7. Managing Job Stress

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Abstract:

Stress is virtually often the cause of the problems that employees face in their lives. Many authors have defined stress in their own terms. In today's world, stress at work is a phenomenon that attracts attention. It's more than just a term; it's an emotion that has an impact on a person's physical, mental, emotional, and behavioral health. Stressors, stress reaction, and stress post-effect are the three concepts that influence job stress. Both pleasant stress (eustress) and negative stress (distress) are examples of stress post-effects. Both of them have distinct roles in the idea of stress. Every company and employee deals with workplace stress and related mental illness on a daily basis. Nevertheless, it frequently happens that neither is fully aware of the problems nor is well-informed about their implications. We will talk about it in this paper. Handling Workplace Stress.

Keywords:

Managing Job Stress, Employee's, Positive Stress, Negative, Job Satisfaction, Anxiety, Depression, Job Insecurity, Working Hours, Over Load, Pressure, Performance, Shift Work

7.1 Introduction:

High productivity and improved organizational efficiency are two of an organization's most valuable human resources. Every human being spends a significant portion of their lives at work, and the environment there can have a significant effect on their personal lives. A person may become ill as a result of

stress and discontent at work. The goal of this study is to examine how job stress affects job satisfaction because stress is a psychiatric disease. [1]

Anxiety and sadness related to the workplace are known as occupational stress, and they can have a variety of effects on an individual. For today's enterprises, stress is a problem that can have a significant negative impact. Job discontent that leads to absenteeism, underemployment, lack of time at work, and other consequences is one of these effects of job stress. Low labor productivity and poor organizational performance are the results of these problems.

A company can better accomplish its goal of high production and efficiency if it can reduce stress in the workplace, foster a good attitude toward its work, and provide the ideal environment for job satisfaction. Many experts believe that one of the most difficult organizational concepts is job satisfaction, which also serves as the foundation for many management strategies aimed at boosting organizational effectiveness and productivity. [2]

7.2 Job Stress:

The detrimental physical and emotional reactions that arise when a worker's needs, resources, or abilities do not align with the demands of their job are known as job stress. Stress at work can cause illness and even accidents.

The terms challenge and job stress are frequently used interchangeably, although they are not the same. We are psychologically and physically energized by challenge, which inspires us to master our occupations and acquire new abilities. We feel content and at ease when a problem is overcome. Challenge is therefore a necessary component of creative and healthy work. When people remark that "a little bit of stress is good for you," they are most likely referring to the significance of difficulty in our professional lives.

Every employee experiences stress at work at some point in their career, which is a growing phenomenon. When someone works, they are constantly presented with opportunities, demands, targets, and threats.

This causes a cacophony of thoughts that can lead to work-related stress. It happens when the responsibilities of the job do not align with the worker's skills, resources, or needs.

The detrimental emotional and physical reactions that have drawn more attention in the field of occupational health throughout the past three decades are referred to as work stress. [3]

A. Managing Work-Related Stress:

Stress at work is very personal. Some people do well in fast-paced occupations like air traffic controllers, police officers, and emergency care nurses. These are demanding occupations where a mistake could endanger lives.

In situations like this, the rest of us probably wouldn't last a day. However, that does not imply that our work is any less demanding. Stress is a part of any job.

There can be a lot of paperwork, short deadlines, or the odd irate client. Alternatively, there can be lengthy discussions that cause everyone to fall further behind. All of them have the potential to be stressful.

In other words, stress isn't just caused by one's employment. Stress is also a result of how an individual handles the demands and obligations of their particular workplace.

It should come as no surprise that people react differently to stress. Their personality and the culture of their workplace influence how they react. [4]

7.3 Effects of Stress:

The most intelligent animals on the planet are humans. However, they continue to succumb to stress brought on by their own businesses and organizations. Because high levels of stress among employees lead to employee turnover, this condition poses an equal risk to businesses. In order to avoid a difficult work environment, highly stressed employees opt to be absent. Workers under a lot of stress are not motivated.

Stress's short-term effects include:

- Headaches
- Shallow breathing
- Trouble sleeping
- Anxiety
- Upset stomach

Long-term, constant stress can raise the risk for:

- Heart disease
- Back pain
- Depression
- Lasting muscle aches and pains
- A weakened immune system

Your mind can also be impacted by stress. It may affect your capacity for concentration and creativity. Because you're not thinking clearly when under stress, you're also more likely to make mistakes. Your feelings and actions might be impacted by ongoing stress. It can cause you to become irritable, grumpy, less enthusiastic about your work, and even melancholy. [5]

7.4 Causes of Stress at Workplace:

Based on where they originate, stressors can be categorized into two groups. Two major classifications are:

Internal causes: These include a person's mindset, thought process, etc. These factors, which begin internally, result in stress. These internal factors are determined by an individual's viewpoint. A person may become anxious even if there is no threat in their immediate environment because they see someone or something as dangerous.

