

A STUDY ON STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES IN A HOSPITAL

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ABSTRACT

A study on “Stress Management Techniques in a hospital” topic stated that level of stress from managers in a hospital. The objectives of this study are (i.) To assess the stress management techniques followed by the hospital and offer suggestions for reducing stress among the members. (ii.) To assess the relationship between stress and experience, between stress and age of managers in the hospital. The research design used for this study is descriptive research.

The population of this study is managers. Since the population is not huge, the whole population of managers were considered as samples for the study which totaled to 120. In the entire study population, it's noted that 10% of the sample falls within the age range of 21-30, 50% is in the age group of 31-40, 27% of the sample lies in the age group of about 41-50 and the percentage of sample that falls in the category 51 and above is 13%. The majority of the sample of about 33% has total work experience of about 11-15 years. 27% of the sample has an experience of about 21 and above years. 17% of the sample falls in the category of 0-5 years of total experience. 12% of the sample lies in the category of 16-20 years of experience. The sample that has about 6-10 years of experience is 10%.

This study has shown that the managers are working in hospitals do feel stress but not in very high levels.

Key words: Stress management, Managers, Age, Experience, Hospital

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1. INTRODUCTION

Human behavior in an organization is influenced by various physical, social, and psychological factors. An important aspect of organization that integrates an individual into the organization is the role assigned to him/her within the overall structure of the organization. Organizations are grappling with increasing problems of stress in the workplace and initiating appropriate responses. A large number of employees experience unacceptable levels of stress. Stress is often termed as a twentieth century syndrome, born out

of man's race towards modern progress and its ensuing complexities. It has become the most important factor influencing individual efficacy and satisfaction in modern day occupational settings.

Hans Selye first introduced the concept of stress in to the life science in 1936. He defined stress as "The force, pressure, or strain exerted upon a material object or person which resist these forces and attempt to maintain its original state." Stress is ubiquitous in our society. It has become an integral part of everyday living. Stress is an unavoidable consequence of modern living. At one point or the other everybody suffers from stress. It is a dreaded symptom of the 21st century corporate environment. With the growth of industries, pressure in the urban areas, quantitative growth in population and various problems in day to day life are some of the reasons for increase in stress.

Stress is a complex phenomenon. It is a very subjective experience. It is one among the most common emotions. Everybody experience it at times. What may be a challenge for one will be a stressor for another. It depends largely on background experiences, temperament and environmental conditions. Stress is a part of life and is generated by constantly changing situations that a person must face. The term stress refers to an internal state, which results from frustrating or unsatisfying conditions. A certain level of stress is unavoidable. Because of its complex nature stress has been studied for many years by researchers in psychology, sociology and medicine.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Most of the studies have been carried out to assess the stress experienced by people on various professions. Little is available on the organization role stress experienced by managers working in private sectors. In this chapter, an attempt has been made to take cognizance of studies, which has relevance to present problem.

Job Stress

The study by Ekta Sharma showed that government doctors experience higher level of stress than private doctors. Government doctors experienced work load and they felt that it affected their quality of work. Private Doctors felt that they do not get time to spend for their other interests or families. Both the government and private doctors felt that they were not able to satisfy the conflicting demands of the people-peers, juniors or bosses. Both felt that they had lack of resources and facilities needed in their role (Ekta Sharma, 2005).

Organizational Role Stress

A study undertaken among top-level nursing executives in all general medical-surgical hospitals in a metropolitan county examined the relationship among role conflict, ambiguity and depression. It also described the major factors for their perceived job-related stress. It showed that there is a relationship between increased role conflicts, increased role ambiguity and increased depressive symptoms. In addition, higher level of depressive symptoms led to lower levels of job satisfaction and higher levels of quality concern stress factor. Finally, overload stress factor was identified as more stressful by all the nursing executives (Cynthia C. Scalzi, 1990).

Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction

The study that was carried out in industrial managers and executives working in different large scale organizations investigated the effect of age on job stress and job satisfaction among managers and executives on different age groups. The findings of this study reveal higher levels of job stress and less job satisfaction among managers and executives who are young adults than the middle-age and the old age groups. The study also found that the age is negatively correlated with occupational stress and positively with job satisfaction (K. Chandraiah, 2003).

