

A Study on Stress Management Practices Adopted by Small Scale Manufacturing Units in Coimbatore

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Abstract

Stress management refers to the usage of various techniques to control a person's stress level, especially chronic stress, to enhance smooth functioning of the person. The main purpose of this paper is to study the stress management practices adopted by small scale manufacturing units in Coimbatore, analyze the factors influencing stress and to study the relationship between job profile and level of stress among the employees. The sample size of 120 employees selected from various small scale manufacturing units in Coimbatore. The primary data was collected through questionnaire and interview. Analysis was done by using Chi-square. The result of the study proves that the employees have less or more work experience, it does not have any impact on the level of stress among the employees. This result proves that educational qualification of the employees does not have any impact on the level of stress among the employees.

Key Words: Stress, job stress, small scale units and stress management practices.

1. Introduction

Stress management refers to the usage of various techniques to control a person's stress level, especially chronic stress, to enhance smooth functioning of the person. Stress causes numerous physical and mental symptoms based on each individual's situation in life. These include physical health decline, depression etc., Stress management is one of the keys to a happy and successful life in modern society.

2. Stress at work

Stress has become a part of work life. Corporates have started to emphasize on positive stress in organization to keep up the challenging work culture. The challenges in organization such as the latest technology updation, targets and sometimes even the organizations' structure causes stress. Absenteeism and work reflects the stress level of an organization. Stress affects an individual and organization as a whole. High rate of absenteeism, increased staff turnover, poor safety record, worsening customer relations, or degrading the quality control found in an organizational suffers from stress.

3. Factors influencing stress

Environmental Factors

- Environmental uncertainty affects the organization which in turn induces stress. This uncertainty is due to the variations prevailing in Business Cycle.
- The political system which is unstable or which is not properly implemented may result in stressful situations.
- Technological uncertainty can also cause stress. Innovations may make an employee's skills and experiences obsolete in a short period of time. Computers, robotics, automation and other forms of technological innovations are threat to many people and cause them stress.

Organization Factors

- Task demands are related to a person's job.
- Organizational pressures to avoid errors in job.
- Targets to complete tasks in a limited time period.
- Working conditions, layout and facilities.
- Level of differentiation in the organizational structure, rules and regulations, and decision making by the management.
- Lack of participation, leadership and managerial style, job security, and peer pressure may all lead to stress.

Individual Factors

- Family Problems, relationship issues and troubles with dependents may create stress.
- Lack of required knowledge or experience and personality characteristics.

- Economic problems created by individuals overextending their financial resources are another set of personal troubles that can create stress for employees and distract their attention from their work.

4. Effects of Stress

- Stress changes the gene expression – When an individual is under stress, his body produces chemicals which alters the gene of the person, like level of fat, shortage in body, work of immune systems, aging and even development of cancer.
- Stress may cause damage to brain. This affects the memory and functioning of other parts of the body.
- Stress affects the immune system like slowing, wound healing, diminishing the effects of vaccines, increasing susceptibility to infections and also reactivates the latent infections.
- Chronic stress damages the energy of the body.
- Stress reduces the ability to metabolize and detoxify. Stress can also create a thirst for high fat and high sugar food items.
- Stress messes with sex hormones.
- Stress is bad for bones and muscles. Higher stress level is associated with lower bone mineral density and causes more physical pain.

5. Review of Literature

Viljoen, J.P and Rothmann, S revealed that stress caused ill health. This also affected the organizational commitment among employees. Stress is about job security influenced to both physical and psychological ill health. Work life balance, overload, job aspects, control, and pay caused low level of commitment also lead to get stress.

Schmidt et.al., evaluated the presence of occupational stress among the nursing professionals working in surgical settings to investigating their relationship.

Li-fang Zhang suggested that controlling the self-rating abilities of the participants, the conducive conceptual change in teaching approach and their role of insufficiency predicated that the conceptual change in teaching strategy is negative.

