changes on the part of individual leading to irrationality and aggression, which might lead to performance and productivity loss.

Role ambiguity: A role is a set of activities that are associated with a certain position in the organization or in the society. Studies have confirmed that when people have confusion and lack of clarity regarding their roles they face stress immensely. Sometimes it so happens that the jobs are not clearly defined in concrete terms, then the incumbent is even more confused regarding the differing expectations of his/her job, which acts as a very strong intrinsic factor for stress.

Role overload and role underload: Role overload occurs when the work requirements are so excessive that employees feel that they do not have adequate time or ability to meet such requirements. Working under time pressure is specially stressful and physiological symptoms of stress increase significantly prior to deadline and decrease sharply after the deadline has passed. Role underload occurs when a person's ability is underutilized so that either there is too little work or there is too little variety in work.

Responsibility: When an individual is held responsible for anything that goes wrong where in the person has limited degree of control over the situations leads extreme stress. Most significant form of job stress is caused when an individual has responsibility for other members of the society, failing in which puts the tag of accountability.

Interpersonal conflicts: When an individual has to deal with different people such as managers from other departments they might have interpersonal conflicts due to their differing expectations.

Stress amongst professionals: Pestonjee and Mishra have explained the nature of role stress and job satisfaction amongst professionals. They have found that job satisfaction variables are negatively correlated with all the dimensions of role stress among the professionals. They undergo stress due to high expectations of their superiors from them. So most of the time professionals under stress are burnout and are not satisfied with their job.

If burnout and job stress among professionals is to be reduced, increased resources will be required to improve training in management skills and in addition to it, some stress management training programs must be given to them.

The stressors have been classified into organizational stress, work overload, leadership style, role ambiguity and role conflict. Studies have attempted to identify stressors among professionals, which can lead to physical illness and psychological distress. The aim of the study was systematically to review the correct evidence for the effectiveness of stress management interventions for the professionals. Professionals report a range of stressors in their work, including

stress associated with their work and personal stresses. Recommended coping strategies include support from colleagues and related people.

Scope and Methodology: For the purpose of this study, a sample size of 50 professionals was taken. These professionals were selected from two different fields of management and academics. This was a general survey through questionnaire and interviews. These professionals were in the age group of 29 to 55 years with professional experience of around 22 years. Data was collected through predesigned questionnaire with Likert's five point rating scale. Information was also collected through interviews to fill the gap arising from the collection of data through questionnaire. Collected data was tabulated and interpreted.

IV. Limitations of the Study

The present research is a micro study involving a sample size of 50 professionals, which belong to two different fields of management and academics of Eastern UP region. Therefore, this may not clearly reflect the viewpoint of whole population of professionals in India. Nowadays, various professionals experience stress.

V. Discussion

Table 1: Stressors Experienced by Professionals

Determinants of Job Stress	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Dis-agree	Strongly disagree
					In %
1. Deadlines and time pressure.	44	25	20	8	3
2. Too many cases to report at once.	51	39	4	3	3
3. Trouble with work colleagues and the superior.	20	27	40	10	3
4. Mounting competition between the managers and fear of losing their positions/ good image.	20	25	20	20	15
5. Inability to meet the expectations of the superiors.	20	30	30	10	10
6. Multiple roles to play at the same time. (manager, administrator, father, husband)	47	40	8	2	3
7. Non-availability of time to pursue hobbies / interests.	22	50	13	8	7
8. Feeling of tiredness exhaustion at the end of the day.	35	26	12	17	10
9. Get sufficient time for relaxation and refreshing.	15	10	15	35	25
10. Get time for walking / yoga / meditation for stress reduction and maintaining good health.	10	15	15	30	30
11. Undergone physiological such as increased B.P, diabetes, cholesterol, ulcers, headache and not being able to practice relaxation techniques.	30	35	10	20	5

12. Undergone behavioral changes in the form of alcoholism, smoking, irritation and depression.	20	20	10	25	25
13. Supportive family and perfect life balance.	40	30	20	5	5
14. Enjoying maximum job-satisfaction and motivated to learn higher skills.	25	25	20	10	20
15. Competent enough to handle all managerial complexities.	30	35	20	10	5

VI. Summary and Major Findings

Indication of Role Stress

An effort was made to analyze stressors for professionals and the relevant data have been furnished in the table1 by applying percentages. Table1 is self-explanatory. The findings reveal that professionals have time pressure and too many cases to report at the same time. Table 1 shows tendency of negativitism which itself is an indication of high stress among professionals. They have role stress, role overload and inter-role conflict. Respondent professionals understudy also have agreed that there is mounting competition between them and their colleagues and majority of them have expressed their dissatisfaction over managing multiple roles by them effectively.

Impact of Stress

More than 65 percent of the professionals felt that they have undergone quite a lot of physiological changes such as enhanced B.P, diabetes, cholesterol, headache and the like. This is because not only professionals understudy are overloaded with work but also because they are unable to meet their work life balance, as they hardly practice yoga, relaxation techniques, and go for their morning and evening walk. As a result, about 40 percent of the professionals have even reported behavioral changes, especially in the form of irritation and cynicism, if not much of drinking and smoking. Behavioral change might trigger aggressive behavior on the part of the person influencing the productivity and interpersonal relationships.

Table 1 also depicts that about 90 percent respondents strongly agree that they have too many cases to report at once. It is an assumption that 65 percent respondents reporting physiological change are from these 90 percent. Even if that assumption is accepted, it also means that 25 percent respondents who have work pressure do not report any physiological change.

