

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE & MANAGEMENT

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- Sharma T., Kwatra, G. (2008) Effectiveness of Social Advertising: A Study of Selected Campaigns, Corporate Social Responsibility, Edited by David Crowther & Nicholas Capaldi, Ashgate Research Companion to Corporate Social Responsibility, Chapter 15, pp 287-303.

**JOURNAL AND OTHER ARTICLES**

- Schemenner, R.W., Huber, J.C. and Cook, R.L. (1987), "Geographic Differences and the Location of New Manufacturing Facilities," Journal of Urban Economics, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 83-104.

**CONFERENCE PAPERS**

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**OUTCOMES OF STRESS: A STUDY OF CAUSE & REMEDIAL ACTIONS FOR REDUCING STRESS**

**HARTESH PANNU**  
**ASST. PROFESSOR**  
**CHANDIGARH BUSINESS SCHOOL**  
**MOHALI**

**PRERNA TIKKU**  
**ASST. PROFESSOR**  
**CHANDIGARH BUSINESS SCHOOL**  
**MOHALI**

**ABSTRACT**

Workplace stress is to be expected. Stress is a natural human response to its environment. In fact, moderate levels of stress are considered essential motivators. However, high levels of stress have the capacity to greatly impact physical and emotional health. As leaders, it is our responsibility to assess and manage levels of stress in the workplace to ensure a safe and productive work environment. Stress is a major hygiene factor that must be managed. The aim of this paper is to provide insight that will help the reader further improve his/her management competencies in managing stress in the workplace.

**KEYWORDS**

Stress, Workplace, Employee Productivity, Performance Employee Conflicts.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Stress is defined as an imbalance between demand and resources or as occurring when pressure exceeds one's perceived ability to cope, yet, stress is not given due importance and it is becoming one of the major cause of employees becoming unproductive and demotivated. The impact of stress on cost and productivity is substantial to the organization; A number of factors (environmental, organizational and individual) moderated by individual differences cause an employee to feel stress. The more frequently these factors occur and the more intensely they are experienced by the employee, the greater the stress that he experiences; job related tension tends to decrease job satisfaction and performance. It causes individual to become disoriented and imbalanced. Stress itself is not necessarily a bad thing. Excessive stress is also costly. This is owing to the fact that stress leads to low productivity, encourages absenteeism, and leads to high turnover, disability pay-outs and an increased worker compensation scheme. Therefore, it is important for employees to identify any signs of stress among their colleagues and themselves early enough to prevent impacts on the organization's performance levels (Hicks & Caroline, 2007). This will help individuals recognize the underlying problem and seek measures to cope with it. Ultimately, it will reduce the impact of stress on organizational performance and productivity. This paper seeks to identify types of stress in the workplace and how the signs and symptoms of stress can be recognized by individuals. Finally, the paper will broadly discuss coping mechanisms that can assist individuals deal with stress.

**OBJECTIVES**

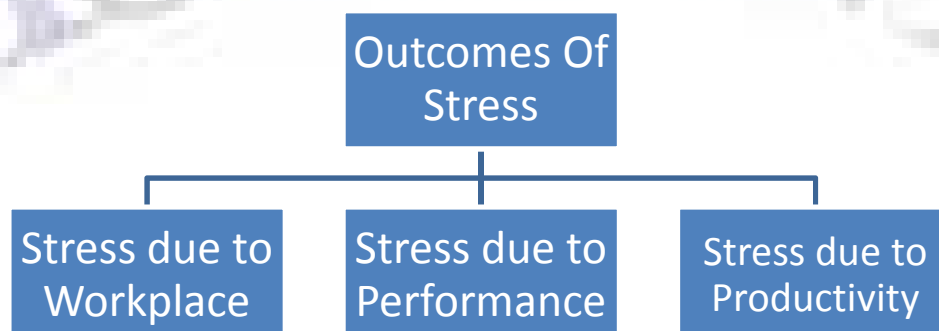
1. To study the causes of stress among employees.
2. To analyze the causes of stress on employees.
3. To study the effect of stress on productivity of an organization.
4. To study the effect of stress on performance
5. Effect of stress at workplace.

**TYPES OF STRESS AT WORKPLACE**

- a. Time Stress: This is where individuals lack enough time to complete all of their assigned duties. Such workers feel trapped, hopeless and unhappy about their status. Workers under this type of stress worry about deadlines and most of the time rush to avoid being late (Fried, 2008).
- b. Anticipatory Stress: This describes the stress that workers experience regarding the future. The basic premise is that workers naturally worry about the fact that something might go wrong in the near future..
- c. Situational Stress: Situational stress occurs when individuals are in an intimidating situation over which they have no control. Such situations may involve a conflict of interest, loss of acceptance or change in status in an individual's group.
- d. Encounter Stress: This type of stress revolves around individual contacts. People get stressed when they are anxious about interacting with a particular group of individuals or a particular person (Albrecht, 2010). It often occurs in a situation where workers interact with clients or customers who may be in some form of distress.

