

## The Importance of Dealing with Organizational Stress

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### Abstract

Job stress is the harmful, physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the workers. The experience of stress is a challenge to the health and safety of workers and to the healthiness of the organization. Organizational stress could be considered as the result of those factors in an organization that cause stress for the individual employee, and in turn, have negative organizational consequences. Stress related issue can impede the progress of an organization- in absenteeism, accidents and loss of productivity. As a result, dealing with employee's stress is important for the organization as well as individuals. This is because the survival of every organization depends to a reasonable extent on the workforce. Therefore, this paper is aimed at X-raying the importance of dealing with organizational stress. The paper, being a theoretical one, sourced data from two main sources, the primary and secondary sources. Data from primary sources were obtained from intensive/unstructured interviews. While secondary data were obtained from Journals, articles, Text books and chiefly the internet. The study revealed that poor work organization and lack of communication are some of the major causes of stress in an organization. It was equally found out that stress could lead to employee's burnout and burnout is a contributory factor to violence in a work place. Based on the findings, we recommended that organizations should establish clear means of communication at all times, especially during time of stress. This will help alliviate fear and role ambiguity in an organization. Equally, organizations should establish and support wellness programmes as a means to reduce work stress. The study concluded that the best strategy in dealing with job stress is to identify the stressor, treat the symptom, change the person and remove the cause of the stress.

**Keywords:** Dealing with, organizational stress

*"NOBODY IN LIFE IS STRESS FREE. STRESS IS A PART OF DAY-TO-DAY LIFE, WHICH CANNOT BE AVOIDED" DR RAJEEV JAIN*

### INTRODUCTION

Stress in organizations is a wide-spread phenomenon with far-reaching practical and economic consequences, Borman etel (2002). Organizational job performance are atimes threathened and are affected because of the health situation and outcome reaction shown out by staff faced with by a different situation which emanates from stress. In the work place, everybody is facing the problem of stress. Organizational stress can have a profound effect on production and motivation in the work place. Stress at work place can be a real problem to the organization as well as its workers. Good management and good organization are the best forms of stress prevention. If employee's are already stressed, their manager should be aware of it and know how to help. Stress occur in a wide range of a work circumstances. Work pressure cannot be prevented. Stress occurs generally, when pressure become excessive and unmanageable. Stress can damage one's health and performance, not only that, worries about job security or the demand of a workload increase. When stress factors, or stressors, are coupled with effective or uncaring management, stress can become a problem that extends to the entire departments or organization Jill Leviticus (2014). According to Christain Nordqvist (2014), stress is generally used when we feel that everything seems to have become too much-we are overloaded and wonder whether we really can cope with the pressure placed upon us. Stress results from a mismatch between the demands and pressure on the person, on the one hand and their knowledge and abilities, on the other. It challenges their ability to cope with work. This includes not only situations where the pressure of work exceeds the worker's ability to cope but also where the worker's knowledge and abilities are not sufficiently utilized and that is a problem for them. Anything that poses a challenge or a threat to our well being is a stress. Therefore, work stress is recognised world wide as a major challenge to workers health and the healthiness of their organization (see for example ILO 1986,1992). Workers who are stressed are also more likely to be unhealthy, poorly motivated, less productive and less safe at work place. Their organizations are less likely to be successsful in a competitive market. Therefore, we consider organizational stress to be the result of those factors in an organization that causes stress for the individual employee and in turn, have negative consequences. In order to avoid negative consequences associated with stress, good and proactive management as a matter of fact should be devised as means of dealing with stress, this is beacuse good management of organizational stress is a sinequanon to the growth of the organization.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the major causes of organizational stress
2. To evaluate the impact of stress on organizational performance
3. To explore effective strategies of coping with stress.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### DEFINITION AND THE STRESS CONCEPT

