

A Qualitative Study on Relationship between Job Stress and Employee Performance

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Abstract

Technologies have revolutionized our lives and livings. Today, more innovative and well paid career opportunities are present in the market. However with rise in opportunities, the competition for high end jobs is also increasing. The competition within organization and between organizations has led to cut-throat competition and hence job stress has become a part of every employee pan industry. Job stress, which is often treated as a personal problem actually impacts the organization's effectiveness in the form of a cumulative ineffectiveness of stressed employees. In other words, stress is found to be affecting the performance of employees in the organization and hence is leading to affect the performance and well- being of organizations also. This qualitative research is intended to find substantial evidence over the relation between job stress and employee performance. Over the past few years several researchers have worked upon this concept. Moreover none have been able to consolidate the conceptual framework at a fundamental level. This qualitative paper attempts to review 20 research papers published between the years 2018 to 2021 and critically analyze the done researches in this field so as to provide a concise platform to understand these variables. This paper intends to support future investigation in this matter.

Keywords:- Job, Stress, Performance, Employee.

Introduction

Stress is the body's response to all the work done physically and mentally. Sometimes there is a great confusion between the challenges and the stress which arrives in the organization. Challenges usually provide energy sensitively and physically, it also motivates us to enhance our skills and helps to become masters in our job. Therefore when the challenge is met employees feel relaxed and satisfied. There are many different conditions which cause stress at the workplace and can have a negative affect on the performance and overall well-being of any individual's body and mind.

It is a standing question for an organization, how a company can have a stress free environment with high performing employees. Nowadays the well-being of an employee is an important function for an organization. It is consistently observed that if employees are satisfied with the type of job and they have been provided

with a better work environment, they are likely to improve their performance at work. This is one reason as to why companies focus on employee's happiness and satisfaction.

Increasing competition within and between organizations compels employees to put in their best effort to survive within the organization. They either perform or abdicate their power and position. Both ways they struggle and stress themselves. It is a big challenge for HR to keep employees motivated for high performance without having stress. A strong conceptual framework over how and what factors of stress intervenes the performance of employees at work needs to be developed. Though several similar studies exist in literature, no attempt has been made to consolidate these studies. The objective of this study is to consolidate the previous studies so that it helps academicians and HRs to comprehend the relationship of stress and employee performance in a finer way.

1.1 Job Stress

The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (1999) defines stress as- 'The harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, needs of the worker'. The HSE or the Health and Safety Executive (2001) define it as- 'The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them'.

Stress increases when the pressure in relation to one's ability to cope up with the situation increases. This means that an employee is not able to work efficiently if he is charged with more work than his capacity. Stress is an ailment of modern times which afflicts people in spite of their acknowledgement of its existence. Stress is a syndrome exists everywhere like in the lives of the wealthy and deprived, educated and uneducated, men and women. Stress is, however, more evident and is probably more extensive in technologically advanced countries, and is common among high skilled and highly developed professionals.

There are 9 major reasons due to which work stress in any organization exists: Job uncertainty, High command for Performance, Workplace traditions, Management Style, Environmental Conditions, Technology, Job stress and women, Personal or Family Problems and Worker characteristics.

Type of Job Stress:

Stress can be sub-categorized into four types of stresses : physical stress, psychological stress, psychosocial stress, and psycho spiritual stress.

Physical stress: Trauma (injury, infection, surgery), strong physical labor/over-exertion, environmental exhaust (pesticides, herbicides, toxins, heavy metals, inadequate light, radiation, noise, electromagnetic fields), illness (viral, bacterial, or fungal agents), tiredness, insufficient oxygen supply, hypoglycemia I(low blood sugar), hormonal and/or biochemical imbalance, dietary stress, dehydration, substance abuse, dental challenge, and musculoskeletal misalignments/imbalance.

Psychological stress: Emotional stress (resentments, fears, frustration, sadness, anger, grief/bereavement), cognitive stress (information overload, accelerated sense of time, worry, guilt, shame, jealousy, fight,

attachments, self-criticism, self-loathing, unworkable diligence, anxiety, panic attacks, not feeling like yourself, not feeling like things are real, and a sense of being out of control/not being in control), and perceptual stress (beliefs, roles, stories, attitudes, world view).

