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- Kumar S. (2011): "Customer Value: A Comparative Study of Rural and Urban Customers," Thesis, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra.

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A STUDY ON FACULTIES PERCEPTION OF STRESS AND COPING STRATEGIES**ANITHA.A****ASST. PROFESSOR****DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
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ANNAMALAI****ABSTRACT**

This study investigated stress and coping strategies adopted by faculties in some selected colleges in five states. Questionnaire forms were administered to collect relevant data from 12 randomly selected colleges in India. The result of a chi-square analysis revealed that male and female colleges were significantly different in stress experience, but respondents of different marital status were significantly different. The study also found that male and female, and married and single respondents were significantly different in their coping strategies. The implications of these findings to counselling were discussed in this paper.

KEYWORDS

stress, eu-stress, causes of stress, coping strategies, Addressing the causes of stress, Symptoms of Stress.

INTRODUCTION

Stress has become significant due to dynamic social factor and changing needs of life styles. Stress is man's adaptive reaction to an outward situation which would lead to physical, mental and behavioural changes. Even though stress kills brain cells, not all stresses are destructive in nature. Appropriate amount of stress can actually trigger passion for work, tap latent abilities and even ignite inspirations. The study throws light on the wide spread silent problem by name 'Stress', which gave raise to acute dysfunctions and are called many diseases, increase divorce rates, and other harassments. The work stress is found in all professions. Teaching professionals are very stressed because they are pressured on results. Because of **eu-stress**, they suddenly receive the strength that is required to perform to the best of the ability. Stress can make a person productive and constructive, when it is identified and well managed. The focus of the paper is to study the stress level among faculties and to suggest the coping strategies.

Stress is a part of every employee's life. However, where stress is excessive, personal and organisational performance is at best damaged. At the worst, stress is a liability and a threat to the survival of an organisation. Therefore the researcher attempts to identify the factors that cause high stress among employees and discuss the coping strategies adopted by them to reduce stress.

STRESS

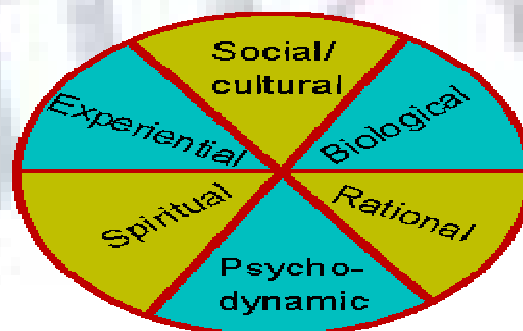
According to one medical researcher, han selye " stress is a non-specific response of the body to any demand."

R. S. Schuller has defined " stress as a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity constraint or demand related to what he or she desires and for which outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important."

- Stress basically is state of mind which creates a biomedical reaction in the human body.
- It is mainly caused by a situation which makes excessive physical and psychological demand on the part of an individual. Such a situation is known as a stressor or stimulus.
- A stressful situation generally results in anger, tension, anxiety, depressions, etc.

CAUSES OF STRESS

The factors that contribute to the experience of stress are many and varied. A useful overview of these causes can be gained by using the 'analysis wheel', to view them. Using this wheel, you can take six different perspectives on the causes of stress. Each of the lists below contains a sample of ideas only - there are many more causes of stress than those listed.

FIGURE 1**BIOLOGICAL**

The causes of some stress lie in the biological make up of your body, or the interaction of your body with the food you eat or environment you live in. Some examples of the biological causes of stress include:

- Lack of fitness
- Poor diet (eg: deficiency of vitamins; too much caffeine)
- Allergic reaction to chemicals in food
- Genetic disorder resulting in chemical imbalances in the body
- Changes in bodily functions, such as pregnancy, puberty, menopause, PMT or ageing

SOCIAL/CULTURAL

Stress can be caused by a whole range of social and cultural pressures, such as:

- Change of social circumstances (eg: bereavement of spouse, moving job, marriage, holidays)
- Pressure to conform to social or employment patterns of behaviour, especially where these behaviours are not the preferred behaviours of the individual (eg: demands on an introvert to behave in an extrovert manner).
- Conflict in relationships, or an absence of praise and being valued by others
- Lack of support, time to be listened to, and time for relaxation.
- Having a high-pressure job, being unemployed or only having a small range of social circumstances (eg: rarely leaving the house, few hobbies).