Occupational Stress and Job Performance

Occupational stress has an impact on job performance. A study undertaken in an ice cream factory of a multinational organization by Kousar investigated the effects of occupation stress on the job performance of the employees in five different departments (Human Resource department, electrical and chemical

department, stores, engineering department and production department) having different levels of job (managers and executives, executive managers and executives, senior supervisors, supervisors, editors, machine operators, helpers, etc.) and the level of stress. The results indicated that almost same level of stress was experienced by employees in different departments and there was no significant effect of stress on the performance of the employees (Sumaira Kousar, 2006).

3. STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

From the points discussed above, it is crystal clear that stress is unavoidable in a person's life. It is more pronounced when a person is in a managerial position where one wields authority and extracts work from the subordinates, co-ordinates as a team and at the same time bogged down by pressures from top. Limited number of studies is available on the stress experienced by managers in a private concern.

3.1. Objectives

- To assess the stress management techniques followed by the hospital and offer suggestions for reducing stress among the members.
- To assess the relationship between stress and experience, between stress and age.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

The study has been designed to incorporate various aspects that would help us to assess the amount of role stress faced by the managers working in leading hospital in Chennai. The descriptive design of the study would help in identifying the various areas of stress faced by the managers, identification of stressful areas in the roles performed by the managers, selection of instruments for gathering the information, identification of target population and determination of sampling procedure, design of procedure for information collection, collection of information, analysis of information and generalizations and /or predictions to describe accurately the characteristics of the research problem.

4.1. Sampling Design

The population of this study is managers. Since the population is not huge, the whole population of managers was considered as samples for the study which totalled to 120.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the researcher has presented the statistical results applied on the data supported by appropriate tables and diagrams. The frequency distribution of the respondents and the percentage of the respondents have been computed.

Table 1 Age Distribution of Managers

Age Group	Percent
21-30	12
31-40	54
41-50	22
51 & Above	12

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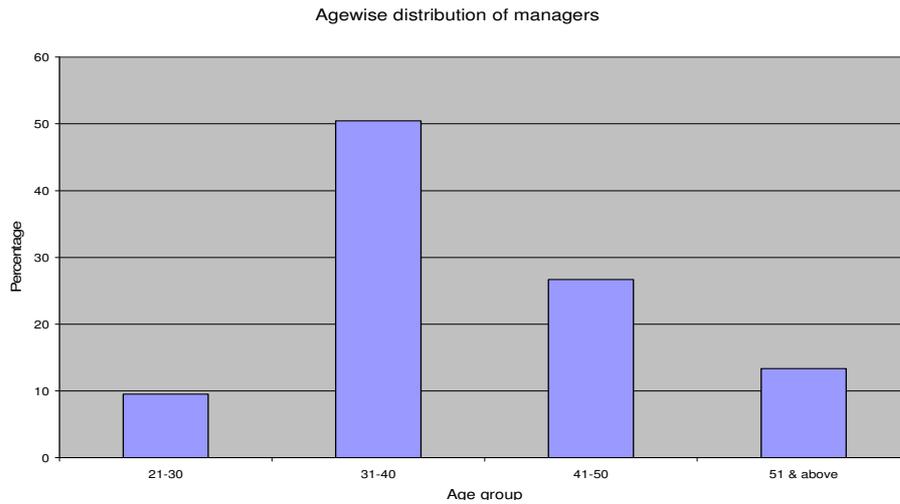


Figure 1

The Figure 1 represents that 10% of the respondents were within the age range of 21-30. The majority of the study population (50%) was in the age group of 31-40. Nearly 27% of the respondents were in the age group of about 41-50. 13% of them were in the age group of 51 and above.

Table 2 Gender Distribution of Managers

Gender	Percent
Male	84
Female	16



Figure 2

The above depicted figure indicated that the study population consisted of majority of men and very low percentage of women. The total percentage of men was about 83%. Among the total sample of 105, only 18 of them were women which constituted 17%.

