



A STUDY OF NATURE AND CAUSES OF JOB STRESS AMONG EMPLOYEES OF MANUFACTURING SECTOR IN LUDHIANA

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Abstract

The study investigated the nature and causes of job stress among employees in manufacturing industry in Ludhiana district of Punjab. The target populations comprised all employees working in different manufacturing units in study area. The study used convenient sampling to collect the data responses by using self-administered questionnaire. From the field survey fifty filled questionnaire were collected by researcher. The collected data were analysed by using descriptive statistical tools. The study noticed existence of job stress among employees and different causes of job stress such as extra workload, role ambiguity, role conflict and many others. The study provides implication for different stakeholders to come up with suitable strategies to handle job stress among employees to improve productivity in manufacturing sector.

Keywords: Job Stress, Employee, Manufacturing Sector, Role Ambiguity, Role Conflict, Performance.

Introduction

Stress can be defined as pressure job stress can be elaborated as resistance to come to work and a feeling of continuous pressure. Hence job stress is physical and emotional action that takes place when there is a gap between job requirements, capabilities and resources. Employees performance is an essential element of organization success. Employees performance can be significantly delayed by high levels of stress experienced in the work environment. The employees working in different organizations must deal with stress. Especially, Employees are under great stress due to much antecedents of stress. The stress contributes to decreased organization performance, decreased employee's overall performance, high staff turnover and absence due to health problems. (Islam et al, 2012).

Stress can be defined in general term as people feel pressures in their own life. The stress due to workload can be defined as reluctance to come to work and a feeling of constant pressure associated with general physiological, psychological and behavioural stress symptoms. Hence 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 worker and he/she expressed that job stress can lead to poor health and even injury. impact of stress on employee productivity.

Robbins (2001) defines stress as a dynamic condition in which the individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint, or demand related to what he or she desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and essential. Stress results from a mismatch between the demands and pressures 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 pressures of work exceed 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.

Stress is one of the burning issues that manufacturing sector must deal so that employees can comfortably produce quality work. Stress causes an imbalance in one's life because it leads to depression and thus damages health, attitude and work behaviour. impact of stress on employee productivity. There is also evidence that manufacturing is experiencing role ambiguity. Reported that lack of regular feedback about how well Employees were doing was the highest source of stress. The lack of regular feedback received by manufacturing was reported earlier (Dua, 1994). Feedback is important to enable the Employees to evaluate their performance on the job and how they are progressing in their effort toward task accomplishment. Since positive feedback may serve as reinforcement to the self-efficacy belief that leads to higher performance and less stress, Employees who do not receive regular feedback may experience considerable uncertainty about their role performance. impact of stress on employee productivity.

Objectives of this Study

- To study the nature of job stress perceived by employees of manufacturing sector in Ludhiana.
- To identify the causes of job stress among employees of manufacturing sector in Ludhiana.

Literature Review

Job stress is an unpleasant emotional situation that an individual experience when requirements of a job are not counter balanced with his ability to cope with the situation. It is a well-known phenomenon that expresses itself differently in various work situations and affects the workers differently. Jamshed et al., (2011) suggested that an individual in his or her job in manufacturing organization face stress "The workplace is potentially an important source of stress for Employees because of the amount of time they spent in their respective organizations." Moreover, stress often decreases their performance. "Therefore, occupation of individuals could



be a major source of stress in the given circumstances. When individuals face stress due to various conditions of their occupation and fail to cope with stress, it results in burnout.” Basically, in manufacturing sector lack of administrative support from a boss (manager), work overload & time pressure, riskiness of a job, poor relationship with customers & co-workers, and work-family balance cause stress which in turns decrease employee performance.

The causes of stress are many like workload, cuts in staff, change at work, long work hours, shift work, lack of supervision, inadequate training, inappropriate working conditions, too heavy responsibilities and poor relations with colleagues.” The same was identified by Ganster&Rosen (2013) “huge and multi fields literature points a lot of key factors such as work environment, management support and workload in determining how stressful the work can be and its effect on employee physical and mental health.

According to Bowling and Harvey (2001), stress occurs with the interaction between an individual and the environment, which produces emotional strain affecting a person’s physical and mental condition. Stress is caused by stressors, which are events that create a state of disequilibrium within an individual. These authors also stated that the cost of too much stress on individuals, organizations, and society is high. Many employees may suffer from anxiety disorders or stress-related illnesses. In terms of days lost on the job, it is estimated that each affected employee loses about 16 working days a year because of stress, anxiety or depression.