PSYCHODYNAMIC

The term 'psychodynamic' refers to subconscious thoughts and feelings, which often arise from childhood experiences. The way in which you learned to cope in childhood is by using defence mechanisms that involved a degree of self deception. You still use those defences today. Examples of psychodynamic causes of stress include:

- Inner conflicts that have not been addressed, but repressed (ie pushed out of conscious awareness).
- Encountering situations that evoke stressful feelings that were experienced in childhood
- Expending effort to maintain defences in situations that threaten self-esteem.
- Lack of self-awareness
- Increasing self awareness and personal growth

RATIONAL

The rational processes in our minds constantly interpret and evaluate the world around. Events can be interpreted in many ways, and the way in which this is done can influence the level of stress that is felt. Some examples of rational causes of stress include:

- Perceiving the consequences of actions as being dangerous or threatening. These perceptions may or may not be accurate - ie the stress might be beneficial, in preparing for a real danger, or harmful, in creating unnecessary stress.
- Having an inaccurate perception of self.
- Believing one is capable of achieving far too much - setting standards and expectations too high (and therefore falling short of them).
- Misinterpreting the actions of others so as to discount (ie: not accept) the love and support that is given.
- Not having the skill or knowledge to cope with certain situations, such as not having a rational approach to problem-solving, or conflict resolution, and therefore being unable to cope with problems as they arise.

EXPERIENTIAL

What are you experiencing at this point in time, and how are you, personally, reacting to it? The way in which each individual experiences each snapshot in time, even in very similar situations, is very different. One person may find a situation highly stressful, whilst another may find it stimulating or enjoyable - every reaction is unique. There may be many instant pressures that cause an individual to experience stress, such as:

- Too many simultaneous demands from different people
- Environmental stresses, such as noise, cramped conditions, or cluttered surroundings.
- Needs that are being unmet or frustrated.
- The appearance of a threat to survival, self-esteem, or identity.
- Change in patterns of eating, sleeping, time zone, relationships etc..

SPIRITUAL

The need for individual spiritual development has long been recognised by religion. It is only during the last 30 years that psychology has acknowledged the existence of a spiritual side to the individual. Some spiritual causes of stress include:

- Violation of personal or religious moral code, contravention of accepted group practice, or violation of laws ("sin")
- Lack of spiritual development
- An absence of truth (eg: self-deception and deception of others)
- The lack of a sense of personal agency - ie that one can influence events - or the failure to recognise and exercise choice.
- Absence of a relationship with God, and lack of forgiveness.

ADDRESSING THE CAUSES OF STRESS

Once you have identified the causes of your stress, you can then make plans to address them. For example:

CAUSE OF STRESS	ACTION THAT CAN BE TAKEN TO REDUCE STRESS
Need for time of privacy and solitude not being met	Find a place and a time of day when you can be on your own, or go on a retreat
Lack of fitness	Engage in some sport or fitness activity (may need to consult your doctor)
Unexplained inner feelings of stress	Consult a doctor, and perhaps get referral to an appropriate specialist (eg: a counsellor or dietician)
Stressful job circumstances	Negotiate different working schedules with your boss
PMT	Consult your doctor about available treatments
Lack of skill to resolve conflict or manage demanding workload	Attend training courses in assertiveness, conflict resolution or time management

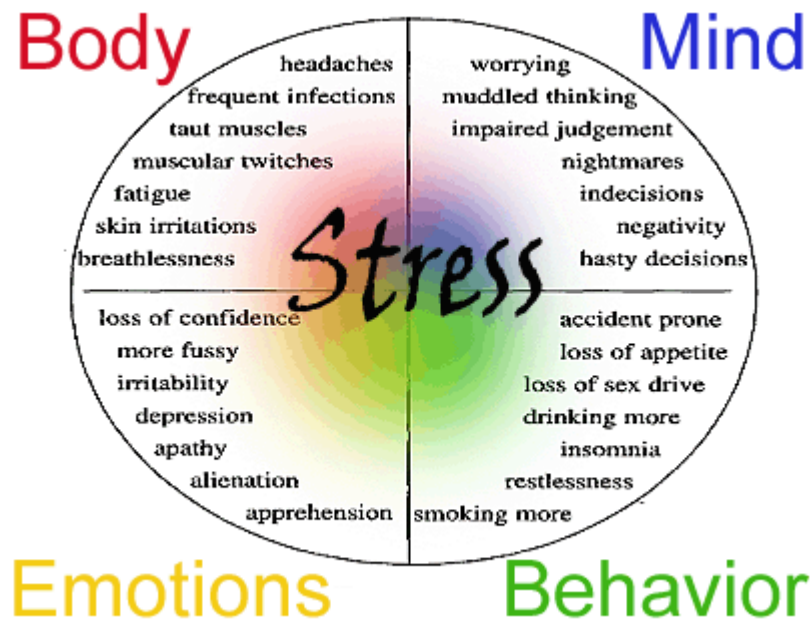
SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