Table 3 Distribution of Managers by Marital Status

Marital Status	Percent
Married	88
Single	12

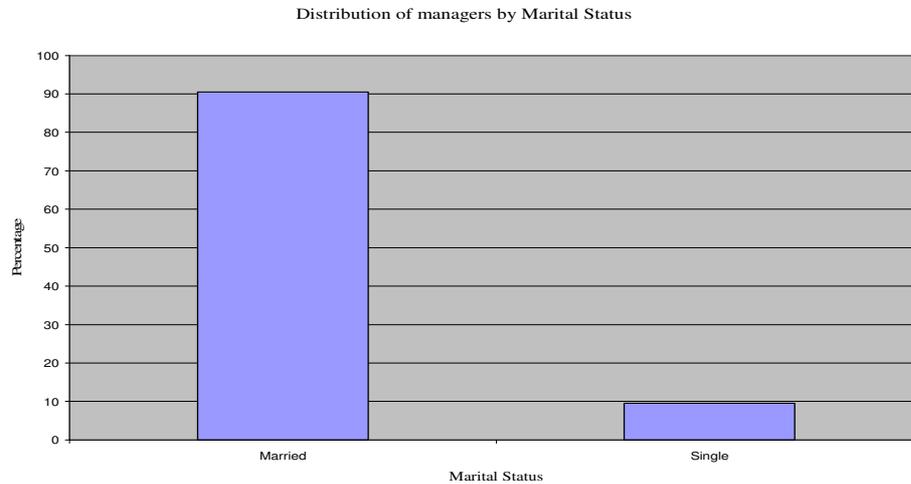


Figure 3

The Figure 3 depicted the distribution of the study population of managers and according to their marital status. The majority of the respondents were married and only a few were unmarried. 90% of the respondents were married and only a minority of about 10% was unmarried.

Table 4 Distribution of Managers by years of experience

Years of Experience	Percent
0-5	52
6-10	28
11-15	8
16 & Above	12



Figure 4

The majority of the respondents (55%) were in the category of 0-5 years of experience as managers. 20% of them have had an experience of 6-10 years. 12% of the respondents were in the range of 11-15 years of experience. The remainder (12%) has had an experience of 16 years and above.

Table 5 Distribution of Managers by total work experience

Work Experience	Percent
0-5	18
6-10	8
11-15	30
16-20	24
21 & above	20

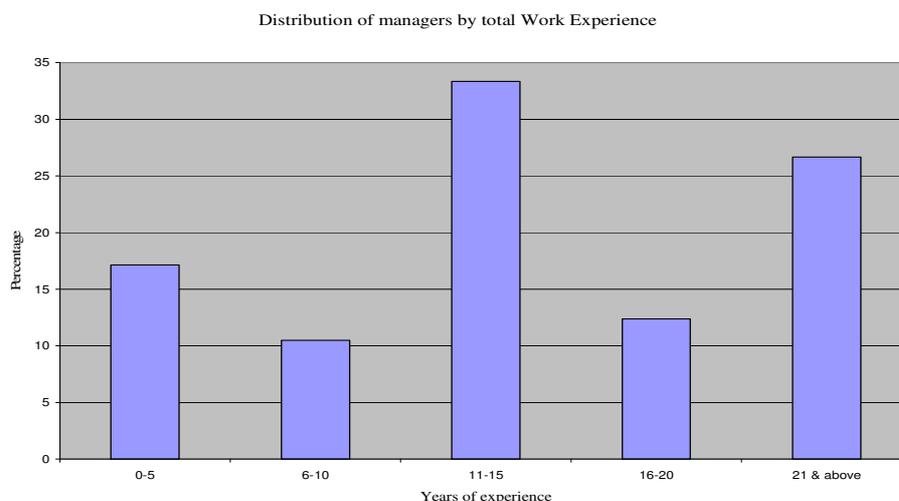


Figure 5

The majority of the respondents (33%) have had a total work experience of about 11-15 years. 27% of them have had an experience of 21 and above years. 17% of the respondents have put in 0-5 years of total work experience. 12% of them have had 16-20 years of work experience. The remainder (10%) has put in 6-10 years of service.

6. FINDINGS

Of the total sample of the study, it is noted that 10% of the sample falls within the age range of 21-30, 50% is in the age group of 31-40, 27% of the sample lies in the age group of about 41-50 and the percentage of sample that falls in the category 51 and above is 13%. In the entire study population, majority of the population is men and very low percentage is women. The total percentage of men is about 83%. Among the total sample of 105, only 18 of them are women which constitutes 17%.

The majority of the sample is married and only a few were unmarried. 90% of the sample is married and only a minority of about 10% is unmarried. The majority of the sample of about 55% falls in the category of 0-5 years of experience as managers. 20% of the sample has an experience of about 6-10 years. 12% of the sample is in the range of 11-15 years of experience. The sample that has about 16 and above years of experience as a manager is nearly 12%.

The majority of the sample of about 33% has total work experience of about 11-15 years. 27% of the sample has an experience of about 21 and above years. 17% of the sample falls in the category of 0-5 years of total experience. 12% of the sample lies in the category of 16-20 years of experience. The sample that has about 6-10 years of experience is 10%. The respondents very often felt that they were not able to spend

time with their family and friends as they did not get time due to the heavy demands of their work role. They felt that their role tends to interfere with their family life. They also felt that their other interests were neglected due to lack of time to attend them.