Kayoko Urakawa and Kazuhito Yokoyam found the adverse effects on mental health due to the job demand and job stress which was positively associated with the sense of coherence (SOC). It is an important factor for determining the coping ability over the job stress for both the genders

Connolly et.al., commented that work related stress such as demand, support, control, role, relationships and change can be analyzed by examining overall levels of psychological strain, job satisfaction, and the psychosocial working conditions

6. Objectives of the Study

- To study the stress management practices adopted by small scale manufacturing units in Coimbatore.
- To analyze the factors influencing stress among the employees.
- To study the relationship between job profile and level of stress among the employees.

7. Limitations of the Study

- Due to personal inconvenience the employees working in night shifts could not be met for data collection.
- Respondents were redundant and suspicious in responding to the questions.
- Accuracy is also another problem for the sample may not reveal the fact
- The respondents were not ready to spend time in answering.
- The statistical tools chosen have their own limitation.

8. Research Design

Descriptive research design was adopted by the researcher for conducting the study. It is a scientific method which involves observing and describing the behaviour of a subject without influencing it in any way. Sampling design adopted is probability sampling method. The sample size of 120 employees selected from various small scale manufacturing units in Coimbatore. The Sample respondents were selected by using simple random sampling technique. The primary data was collected through questionnaire and interview. The secondary data was collected from books, journals and websites.

9. Analysis and Interpretation

Chi-Square Analysis

Hypothesis 1: The Level of Stress is independent on the Work Experience of employees

Table 1.1

Factors	Level of Significance	Degrees of Freedom	Table Value	Calculate X2 value	Result
Work Experience and Level of Stress	5 %	4	9.488	7.063	Accepted

The table 1.1 depicts that the level of stress is independent on work experience. This result proves that whether the employees have less or more work experience, it does not have any impact on the level of stress among the employees.

Hypothesis 2: The Level of Stress is independent on the Educational Qualification of employees

Table 1.2

Factors	Level of Significance	Degrees of Freedom	Table Value	Calculate X2 value	Result
Educational Qualification and Level of Stress	5 %	12	21.026	8.656	Accepted

The table 1.2 shows that the level of stress is independent on educational qualification. This result proves that educational qualification of the employees does not have any impact on the level of stress among the employees.

Recommendations for Individuals - Ways of Overcoming Stress

- One thing at a time – to avoid any unnecessary disturbances in the work that affects the concentration.
- Simplifying schedule - A schedule piled with unnecessary things which becomes a major reason for stress. The Schedule can be simplified by reducing the commitments by having only essential things. Learn to say no. Leave the commitments that aren't beneficial. To have space between important things. To have meetings only when it is essential. Leave room for down time and fun.
- To be active daily by doing something like a walk, hike, sport, run, or gym. If doesn't reduce stress, have fun doing it.
- To develop a healthy habit like, eating fruits and vegetables instead of snacks. Quit smoking. Cook healthy food for dinner. Drink water instead of soda and have one habit at a time.
- Try out something that can calm down like a bath, or working at home, or gardening, or reading books, or medication or a walk.
- Simplifying finances - Finances can be a major source of stress for a person. Bills and debt payments can be automated. The money spent for shopping can be reduced. To engage in activities that does not require money.
- Have fun each day, even if it takes just a few minutes of the schedule.
- Trying a creative activity like writing, painting or playing music or doing interior design or building things can reduce stress.
- To get rid of things which is not necessary and that clutter the room.
- Be early - Try to do everything earlier than to stick to deadlines, schedule with space between various tasks. Always plan with some buffer time as things take longer time than planned.

For Organizations – to Maintain a Stress-Free Environment

The Small scale manufacturing units have to take necessary steps to reduce stress. They have to conduct regular survey in the organization. The

communication channel between the top management and lower management should be improved. They have to provide performance base incentives to motivate employees.

Further, the companies can conduct cultural programs in the organization to make the employees relax from the regular work. The management should try to cope up with new technological advancement for overcome the stress among the employees. The organizations have to reduce providing target level based oriented work to the employees. The management should try to give proper Training & development program along with tie-ups with other units to reduce stress. They need to create a healthy compensation plans to the employees avoiding stress. They may conduct many relaxation programs like outbound training; get together, meditation class etc... The management may allow the employees to give their suggestion/ ideas & ideas. Thus this study would help in sorting the issues in Small scale manufacturing units and help them to maintain a stress-free environment.

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