The symptoms of stress can show up mentally, physically, emotionally or behaviorally, and within each category they cover a wide range of symptoms. There is no one list of symptoms that describes stress because the symptoms themselves are highly subjective and as varied as we are.

Stress Symptoms show up differently for each one of us.

This is because each of us experiences stress differently. A steep roller coaster dive might be enormously distressful for some of us yet the same ride can be pleasant for others. Our stress responses are also widely different. Some people blush others pale, some eat more, some less.

FIGURE 2

**COPING STRATEGIES**

Stress may be inevitable, but how you deal with it is largely up to you. Here are some ideas to help you create your own stress defense.

- **Use your support system** – You may feel better sharing your feelings with a caring friend or family member. It can help to know that you're not the only one who has disagreements with a spouse, problems with parenting or other worries.
- **Talk it over with yourself** – We often have no control over the unpleasant events that happen in our lives, but we can change what we say to ourselves about these events. All our feelings are greatly affected by what we say to ourselves.

Avoid:

- Catastrophizing ("This is the worst thing that ever happened to me.")
- Generalizing ("My dog doesn't like me therefore, no one will.")
- Projecting ("I'm sure this isn't going to work out.")

Instead, try telling yourself "I am loved and safe" Practice talking nicely to yourself.

- **Don't demand perfection** – Ease up on yourself and those around you – accept that everyone has both strengths and shortcomings.
- **Just say no** – Sometimes, we take on too much. You can avoid feeling overburdened by setting realistic goals and priorities. Remember, it's OK to say no to requests that push you beyond your limits.
- **Take one thing at a time** – Instead of thinking of other things you should be doing, focus on the task at hand and do it well. You'll enjoy the sense of accomplishment and regain a sense of control.
- **Strive for balance in your life** – Make time for activities and people you enjoy. Taking your mind off stressful matters for a while can help you keep a healthy perspective.
- **Be active** – Walk your dog, go dancing or join a gym. If you're generally healthy, aim to get at least 2.5 hours a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity. At least two days a week, work in some muscle-strengthening activity at a moderate intensity or higher. Just be sure to check with your doctor before significantly increasing your level of physical activity.
- **Eat healthfully** – Some people reach for junk food or turn to other unhealthful eating habits when they are under stress. Reduce consumption of caffeine and refined sugar, and increase your consumption of whole grains, nuts, fruits and vegetables.
- **Avoid unhealthy behaviors** – Some people drink too much alcohol or over-eat to cope with stress. Talk with your doctor if you need help.
- **Get in touch** – Hug someone, hold hands or stroke a pet. Physical contact is a great way to relieve stress.
- **Practice rest and relaxation** – Take six deep breaths. Breathe slowly and deeply in through your nose, and out through your mouth. Use your imagination to place yourself on the beach, or in some other pleasant place from the past. Close your eyes and imagine the scene in detail, including all your senses. In just a couple of minutes you can re-experience the pleasure of actually being there. Get at least seven hours of sleep nightly. And, if your health permits, meditation, yoga or even tai chi can help you feel calm. Look for these types of classes in your community or try a video. Even losing yourself in a good book or taking a quiet walk can help you unwind.
- **Learn to laugh** – Rent a comedy video and watch it with others (you'll laugh more).
- **Stretch** – Stand up. Raise your arms above your head. Stretch left and hold 1-2-3-4. Stretch right and hold. Repeat the stretch several times.
- **Stop smoking** – Nicotine is a stimulant, and it can increase anxiety.
- **Seek professional help** – If your stress your level becomes severe, seek help from a mental health professional who can help determine the best course of treatment for you.

METHODOLOGY

Designing a suitable methodology and selection of analytical tools are important for a meaningful analysis of any research problem. In this study, Empirical research design. Both primary and secondary data have been used for the present study.

