



STRESS MANAGEMENT TRAINING AT WORKPLACE

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ABSTRACT

Stress at work is a significant problem in professional settings. Stress among employees lowers their efficiency and productivity. It has an effect on both individual performance and the general effectiveness of the organization. Every organization needs stress management training because the long-term benefits of investing in such programs outweigh the costs. Employers can save costs per employee in addition to increasing worker productivity. Companies who do not take employee stress seriously will face more consequences. This research paper aims to understand the factors leading to stress amongst employees in the workplace and the different remedies or training programs that organizations should implement to ensure employee stress is managed effectively so that their productivity is not hampered leading to downfall of the organization. A survey of 130 IT employees was conducted and the findings suggested that work load, job control and social support are some of the main factors impacting stress in the organization.

Keywords: Workplace Stress, Stress Management Training, Employee Productivity

INTRODUCTION

Stress is one of the major factors caused due to organizational pressure and individual responsibilities. Organizational stress is created since individuals try to gain a place in their business lives, will try their best to fulfill the company's requirement to either achieve a hike or a higher position in the organization. Human resource is an asset to the organization and ensuring the right work-life balance is maintained by the employees is in the hands of the management. Trying to meet the dynamic business expectations and fulfilling objectives can often increase the stress level amongst employees leading to decreased productivity, employee performance, employee engagement and morale. Many researches have proved that there is a direct relationship between stress and organizational performance. In today's world, white-collared employees are not only concerned of compensation but they also look to achieve a place in the organization. They need to be valued. Majorly, their aim is to have a good work-life balance and work culture. There are many aspects that can cause stress to employees. For example, not being valued in the organization, stress due to lesser compensation, unable to balance work and personal lives, unrecognition efforts, lack of proper management, passive leader are some of the main factors for employee stress in the workplace. Individuals who are highly stressed lack determination to work and affects the whole system of success in organizations.

The reason for stress according to WHO is the lack of ability of employees to be able to match the demands of the organization or capability to adapt to the required demands. In most of the cases, the demand seems very unreasonable for employees leading to lack of performance and increased absenteeism.

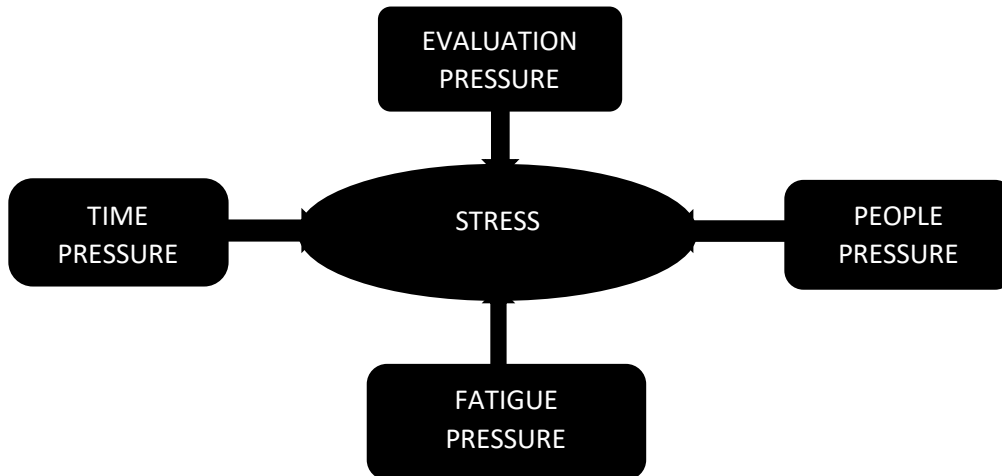
However, it is important to ensure adequate stress management training sessions are conducted by the organization to increase the morale and productivity of the employees. It is not only going to improve the productivity of the employee but will also impact the organizational performance and have several other benefits like cost reduction, high team performance etc.

Research has proved that effective training can lead to reduced stress in the workplace and the ability to perform well under stress caters down to 2 skills

- Optimal Perception of situations (Positive mindset)
- Optimal Energy Management

Most employees lack these skills and hence suffer from stress and anxiety issues while working in organizations.