Rajeev Jain (2012) , defined stress as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the workers. According to him, job stress can lead to poor health and even injury. He sees stress as the outcome reaction that will be shown out by anyone when faced by different situation, which is apart from the normal one. In his view, everybody is facing the problem of stress in a work place. He adduced that stress is not always negative, sometimes positive also. To buttress that assertion, he said that in giant companies, manager usually delegates certain responsibilities to their subordinates, which in turn aid subordinates to upgrade their skills and improve efficiency (This is positive or Eustress). He concluded that stress is a general term applied to various psychological (mental) and physiological (bodily) pressures experienced or felt by people throughout their lives. On the other hand, many times, stress occurs due to excessive work load which hampers individual as well as organizational performance ( This called negative/distress). In his own, David (1993), said that stress is an imprecise term. It is usually define in terms of the internal and external conditions that create stressful situations, and the symptoms that people experience when they are stressed. Arnold and Feldman ( 1986) define stress as “ the reactions of individuals to new or threatening factors in their work environment.” According to him, since our work environments often contains new situations, this definition suggests that stress is inevitable. This definition also highlights the fact that reactions to stressful situations are individualized, and can result in emotional, perceptual, behavioral, and physiological changes. McGrath (1976) proposed a definition based on the condition necessary for stress. “ So there is a potential for stress when an environmental situation is perceived as presenting a demand that threatens to exceed that person’s capabilities and resources for meeting it, under conditions where he expects a substantial differential in the rewards and costs from meeting the demand versus meeting it. The British National Institutes of Health (2014), sees stress as anything that poses a challenge or a threat to a person well-being. They opined that stress is generally used when we feel that everything seems to have become too much,- we are overloaded and wonder whether we really can cope with the pressures placed upon us. According to them, Some stresses get you going and they are good for you- without any stress at all many may say our lives are boring and would probably feel pointless. However, when stresses undermine both our mental and physical health they are bad. They went on to say that the way you respond to a challenge may also be a type of stress. Part of your response to a challenge is physiological and affects your physical state. When faced with a challenge or a threat, your body activates resources to protect you- to either get away as fast as you can, or fight.

### THE STRESS CONCEPT

According to W.C Borman, D.R Iigen, and R.J Klimoski (2002), postulated that on the most general level, one can differentiate between four stress concepts: (a) the stimulus concept; (b) the response concept; (c) the transactional concept; and (d) the discrepancy concept. The stimulus concept focuses on situational conditions or events. Within this conceptualization they opined that certain stimuli are stressful, for example high blood pressure, interpersonal conflict at work, or accidents. However, the stimulus concepts is problematic because not all individuals react in a uniform manner to the same stressor. Nearly every situational condition or every event may evoke strain in some individuals.

The reaction concept focuses on physiological reactions as the crucial constituents of stress, i.e. stress exist if an individual shows a specific reaction pattern, irrespective of situational characteristics, Selye( 1956). However, this conceptualization also has its shortcomings. It does not take into account that very different situations can result in the same physiological responses and that an individual’s coping efforts may have an effect on his individual’s reactions, thus altering the stress response.

Another class of concepts refer both to the situation and the person when defining stress. The transactional concept brought forward by Lazarus (1966) assumes that stress results from a transaction between the individual and the environment, including the individual’s perceptions, expectations, interpretations, and coping responses.

The discrepancy concept describes stress as an incongruence between individual’s desires and the environment (Edwards, 1992). However in operationalizing such a discrepancy, researchers face great difficulties. This indicates that stress is a broad term which conveys a variety of meanings.

### Stressors

According to the Wikipedia, the free Encyclopedia, a stressor is a chemical or biological, agent, environmental condition, external stimulus or an event that causes stress to an organism. An event that triggers the stress response may include: environmental stressors (elevated sound levels, over-illumination, overcrowding). A

stressor is anything that causes the release of stress hormones. There are two broad categories of stressors: Physiological (or physical) stressors and psychological stressors. Physiological stressors are stressors that can put strain on our body (i.e. very cold/hot temperatures, injury, chronic illness, or pains). Psychological stressors are event situations, individuals comments, or anything we interpret as negative or threatening. Kahn and Byosiere, (1992) stated that stressors are condition and events that evoke strain. They opined that stressors can be single events such as critical life events or traumatic experiences and chronic problems which continue over a longer period of time. According to them, stressors can be grouped into the following categories: Physical stressors, work –related job stressors, role stressors, social stressors, time- related stressors, career-related stressors, traumatic events, and stressful change process.

