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A STUDY ON STRESS LEVEL OF WORKERS IN CONSTRUCTION SECTOR (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NRI'S IN UAE)

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ABSTRACT

Stress has become a part of life and it is present in each and every type of job. It is no longer considered as a rare problem or related to specific sector. In reality it is quite impossible to eliminate stress but it is possible to control the stress related issues. Construction industry is more stressful than it was five years ago, according to a survey of 1,000 professionals working in the sector. Success of construction project depends up on the effective and efficient management of human resources. Construction workers are a group that are particularly vulnerable to health risks because they have few legal protections, a poor safety net, increased exposures to some environmental factors, and are economically disadvantaged. Studies show that blue-collar industries, i.e. construction, are more stressful than white-collar industries. UAE's construction sector has exhibited sustainable growth over the years, with its value following an upward trend from 2009 through to 2011 and forecasted to be continuing with the same pattern in future as per the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The industry is also contributing increasingly in the nation's GDP and that this trend is also forecast to be continued in coming years reaching 11.5% of GDP in 2021. Increasing prospects of construction industry create job opportunities and it results in human stress due to the nature of job this study aims to evaluate stress level among workers in construction sector. The parameters for evaluation are organizational, economical, physical, psychological factors contributing to stress. It also attempts to find out overall satisfaction level of construction workers. The study is based on the primary data collected through structured questionnaire from non-resident Indians working in UAE. Sample size 75. After data collection it has been classified and analysed using percentage analysis, likerts's five point scale and mean.

KEYWORDS

stress, construction industry, factors contributing to stress, satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Stress is defined as "a state of psychological and physiological imbalance resulting from the disparity between situational demand and the individual's ability and motivation to meet those needs. "With the growing prospects of construction industry, like any other career construction workers have their own types of job stressors to deal with. The UAE construction sector is going through a phenomenal growth phase with a score of ongoing projects, investment into green open spaces, and the strong government support. Further, the country is witnessing massive investments in the Construction Industry from both public and private enterprises coupled with the increased foreign direct investment over the past few years. UAE can be seen as one of the fastest growing economy, with its construction industry ranked third among the construction industries of the Middle East countries. The construction industry is third largest economic activity after oil and trade, in the UAE, including approximately 6000 companies with most of the construction activities taking place in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Such a large industry offering so many job opportunities and involvement of human resource from many countries faces the threat of stress related issues. The major factor of stress is low wages. Work-related stress is affecting their lives and their family relations suffer because of the challenges they're facing at work.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mohammad Reza Irvani in his study entitled "Study of Effective Cultural, Social Economical Factors on Making Work Stress among Workers in Mobarakeh Steel Complex" identified that there is relation between decreasing income of workers and increasing stress. A worker with higher social base and higher education experience low level of stress. Lack of training proves to be a factor for stress. He suggested the following remedies to reduce stress like increasing incomes and wages and giving proper gratuity for doing better work Replacing workers based on specialty and work division regarding to individual characteristics Making proper space for representing suitable solutions for problems in work place, asking workers opinions about making active atmosphere to continue work at certain place.

Jins Joy. P and Dr. R. Radhakrishnan in their study "A study on impact of work stress among tile factory workers in Thrichur district in Kerala" the focus of the study is to find out and compare the impact of work stress among tile factory workers at gender level in Trichur district in Kerala. The study is based on the factors affecting stress like headache, blood pressure, depressed etc.

L. Sasikala and Dr. Aselvarani in their study "A study on work stress among architects and construction professionals in Indian Construction Industry" focused on work stress factors among professional architects builders, civil/structural engineers and quantify surveyors in the building construction industry in India. The findings reveal that the key stress factors among

These professionals were high volume work lack of security safety measured on site, variations in the scope of work and fragmentation of building work into specialized fields. Other stress factors related to organizational structure were lack of feedback, poor communication, inadequate staffing and poor remuneration. Saideh Monatazer, Mohamed Reza Monazzam, Roksana Mirkazemi in their study "Heat stress level among construction workers" Studied the stress level of Iranian construction workers. The purpose of this study was to determine the level of heat stress to construction workers using Thermal Work Limit (TWL) and Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) indices and by measuring Urine Specific Gravity (USG) among construction workers in Iran and comparing the appropriateness of these indices for measuring heat stress in Iran climate. The study finds out that workers were at an allowed level of heat stress. TWL, WBGT and USG measures were significantly correlated; however as TWL level enabled classification based on required intervention, it had some merit over WBGT index.