Stress Coping Strategies

The individual with his internal strengths can make positive influence on the working environment. The fig. I clearly depicts how an individual with his personality attributes like internal locus of control, high need for

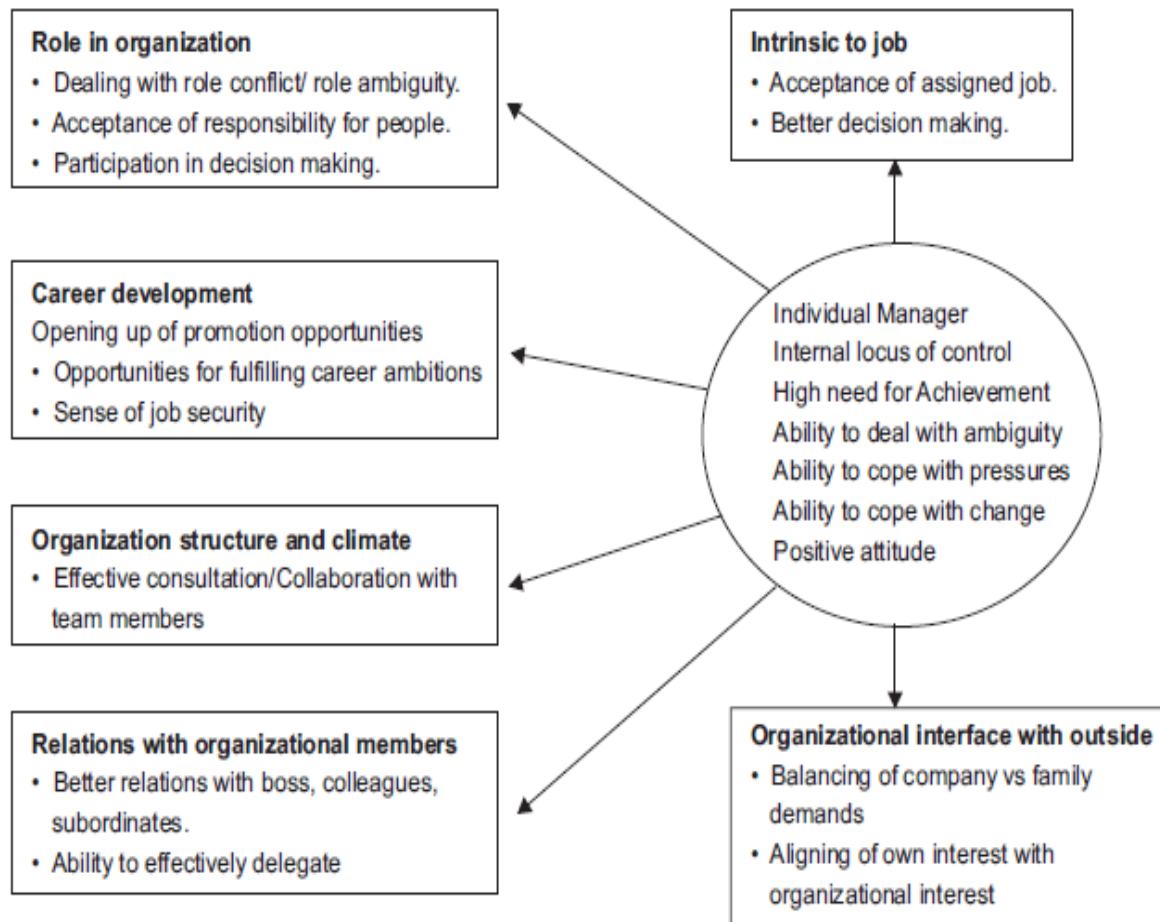achievement and positive attitude counteract the negative impact of stress.

Fig.1: Managing Executive Stress: An Approach to Self Development- A Model

(Source: Jaipuria HR Journal)

1. Team Building and Group Practice: Since most of the professionals experience mounting job pressure and competition, they might resort to group practice, which will lead to not only team building but also healthy competition among the professionals. Sharing the practice with friends, colleagues, and delegation of as minor work as possible to subordinates is a means for effective team building and healthy group practice.

2. Cognitive Restructuring / Rule your mind / Positive thinking: Our mind is responsible for all our actions. If we can rule our mind we can resolve most our problems. Feed your mind with positive thoughts by saying positive things to yourself. We are required to develop our own philosophy of life like "Nishkam Karma" &

"Karma theory". Negativity in mind leads to negative occurrences and results which replaces more irrational thoughts with the positive ones and itself is cognitive restructuring. This process helps the individual who is experiencing behavioral changes which ultimately takes a toll on the performance. It is a tested method by various behavioral scientists that cognitive restructuring would alleviate stress by encouraging a person to adopt a more reasonable belief about the outcomes associated with the events.

3. Time Management: "Healthy mind lives in a healthy body"; this is well said, but due to Poor Time Management skill we are not able to focus on various demands of physical body (exercise, yoga, meditation, relaxation techniques). Due to poor time management there is also lack of ability to balance psychological body (relationships, hobbies, family life, meditation external reading) as well as needs of the society (philanthropic activities, free medical camps, attending emergencies). If one can manage time effectively, one can accomplish twice as much as the person who is poorly organized. Prior allocation of time for various activities as well as prioritizing activities by importance and urgency will take care of the majority of the problems caused due to stress.

VII. Conclusion

Stress is the common element that accompanies the people irrespective of their profession. Response to stress varies between the individuals. Since the outcomes of stress are severe, the strategies to cope with stress can be adopted diligently as per the suitability of the individual. Behavior modification and physical fitness or wellness programs could be very well adopted by professionals to prevent grid-lock for their effective performance and by averting them from being victimized to stress.

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