Psychosocial stress: Relationship/marriage difficulties, lack of social support, lack of wealth for sufficient survival, loss of service/investments/savings, loss of dear ones, financial failure, home foreclosure, and separation.

Psycho-spiritual stress: A disaster of values, meaning, and purpose; joyless striving (instead of productive, rewarding, meaningful and fulfilling work; and a misalignment within one's core religious beliefs.

Employee Performance:

According to Verboncu and Zalman (2005), Employee Performance is a particular result obtained in management, economics, marketing, etc. that features competitiveness, efficiency and effectiveness of the organization, its procedural and structural components.

When work of any employee is appraised on the basis of how he fulfills his job duties and executes his required tasks, this process is known as Employee Performance. It refers to the competence, quality, and efficiency of their output. Employee Performance helps to assess the value of the employee to the organization. Every employer must think that an employee is an asset to the company and that such assets need timely nourishment. Some ways an employee should be taken care of includes rightful and proper appraisals equivalent to the efforts exerted by the employees.

Every employee makes an individual involvement to the performance of the organizational unit. If the performance of organizations as a whole or an individual employee declines over a period of time and is irrecoverable, either the employer or the employee pays its cost in terms of retrenchment or attrition.

Methods of Performance Appraisal

Several Methods and techniques are used for evaluating employee performance. They may be classified into two broad categories as shown in fig. :

Traditional Methods

1. Confidential Report
2. Free form or Essay
3. Straight Ranking
4. Paired Comparison
5. Forced Distribution
6. Graphic Rating scale
7. Checklist Method
8. Critical Incidents

Modern Methods

1. Assessment Center
2. Human Resource accounting
3. Behaviorally Anchored Rating
4. Appraisal through MBO
5. 360 Degree Appraisal

9. Group Appraisal

10. Field Review

Source :C.B Gupta (2009), Book on Human Resource Management.

Review of Literature

Mohamed Salina , NikmatAzlinawati, HashimAzreenNurul, ShuibNorley&RaduanNasution Nor Jannah (2021) conducted a study on university staff , both academic and non academic and found that academicians have high levels of burnout in aspects of personal, work and client-related matters. These aspects contributed to higher psychological distress among Academicians and affected their job satisfaction. The authors have also evaluated that non academicians have higher job satisfaction than academicians in the universities.

Gulshana ,AhmadbShafeeq(2019) carried out a study on managerial staff. He found that male employees, within the age group of 20 to 30 years, post graduates, employees who are married and those who have worked for 1 to 5 years are more stressful. The study also showed that the most important factors of stress in a job are the role ambiguity, conflict among colleagues, rapid change in global network, working with untrained employees, lack of time for leisure, diversity and complexity of tasks. The results revealed that there is an inverse relationship between employee job performance and job stress.

Lim Ling Wee & RasdiMohdRoziyah (2019) found that majority of the married women professionals leaving workforce attribute their decision to “pushed out” factors like workplace inflexibility, extensive working hours, high amount of work than “opt-out” factors, which focus on the biological and emotional “pulls” that lure women back into their established roles of motherliness. Most of the married women professionals interviewed said that they had no intention to return to the workforce again and had lost self-belief to join back the workforce.

RamliHaeba Abdul (2018) conducted an investigation on health service employees in Jakarta. The investigation monitored the work stress experienced by the employees and its influence on organizational commitment and employee performance. The study originates that work stress has a negative and noteworthy impact on organizational commitment and employee performance. The author suggested a causal relationship between organizational commitment , moral of the employee and employee performance.