**Physical stressors** refer to aversive physical working conditions including noise, dirt, heat, vibrations, chemical, or toxic substances. They also include poor ergonomic conditions that work place and accidents.

**Task-related job stressors** appear while doing a task and they include high time pressure and work over-load, high complexity at work, monotonous work, and disruption (e.g., caused by an unexpected computer shutdown).

**Role stressors** fall into role ambiguity and the role conflict. **Social stressor** express themselves in poor social interactions with direct supervisions, co-workers, and others. These stressors include interpersonal conflicts at work place, (sexual) harassment, and mobbing /bullying (Zapf, Knorz, and Kula, 1996b). Additionally, having to deal with extremely difficult customers can also be conceptualised as social stressors. **Work schedule-related stressors** stem from working time arrangement. The most prominent and well- researched stressors in this category are night- and shift work. Additionally, long working hours and overtime belong to this category.

**Career –related stressors** include insecurity and poor career opportunities. **Traumatic stressors** are single events such as the exposure to disasters, major accidents, or extremely dangerous activities. Soldiers, police personnel and fire fighters are assumed to be particularly prone to the exposure of traumatic stressors (Corneil, Beaton, Murphy, Johnson, & Pike, 2000). **Organizational change** can also be regarded as a stressor. Examples include mergers, downsizing, or the implementation of new technologies. They are stressful because they may result in other stressors such as job insecurity, overtime, and conflicts.

## THEORITICAL REVIEW

The theoritical review of this work will be anchored on Psychological theories of stress and The person-Environment Fit Theory.

**Psychological Theories of stress:** The psychological theories of stress gradually evolved from the theory of emotion (James-Lange), The emergency theory (Cannon-Bard), and the theory of emotion (Schachter-Singer). Because stress is one of the most interesting and mysterious subjects we have since the beginning of time, its study is not only limited to what happens to the body during stressful situation, but also to what occurs in the psyche of an individual Sara, M (2012). Therefore, this paper will discuss the different psychological theories of stress as propounded by James and Lang, Cannon and Brad, and Schachter and Singer.

### **James-Lang: Theory of emotion.**

In 1884 and 1885, theorists William James and Carl Lange might have separately proposed their respective theories on the correlation of stress and emotion, but they had a unified idea on this relationship, emotions do not immediately succeeds the perception of the stressors or the stressful event; they become present after the body's response to the stress. For instance, when you see a growling dog, your heart starts to race, your breath begins to go faster, then your eyes become wide open. According to James and Lange, the feeling of fear or any other emotion only begins after you experience these bodily changes. This means that the emotional behaviour is not possible to occur unless it is connected to one's brain.

### **Cannon-Bard: The emergency theory.**

This theory is quite the opposite of what James and Lang proposed. According to theorist Walter Cannon, emotion in response to stress can actually occur even when the bodily changes are not present. Cannon said that the visceral or internal physiologic response of one's body is more slowly recognized by the brain as compared with its function to release emotional response. He attempted to prove his theory by means of creating the so-called "decorticated cats", wherein the neutral connections of the body are separated from the cortex in the brain of the cats. When faced with a stressful response, the decorticated cats showed emotional behavior which meant feeling of aggression and rage. This emotion was then manifested by bodily changes such as baring of teeth, growling and erect hair. To further enhance Cannon's theory, theorist Philip Bard expanded the ideals of Cannon by arguing that a lower brain stem structure called the thalamus is important in the production of emotional responses. According to Bard, the emotional response is released first, and then sent as signals by the Thalamus to the brain cortex for the interpretation alongside with the sending of signals to the sympathetic nervous system or SNS to begin the physiologic response to stress. Therefore, this theory argues that emotional response to stress is not a product of the physiologic response; rather, they occur simultaneously.

### **The Schachter- Singer Theory**

Theorists Stanley Schachter and Jerome Singer argued that the appropriate identification of the emotion requires

both cognitive activity and emotional arousal in order to experience an emotion. Attribution, or the process wherein the brain can identify the stress stimulus producing emotions. The theory explains that we become aware of the reason behind the emotional response, and when we found out that the reason is not obvious, we start to look for environmental clues for the proper interpretation of the emotion to occur.