External causes: These include a variety of outside elements that impact an individual's performance within an organization, such as

1. Job insecurity: When an employee works for a company, their worry of losing their job causes them to experience chronic stress, which lowers the quality of their work.
2. Working hours: Unusual working hours can cause a variety of physiological issues in workers, which can result in stress at work.
3. Workplace control: This describes how much authority an employee has over their job. An employee loses interest in their work and feels pressured to meet superiors' expectations if they have little or no influence over it.
4. Managerial style: Employee stress is impacted by bosses' domineering approach. Employees under authoritarian management have very limited autonomy when it comes to planning and decision-making. Because they have very little control over their work and a lot of constraints, employees working under such bosses are under a lot of stress.
5. Overload & Underload: Overloading entails doing a lot of work in a short period of time. Any person may experience stress as a result of such elevated expectations. There is too much time available and very little work to be done elsewhere. Here, the worker feels anxious and doubts his or her abilities.

6. Requests for behavioral changes can occasionally cause stress for an employee since they need them to behave in a way that is not natural to them. [6-7]

7.5 Levels of Stress:

A variety of negative pictures are conjured up in our minds when we say the term stress. Because we believe that stress always has a bad effect on our lives. This is untrue; stress has varying degrees, and each degree affects people's lives in a different way. Figure 7.1 illustrates that stress always has beneficial effects prior to the optimal level. People are more focused and committed when they are working in a comfortable environment. But when it surpasses its peak, it becomes more than simply a sentiment or a term; it becomes a major problem, an issue, a sickness, such as depression, ulcers, or cancer.

The relationship between pressure and performance is shown by the pressure performance curve, which has a bell-shaped trajectory. This curve is sometimes referred to as the stress curve. Although they are interchangeable, it is more helpful to think of "pressure" rather than "stress" because stress is generally viewed negatively. Although stress might technically be a good thing, any negative connotations are eliminated when we substitute the word pressure. [8]
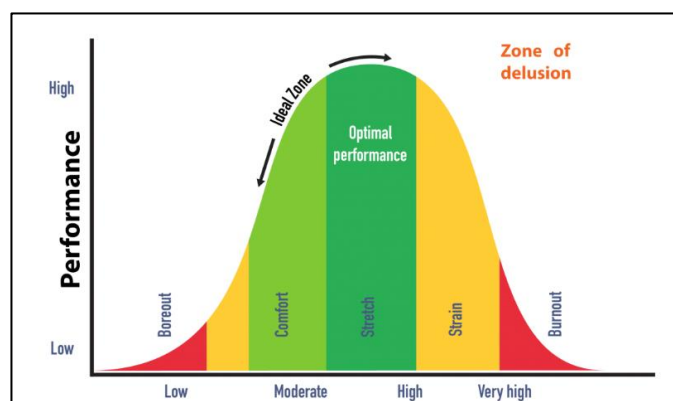

Figure 7.1: Levels of Pressure (Source: www.google.com)

Stress is a situation that arises from people's interactions with their occupations and is characterized by changes in people that require them to deviate from their usual functioning, according to Beehr & Newman (1978). According to a recent National Association of Mental Health research, pressure is a subjective sensation of tension or arousal brought on by a potentially stressful circumstance, whereas stress is another matter entirely. However, stress occurs when pressure surpasses a person's capacity for coping. [9]

Table 7.1: Most stressful jobs

Job	Stress score
Fire-fighter	71.59
Military personnel	70.78
Military general	63.11
Airplane pilot	60.46
Police officer	50.82
Actor	50.33
Broadcaster	50.30
Event coordinator	49.33
Photojournalist	49.22
Newspaper reporter	48.76

The following are important job stressors that impact job performance:

- Workload
- Job security
- Autonomy
- Role conflicts
- Shift work

- Low salaries

- Technology change

- Low morale

- Lack of recognition

These are a few of the elements influencing how well workers perform on the job. Workload, job security, and shift work are the three main considerations taken into account here.

The connection between job performance and stresses such as workload, role conflict, work-life balance, peer relationships, job security, time pressure, etc., with motivation acting as a mediating component.