According to JalagatRevenio(2017) there exists a significant relationship between job stress and employee performance. Factor wise regression analysis revealed that underutilization of skills and work overload correlate to employee performance and that there was no direct relationship between role ambiguity and

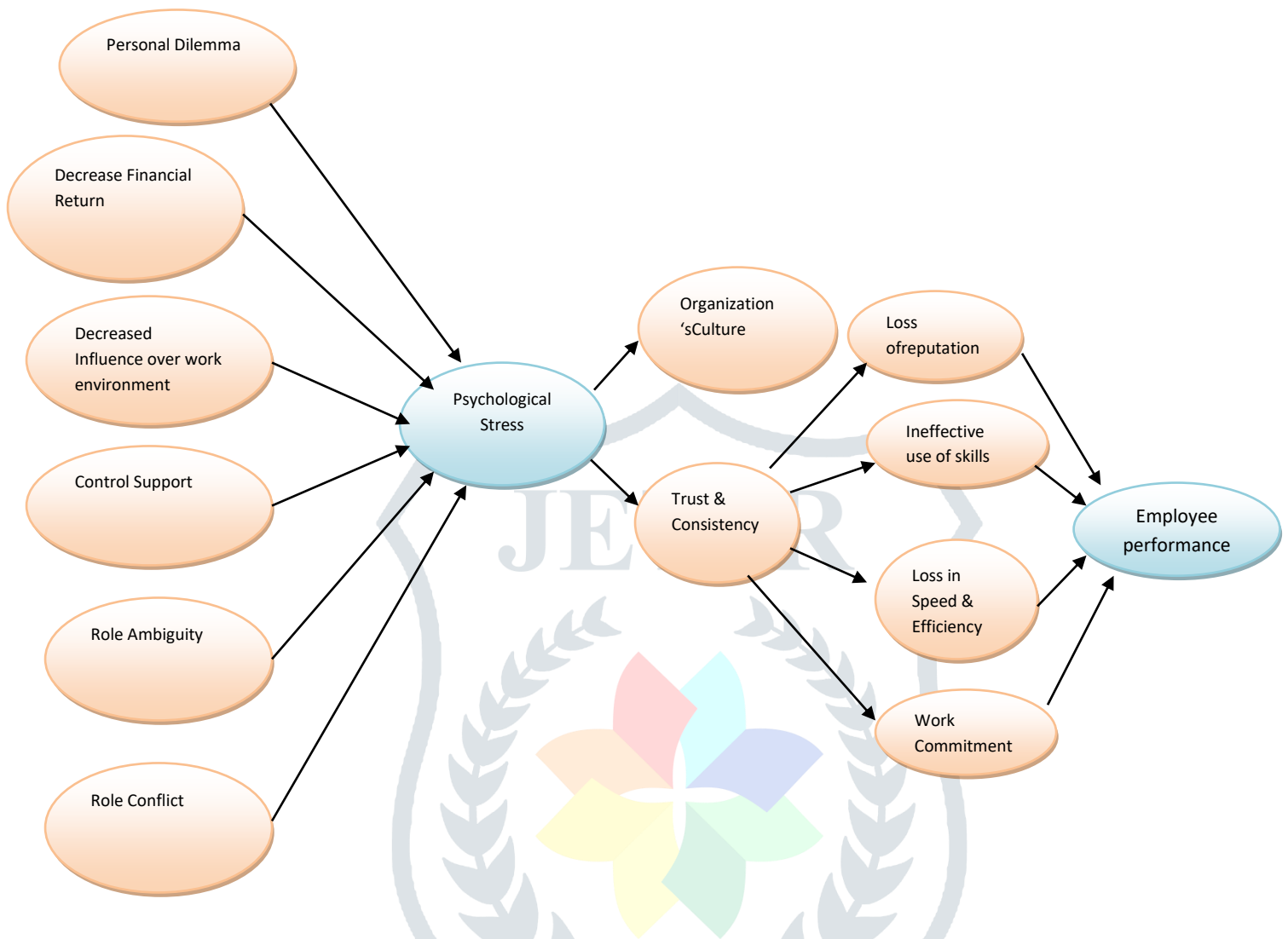
employee performance. Revenio also recommended that the company should consider underutilization of skills and work overload as predictors of employee performance. However, the study also recommended that further studies could be conducted by taking larger samples, scope and more variables as suitable to arrive at more reflective results.

Khuong Ngoc Mai and Yen Hai Vu (2016), studied that five working factors including work overload, role ambiguity & role conflict, working relationship, career development had significant and optimistic influence on job stress and in contrast, job stress had negative influence on employee job performance. In addition, this study also found that career progress did not directly affect employee job performance, but ultimately through job stress.