### **Person-Environment Fit Theory**

Person-environment theory (P-E) assumes that stress occurs because of a misfit between the individual and the environment. Thus, it is neither the person nor the situation alone which cause stress experiences and strains. There are two types of misfit between an individual and the environment. The first type refers to the fit between the demands of the environment and the abilities and the competencies of the persons. The second type refers to the fit between the needs of the person and the supplies from the environment. At the conceptual level, P-E fit theory differentiates between the objective and the subjective person as well as between the objective and the subjective environment (Harrison, 2008). Objective person and objective environment refer to the individual needs, abilities and competencies and to environmental supplies and demands as they exist, i.e. independently of the person's perceptions. Subjective person and environment refer to the individual's perception. Therefore, fit can refer to the congruence between (1) objective environment and objective person, (2) subjective environment and subjective person, (3) subjective and objective environment (i.e., contact with reality) and (4) subjective and objective (i.e., accuracy of self-assessment). The theory argues that the objective person and environment affect the subjective person and environment and that a misfit between the subjective environment and the subjective person produces strain. Strain increases as demands exceed abilities and as needs exceeds supplies. When abilities exceeds demands, strain may increase, decrease or remain stable. Similarly, when supplies exceed needs, strain may increase, decrease or remain stable. The exact picture of the relationships depends on the content and importance of the dimension in question W.C Borman, D.R Ilgen, R.J Klimoski (2002).

### **DIFFERENT VIEWS ON CAUSES OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRESS:**

#### **Deborah Manning and April Preston views on causes of organizational stress**

According to Deborah Manning and April Preston (2013), there are many causes of stress within an organization including organizational structure, Leadership style and quality, the demands of task roles, balancing efficiency of services with high quality standards, the increasing "24/7" mentality, structural changes and changes in business processes, and the quality of communication throughout the organization.

#### **Organizational change**

Change is difficult for an institution and for its employees. There is uncertainty about the future, about what the organization will look like, and how the employees feel they will fit into the new structure. While some individuals embrace change, most simply accept it and with widely varying degrees of willingness. There are those, however, who refuse to change. The subsequent rejection of cooperative progress puts increased stress on supervisors, colleagues, and the institution as a whole. According to the old adage, "most people do not like any change that does not jingle in their pockets." The typical tendency is to resist it. Yet, in *A Survival Guide to the Stress of Organizational Change*, the author states, "resisting change is one of the most common causes of stress on the job" (Pritchett and Pound 1995). Employees frequently become fearful during times of organizational change because of the instability change causes. They question their abilities to perform in an unknown future. There is a tendency to leave what Steven Covey calls their "circle of influence" and spend significant time in their "circle of concern," worrying over possibilities outside their span of control (Covey 1989). Ironically, by clinging to the security blanket of what is known to them, employees can increase their stress levels exponentially. The large-scale result is infectious damage to the organization.

#### **Leadership**

The quality of leadership is a critical factor relative to the stress of the organization. Are organizational leaders viewed as competent, ethical, strategic, approachable, and fair? Do they have reasonable expectations? Do they clearly communicate their vision and directions? If not, the organization will experience stress. True leadership does not come from the position held rather from creating a vision, setting an example, and inviting participation. An intelligent leader reads and understands books, but a great leader reads and understands people. As noted by Kouzes and Posner in the leadership challenge, "Leaders don't command and control; they serve and support" (Kouzes and Posner 1995). Leaders can create stress if employees do not think they have the good of the institution and its people in their minds and in their hearts.

#### **Change in Roles and Tasks**

Many organizations are finding it necessary to examine the ways in which business is conducted. Whether seen as positive or negative, many colleges and universities are re-examining processes and services, as well as staffing, and are taking on more "business-like" approaches to how work is accomplished. This may mean streamlining or greater use of technology (including less in-person contact and more online interactions). It generally requires that employees learn new skills and commit to continuous learning. While exciting for some, and taken in stride by many, it is resented or rejected by a percentage of employee populations. As roles and



tasks change, there is the potential for stress-producing ambiguity, placing increased emphasis on the importance of adequate and timely communication. Clarity of job descriptions, reporting relationships, and performance standards are critical in combating the potential stress caused by changes in role and/or tasks.