This study examines how job performance is affected by the three most prevalent stressors: workload, job security, and shift work. The study evaluates the conceptual model shown in Figure 7.2 in order to meet the research goals.
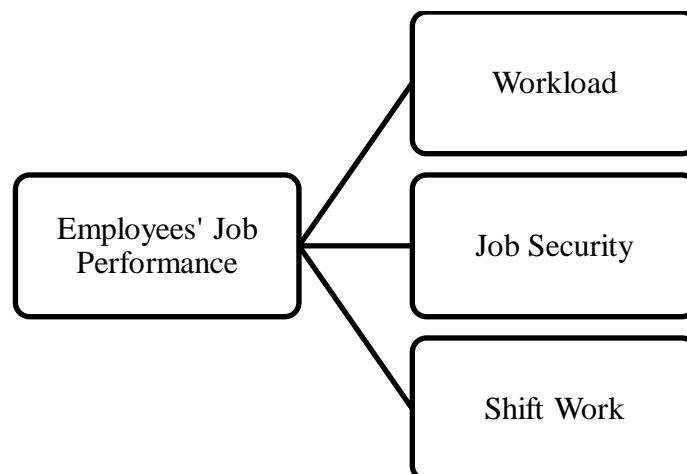

Figure 7.2: Factors affecting employees' [10]

- **Workload:**

One of the main things that influences how productive and efficient people are is their workload. High workloads have become a prevalent source of job stress in today's environment. Certain limitations, such as time pressure, a lack of timely and sufficient assistance, a lack of resources to complete a task, ineffective coworkers, role conflicts, etc., can lead to workload.

An excessive amount of work will result in poorer performance, which will contribute to low morale and increased employee turnover in businesses. Gender disparities in stress management as a result of different organizational stresses have been the subject of numerous research investigations in the past.

- **Job Security:**

These days, a significant contributing element to the high employee turnover rate in businesses worldwide is job security. The vast potential of skilled labor is not recognized by the majority of businesses.

Companies that see their workers as assets, on the other hand, will assess their future needs by offering pensions, encouraging them to advance in their careers and creating an environment that supports advancement. Motivating employees and keeping them on board over the long term is one of the main duties of businesses.

- **Shift Work:**

Most businesses in a variety of industries, including IT, IT-enabled services, manufacturing, etc., experience job stress as a result of shift and night work.

People's working hours have altered in many firms due to globalization, heightened competitiveness, and new technical advancements. Periodically adjusting to new shift timings is very inconvenient for the personnel. Adapting to shift timings may

have negative health effects and cause psychological and physical discomfort. It is past time for businesses to recognize the need of providing shift workers with the necessary support through appropriate interventions. [11]
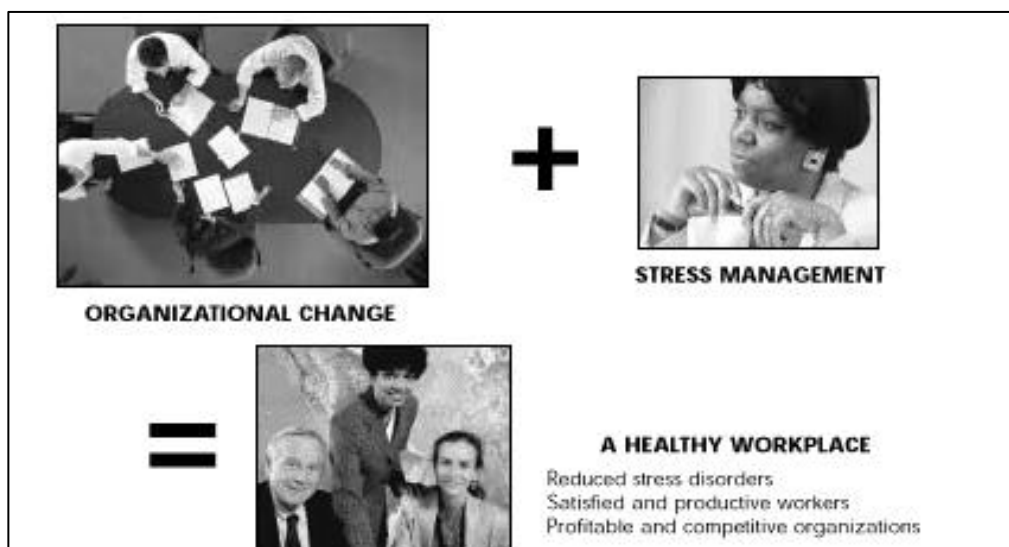
7.6 Preventing Stress at Work:

Figure 7.3: Preventing Stress at Work (Source: https://www.cdc.gov/)

Change the Organization to Prevent Job Stress:

- Make sure the workload is appropriate for the resources and competencies of the employees.
- Jobs should be created to give employees purpose, challenge, and chances to apply their abilities.
- Clearly state the duties and obligations of employees.
- Allow employees to have a say in choices and actions that impact their jobs.
- Enhance communication and lessen ambiguity on future job opportunities and career advancement.
- Give employees the chance to socialize with one another.