According to Shahid Naeem Muhammad, Latif Khalid, Sohail Nadeem & Ashraf Aleem Muhammad Aleem (2011), Bankers are in a great deal of stress due to many previous circumstances of stress. The study was conducted on 150 bankers of the district Faisalabad. The results revealed that all factors of stress attribute to decreased the performance of bankers. Ali Fouzia, Karamat Monazza, Khurram Mehak, Chuadary Asma & Farman Saba (2011), tried to map three types of commitment : affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment on job stress. It was found by them that affective commitment and continuance commitment have a noteworthy positive relationship with job stress, whereas normative commitment is having a negative relationship with Job stress.

Imtiaz Subha & Ahmad Shakil (2009) in their empirical investigation found that with every unit increase of stress factors: personal dilemmas, decrease in financial return, decrease in influence over work environment, decrease in controller support, correspond to 0.513, 0.079, 0.266, and 0.117 unit decrease in job performance respectively. Researchers also mentioned that higher levels of stress existed because of no managerial concern over the problem of increased job stress. This consequently lower the employee performance; staking organizational reputation and loss of skilled employees. Such situations call for immediate concern from the management for employing effective stress management practices and for increasing employee satisfaction and overall employee performance.

Deduced Conceptual Model



Source : This deduced conceptual model is developed from the review of literature by Dr Rumiya Agashe and Prof AlkaSanyal

The model explains about all the major factors which are responsible for psychological stress. Personal dilemma, Decrease Financial returns, Decreased influence over work environment, Control support, role ambiguity, role conflict are the major responsible factors for stress in the organization. If there is psychological stress in the organization the culture within the organization will suffer together with lesser trust and consistency in work. Further the model says that if trust and consistency decreases the reputation of the employee will be decrease and an employee will be considered as ineffective and incapable. The speed of performing the task will also decreased which overall shows a negative impact on Employee Performance.

Discussion

Stress not only affects an individual but also the performance of all organizations. The researchers in the past one decade have repeatedly attributed psychological stressors like role conflict, underutilization of skills,

increasing workload as contributing factors to decreased job performance. High affinity to organization, affective and continuance commitment also contribute to stress. This happens when employees due to high affective and continuance commitment start internalizing organizational objectives as their own and misbalances their work life. The result cascades to having burnout and reduced energy at work and hence leading to low performance.

One more less investigated factor that has been found to have a high impact on stress is the personal dilemma of the employee. The rapidly changing work environment and digitalization of the job market creates a gambit of illusive opportunities. This virtual yet upfront arena of attractive job-offers often confuses an employee of his potential and he feels that he has a decreased financial return of his present job. This causes psychological stress to him and contributes to decreased performance. Employees' dilution of the availability of better opportunity in the market and his constant endeavor to compare himself to his peers with regards to their social and financial status also is contemplated to be contributing factors to decreased focus on work and hence deteriorating his performance.

Researchers have so far resolved the fact that stress creates lower performance. However a scope remains in finding out ways to reduce stress. A suggested way to reduce stress would be to increase employee focus. If HRs can create a focused career development channel for the employees to work on, and give them attainable goals to perform, then employees would be able to save themselves from external distractions like comparing their status with peers is best for him. A carrot and a stick approach to career progression would allow them to remain focused and reduce their personal dilemma at the workplace. A scope of empirical investigation on this preposition remains for researchers and HR practitioners to perform wherein the cascading effect of career counseling, appraisal, carrot and stick approach can be studied in purview of focusing employees to work and perform while bypassing psychological stressors at work.

Conclusion

The study is qualitative in nature, which includes the finding of many researchers and their finding to examine the relationship between Job stress and Employee performance. In the study we found that if high affective and continuance commitment is present, then after some time employee will not be able to manage the work with his personal life and the level of burnout will start increasing. The study also focuses on one more every essential factor of Stress: Personal dilemma, which actually occurs when the employee compares himself with his peer groups and get confused on what is best for his career. Hence the result focuses on the fact that when stress increases due to personal dilemma the performance automatically gets decreased.

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