### **Balance in Work and Life**

As technology increases, we are witnessing a struggle- not just with continuous learning and the expectation that work will be accomplished more quickly, but also with a quality dilemma. For those who provide a service rather than a product, there is stress inherent in balancing process efficiencies with customer expectations for quality and personal hands-on assistance. Among significant contributing to organizational stress is the “24/7” expectation in an increasing number of jobs. Many employees express concerns that they do not have a “life outside of work” anymore. Office-related e-mails infringe on employees’ evenings and weekends. With the abundance of laptop computers, the expectation seems to be growing that we can work wherever we go. Employees risk becoming resentful and are vulnerable to burnout. Some cease to have the energy and the enthusiasm they had in the past. As they lose their spark and creativity, the organization loses major resources.

### **Guarav Akrani Views On Causes Of Organizational Stress**

In his own, Gaurav Akrani (2011) came up with the following as the major causes of organizational stress:

1. **Career Concern:** if the employee feels that he is very much behind in the corporate ladder, then he may experience stress. If he seems that there are no opportunities for self growth, he may experience stress. Hence, unfulfilled career expectations are the significant source of stress.
2. **Role ambiguity:** It occurs when the person doesn’t know what he is supposed to do, on the job. His tasks and responsibilities are not clear. The employee is not sure what he is expected to do. It creates confusion in the minds of the worker and the result is stress.
3. **Rotating Work Shift:** stress may occur in those individuals who work on different work shifts. Employees may be expected to work on day shift for some days and then on the night shift. That may create not only personal life but also family life of the employee.
4. **Role Conflict:** it takes place when people have different expectations from the person performing a particular role. It can also occur if the job is not as per expectation, or when a job demands a certain type of behavior that is against the person’s moral values.
5. **Occupational Demands:** some jobs are more demanding than others. Jobs that involve risk, and danger are more stressful. Research findings indicate, job that cause stress needs constant monitoring of equipment and devices, unpleasant physical conditions, etc.
6. **Lack of Participation in Decision- Making:** many experienced employees feel that management should consult them on matters affecting their jobs. In reality, the superiors hardly ask the concerned employees before taking a decision. That develops a feeling of being neglected, which may lead to stress.
7. **Work Over Load:** Excessive workload leads to stress as it puts a person under tremendous pressure. Work overload may take two different forms: (1) **Qualitative work overload** implies performing a job that is complicated or beyond the employee’s capacity. (11) **Quantitative work overload** is as a result of many activities performed in a prescribed time.
8. **Work Underload:** in this case, too little work or very easy work is expected on the part of the employee. Doing less work or jobs of routine and simple nature would lead to monotony and boredom, which can lead to stress.
9. **Poor Working Conditions:** employees may be subject to poor working conditions. It would include bad lighting and ventilation, unhygienic sanitation facilities, excessive noise, and dust, presence of toxic gases and fumes, inadequate safety measures, etc. All these unpleasant conditions create physiological and psychological imbalance in humans thereby causing stress.
10. **Lack of Group Cohesiveness:** every group is characterised by its cohesiveness, although they differ widely in its degree. Individuals experience stress when there is no unity among work groups and this lead to stress to employees.
11. **Interpersonal and Intergroup Conflict:** these conflicts take place due to differences in perceptions, attitudes, values and beliefs between two or more individuals and groups. Such conflicts can be a source of stress for group members.
12. **Organizational Changes:** when changes occur, people have to adapt to those changes, and this may cause stress. Stress is higher when changes are significant or unusual like transfer or adoption of new technology.
13. **Lack of Social Support:** when individuals believe that they have the friendship and support of others at work, their ability to cope with the effects of stress increases. If this kind of social support is not available, then an employee experiences more stress.

### **Rajeev Jain views on the causes of Organizational Stress**

Rajeev Jain (2012) listed the following as the general and specific causes of stress in an organization:

### General Causes

1. Insufficient back-up
2. Long or unsociable hours
3. Poor status, pay and promotion prospects
4. Unnecessary rituals and procedures
5. Uncertainty and insecurity

### Specific Causes of Stress at Work

1. Unclear role specification
2. Role conflict
3. Unrealistically high self-expectations (perfectionism)
4. Inability to influence decision making(powerlessness)
5. Frequent clashes with superiors
6. Isolation from colleagues support
7. Lack of variety
8. Poor communication
9. Inadequate leadership
10. Conflicts with colleagues
11. Inability to finish a job
12. Fighting unnecessary battles.