**OUTCOMES OF STRESS**

The first step in solving unproductiveness and disorientation is to know the causes of stress that employees go through. Once the causes of stress is identified, the organization can come up with good programs for stress management for its employees. There are various effects related to stress, some of them are mentioned below:



**A) EFFECT OF STRESS AT WORKPLACE**

The workplace is the physical location where someone works. Such a place can range from a home office to a large office building or factory. The workplace is one of the most important social spaces other than the home, constituting "a central concept for several entities: the worker and his/her family, the employing organization, the customers of the organization, and the society as a whole. Stressors can be divided into those that arise from within an individual i.e., internal, and from environment i.e., external. Internal conflicts, fears of inadequacy, fear of unknown and guilt feelings are examples of stressors that do not depend on the environment.

**STATISTICS ON WORKSTRESS**

- 40% of workers reported their job was very or extremely stressful.
- 25% view their jobs as the number one stressor in their lives.
- 29% of workers felt quite a bit or extremely stressed at work.
- 26% of workers said they were "often or very often burned out or stressed by their work".

**STRESS AT DIFFERENT WORK LEVELS**

EMPLOYEE	STRESS	REASON
Fresher/Trainee	Fear of losing job	Incapability
Employee for less than 1 year	Mental Stress	Wrong comparison with co-workers
4-5 years of experience	Self induced stress	Unmarried and wants to settle in life
5+ years of experience	Less concentration	Lack of time management

**SPECIFIC STRESSORS**

- 1) Organizational problems
- 2) Unclear role specifications
- 3) Insufficient back-up
- 4) Role conflict Long hours, excessive overtime, shift work,
- 5) Unrealistically high self-expectations
- 6) Poor status, pay and promotion prospects
- 7) Unnecessary lengthy procedures
- 8) Job uncertainty and insecurity
- 9) Poor relations with co-workers
- 10) Frequent clashes with superiors
- 11) Conflicting demands
- 12) Isolation from colleagues' support
- 13) Lack of variety

**TASK-RELATED STRESSORS**

- 1) Poor communication
- 2) Difficult clients or subordinates
- 3) Inadequate leadership/poor supervision
- 4) Insufficient training
- 5) Inability to finish a task in time
- 6) Inability to help or act effectively

**PHYSICAL STRESSORS**

- 1) Physical agents (noise, heat, radiation, cold)
- 2) Uncomfortable work area

**ALARMING SYMPTOMS OF STRESS**

1. Frequent headaches, jaw clenching or pain
2. Gritting, grinding teeth
3. Stuttering or stammering
4. Tremors, trembling of lips, hands
5. Neck ache, back pain, muscle spasms
6. Light headedness, faintness, dizziness
7. Heartburn, stomach pain, nausea
8. Excess anxiety, worry, guilt, nervousness
9. Increased anger, frustration, hostility
10. Insomnia, nightmares, disturbing dreams
11. Trouble learning new information
12. Forgetfulness, disorganization, confusion
13. Difficulty in making decisions
14. Increased frustration, irritability
15. Reduced work productivity
16. Lies or excuses covering poor work
17. Problems with communication
18. Social withdrawal or isolation
19. Constant tiredness, weakness, fatigue
20. Frequent use of over-the-counter drugs
21. Increased smoking, alcohol, or drug use

**REMEDIAL MEASURES**

There are a variety of steps you can take to reduce both your overall stress levels and the stress you find on the job and in the workplace. These include:

- **Taking responsibility** for improving your physical and emotional well-being.
- **Avoiding pitfalls** by identifying knee jerk habits and negative attitudes that add to the stress you experience at work.
- **Learning better communication skills** to ease and improve your relationships with management and coworkers.
- Yoga
- Relaxing Exercises
- Self distracting
- Alternative solutions
- Adopting problem solving techniques
- Listening to good music of favorite genre



- Spending more time with kids and pets
- Going for a long walk
- Light scented candles
- Curling up with a good book
- Having a conversation with old friends

**Don'ts:**

- Taking more sugar, chocolates and sweets
- Intake of excess caffeine (coffee), sodas, tea
- Consuming alcohol
- Zoning out for hours in front of the TV or computer
- Taking out your stress on others like lashing out, angry outbursts, physical violence
- Filling up every minute of the day to avoid facing problems
- Chewing tobacco, cocaine, heroin and other drugs
- Shopping and gambling sprees

**B) EFFECTS OF STRESS ON EMPLOYEES PRODUCTIVITY**

Workplace stress derives from many sources. It can be a demanding boss, annoying co-workers, angry customers, hazardous conditions, long commutes and a never-ending workload. Your work performance is also affected by stressors such as family relationships, finances and a lack of sleep stemming from fears and anxieties about the future. How you handle the effects of stress depends on whether it is easier to change the situation or change your attitude toward it.

