A STUDY ON FOOD INDUSTRIES IN VARIOUS LEVEL OF EMPLOYEE STRESS IN HYDERABAD, TELANGANA

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Abstract

Stress is experienced by employees at work when they perceive that they may not able to or struggling to fulfill the expectations of their employer. The purpose of this study was to find the causes of occupational stress in food industry, its effects on employees and their health, and the different methods used by employees to counter it in the food-chain industry. Work-related stress is a major part of an employee's professional life, and when it comes down to the intensely competitive food-chain industry this stress magnifies to a newer level. The food-chain industry is expanding very rapidly and as new competitors are entering the market regularly, employees need to put in extra effort to satisfy customers which of course creates immense stress and requires a lot of stress management skills.

Key Words: Work-related stress, Occupational stress, Food-chain industry.

1. Introduction

A healthy job is likely to be one where the pressures on employees are appropriate in relation to their abilities and resources, to the amount of control they have over their work, and to the support they receive from people who matter to them. As health is not merely the absence of disease or infirmity but a positive state of complete physical, mental and social well-being (WHO, 1986), a healthy working environment is one in which there is not only an absence of harmful conditions but an abundance of health-promoting ones.

These may include continuous assessment of risks to health, the provision of appropriate information and training on health issues and the availability of health promoting organisational support practices and structures. A healthy work environment is one in which staff have made health and health promotion a priority and part of their working lives.

1.1. What is Work-Related Stress?

Work-related stress is the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope.

> ➢ Stress occurs in a wide range of work circumstances but is often made worse when employees feel they have little support from supervisors and colleagues, as well as little control over work processes.
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> ➢ There is often confusion between pressure or challenge and stress and sometimes it is used to excuse bad management practice.

Pressure at the workplace is unavoidable due to the demands of the contemporary work environment. Pressure perceived as acceptable by an individual, may even keep workers alert, motivated, able to work and learn, depending on the available resources and personal characteristics. However, when that pressure becomes excessive or otherwise unmanageable it leads to stress. Stress can damage an employees' health and the business performance.

Work-related stress can be caused by poor work organisation (the way we design jobs and work systems, and the way we manage them), by poor work design (for example, lack of control over work processes), poor management, unsatisfactory working conditions, and lack of support from colleagues and supervisors.

Research findings show that the most stressful type of work is that which values excessive demands and pressures that are not matched to workers' knowledge and abilities, where there is little opportunity to exercise any choice or control, and where there is little support from others. Employees are less likely to experience work-related stress when - demands and pressures of work are matched to their knowledge and abilities - control can be exercised over their work and the

way they do it - support is received from supervisors and colleagues - participation in decisions that concern their jobs is provided.

1.2. Work-Related Stress: Risk Factors, Prevention and Cost

Work-related stress is still an evasive concept to many, although the topic is covered in hundreds of papers published every year. The paper will focus on the main evidence of risk factors extracted from existing research, as concerns in particular work-related stress interventions and related costs. The presentation will provide an overview of the vast amount of knowledge we already have. Stress can be handled both positively and negatively depending upon the situation, the control of the victim over the stressful conditions and how threatening he perceives it to be. It can permanently change the personality of an individual and the way he goes about things in his family as well as social life. However, it is in the benefit of the individual and the society as a whole to find ways to positively deal with occupational stress. The higher management can aid employees in reducing their stress by offering them flexible timings, some degree of relaxation as far as reporting to work on time is of their work concerned on special occasions or when there is turmoil; and proper appreciation for the quality and consistency.

The burnout rate of people employed in food industry is one of the highest. According to the Permanent Life Situation Survey, hotel and restaurant workers experience employee burnout at a rate of one in seven. Although the annual study takes place in the Netherlands, the results are consistent with other findings throughout the world.