HYPOTHESIS

H1: Occupational stress has impact on organizational level outcomes

DATA AND PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENT COMPANIES

The study is based on a survey conducted in 12 Information Technology companies in and around INDIA with sample size 100. Out of total sample, 65 (65%) were men and rest women. The respondents were software professionals at lower and middle levels with a mean of about 5 years in the company and 7 years in industry.

TABLE 1: SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

Age group	Sample size
20-29	15
30-34	30
35-39	30
>40	25

Total sample size: 100

TABLE 2: SHOWS THAT, THE STRESS AMONG FACULTIES AT BODY, MIND, BEHAVIOURAL AND EMOTIONAL LEVELS

Age group	20-29	30-34	35-39	>40
Impact on Body	5	5	10	80
Impact on Mind	8	12	75	5
Impact on Behaviour	62	28	5	5
Impact on Emotions	25	55	10	10

ANALYSIS OF THE TABLE 2 STATISTICS**IMPACT ON BODY**

From the Table 2, 80% of respondents from >40 age group felt high level of stress impact on body followed by 10% from 35 -39 age group, 5% from 30 -34 age group and 5% from 20 -29 age group. Stress impacts on body lead to headaches, fatigue, Hypertension, Coronary artery diseases, Skin disease etc., the data obtained from primary source, draw the attention and alarming the individual as well as colleges.

IMPACT ON MIND

75% of respondents from 35 -39 age group felt high level of stress impact on mind followed by 12% from the age group of 30 -34 and 8% from the rest age groups. Depressions, Anger, Irritability, Mood swings, Lack of self-confidence etc., are the symptoms of stress on mind which leads to serious effect on individual

IMPACT ON BEHAVIOUR

62% from 20 -29 age group felt high level of stress impact on behaviour followed by 28% from the age group of 30 -34, 5% from 35 -39 and 5% from >40 age group. Stress impacts on behaviour leads to Unsafe behaviour pattern, Speech disturbance, and even suicidal tendencies etc.,

IMPACT ON EMOTIONS

55% from 30 -34 age group felt high level of stress impact on emotions followed by 25% from the age group of 20 -29, 10% from 35 -39 ages and 10% from above 40 years. Emotional impact of stress on individual leads to Alienation, apprehension etc., causes absenteeism, employee turnover and low productivity etc.

Ho: suggestion proved not used to coping strategies

Ha: suggestion proved used to coping strategies

TABLE 3: CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

O _i	E _i	(O _i -E _i)	(O _i -E _i) ²	(O _i -E _i)/E _i
15	100	-85	7225	72.25
30	100	-70	4900	49
30	100	-70	4900	49
25	100	-75	5625	56.25
				226.5

Degree of freedom=3

Calculated value=226.5

Table value @ 5% confident level is= 7.815

Therefore calculated value is greater than the table value. So, Ho is rejected.

The conclusion is suggestion proved used to coping strategies.

TABLE 4: ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE (ANOVA): TYPE COPING STRATEGIES

COPING STRATEGIES	f	p
Confronting coping	1.325	0.263
Distancing	1.597	0.172
Self controlling	0.926	0.470
Seeking social support	0.628	0.679
Accepting responsibility	0.831	0.532
Escape avoidance	5.182	0.000
Planful problem-solving	1.761	0.131
Positive reappraisal	1.159	0.338

No significant difference in coping strategies used were seen in terms of work area overall (f=1.356, p=>0.05), however there was a significant difference for the escape avoidance sub-scale (p=<0.05)

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Geographical location of this study is limited to India, with sample size of 100 faculties from 12 colleges. The primary data collected for this study is perceptual.

SUMMARY

The stages involved in managing stress are:

1. recognising the symptoms of stress
2. identifying the causes
3. taking action to address the causes and thereby reduce the symptoms
4. where necessary, taking interim steps to relieve the symptoms until the underlying causes have been addressed.

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted among college staff because of the popular belief that professionals in education sector are highly susceptible to stress and attendance consequences. Although, this study revealed that there was no significant difference in the stress experienced by male and female faculties, it confirmed that faculties are stressed. Stress can make an individual productive and constructive when it is identified and well managed. In times of great stress or adversity, it's always best to keep busy, to plow anger and energy into something positive. Positive attitude and meditation will be helpful for coping the stress. Having broader perspective of life will definitely change the perception of stress.

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