**a) Time Management** An overwhelming workload, lack of peer support and too many demands at once, however, contribute to a sense of frustration and panic that there isn't enough time to complete the work. According to the authors of "Performance Under Pressure: Managing Stress in the Workplace," if these conditions routinely result in overtime or having to take work home, the stress of being unable to manage time efficiently can fuel employees' resentment toward the company as well as negatively influence their commitment and loyalty.

**b) Relationships:** Stress is a major contributor to job burn-out and strained interactions with peers and supervisors, says Bob Losvyk, author of "Get a Grip!: Overcoming Stress and Thriving in the Workplace." The combined feelings of helplessness and hopelessness generate heightened sensitivities to any and all forms of criticism, defensiveness, depression, paranoia about job security, jealousy and resentment toward co-workers who seem to have everything under control, short-fuse tempers, diminished self-esteem and withdrawal.

**c) Focus:** Stress affects your ability to remember things you already know, to process new information you are learning and to apply both to analytical situations and physical tasks that require concentration. When you are mentally exhausted from all of the worries, anxieties and tension brought on by a stressful environment or lifestyle, you are more easily distracted and prone to make costly, harmful or even fatal mistakes on the job.

**d) Health:** In addition to headaches, sleep disorders, vision problems, weight loss/gain and blood pressure, stress affects cardiovascular, gastrointestinal and musculoskeletal systems, says Richard Weinstein, author of "The Stress Effect." If you're not feeling well, you're not going to do your best work. Further, the amount of sick leave taken to rest and recuperate from stress-related illnesses often means that the work only accumulates during your absence and, thus, generates even more stress about how to catch up once you return.

**REMEDIAL MEASURE**

## 1) Individual Coping Strategies

- Physical Exercise such as Yoga, Swimming, Jogging, Playing, walking etc.
- Relaxation—Transcendental Meditation
- Work-home Transition
- Cognitive Therapy
- Networking
- Time Management
- Use of realistic goal setting

## 2) Organizational Level Coping Strategies

- Supportive organizational climate
- Job Enrichment
- Organizational Role Clarity
- Career planning and counseling
- Stress control workshops and Employee Assistance Programme.
- Improved personnel selection and job placement
- Training
- Redesigning of jobs
- Increased employee involvement
- Improved organizational communication

**C) EFFECT OF STRESS ON PERFORMANCE:**

According to recent research stress impacts the work performance of 49% of employees. It most often leads to difficulty concentrating, absenteeism and poor work quality. Gender differences exist in the influence of stress on work performance, yet variances by age are minimal. According to the study, difficulty concentrating is the most common way that personal problems and stress disrupt work performance for males and females. Females are absent more often due to personal problems, but males miss more days of work because of a personal issue.

**REMEDIAL MEASURE**

- Managers need to pay attention to female absenteeism since it may be a reflection of stress at home and/or in the workplace.
- **Positive work culture:** A positive work culture is one with **clear vision and purpose** and where staffs are aware of their individual contribution. This enables staff to be engaged with the success of the company.
- **Training and development:** Training and development opportunities add value to both the workplace and the individual. This may be observable directly through increased performance, sales and/or improved customer care.
- **Pay and remuneration, working hours, pressure, and other conditions of employment:** Contractual pay and conditions should reflect the responsibilities of the particular role, and the value the role represents to the organization. People working overtime should be compensated fairly with either overtime payments or be given time off in lieu. When employees are expected to work longer hours with no reward, this can lead to increased stress, lower performance and staff fostering resentment towards the organization. Over a period of time, this can lead to talented and experienced staff leaving an organization.

**CONCLUSION**

Stress is a naturally occurring phenomenon which can act as a motivator under the right circumstances. However, like so many other things in life, an excess of stress will have negative consequences with repercussions that will transcend personal and professional confines. Left untreated, excessive stress will ruin an individual's health and productivity.

As leaders and managers, we are uniquely positioned to identify the various sources and types of stress. Furthermore, we may even have the capacity to take action aimed at stemming these sources and types of stress. However, we must first be able to recognize the signs and symptoms of stress in order to effect the appropriate organizational changes. And, in cases where either the solution resides outside of our sphere of influence or, to help cope with residual stress, is it essential that we understand the various coping mechanisms available and help individuals select the most appropriate ones.

Stress management includes taking care of organisational issues like leadership, peer support, organisational culture and policies, work design and reporting arrangements as well as job analysis, staff selection and training to enhance role clarity such that there is a balance between the individual and his work environment. Effective systems for motivation and performance management are essential (Jennifer et al, 2006).

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