The main cause of the high incidence of employee burnout in the hospitality industry is chronic stress in the workplace. Contributing factors of burnout in the food and hospitality industry include

- ✓ Increasing pressure and job demands that become overwhelming
- ✓ Having little or no control over your work
- ✓ A work environment that is stressful, hostile or unpleasant
- ✓ Long hours, often late at night, resulting in a lack of sleep or rest
- ✓ Tight schedules

- ✓ A job that is monotonous, repetitive or boring

- ✓ Constantly trying to please everyone

- ✓ Lack of communication with coworkers, supervisors and management

- ✓ Being assigned job responsibilities without receiving the proper support and guidance

- ✓ Not having a job description or expectations clearly defined

- ✓ Feeling as if there is not a sense of balance between work and home life

- ✓ Working in a position with responsibilities where you are over or under qualified

- ✓ Many positions require long hours of constantly being on your feet

- ✓ Stressful interactions with customers

- ✓ Many positions have a lower rate of pay than many other industries

Role factors refer to role ambiguity, role conflict, role overload, role stagnation and inadequacy of role authority. Job factors consist of difficulty in performing the job, feeling of inequity, that is, feeling of being poorly paid and mismatch between the capability of the individual and requirement for the job. Noise levels, temperature levels, poor lighting, ventilation, vibration and motion constitute physical factors.

2. Effect of Stress

It is stated that stress is like electricity. If the voltage is just right, it can make a bulb light up and provide brilliant illumination. Such glow-up occurs when stress is properly channeled, resulting in a feeling of challenge, job satisfaction, creativity, effectiveness and better adjustment to work and life. However, if the voltage is higher than what the bulb can take, it burns out the bulb. Burnout is therefore the harmful effect of stress resulting in ineffectiveness, exhaustion, irritation, inaction, health deterioration and a host of other problems. Generally, employees with roles requiring continuous work and direct contact with people (teachers, trainers, salesmen, personnel roles) experience burnout more that employees with less direct contact with people. Highly routine and mechanical roles also produce burnout. Stress is a naturally occurring experience, which if properly managed, will help in the growth, change, development and performance of the individual, both at work and at home.

Contrastingly, if stress is not properly managed, it may lead to detrimental effects on the individual's well-being and health and also on the organization. It may also be stated here that stress can be either temporary long term, mild or severe, depending mostly on how long its causes continue, how powerful they are and how strong the employee's recovery powers are. If stress is temporary or mild, most people can handle it, or at least recover from its effects rather quickly. Problems predictably arise when high intensity stress continues for an extended duration of time. Job stress can be positive or negative. Some work situations may have positive challenges and excitement, while others are very threatening and anxiety arousing. "Eustress" or positive stress is one where the situation offers an opportunity to the individual to gain something. In its absence the individual lacks the 'edge' necessary for peak performance. Promotions to new jobs make the employees feel anxious about their new work assignments: through they look forward to the additional challenges, rewards and excitement. In these cases, the new and uncertain job situations create positive stress also called "Eustress" as stated by Hans Selye (1956). "Distress" or negative stress is associated with heart-disease, alcoholism, drug abuse, marital breakdown, absenteeism, child abuse and a host of other social, physical, organization and emotional problems.

For example, when managers are given major projects to complete under severe time pressures, they feel very tense and nervous about being unable to get their work done on time. Negative stress occurs when we perceive and imbalance between the demands placed on us and our ability to meet those demands in a certain amount of time

2.1. Reducing Food Industry Burnout

There are effective measures that both employers and employees can take to reduce the high rate of stress and burnout of workers in the hospitality industry.

2.2. Ways Employers Can Reduce Employee Burnout

Develop ways to reduce the various types of workplace stress workers face each day. The following are steps that companies can take to reduce workplace stress:

➢ Develop open communication with employees

➢ Provide adequate staffing

➢ Allow employees to have control over their work

➢ Be supportive of the efforts that employees make in their positions

➢ Give recognition and rewards to employees for special accomplishments and contributions

➢ Encourage a positive, happy and friendly work environment

➢ Companies need to ensure that their managers are well trained and approachable by employees if a problem arises

3. Literature of Review

Anderson, C. R., Hellriegel, D., and Slocum, J.W.(2021). Managerial response to environmentally induced stress. Academy of Management Journal, 20, 260-272. Numerous studies demonstrate that many situations in manufacturing working life that can become stressful. These include the problems with the physical environment, such as heat stress, poor lighting, excessive cold, or excessive noise (Anderson et al, 1977).