Ritchie and Martin (1999) states that stress was described in terms of external, usually physical, forces acting on an individual. Later it was suggested that the individual’s perception and response to stimuli or events were a very important factor in determining how that individual might react, and whether an event will be considered stressful. These authors further contended that most researchers acknowledged that both external and internal factors affect stress. They viewed stress as a response to external or internal processes, which reach levels that strain physical and psychological capacities beyond their limit. impact of stress on employee productivity. Thus, it is defined that stress can be experienced from four basic sources. The Environment– the environment can bombard you with intense and competing demands to adjust. Examples of environmental stressors include weather, noise, crowding, pollution, traffic, unsafe environment, and substandard housing, and crime.

Rehman et al. (2010) highlighted that high level of stressors like heavy workload and uncertainty about supervisor’s expectations are associated with physical symptoms. Stress also gets caused when an employee does not fulfil the demand of job and supervisor (Schnall, 2011) Excessive workload and conflicting expectations are the good examples of working conditions. 40 percent of workers reported that their job is extremely stressful. In the U.S., 80 percent of American workers feel stress on their job.

Earlier studies have shown different factors associated with occupational stress. For example, work overload that refers to when the employees’ role expectations exceed the resources or time available to fulfil assigned responsibilities. According to Manzoor (2011), there are several factors which cause stress in employees at job and these factors are job timings, pay, bonus, workload and peer attitude. Badar (2011) states workload, technological problems, higher targets, compensation and salary, outcomes of decisions, management and peer support behaviour, longer time frame are the main factors of causing stress in employees. Dar et al. (2011) assume that with increase in designation, stress increases and factors of creating stress in employees are feeling undervalued, work home interface, fear of joblessness, traumatic incidents at work and economic instability. impact of stress on employee productivity. Inflexible work hours, work overload, risky job and poor co-worker relations are the main contributors to job stress, which create dissatisfaction among the employees’ impact of stress on employee productivity

Some studies observed that role conflict refers to incompatible requirements and expectations that the employees receive from their supervisor or co-worker. An individual must interact hold conflicting expectations about that individual’s behaviour. Luthans (2002) differentiates three major types of role conflict. One type is the conflict between the person and the role. For example, a production worker and a member of a union are appointed to head up a new production team. This new team leader may not really believe in keeping close control over the workers and it would go against this individual’s personality to be hardnosed but that is what the head of production would expect. The second type of interpersonal role conflict creates contradictory expectations about how a given role should be played. Finally, inter-role conflict results from differing requirements of two or more roles that must be played at the same time. For example, work roles and non-work roles are often in such conflict.

Zhou and George(2001) stated that the role arises when more demands have been taken place upon the individual by the peers, supervisors, subordinates. Such type of stress is more dominant in the jobs which have lack of descriptions or unclear descriptions and these require conceptual thinking and decision making. impact of stress on employee productivity. Thus, the stated that role ambiguity is another factor that leads to job stress; thus, it occurs when the expectations, objectives, responsibilities have not been clearly designed for employees. Malik (2011) stated that the employees become ambivalent to predict their supervisor’s reactions to their tasks as “success” or as “failure.” Finally, long hours, work overload, time pressure, difficult or complex tasks, lack of breaks, lack of variety and poor work conditions (for example, space, temperature, light) are causes of occupational stress.



Research Methodology

The present research adopted descriptive research design. Descriptive research is a design to depict the participants in an accurate way. This design was considered appropriate because it allows to collect relevant data on the research variables and analyses them using the appropriate techniques. It also allows to examine the existing job stress among employees of selected manufacturing organization and its causes.

Both primary and secondary data used in this research. The source of secondary data was the internet, articles, and books and the source of primary data was a questionnaire. Closed-ended questionnaires were designed for the respondents. The questionnaires were divided into various sections to capture the critical areas spelled out in the objectives for the study.

The target population is the organizations dealing with different manufacturing industries in Ludhiana district of Punjab. The sample population is a subset of the entire population, and inferential statistics is to generalize from the sample to the population. A sample size of fifty respondents was conveniently used for the study. It is noted that analyses are best when conducted on samples that are still fresh. Therefore, sampling was used to select a portion of the population to represent the entire population. He emphasizes the need for a researcher to select a sample from which he wishes to seek information, using appropriate sampling Techniques. Convenience sampling was used to distribute the questionnaire to the respondent employees. The questionnaire was divided in three parts covering background information questions in part one, nature of job stress experience in part two and causes of job stress in respective organization of employee respondents.

The questions were thoroughly explained to the respondents after copies of the questionnaire were handed to them. The purpose was to help the respondents understand the relevance of the research and provide their independent views on the questionnaire items given to them. The collected data was analysed by using descriptive statistical tool such as frequency and percent analysis followed by use of average (mean) score and standard deviation.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The first part of this section described about demographic and background information of employee respondents. The second part explains nature of job stress and third part highlight causes of job stress as perceived by employees of selected organization in study area. Frequency analysis is used to show the trends in respondents. Frequency analysis provides in detail information about the respondent's age, gender, tenure, working profile in the organization. This information is expressed in percentage.