Task-Related Causes of stress at work according to Rajeev, includes: difficult clients or subordinates, insufficient training, emotional involvement with clients or subordinates, the responsibilities of the job and inability to help or act effectively.

### David S. Walonick Views On Causes Of Organizational Stress

David Walonick(1993), laid emphasis on job stressors as the major causes of stress at work place. He divided stressors into those that arise from within an individual (internal), and those that are attributable to the environment (external). Internal conflicts, non-specific fears, fears of inadequacy, and guilt feelings are examples of stressors that do not depend on the environment. Internal sources of stress can arise from an individual's perceptions of an environmental threat, even if no such danger actually exists. Environmental stressors are external conditions beyond an individual's control. There are many aspects of organizational life that can become external stressors. These include issues of structure, Management's use of authority, monotony, a lack of opportunity for advancement, excessive responsibilities, ambiguous demands, value conflicts, and realistic work loads. A person's non-working life (e.g. family, friends, health, and financial situations) can also contain stressors that negatively impact job performance. Other causes includes:

**Adverse Working condition:** such as excessive noise, extreme temperatures, or overcrowding, can be a source of job-related stress.

**Role Ambiguity:** Role ambiguity is often the result of mergers, acquisitions and restructuring, where employees are unsure of their new job responsibilities. Role conflict has been categorized into two types: intersender and intrasender. intersender role conflict can occur when worker's perceive that two different sources are generating incompatible demands or expectations. Intrasender role conflict can arise when worker's perceive conflicting demands from the same source. Overload is frequently created by excessive time pressures, where stress increases as a deadline approaches, and then rapidly subsides. Underload is the result of an insufficient quantity, or an inadequate variety of work. Both overload can result in low- esteem and stress related symptoms, however, underload has also been associated with passivity and general feeling of apathy.

**Poor interpersonal relationship:** poor interpersonal relationship are also a common source of stress. Three interpersonal relationship that can evoke a stress reaction include: (1) too much prolonged contact with other people, 2) too much contact with people from other departments, and 3) an unfriendly or hostile organizational climate. Equally, personal factors are often a source of stress. These include career related concerns, such as job security and advancement, as well as financial and family concerns.

### THE EFFECTS OF WORK STRESS ON ORGANIZATIONS

The World Health Organization (1999), in analyzing the impact of job stress in an organization, said that if key staff or large number of workers are affected, work stress may challenge the healthiness and performance of their organization. Unhealthy organizations do not get the best from their workers and this may affect not only their performance in the increasingly competitive market but eventually even their survival. WHO listed the following as the consequences of work stress on organization.

- Increasing absenteeism,
- Decreasing commitment to work
- Increasing staff turn-over
- Impairing performance and productivity

- Increasing unsafe working practices and accident rates
- Increasing complaints from clients and customers
- Adversely affecting staff recruitment
- Increasing liability to legal claims and actions by stressed workers
- Damaging the organization's image both among its workers and externally.

#### **Rajeev Jain Views of the effect of job stress on organization**

Rajeev Jain(2012), said that stress at work can be real problem to the organization as well as for its workers. According to him, studies have shown that stressful conditions are actually associated with increased absenteeism, tardiness, and turnover-all of which have negative effect on the bottom line. He went on to define a healthy organization as one that has low rates of illness, injury, and disability of its workforce and is competitive in the market place. He therefore listed the following as the effects of job stress in an organization:

- Changes take place in personality traits
- Existing personality problems increase
- Moral and emotional constraints weaken
- Depression and helplessness appear
- Interest in affairs of the organization and enthusiasms diminish
- Absenteeism increases
- Drug abuse increases
- Energy levels are low
- Sleep patterns are disrupted
- New information are ignored
- Responsibilities are shifted onto others
- Problems are solved at an increasingly superficial level
- Suicide threats may be made