Connolly, John F and Willock, Joyce and Hipwell, Michele and Chisholm, Vivienne (2022) Occupational Stress & Psychological Well Being following University Relocation: six months on. Project Report. Queen Margaret University. Connolly, John F and Willock, Joyce and Hipwell, Michele and Chisholm, Vivienne in their research titled "Occupational Stress & Psychological Well Being following University Relocation" (2009) they described and analyzed that management standards for work related stress (demand, support, control, role, relationships and change) can be analyzed by examining 1) overall levels of psychological strain 2) job satisfaction, and 3) the psychosocial working conditions.

Richardson, K. M., & Rothsetin, H. R. (2023). Effects of occupational stress management intervention programs: A meta-analysis. Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, Vol. 13 (1), pp.69-93, Richardson, K. M., and Rothsetin, H.R. 17in their article titled "Effects of occupational stress management intervention programs" (2008) they provided an empirical review of stress management interventions, employing meta-analysis procedures. The results

also revealed that relaxation interventions were the most frequent type of intervention. Further, there were a few stress interventions focused on the organizational level. More specific results also indicated that cognitive behavioral interventions produced larger effects than other types of interventions.

Katherine Pollak. Eisen. George J. Allen. Mary Bollash and Linda S. Pescatello, "Stress management in the workplace: A comparison of a computer-based and an in-person stress management intervention", Vol.24, Issue 2, pp. 486-496, 2024. Katherine Pollak.

Eisen. George J. Allen. Mary Bollash and Linda S. Pescatello in their book titled "Stress management in the workplace" (2009) it suggested that work stress significantly contribute to corporate health costs. Comparison through randomized controlled design of stress management and intervention provided by an instructor-led group and computer presented format, has resulted in significantly higher attrition in computer-based presentation format.

4. Analysis and Interpretation

TABLE 1: AGE OF THE FOOD INDUSTRY EMPLOYEES

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Below 20 years	04	5.33
20 to 30 years	38	50.67
30 to 40 years	22	29.33
40 to 50 years	08	10.67
50 years and above	03	4.00
Total	**75**	**100.00**

Source: Collected from primary data

The above table shows that 50.67% of respondents are under the age of 20 to 30 years and 29.33% of respondents are under the age of 30 to 40 years. 10.67% of respondents are under 40 to 50 years. 5.33% and 4% of respondents are of below 20 years and 50years and above respectively. Mostly youngsters are employed in the occupation.

TABLE 2 EDUCATION QUALIFICATION OF FOOD INDUSTRY EMPLOYEES

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Below SSLC	26	34.67
PUC	25	33.33
DEGREE	20	26.67
ABOVE DEGREE	4	5.33
Total	**75**	**100.00**

Source: Collected from primary data

Table 2 represents the Education qualification of the respondents. Highest percentage of respondents are of below SSLC that is 34.67%. The lowest respondents fall under the group of above Degree that is 5.33%. The qualification of PUC and Degree are 33.33% and 26.67% respectively. Youngsters in the age group below 30 years who are graduates are employed in such occupations.

TABLE 3 MARITAL STATUS OF FOOD INDUSTRY EMPLOYEES

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Married	23	30.67
Unmarried	52	69.33
Total	**75**	**100.00**

Source: Collected from primary data

Table 3 states the marital status of the respondents. Under this married constitute 30.67% and 69.33% shows highest among these two is unmarried. Majority of the workers are unmarried in the industry.

TABLE 4 SIZE OF THE FAMILY OF FOOD INDUSTRY EMPLOYEE

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Small family	54	72.00
Large family	21	28.00
Total	**75**	**100.00**

Source: Collected from primary data

Table 4 reveals the family size of the respondents. Under this group most of the respondent are from the small family that is 72% and 28% of the respondents are from large family. Mostly nuclear families are engaged in the industry.