Table I: Profile of respondents

Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Male	43	86.0	86.0	86.0
	Female	7	14.0	14.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	
Age		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	25 to 34 years	29	58.0	58.0	58.0
	45 to 54 years	2	4.0	4.0	62.0
	35 to 44 years	19	38.0	38.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	
Experience		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	6 months-1 year	14	28.0	28.0	28.0
	1 to 3 years	11	22.0	22.0	50.0
	3 to 7 years	25	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	
Work profile		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Technical	7	14.0	14.0	14.0



Administrative	8	16.0	16.0	30.0
Production	25	50.0	50.0	80.0
Others	10	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

This table shows the respondents division according to the gender. It shows that majority of respondents (86%) are male and (14%) respondents are females. This implies that Manufacturing sector of Study region is not biased in its employment but rather than male dominating over their female counterparts. impact of stress on employee productivity. This table shows the respondents division according to age. The table shows that 58% respondents belong to age bracket of 25-34, 38% belong to the age bracket of 35-34 and 4% respondents belong to the age bracket of 45-54. This means that the manufacturing sector also have young people in the service and are ready to serve for long time provided they are motivated enough to stay. This table shows the respondents division according to tenure. The researcher revealed that 50% of worker had experience between 3 to 7 years, 22% had 1 to 3-year experience and only 28% had 6 months to 1-year service. This indicates that most of worker is experienced. This table shows the respondents division of respondents according to their working profile in their respective organizations, the data analysis highlighted that 14% of employees were working in technical department in their respective organization, 16% were from administrative job positions. Half of the respondents (50%) were from production department of selected manufacturing organization and remaining 10% were working in other departments including human resource, accounts & finance, sales & marketing and purchase & store departments.

Nature of Job Stress

The present section of the chapter highlights the nature and causes of job stress being experienced by the employees in manufacturing industry in Ludhiana. The nature and causes of job stress were measured by using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The descriptive statistics was applied to understand and observe the result of nature of job stress and causes of job stress.

The results in the table indicate that most employees strongly agree that they are not certain about what their future career picture looks like (Mean= 4.8042, SD=0.2396). Most employees agree that they are not satisfied with the work at the organization and would look for a job elsewhere (Mean= 3.6042, SD = 0.9620) and they also agree that there are many complains and grievances going on around the organization (Mean=3.7410, SD= 1.0327). Similarly, the employees agree that they do not attend work on a daily basis and in time (Mean= 3.9401, SD=0.7624). Additionally, they also agree that they experience headaches, sweats, dizziness or light headedness while at work (Mean=3.7124, SD=1.2308) and they also agree that they rarely talk to the bosses or co-workers whenever they have a personal problem (Mean=3.9104, SD=1.23369). However, majority employees are uncertain whether their performance is not satisfactory in the organization (Mean=3.2018, SD=1.0327). Most respondents disagree that they have been diagnosed with any illness for the last 12 months (Mean= 2.5673, SD= 1.3456) and also strongly disagree to having had a job accident for the last 6 months (Mean= 1.8630, SD=1.6024).

Table II: Mean score of nature of job stress among employees

Nature of Stress	Mean	Std. Dev.
I am not satisfied with the work at the organization and would look for a job elsewhere	3.6042	0.9620
There are many complains and grievances going around in the organization	3.7410	1.0327
My job performance is not satisfactory or is getting worse	3.2048	1.0238
I do not attend work on a daily basis and in time	3.9401	0.7624
I am not certain about what my future career picture looks like	4.8042	0.2396
I always experience headaches, sweats, dizziness or light-headedness while at work	3.7124	1.2308
For the last 12 months, I have been diagnosed with an illness	2.5673	1.3456
For the last 6 months, I have had a job accident	1.8630	1.6024
I rarely talk to my boss or co-workers whenever I have personal problems	3.9104	1.23369

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that uncertainty about what the future career picture looks like the most prevalent indicator of stress among the employees of the manufacturing organizations because it implies job insecurity. The willingness to look for jobs elsewhere by the employees imply high labour turnover which is also an indicator of stress in the manufacturing organizations. Additionally, it is evident that the employees are stressed due to the fact that there are many complains and grievances in the manufacturing organizations. Withdrawal tendencies as an indicator of stress is also present among the



organization employees because the rarely talk to their bosses or co-workers whenever they have personal problems. Absenteeism as an indicator of stress is also very evident due to the fact that employees do not attend work on a daily basis and in time. Besides, the fact that most of them experience stress symptoms such as headaches and dizziness further ascertain the existence of stress among them. The issue of decrease in performance cannot be ascertained to be an indicator of stress in the factories because the employees are uncertain about its occurrence in the factories. The occurrence of illnesses and accidents is not an indicator of stress in the factories.