MAJOR TYPES OF STRESS IN WORKPLACE



MINDFULNESS BASED STRESS REDUCTION PROGRAM – 1979-JON KABAT ZINN

Although this program was first created to help stressed-out employees, studies have shown that people with anxiety, hypertension, and other mental illnesses can also benefit from this type of therapy. Through this 8-week program, people can make sure they become more self-aware and capable of making informed decisions in their daily lives. It will assist people in letting go of stressful past experiences and in adopting a more optimistic outlook on life.

STRESS INTERVENTION PROGRAMS:

- Primary Intervention: Stressor Reduction
- Secondary Intervention: Stress Management
- Tertiary Intervention: Workplace Counselling

Primary Intervention: These are the initiatives taken by the organization to reduce the elements causing stress in the first place. Reducing the primary reason for stress of employees, trying to eliminate those factors which are majorly affecting employee productivity. These interventions should be made to bring in a cultural change in the organization

Some of the actions to reduce stress are as follows:

- Reassigning the task
- Creating a comfortable work environment
- Establishing flexible work schedules
- Involve employees in decision making
- Creating a sense of responsibility amongst the employees by assigning small leadership tasks
- Fair employment practices
- Good feedback mechanisms
- Rewards and Recognition

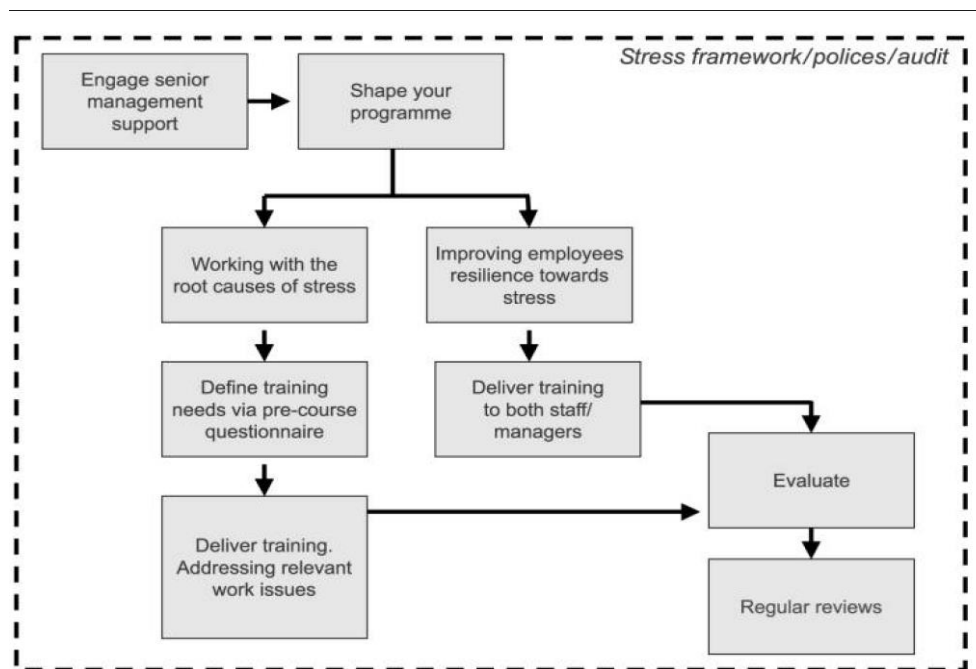
Secondary Intervention: These initiatives primarily involve conducting stress management programs, educational activities, stress management games, understanding the primary cause for stress amongst the employees. Each individual has their own threshold limit to handle stress and can have different reasons like their personality, past experiences, coping up strategies, approach to aspects of lives etc. However, organization should understand the common stress factors amongst the employees and conduct training programs to ensure employees manage their stress. Organizations should conduct well-being programs, health care programs, relaxation techniques to ensure

employee stress is reduced and productivity increases. These training sessions will lead to increased adaptability towards complex business situations.

Tertiary Intervention: This intervention deals with employees who are undergoing severe stress or have undergone stress in the past. Organization should provide rehabilitation, treatment and recovery to such individuals. These initiatives can be outsourced or can be an in-house counselling session as part of Employee Assistance Programs. There are many evidences proving the effectiveness of counselling on mental-well-being of the employees.

However, organizations tend to prefer secondary and tertiary intervention programs compared to primary intervention.