TABLE 5 NATURE OF JOB OF FOOD INDUSTRY EMPLOYEES

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Part time	47	62.67
Full time	28	37.33
Total	**75**	**100.00**

Source: Collected from primary data

Table 5 provides data of the nature of job of the respondents. Most of the people work part time and very few work as full time basis. That is 62.67% and 37.33% respectively. Mostly, contract labor or part time workers are given preference for employment which may be a strategy of the organisation.

TABLE 6 MONTHLY INCOME OF THE FOOD INDUSTRY EMPLOYEE

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Below 5000	04	5.33
5000 to 10000	18	24.0
10000 to 15000	31	41.34
15000 and above	22	29.33
Total	**75**	**100.00**

Source: Collected from primary data

Table 6 recorded with the monthly income of the respondents. Here it is observed that most of the respondents are earning Rs.10000 to 15000 per monthi.e., 41.34% of the respondents.Only 5.33% of respondents earn only Rs.5000. 29.33% of respondents earn more than 15000.24% of respondents earn Rs.5000to 10000.

TABLE 7: EXPERIENCE OF THE FOOD INDUSTRY EMPLOYEES

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Below 1 year	34	45.33
1 to 2 years	23	30.67
2 to 3 years	13	17.33
Above 3years	05	06.67
Total	**75**	**100.00**

Source: Collected from primary data

Table 7 consists of Experience of the food Industry Employees. 45.33% of respondents have less than one-year service. Only 06.67% of respondents have above three years' service.30.67% and 17.33% 0f respondents have 1 to 2 yearsand2 to 3 years' experience.

It is observed that most of the employees are either Under Graduates, below 30 years, unmarried, low inexperience, have low incomes are engaged which could be the causes of stress.

Table 8 JOB STRESS – FACTORS

Particulars	N	Mean	Std Deviation
Have high work load	75	4.11	1.214
Have Arguments with angry customers	75	2.29	1.171
Get Unkind/hurtful response from customers	75	3.79	1.177
Have faced Harassments and assaults in workplace	75	2.97	1.461
Have Constant pressure to work fast	75	3.49	1.298
It is Difficulty to keep up with time deadlines	75	3.67	1.201
Feeling tired and drained of physical energy	75	3.56	1.056
Unkind treatment by hotel workers/owners	75	3.76	1.344
Feeling of choosing wrong job/profession	75	2.76	1.113
Low confidence level and low self esteem	75	2.92	1.292

Skipping meals and loss of appetite	75	2.80	1.263
Getting irritated by traffic	75	4.21	1.094
Being in an accident because of rash driving	75	3.48	1.379
Difficulty in finding customer's address	75	3.07	1.131

From Table 1 it is observed that "Getting irritated by traffic" and "Have high work load" has the highest Mean value of 4.21 and 4.11 respectively. Hence it indicates the stress is more in these two factors when compared to other stress factors. The factors "Have Arguments with angry customers and Feeling of choosing wrong job/profession" has the lowest Mean value that is 2.29and 2.76. Therefore, the stress level is less towards these two factors compared to other factors of job stress. The factors of age, experience, income and experience might also impact on the job stress and while dealing with customers or other team members, this might be impacting them a lot.

TABLE 9 STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Particulars	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Learn techniques for relaxation such as meditation and deep breathing	75	3.20	1.668
Build physical exercise into daily life	75	3.33	1.436
Learn to recognize the sources of stress	75	3.35	1.310
Make Time to discuss with Family members or play with kids	75	3.43	1.265
Express my feelings instead of bottling them up	75	3.35	1.370
Tried to have regular and adequate amount of sleep	75	3.53	1.234
Bring humor into life by watching comedies, sharing jokes and reading fun stories	75	4.31	1.162
Attach myself with nature, try gardening, spend time in the open sky, terrace, balcony and feel the flowing air	75	3.87	1.329

Practice healthy eating habits and avoid junk foods	75	3.05	1.229
Share my feelings about work problems you face with your friends and family members	75	3.51	1.245

Table 9 shows that the most respondents are practicing the factors consists of "Bring humor into life by watching comedies, sharing jokes and reading fun stories "and "Attach myself with nature, try gardening, spend time in the open sky, terrace, balcony and feel the flowing air" as the mean shows highest value such as 4.31 and 3.87. The factors less practiced to manage stress by the respondents are "Practice healthy eating habits and avoid junk foods" and "Learn techniques for relaxation such as meditation and deep breathing" as the Mean value is lowest that is 3.05 and 3.20 respectively.