Riddhi R. Bhatt, Gaurav J. Desai, Pramod B. Verma in their study "Psychological stress among unorganized building construction workers in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India find out the psychological stress among unorganized construction workers at working site. After analyzing the results show that most of participants have high to extreme level of stress. This work stress can be reducing by applying the concept of level of prevention through ergonomics, work design, organizational development, workers training & counseling, replacement & periodic examination, enhanced occupational health services etc.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To evaluate the stress level among construction workers in UAE with Indian origin
2. To identify the factors responsible for stress
3. To analyses the overall satisfaction level of construction workers
4. To provide suggestions to improve the mental health and reduce stress

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology is the systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study and explains the different steps that are generally adopted by the researcher in studying the research problem. The present study is analytical in nature. Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. For the purpose

of collecting Primary data a structured questionnaire was prepared and distributed among construction industry workers in various provinces of UAE. Secondary data has been collected from internet, online journals, and magazines and textbooks. The sample size was 75. Snowball sampling method was used for collecting the data. For the purpose of data analysis statistical techniques such as Percentage, mean and ranking methods were used.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The construction industry reports one of the highest incidents of accidents/injuries of workers every year. One of the major reasons for this will be stress faced by them. As a high-risk industry, there is a need to investigate factors that contribute to stress among workers.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

TABLE NO. 1: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Variables	Classification base	No. of respondents	Percentage
Age	Below 20	3	4
	20-30	46	61.33
	30-40	21	28
	40 above	5	6.67
Gender	Male	75	100
	Female	0	0
Educational qualification	Secondary level	38	50.67
	Senior secondary level	23	30.66
	Graduate	14	18.66
	Post graduate	0	0
Monthly income	Below 25000	43	57.33
	25000-50000	27	36
	50000-75000	5	6.67
	75000 above	0	0

Interpretation

From table 1 it is clear that 61.33 percent of respondents belong to age group of 20-30. 28 percent belong to the age group of 30-40. 6.67 percent belongs to the age group 40 above. 4 percent belongs to below 20 age group. 100 percent of respondents are male. 50.67 percent respondents have only secondary level education. 30.67 percent have senior secondary education. 18.66 are graduates or diploma holders. 57.33 percent have salary below 25000. 36 percent have monthly income between 25000-50000. 6.67 percent have monthly income between 50000-75000.

TABLE NO. 2: DURATION IN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Period	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Less than 1 year	3	4
1-3 years	21	28
3-5 years	35	46.66
5-7 years	14	18.67
More than 7 years	2	2.67

Interpretation

46.66 percent of the respondents are in construction industry for 3-5 years. 28 percent belong to group of 1-3 years. 18.67 percent is in construction industry for 5-7 years. 4 percent have a short experience in construction industry. 2.67 percent is in construction industry for more than 7 years.

TABLE NO. 3: GENERAL SATISFACTION LEVEL WITH THE WORK PLACE

Variable	Classification base	No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Overall satisfaction	Yes	46	61.33
	No	29	38.66
Satisfaction with control and involvement at work	Yes	24	32
	No	51	68
Satisfaction with health and safety practices	Yes	27	36
	No	48	64
Ability to balance personal and work life	Yes	14	18.67
	No	61	81.33
Availability of rest time	Yes	19	25.33
	No	56	74.67
Frequent off	Yes	23	30.66
	No	52	69.34
Chance of getting variety Jobs	Yes	11	14.67
	No	64	85.33
chance to do something that makes use of your abilities	Yes	16	21.33
	No	59	78.67
chance to try your own methods of doing the job	Yes	9	12
	No	66	88