The respondents were of the opinion that they were not learning enough in their present role to take up higher responsibilities. They also felt that they lack time and opportunities to prepare themselves for future challenges in their present role and they felt stagnated in their role. In the stressor Role Expectation Conflict, the respondents felt that they were not able to satisfy the conflicting demands of various people above them as the most commonly faced situation and they were also bothered with the contradictory expectations different people have from their roles.

In the aspect of Role Erosion, most of the managers felt that many functions that should be a part of their role have been assigned to some other role and they wished to take more challenging tasks. In the aspect Role Overload, it is noted that most of the managers feel that there is a need to reduce some parts of their role. Only few of the managers consider that they have been given too much responsibility or feel overburdened in their role. Under the aspect of Role Isolation, most of the managers felt that other role occupants do not give enough attention and time to their roles and only a few of them wished there should be more consultation between their roles and others' roles.

In the aspect Personal Inadequacy, most of the managers opened that they wish to have prepared themselves well for their role and very few felt that they had more skills to handle the responsibilities of their role. In the aspect Self Role Distance, the sample of managers felt that the work they did in the organization were not related to their interests and also felt that they were unable to use the training and expertise in their roles. In Role ambiguity as a stressor, the managers very often felt that their roles were not defined clearly and in detail. They also felt that the scope and responsibilities of their role are not clear. In the aspect Role Inadequacy, the respondents were of the opinion that they would like to have more financial resources for the work assigned to them. They also opined that they were not given enough resources and did not get the necessary information to be effective in their role.

The role stressors that had emerged as the top three contributors to overall organization role stress are Self-Role Distance, Role Overload and Role Ambiguity. Self-Role Distance (SRD) emerged as the most potent role stressor. Role Overload (RO) was reported as the second most important stressor and Role Ambiguity emerged as the third most potent stressor. However, the female managers felt Self-Role Distance and Role Ambiguity as the most potent role stressors. The sample population with an experience as a manager in the range of 0-5, 6-10 and 11-15 felt Self-Role Distance and Role Overload as the contributory factors to organizational role stress whereas those who had more than 16 years of experience as a manager felt Role Erosion as the contributory factor for organizational role stress. It could be noted that the respondents in the age group of 21-30 felt that Resource Inadequacy is the role stressor encountered by most of them. Those who are between the age group 31-40 and the most experienced age group which falls under the category of 51 & above reported Self-Role Distance as the potent role stressor. The age group 41-50 indicated Role Overload and Self-Role Distance equally as important causes for organizational role stress. The married respondents felt that there is more of Self Role distance. The unmarried respondents felt that there is more of Resource Inadequacy as opposed to the married respondents' view. It is found that there is no perfect positive or negative relation between Marital Status and Inter Role Distance but there is perfect relation between Marital status and Inter Role Distance.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined and clarifications made whenever necessary to eliminate role ambiguity. Training in relaxation techniques and physical fitness or wellness programs should be arranged in order to deal with the various types of stress.
2. Job oriented training programmes should be provided to improve the skills of the managers to face future challenges, boost their confidence to work effectively and thereby alleviate personal inadequacy.
3. Job rotation should be introduced in order to avoid monotony and prevent stress.

4. Opportunities should be made available for career development and growth to manage role stagnation.
5. There should be effective communication, proper interaction and interpersonal relationships developed between and among the respondents to avoid role expectation conflict.
6. Proper grievance handling procedures should be ensured to win the trust and confidence of the managers to reduce their tension related to job related problems.
7. Stress audit should be undertaken in the organization to identify stress areas and improve conditions of job thereby alleviating job stress.

8. CONCLUSION

This study has shown that the managers working in hospitals do feel stress but not in very high levels. They feel the need for change in working systems considering the employee to be given more importance in their area of work thereby giving them the freedom to express their requirements at various levels like career advancements programme etc.

The study has also been an eye opener to see that they felt more of a self role distance as a stressor which means “conflicts of one’s values and self concepts with the requirements of the organizational role”. This also showed the importance given by the respondents to their area of work and at the same time their own principles in their personal life thereby maintaining a healthy working environment. Here it is to be noted that as expressed in the recommendations they would like to have machinery which would help them to express issues that lead to self role distance. Role ambiguity and role overload were also considered as the other key stressors for which recommendations have been made which when implemented and tested upon would be able to bring about better results in performance as well.

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