

A Study on the Causes of Work Related Stress Among the College Teachers

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Abstract

We all need to have some mental pressure in our life which makes our work satisfying and help us to meet deadlines. Too much pressure without having the chance to recover out of the situation causes stress and it damages our health too. When the demands and pressures placed on individual workers do not match the resources available, or do not meet the individual's needs and motivations, stress can occur and endanger that person's health and well being. In the short term, stress can be debilitating, in the long term it can kill.

Workplace stress differs from person to person. It can depend on your personality type and how you respond to pressure. Stress is the result of any emotional, physical, social, economic, or other factors that require a response or change. Some kind of stress is referred to as "challenge" or "positive stress", but when stress occurs in amounts that you cannot handle both mental and physical changes may occur. The objective of this paper is to study various work related causes that lead to stress with respect to work culture in educational institutes. Factor analysis is used to analyze the causes of work related stress. The results show various causes of stress among the teachers, occurring frequently and occasionally.

Introduction

Stress can come from any situation. It is a thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry or anxious. Physicist and engineers refer stress to a force that produces deformations. In medical science, it refers to the changes in physiological actions in response to some reactive stimuli. Stress exists when a force is applied to distort the body. The effect is manifest as

elastic or non - elastic distortions are measurable as strain. In a recent Health and Safety Executive survey (2007), one in six of all working individuals in the UK reported that their job is very stressful. Work related stress is also one of the biggest causes of sick leave. It is impossible to escape pressure at work altogether, so you need to learn how to manage stress effectively. Stress differs from person to person. What is stressful

to one person is not necessarily stressful to another. Every job has a level of stress associated with it. Workplace stress is usually brought on by unreasonable demands that are too large or numerous for an employee to overcome. We all get stressed at some time in our working life, some more than others. The way we deal with stress is the main difference. The degree to which we are affected is also a major variable. Stress not only affects your ability to work, consequently affecting your business, but more importantly it affects your health. Causes of workplace stress may be job content and how the work is organized. In such cases simply providing an employee, or employees, with 'stress management advice' may not be an adequate response. Improved work design can free up employees' resources to concentrate on getting the job done, to do the tasks better, or to look further ahead to find out how to meet new challenges.

Some Typical Causes of Stress are:

Workplace stress is different for everyone - what is stressful for one person may not be stressful for another. What is stressful for you may be different for your friend, spouse, and colleagues or even for your boss. But still some of the common cause of stress are related to personal life like relationship with spouse, children, health, marriage, death of family member etc. Sometimes excessive or high workload and unrealistic deadlines makes people feel stressful. One of the reason for stress is also a lack of control over work activities and interpersonal support or poor working relationships among the superior and subordinates. Sometimes people feel stressed due to the feeling of job insecurity, lack of career opportunities, or level of pay. In case of woman a

reason for stress in women is detected sometimes as mental or physical harassment at work place. In some cases multiple reporting and commanding lines for employees, with each manager asking for their work to be prioritized is the reason to feel people fall in a stressful situation. Some other reasons pointed out by Northern Territory Government report (2003) are failure to keep employees informed about significant changes to the business, causing them uncertainty about their future, a poor physical working environment, longer working hours and participation and non participation from co-workers and superiors.

Review of Literature

According to Northern Territory Government report (2003) workplace stress is the result of the interaction between a person and their work environment. For the person it is the awareness of not being able to cope with the demands of their work environment, with an associated negative emotional response. Different people respond differently to stress. Some people function well under significant stress while others do not. A worker's ability to cope with increasing workplace stress is also affected by the amount of stress they are subjected to from stressors outside of the workplace. Trouble at home may reduce their ability to cope with pressure at work.

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (2007) has carried out the study on work related stress. According to its report work-related stress is a pattern of reactions that occurs when workers are presented with work demands that are not matched to their knowledge, skills or abilities, and which challenge their ability to

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cope. These demands may be related to time pressure or the amount of work (quantitative demands), or may refer to the difficulty of the work (cognitive demands) or the empathy required (emotional demands), or even to the inability to show one's emotions at work.

Johnson et.al, (2005) have carried out the study on the experience of work-related stress across occupations. They have discussed three stress related variables like psychological well-being, physical health and job satisfaction and these variables are compared between 26 different occupations. The occupations like ambulance workers, teachers, social services, customer services - call centers, prison officers and police. The study reveals the high emotional labour associated with the high stress jobs is discussed as a potential causal factor.

Gemmil & Heisler (1972) found a significant correlation between measures of job stress like insecurity of job or promotion, ambiguity of supervisor's evaluation, too heavy work load, too less authority etc. and nature of individual or locus of control.

Park (2007), in their study of work place and job performance, found that negative implications of work stress are recognized as a challenge to both employers and workers, with women, youth, shift, part-time, and non white collar workers being more likely to have high-strain jobs. Those with such jobs perceived their work to be physically demanding and less satisfying. Low personal incomes and low levels of education were also associated with higher stress.

In Spanish study (García, 2002), it was estimated that around 16% of cardiovascular diseases in men, and

22% of these illnesses among women, correspond to work-related stress.

Palmer (2004) also supports to this and his study shows that work-related stress costs the national economy a staggering amount in sick pay, lost productivity, health care and litigation costs.