Interpretation

From table no. 4 it is clear that 61.33 percent respondents are overall satisfied with construction jobs. Remaining 38.67 percent not feeling any sort of satisfaction because they were forced to join this job. 32 percent respondents are satisfied with the control and involvement at work. Remaining 68 percent against this statement. 36 percent of respondents are satisfied with health and safety practices in construction jobs. 64 percent opined that construction have health and safety issues. 18.67 percent of respondents have the opinion that they were able to balance personal and work life but majority of the respondents were against this statement. 25.33 percent respondents opined that sufficient rest time is available. Remaining 74.67 percent not showing a positive attitude towards this statement. 30.66 percent respondents replied that they were taking frequent off because of the work load related health issues. 14.67 percent agreed that construction jobs provide variety tasks and 85.33 percent respondents against this statement. 78.67 percent respondents replied that they were not getting chance to do something that makes use of your abilities

TABLE NO. 4: CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AND STRESS

Variable	Classification base	No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Presence of stress	Yes	63	84
	No	12	16
Whether construction industry adequately address mental health in work place	Yes	8	10.67
	No	67	89.33
Whether company take adequate measures to maintain mental health in worksites	Yes	11	14.66
	No	64	85.34

Interpretation

From the table it is clear that 84 percent agreed that construction industry have stress. Remaining percent disagree with this 89.33 percent respondents opined that construction industry is not adequately addressing mental health in work place. 10.67 percent feel that construction industry is addressing mental health in work place. 14.66 percent of the respondents feel that company take adequate measures to maintain mental health in worksites. Remaining 85.34 percent disagree this statement.

TABLE NO. 5: PHYSICAL/ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS AFFECTING STRESS

Reason	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Mean
	F	F	F	F	F	
Fatigue	68 (90.66)	5 (6.67)	2 (2.66)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4.85
Poor lightening	0 (0)	53 (70.67)	14 (18.66)	8 (10.66)	0 (0)	3.59
Inadequate temperature control	47 (62.66)	25 (33.34)	3 (4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4.58
Poor site conditions	56 (74.66)	17 (22.67)	2 (2.66)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4.71
Noise levels	65 (86.67)	8 (10.66)	2 (2.66)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4.83
Inadequate facilities for rest	59 (78.66)	10 (13.34)	6 (8)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4.71
Safety Issues	61 (81.33)	13 (17.33)	1 (1.34)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4.79

Interpretation

Table No. 5 explains the various physical or environmental factors affecting stress. Likert five point scale shows that all the respondents exhibit average level of favourableness towards all the statements. It indicates that statement about environmental factors can be considered as cause of stress. Mean value of all the statements except poor lightening shows value above 4. It shows that poor lightening is not an important environmental factor contributing to stress.

TABLE NO. 6: ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS AFFECTING STRESS

Reason	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Mean
	F	F	F	F	F	
Inadequate no.of workers	12 (16)	34 (45.33)	23 (30.67)	6 (8)	0 (0)	3.69
Poor communication	27 (36)	29 (38.67)	15 (20)	4 (5.33)	0 (0)	4.05
Insufficient training	10 (13.33)	41 (54.67)	17 (22.66)	7 (9.33)	0 (0)	3.72
Poor relationship with supervisors	35 (46.66)	29 (38.67)	7 (9.33)	4 (5.33)	0 (0)	3.87
Poor relationship with co workers	0 (0)	10 (13.33)	25 (33.34)	34 (45.33)	6 (8)	2.52
Poor relationship with management	22 (29.33)	37 (49.34)	4 (5.33)	8 (10.67)	4 (5.33)	3.87
Interpersonal conflicts.	31 (41.33)	25 (33.34)	13 (17.33)	3 (4)	3 (4)	4.04
Lack of feedback system	7 (9.33)	39 (52)	24 (32)	5 (6.67)	0 (0)	3.63

Interpretation

Table No. 6 explains the various organisational factors affecting stress. Likert five point scales show the favourableness of respondents towards organisational factors affecting. Poor relation with co-worker cannot be considered as an important factor as its mean value is only 2.52. Interpersonal conflict and poor communication are the major factors. Remaining statement shows an average attitude as a factor contributing to stress.