STRESS TRAINING FLOWCHART



TOP 5 TIPS FOR STRESS MANAGEMENT TRAINING

- To ensure that the training need analysis is done and the training takes place within the wellbeing or stress management framework
- Understand the training objectives and accordingly plan the training programs
- Organization should ensure a proper work friendly environment should be maintained and it is not the duty of the trainees
- Form evaluation criterion suitable to the training program
- Conduct regular reviews and provide feedbacks to employees to ensure stress management training is effective in workplace

It is very important for organizations to ensure they choose the appropriate training methods as much as they understand the need for training in organizations. Businesses are switching to e-learning for their training programs, but research indicates that in order to promote skills and practices and guarantee that employees voice their opinions, in-person training sessions should still be held.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Employees feel stressed in workplace when the demands from the employer and their skills cannot be matched. Often, workplace stress can be caused due to various factors which can include employee not interested in their current job role, lack of promotion, less compensation, negative work environment, lack of work-life balance etc. (Yener, 2021). Stress has caused increasing pressure on individuals who try to find a balance between work and personal life and by also trying to achieve a place in their business life. Organization stress is often caused by employee's interactions with other groups or individuals. Research also suggests that there is a direct relationship between job performance, security and stress management. (Altindag, 2020). Certain training programs like Mindfulness based stress reduction program can be implemented in companies to reduce work-life stress. In this program, stress assessment happens in the form of a questionnaire, for example, Depression Anxiety Stress (DASS), Perceived Stress Questionnaire (PSQ) etc. Additionally, biomarkers such as Heart Rate Variability (HRV) can be used to measure the stress rate of an individual. (Arredondo, 2017). Employee stress is a common human resource issue in every organization. It is the responsibility of the management to ensure employee stress levels are balanced and they safe and secure around the workplace. Most organizations try and implement certain educational programs to ensure employees will be able to manage their stress. However, research suggests that certain effective practices like intervention strategies need to be implemented in organizations to ensure stress levels are managed. Intervention strategies include primary, secondary and tertiary interventions. (Cooper, 1997). Implementing stress reduction programs and healthcare programs can reduce the overall healthcare costs spent by the company and increases attrition rate in the organization. As per meta-analysis, it was found that on an average organization can save \$222 per employee if they implement early promotional health programs. Time management programs, encouraging employees in decision making processes will reduce more than half the stress employees face in the organization. (Eisen, 2008). Conducting a stress audit in companies will help in figuring out the key areas causing stress to employees and helps in finding the underlying causes. Employee opinion survey can also be conducted to understand the opinions of employees. (Shuttleworth, 2004). Research helps us to understand that there are different tools, programs and techniques for different employee groups and the kind of training program depends on various factors like nature of work, employee position in the organization, compensation, employee value addition to the company and other personal commitments. It is important for organizations to accordingly design a program for different positioned employees to ensure the training is effective. After training impact and performance should be measured by the organization to understand the training effectiveness on employees. (Limm, 2011).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A survey was conducted amongst **130 IT employees** and freshers to understand the factors affecting stress in the workplace. A factor analysis is conducted to understand those prominent factors affecting stress level in the organization

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES:

Work Load, Job Control, Social Support, Organizational Culture, Work Relationships, Role Ambiguity, Job Security, Career Development, Work-life balance, Work environment

DEPENDENT VARIABLE:

Stress Levels in Workplace

RESEARCH FINDINGS**Descriptive Statistics**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Analysis N
Work Load	3.92	.890	130
Job Control	3.92	1.039	130
Social Support	4.06	.963	130
Organizational Culture	3.32	1.051	130
Work Relationships	2.32	1.128	130
Role Ambiguity	3.61	.944	130
Job Security	4.07	1.122	130
Career Development	3.58	.971	130
Work-life balance	4.22	.892	130
Work Environment	3.90	.963	130
Stress Levels	.77	.423	130

Descriptive Statistics helps in examining the mean and standard deviation of these 10 factors. Mean acts as an indicator of averages while standard deviation explains the wide-spread availability of the data. Higher the standard deviation, higher is the vulnerability of the data. However, in this analysis SD looks closer to the mean.