#### **Consequences of Job Stress by Deborah Manning and April Preston**

Consequences are not exclusive unto themselves. Frequently they overlap and interrelated with one another Manning and Preston (2003). They enumerated the following as the consequences of organizational stress:

- **Employee Turnover:** One of the consequences of organizational stress is an increase in employee turnover. If employees are fearful for their positions or feel the expectations are unrealistic, they may leave the organization rather than continue in the uncertainty of their roles. Turn over is costly to any organization. Significant monetary costs are accrued in recruiting, hiring and training, and loss of productivity.
- **Problem of burnout:** Bournout is exhibited in a number of ways by employees including increases in absenteeism and illnesses; increase in the use of employee assistance programs, as well as prescription and medical insurance plans; increases in workplace accidents, which in turn lead to increases in workers compensation claims. Bournut also is a contributing factor to violence in the work place. Employees suffering from burnout are likely to affect the productivity of other employees, causing an overall reduction in the quality and quantity of work produced.
- **Strained interpersonal relationship:** Employees may become territorial of their duties, Knowledge, and even their workspace. Communication and teamwork suffer, collaborative efforts diminish, and the exchange of information is minimised.
- **Poor Job Performance:** Poor job performance may appear as yet another consequence of organizational stress, thereby reducing productivity. In some cases, the stress arises from lack of confidence in supervisory staff. The lack of confidence may come about because of general organizational uncertainty or a combination of little or no supervisory training, lack of communication skills, or lack of openness and trust.

#### **APPROACHES TO MANAGING STRESS IN WORK PLACE**

##### **MAKE EXPECTATIONS CLEAR:**

One way to reduce stress is to state your expectations clearly. Workers who have descriptions of their jobs experience less stress than those whose jobs are ill defined. The same thing goes for individual tasks. It will be a great place to work as a manager, where every assignment was clear and employees were content and focused on their work. The benefits that will arise from such scenerio will surely be unfathomable. Creating clear expectations dosen't have to be a top-down event. Managers may be unaware that their directives are increasing their subordinates stress by upping their confusion. In this case, a gentle conversation that steers a project in a clearer direction can be a simple but powerful way to reduce stress.

##### **Give Employee Autonomy**

Giving employee a sense of autonomy is another thing that organizations can do to help relieve stress. It has long

been known that one of the most stressful things that individuals deal with is lack of control over their environment. Employees stress levels are likely to be related to the degree that organizations can build autonomy and support into jobs.

#### **Stress Management Training:**

According to Rajeev Jain(2012),nearly one-half of large companies in the United States provide some type of stress management training for their workforce. Some have employee assistance programme (EAPs) to provide individual counseling for employees with both work and personal problems. Such training will definitely minimize job stress in the organization.

#### **Organizational change**

Bringing in a consultant to recommend ways to improve working conditions is the most direct way to reduce stress at work. It involves the identification of stressful aspects of the work (e.g., excessive workload, conflicting expectations) and the design of strategies to reduce or eliminate the identified stressors. It deals directly with the root causes of stress at work.

#### **Creating of Fair Work Environment**

Work environments that are unfair and unpredictable have been labeled “toxic workplace.” A toxic workplace is one in which a company does not value its employees or treat them fairly.

Other ways of dealing with Job stress in an organization are as follows:

- Ensure that the workload is in line with workers capabilities and resources,
- Design jobs to provide meaning stimulation, and opportunities for workers to use their skills.
- Clearly define worker’s roles and responsibilities.
- Give workers opportunities to participate in decisions and actions affecting their jobs.
- Improve communication and reduce uncertainty about career development and future employment prospects.
- Provide opportunities for social interaction among workers
- Establish schedules that are compatible with demands and responsibilities outside the work place.