5. Steps Employees Can Take to Reduce Burnout

- ❖ The following are steps employees can take to reduce workplace stress and burnout:
- ❖ Recognize the signs of stress in the workplace before they lead to burnout
- ❖ Learn a stress reduction method that works for you such as meditation progressive muscle relaxation or guided imagery
- ❖ Speak to your supervisor if you feel stress building
- ❖ Follow a healthy diet
- ❖ Get an adequate amount of rest and sleep
- ❖ Exercise on a regular basis

6. Coping Strategies for Occupational Stress

1. **Write a list.** Include all the things that are stressing you out and rank them in order. This will allow you to focus your efforts on the big issues that will make the biggest difference.

2. **Manage your time.** Write a list of all the things you need to do and categorise them into must do's and should do's. If they aren't must do's cross them off the list for another time. Sometimes simply organising your time better is often the best strategy in coping with

stress. This can help you avoid leaving things to the last minute creating unnecessary stress. For example can you pack your bag the night before and save time in the morning?

3. **Speak to others.** If you are struggling to cope and feeling stressed tell someone. Often people are more than happy to help and share the workload.

4. **Do some exercise.** This will help give you time to unwind. There is a strong link between those that are physically fit and those that are mentally fit. Exercise will not remove the stress from your life but it will help you organise your thoughts allowing you to deal with the problem more effectively.

5. **Avoid foods high in sugar and caffeine.** These foods often release energy in bursts and cause you to crash. These crashes often make you feel tire and can affect your mood, actually making you feel worse in the long run. There are links suggesting that healthy eating helps reduce stress in individuals.

6. **Revisit your goals.** Check whether your goals are realistic and achievable. If not change your goal to something that you can realistically achieve. There is no point stressing over something that you are unable to change or achieve.

7. **Avoid drugs and alcohol.** Many drugs like alcohol may provide you with a short term high, however they are also depressants which can make you feel worse and affect your mood. Drugs are not a long term strategy in coping with stress. If you feel that you may becoming dependant on drugs or alcohol you should seek advice from your local GP.

8. **Stop worrying about things that you cannot change.** Ask yourself, is the problem real or not. If you cannot do anything to change the situation forget about it.

9. **Do something you enjoy.** There is no better way to relax than by doing something you love. Whether it's skydiving, kicking back and watching TV or reading a book doing something you enjoy is a great way to manage your stress.

10. **Learn to say no.** Don't say you will do something if you realistically do not have time to do it. This will only add to your stressful life and allow things to build up.

7. Findings and Suggestions

7.1. Findings

1. It is found that most of the Employees are belonging to middle age group.
2. Most of the respondent are of lower education qualification as the job requires any qualification.
3. It is evidenced that it is suitable to unmarried youths and one who work part time.
4. The Employees earn a moderate income.
5. Majority of the Employees are irritated by traffic and heavy pressure of work.
6. Many Employees practice one or the other stress coping techniques.

7.2. Suggestions

1. The company has to analyse the stress factors of the food Industry Employees and take corrective measures to reduce the job stress.
2. In peak times when there is high traffic   some concessions in time should be given to deliver the food to customers.
3. The company should study the work pressure of the Industry Employees and reduce the work pressure to reduce the stress
4. The company should create awareness to practice various stress relief techniques

8. Conclusion

 The food Industry executives are the back bone of the online food industry Employees. They depend highly on these executives. The success of the company depends upon its employees. In case of food industry, it is very much true. Therefore, the industry motivate the executives to work hard and smart

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