TABLE NO. 7: WORK RELATED FACTORS AFFECTING STRESS

Reason	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Mean
	F	F	F	F	F	
Over work load	33 (44)	41 (54.66)	1 (1.34)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4.42
Less work load	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1.34)	33 (44)	41 (54.66)	1.46
Working hours	53 (70.67)	17 (22.66)	5 (6.66)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4.63
Work pressure	28 (37.33)	39 (52)	3 (4)	5 (6.67)	0 (0)	4.19

Interpretation

Table No. 7 explains the various work related factors affecting stress. Likert five point scale shows the favourableness of respondents towards work related factors affecting stress. Less workload cannot be considered as an important factor as its mean value is only 1.46. All other statements have a mean value above 4. it shows that all the respondents have a conscience opinion regarding the listed statements.

TABLE NO. 8: ECONOMIC FACTORS CAUSING STRESS

Reason	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Mean
	F	F	F	F	F	
Poor remuneration	17 (22.67)	22 (29.33)	24 (32)	10 (13.33)	2 (2.67)	3.56
Stability of remuneration	24 (32)	37 (49.33)	5 (6.67)	9 (12)	0 (0)	4.01
Lack of Job security	39 (52)	24 (32)	7 (9.33)	5 (6.67)	0 (0)	4.29
Lack of career opportunities	44 (58.66)	19 (25.34)	11 (14.66)	1 (1.33)	0 (0)	4.41
Difficulty in changing company	15 (20)	50 (66.67)	3 (4)	7 (9.33)	0 (0)	3.98

Interpretation

Table No. 8 explains the various economic factors causing stress. Likert five point scale shows the respondents opinion regarding the listed statement. Lack of job security, career opportunities and stability in remuneration are the major economic factors contributing to stress. Response towards poor remuneration and difficulty in changing company is average.

TABLE NO. 9: PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS CAUSING STRESS

Reason	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Mean
	F	F	F	F	F	
Personal harassment	4 (5.33)	21 (28)	40 (53.34)	10 (13.33)	0 (0)	3.25
Insult from supervisors	16 (21.33)	37 (49.34)	14 (18.66)	8 (10.67)	0 (0)	3.81
Thoughts about home country	64 (85.34)	8 (10.66)	3 (4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4.81
Tight schedule	33 (44)	27 (36)	10 (13.33)	5 (6.67)	0 (0)	4.17
Cultural gap with co workers	13 (17.33)	22 (29.34)	35 (46.66)	2 (2.67)	2 (2.67)	3.52

Interpretation

Table No. 9 explains the various Psychological factors causing stress. Likert five point scale shows that tight schedule and thoughts about home country are the major psychological factors causing stress as its mean value above 4. Other statements are contributing to stress on an average.

TABLE NO. 10: PLAN TO QUIT FROM CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Classification base	No.of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Yes	39	52
No	36	48

Interpretation

Even though construction industry provides stress respondents shows a mixed attitude towards leaving the industry. Half of the respondents have planned to leave the industry.

FINDINGS

- All the respondents are male. It shows the physical work required in construction industry.
- More than half of the respondents are satisfied with the job in construction industry.
- Respondents opined that construction industry provides high level of stress
- Poor site conditions, noise levels and safety issues are the major environmental factors contributing to stress.
- Interpersonal conflict and poor communication are the organisational factors contributing to stress.
- Over workload, working hours and work pressure are the work related factors contributing to stress.
- Lack of job security, stability of remuneration is the economic factors contributing to stress.
- Thoughts about home country are the major psychological factor contributing to stress.
- Even though construction industry provides stress respondents shows a mixed attitude towards leaving the industry.

SUGGESTIONS

- Take necessary measures to provide mental relief to reduce stress through recreation measures.
- Create a sense of security and address safety issues in construction industry.
- Provide versatile jobs to reduce stress.
- Address noise in the workplace
- Adapt working conditions to workers' differing physical and mental aptitudes.

CONCLUSION

Work stress is a real challenge for workers and the organization in which they are working. This study focused on various factors contributing to the stress level of workers in construction industry in UAE. The study found that the majority of respondents had suffered from stress, anxiety or depression as a direct result of working in the construction industry. Urgent measures must have been taken to address stress in order to make the workers productive. Construction industry in UAE provides ample opportunities for migrants from India. If stress factors are properly addressed construction industry will contribute much to nation's GDP

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