#### **Individual Way Of Dealing With Stress**

There are many things you can do to cope with stress, reduce its effects and make yourself stress resistant. They are as follows:

1. **Exercise** : exercise has been proven to have a beneficial effect on a person’s mental and physical state. For many people, exercise is an extremely effective stress buster.
2. **Maintain a good sense of humor:** Learn to laugh at yourself. Laughter releases endorphins. These are natural painkillers and analgesics. Laughter reduces tension etc.
3. **Set realistic goals for yourself:** we are often our worst enemies and set impossible goals and then castigate ourselves when we fail to meet them, such can throw someone off balance, thereby allowing tensions stress to come in.
4. **Division of labor:** try to delegate your responsibilities at work, or share them. If you,make yourself indispensable the likelihood of your feeling highly stressed is significantly greater.
5. **Always be assertive:** don’t say yes to everything. If you can’t do something well, or if something is not your responsibility, try to seek ways of not agreeing to them.
6. **Get control of your time:** our society suffers from “hurry up sickness”. We drive ourselves crazy with schedules and the clock. Stop setting impossible deadlines and take a “who cares” attitude whenever and wherever you can. Make sure you set aside some time each day just for yourself. Use that time to organize your life, relax, and pursue your own interest.
7. **Learn some relaxation skills:** Visit some relaxation places with friends or family members. Take time for meditation, watch interesting movies and if possible go to bed with a good book or interesting novels.
8. **Get enough sleep:** No one functions well when exhausted. Therefore to overcome the impact of exhaustion which could lead to stress, have enough sleep and by the time you woke up, you will be well refreshed.
9. **Innoculate yourself against events:** If you know that something stressful is about to happen, prepare for it. Anticipate what is likely to happen. Think about how you will likely feel and then plan to cope with these feelings.
10. **Become more flexible:** This isn’t a perfect world and things don’t always turn out the way you want. Your job may cause you stress, but it is your responsibility to deal with it and cope. The main thing is to understand what stress does to you, recognise when your body tells you that you are under too much stress and decide what to do about it.



## FINDINGS

Having reviewed the views of researchers on the issue of stress, the following are my findings:

1. Stress was generally considered as being synonymous with distress, emotional strain or tension, however, it was discovered that stress can be helpful and good when it motivates people to accomplish a task.
2. It was also found out that poor work organization, that is the way we design jobs and work system, and the way we manage them can cause stress.
3. It was also discovered that the more workers have control over their work and the way they participate in decisions that concern their jobs, the less likely they are to experience work stress.
4. One of the consequences of organizational stress is an increase in employee turnover. If employees are fearful for their positions or feel the expectations are unrealistic, they may leave the organization, rather than continue in the uncertainty of their roles.
5. It was also found out that stress results in burnout, and burnout is a contributing factor to violence in a work place. Employees suffering from burnout are likely to affect the productivity of other employees, causing overall reduction in the quality of work produced.
6. It was also discovered that another problem of stress is poor job performance. Poor job performance may appear as yet another consequence of organizational stress, thereby reducing productivity.
7. It was discovered that the best strategies for dealing with stress in organizations: is to treat the symptoms, change the person and remove the causes of the stress.

## Recommendation

1. Employee training: training needs to be a priority, especially for managers and supervisors, who play the greatest role in establishing the organizational climate for employees.
2. Career Development: career development opportunities should be established, communicated and encouraged. Having a career goal to work toward will help alleviate role ambiguity, reduce turnover, enhance job performance, and encourage other high performing employees to apply for positions within the institution.
3. Establishment of wellness programmes: as a means to reduce work stress, institutions should support wellness programmes consisting of exercise and health classes, both of which are effective in helping employees cope with organizational stress.
4. It is equally recommended that organizations should offer their employees the opportunity to have input and to help establish time frames for completion of projects will result in a healthier and more productive organization.
5. Establishment of clear means of communication: communication is important at all times, but especially during times of stress, communication should be timely and multidirectional. To help alleviate fear, it is crucial to enhance communication as soon as a new stressor is perceived.
6. Good Quality leadership: The quality of leadership is a critical factor relative to the stress of the organization. The organizational leaders should be competent, ethical, strategic, approachable, and fair. True leadership does not come from position held but rather from creating a vision, setting an example, and inviting participation.

## Conclusion

The experience of work stress can cause unusual and dysfunctional behavior at work and contribute to poor physical and mental health. In extreme cases, long-term stress or traumatic events at work may lead to psychological problems and be conducive to psychiatric disorders resulting in absence from work and preventing the workers from being able to work again. To avoid this negative scenario, administrators within the organization must be vigilant in assessing stress factors and developing ways in which to manage the stress for the good of the employee and the benefit of the organization.

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