Few studies reveal that uncertain job security and the fear of layoff is also an important source of psychological stress for some, especially during times of economic contraction (Williams 2003). It may also be related to the health effects shift work causes, such as disruption of circadian rhythm, reduction in quality and quantity of sleep, fatigue, anxiety, depression and increased neuroticism (Harrington 2001)

Objectives of Study

1. To analyze the working environment of college teachers.
2. To find out major factors causing stress among them of day to day nature.
3. To check its physical and mental impact on individuals' productivity.

Research Methodology

For the purpose of measuring the objectives following methodology is adopted.

Data Collection

Primary data- Through structured questionnaire designed on the basis of objectives of the study.

Secondary data- Collected through various publications in management journals and internet which is restricted to the conceptual framework of the paper only.

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Sampling Method

Sampling Method: Simple Random sampling

Sampling Unit: Indore (MP)

Sample Size: 50

Data Measurement Tool: Factor Analysis through SPSS 16

Findings and Analysis

Table : 1 Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Analysis N
Routine decision	2.9200	1.20949	50
Work freedom	3.5600	1.21487	50
Learn new things	3.8200	.98333	50
Hectic timing	2.3000	1.40335	50
Free from conflicts	3.8000	1.30931	50
Physical efforts	2.7400	1.19198	50
Helpfulness of people	4.2800	.78350	50
Job insecurity	3.6000	1.24540	50
Mental efforts	4.3200	.99877	50
Authority granted	3.3600	1.12050	50
Recognition received	3.1000	1.32865	50
problems sharing	3.1800	1.25666	50
personal problems and productivity	3.0400	1.59028	50
Work timing inflexibility	3.2000	1.22890	50
Fair admin policies	3.0200	1.13371	50
Healthy work environment	3.8600	1.29378	50
Mental relaxation	3.4800	1.19932	50

Table: 2
Results of Factor Analysis:

Factor Name of Factor	Eigen Value		Statements	Factor Loading
	Total	% of variance		
1 Set 1-Academic factors	2.792	16.423	Authority Granted Recognition Received Fair Administrative Policies Healthy work environment Mental Relaxation	.570 .550 .842 .586 .284
2 Set 2 -Mental factors	2.606	15.328	Free from conflicts Job insecurity Problem Sharing	.338 .637 .618
3 Set 3 -Personal factors	1.730	10.176	Hectic Timings Personal problems and productivity Mental Effort	.044 .834 .108
4 Set 4 -Decision Making factors	1.415	8.325	Routine decision Work freedom	.863 .866
5 Set 5 -Developmental factors	1.389	8.173	Learn New things Physical Efforts	.734 .694
6 Set 6- Peer group	1.323	7.781	Helpfulness of people	.798
7 Set 7 -Working hours	1.118	6.578	Work timing inflexibility	.746

From the above data seven tables have been formed with various variables.

Set 1 includes the factors like administrative policies, work environment, recognition, authority etc. show the maximum weight to fair admin policies (.842) It has seen that the teachers are not satisfied on the part of administrative policies of the colleges. Thus this creates stress among them. The second variable creating the stress is absence of healthy work environment (.586) and lack of authority to perform the task (.570). All the above factors show that availability of these factors positively reduce the stress.

These factors are very important in creating or reducing stress among the respondents.

Set 2 includes the major factors related to mental relaxation i.e. Job insecurity, problem sharing and conflicts at work place. The feeling for job insecurity is the major cause of stress among some respondents (.637). Respondents feel that sharing problems with the colleagues (.618) is also one of the important determinants of stress. Better is the sharing, lesser is the stress.

Set 3 shows that personal problems of the employees

affect their productivity (.834). The teachers feel that due to their personal problems, their productivity gets affected. Again the reduced level of productivity results into stressful situations. Some teachers feel those hectic working hours (.044) though does not lead much to create stressful situations and mental efforts to carry out certain task (.108) do lead to work stress.

Set 4 indicates the cause of stress for some respondents who are not involved in routine decision making, (.863) compared to those who are involved. Similarly, not allowing the freedom to do the work in their own way leads to fall in stressful situations to the respondents. (.866)

Set 5 shows that if the job needs to learn new things in the field sometimes lead to stress (.734) for the employees. Lots of physical efforts involved in job (.694) to fulfill the task is also one of the variables resulting into stress.

Set 6 has only one variable which can be a cause of stress and it is the co-operation or helpfulness or people working around you. Non co-operative peers lead to create stress at work place.

Set 7 shows that the places where the rigid or inflexible working hours are imposed, (.746) the employees are more in the stressful situation.

Conclusion

The paper focuses on the causes of stress at work place among college teachers. Our study support the findings of Park (2007), of work place and job performance which found that negative implications

of work stress are recognized as a challenge to both employers and workers. From the above findings it is clear that the respondents are, though not frequently, into stressful situation. These factors not only lead to reduction in the productivity of the employees but also affect their physical and mental health. To overcome this problem, proper administrative policies can be framed. Similarly, working environment can be made more flexible but not on the grounds of output and productivity. The study by Ravichandran & Rajendran (2007), suggests the need of periodical assessment programmes to reduce stress among the teacher. Higher standards can be set to improve the performance but mental relaxation must also be assured. We suggest certain programmes or motivational packages which will reduce their stress level, whether it is related to personal and family problem or administrative problems. Similarly there can be training and development programmes to increase the innovativeness of the college teachers.

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