- Create work schedules that accommodate obligations and demands outside of the workplace. [12]

7.7 The Role of HR in Managing Stress at Workplace:

In order to effectively manage a department and boost production and revenues, managers must recognize that employees' mental health is a critical tool. In addition to helping employees, early treatment of mental and physical stress can save businesses a significant amount of money by reducing missed productivity. Managers can implement the recommendations made by the World Health Organization (2007) for preventing work-related stress; Figure 4 lists the five concrete actions. [13]
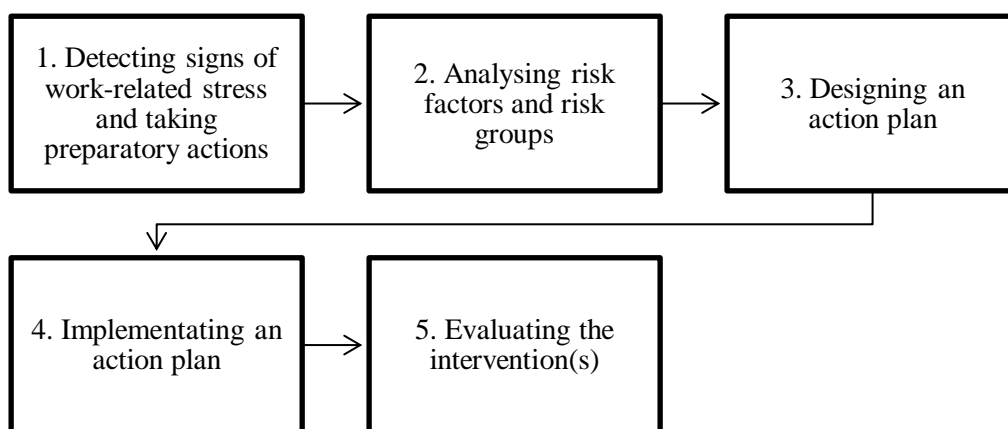
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┌─────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────┐
│ 1. Detecting    │     │ 2. Analysing    │     │ 3. Designing an │
│ signs of work-  │ →   │ risk factors    │ →   │ action plan     │
│ related stress  │     │ and risk groups │     │                 │
│ and taking      │     │                 │     │                 │
│ preparatory     │     │                 │     │                 │
│ actions         │     │                 │     │                 │
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┌─────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────┐
│ 4. Implementating│    │ 5. Evaluating   │
│ an action plan  │ →   │ the             │
│                 │     │ intervention(s) │
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Figure 7.4: Process of Stress Prevention (Source: World Health Organization, 2007)

An HR manager must perform the following crucial duties and tasks in stress management:

1. Determine the different forms of job stress.
2. Recognize the factors that contribute to job stress.
3. Inquire with staff members: How might these stressors be avoided?

4. Create suitable and efficient stress management procedures to deal with stress in the workplace.

5. Talk to the employees about stress issues and raise their awareness of the way they work or other relevant topics.

6. Effectively use management standards to assess stress levels and identify potential solutions to the current situation.

7. Talk about developing and implementing the resolutions with other departments.

8. Pay attention to and modify stress-reduction techniques in accordance with corporate regulations and procedures.

9. Work together with management to quickly identify and assist staff members who are experiencing stress.

10. Create long-lasting policies that can enhance the health and well-being of workers. [14]

7.8 Conclusion:

Since job stress is the most significant source of human resource management and because companies need to ensure the mental and physical well-being of their employees in order to maximize productivity and ensure the highest quality of work, the impact of job stress on work and employees has been examined in recent decades.

When it comes to managing their staff, job stress is one of the most challenging areas that managers currently face. Numerous studies have demonstrated that job stress has a wide-ranging impact on an organization's job performance and production. This study gives us comprehensive details on the causes of work-related stress and how it affects an employee's physical and mental well-being. Another way to put it is that there is a direct correlation between workplace stress and its physical and mental impacts. Non-job stressors are among the many problems that require care.

Together, both work-related and non-work-related stressors may have an impact on an employee's physical and mental well-being. Employees manage their personal and professional stress when they are able to overcome their stress. Stress motivates both the boss and the workers.

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