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.857
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	514.646
	df	55
	Sig.	.000

KMO and Bartlett's Test helps in understanding the reliability of the data and questionnaire. Generally, KMO Sampling Adequacy value should be closer to +1, in this case since it is +0.857, the data seems to be a good fit and highly reliable.

Bartlett's Test also has a significant value lesser than 0.05 which means that the model is a good fit and the data is good enough to form underlying factors.

Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
Work Load	1.000	.709
Job Control	1.000	.540
Social Support	1.000	.733
Organizational Culture	1.000	.436
Work Relationships	1.000	.651
Role Ambiguity	1.000	.598
Job Security	1.000	.596
Career Development	1.000	.558
Work-life balance	1.000	.720
Work Environment	1.000	.662
Stress Levels	1.000	.760

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Factors with higher extraction values ranging from 0.6-1.00 are considered to be important contributors to workplace stress. In this case: Work load, Social Support, Work Relationships and Stress levels are the main contributors to workplace stress. However, it is important to note that the lower contributors are statistically significant indicating that they contribute to workplace stress as well.

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.408	40.073	40.073	4.408	40.073	40.073	4.177	37.975	37.975
2	1.440	13.092	53.166	1.440	13.092	53.166	1.452	13.200	51.175
3	1.113	10.120	63.285	1.113	10.120	63.285	1.332	12.111	63.285
4	.831	7.557	70.842						
5	.677	6.153	76.995						
6	.603	5.485	82.481						
7	.560	5.090	87.570						
8	.439	3.991	91.562						
9	.381	3.460	95.022						
10	.334	3.032	98.054						
11	.214	1.946	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Total Variance explains the total variation created by the principal components on the dependent variable, in this case, Workplace stress. If the total cumulative value is greater than 60%, it means that the questionnaire is fit and good for the study. In this case, since the value is 63.285%, it explains that these factors contribute to the variation in workplace stress. These factors can be considered for further statistical analysis.

Rotated Component Matrix^a

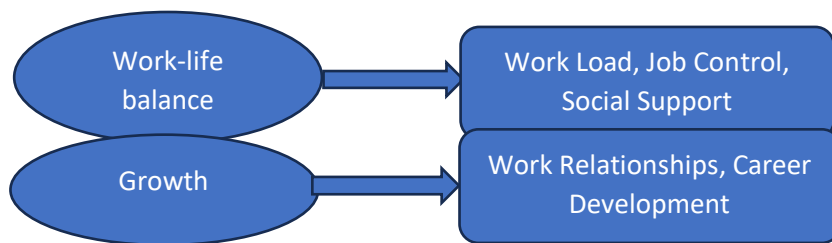
	Component		
	1	2	3
Work Load	.759	.272	.242
Job Control	.719	-.145	-.049
Social Support	.778	.256	.248
Organizational Culture	.326	-.483	.310
Work Relationships	.002	.790	-.161
Role Ambiguity	.621	.147	.437
Job Security	.761	-.129	-.029
Career Development	.383	.569	.297
Work-life balance	.813	-.134	-.203
Work Environment	.774	.137	.208
Stress Levels	-.052	-.187	.850

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 9 iterations.

Rotated Component Matrix explains that these 10 independent variables can be grouped into 2 components or factor loadings. Based on the eigen values, the factors can be grouped. If the eigen value is closer to +1, it means that the factors are significant for the study.

In this case,



CONCLUSION

Stress management is an important part of every organization and individual. It helps organizations in the long run. The main factors for workplace stress are lack of recognition, lack of value addition by the employee, incompetent compensation, inadequate resources and when the demand and skillset of employees are not met. Stress not only reduces the efficiency of the employees but also has a huge impact on the organizational efficiency. It is vital for organizations to ensure they keep a regular check on the stress levels of employees, provide regular training sessions, educational programs and conduct activities that will ensure mental well-being of employees are given special attention. To deal with employee stress, organizations cannot implement a program that is applicable to all employees. It is important to design a stress training program for different employees based on their position, based on their work load etc. In this paper, certain popular and necessary training programs like Mindfulness based stress reduction programs, stress intervention techniques are explained in detail. Findings suggests that work load, job control, social support, career developments are some of the major factors affecting stress in organizations. It can be concluded that it is really very important for organizations to ensure

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