Causes of Job Stress

Table III: Causes of job stress among employees

Causes of stress	Mean	Std. Dev.
The organization does not utilize all my potential in terms of skills and experience	3.6179	1.24634
I am not able to complete the work assigned to me on a daily basis in time	3.6328	1.21053
The organization does not offer me a variety of tasks such that I do not have to do repetitive tasks every now and then	3.4030	1.24526
I am not treated equally with my colleagues in terms of opportunities for growth	3.6418	1.25298
I am dissatisfied with the remuneration I receive from my work	3.9925	1.06550
The organization leaders do not respect me or ask for my opinion before making any major decisions	4.1343	.97171
My job requires a great deal of concentration and remembrance of many different things	2.7910	1.26891
My job requires me to work very fast and hard with little time to do it	2.6045	1.16347
My supervisor and colleagues rarely go out of their way to make life easier for me	3.8134	1.14490
The level of noise in the areas in which I work is usually high	4.2985	1.01884
The level of lighting in the area in which I work is usually poor	3.5373	1.10812
The temperature of my work area is usually uncomfortable	3.6567	1.11790
The level of air circulation in my work area is poor	3.6791	1.07326
In my job, I am well protected from exposure to dangerous substances	3.1045	1.04787
My job exposes me to verbal abuse and or confrontations with clients or the general public	2.6821	1.85881
My job exposes me to physical harm or injury	4.4104	1.13199
My job personally exposes me to potential legal liability	2.2612	.97278
The overall quality of the physical environment where I work	3.7776	1.05998

The results above clarify that majority respondents agree that the organization does not utilize all their potential in terms of skills and experience and also agree that they are not able to complete the work assigned to them in time with Mean=3.617, SD=1.2463 and Mean=3.6328, SD=1.2105 respectively. In addition, the respondents generally agree that they are not treated equally with their colleagues in terms of opportunity for growth (Mean=3.6418, SD=1.2529). Furthermore, the respondents almost unanimously agree that they are dissatisfied with the remuneration that they receive from their work (Mean=3.9, SD=0.1655) and also strongly agree that the organization leaders do not respect them or ask for their opinions before making any major decisions (Mean 4.1343, SD= 0.9717). There is a general agreement by the employees that their supervisors and colleagues rarely go out of their way to make life easier for them (Mean= 3.8134, SD= 1.1449) and they also strongly agree that the noise in the areas that they usually work is high (Mean= 4.2985, SD=1.0181). Moreover, they agree that the temperatures in their work areas is usually uncomfortable (Mean=3.6567, SD=1.1179) and the case is similar regarding whether the level of air circulation in their work areas is poor (Mean= 3.6791, SD=1.0732). Besides, the same majority strongly agree that their job exposes them to physical harm or injury (Mean=4.4104, SD=1.1319) and also agree that the overall quality of the physical environment where they work is poor (Mean= 3.7776, SD=1.0599).

On the other hand, however, most respondents are uncertain regarding the issue of the organization not offering them a variety of tasks such that they do not have to do repetitive tasks every now and then (Mean=3.4030, SD=1.2452). Similarly, the issues of whether the employees are well protected from exposure to dangerous substances and whether their job exposes them to verbal abuse and confrontation with clients or public are met with uncertainty as shown by (Mean=3.1045, SD= 1.0478) and (Mean= 2.6821, SD= 1.8588) respectively. Additionally, they are uncertain whether the lighting in the areas they work is usually poor (Mean= 3.5373, SD=1.1081) It is also noteworthy that majority respondents are uncertain whether their job requires a great deal of concentration and remembrance of many different things (Mean=2.7910, SD= 1.2689). Similarly, the respondents are also uncertain if their job requires them to think very fast and hard with little time to do it (Mean=2.6045, SD=1.1634). The employees disagree that their job personally exposes them to potential legal liability (Mean= 2.2612, SD=0.9727).



The above analysis makes it evident that the employees are faced by various issues that cause stress and elevate the indicators of stress. For instance, the employees feel underutilized and are not able to complete their assignments in time which means that they lack motivation yet they are faced with high workload which in turn strains them leading to stress. Additionally, the employees generally feel that they are not treated equally with their colleagues, the organization leaders neither respect them nor ask for their opinions before making major decisions and they are dissatisfied with the remuneration they receive from their work. To make matters worse, the supervisors and colleagues do not go out of their way to make life easier for the respondents which implies poor employee relations that further cause stress.

The issue of poor working conditions also stands out in the manufacturing organizations. This is shown by the high levels of noise, uncomfortable temperatures, poor levels of air circulation, exposure of employees to physical harm or injury and poor physical environment of the areas where they work. This means that the environmental disturbances in terms of noise, heat, cold, strong fumes and paranoia of impending injury are what the employees are faced with each working day and under such, stress is definitely inevitable.

However, some of the causes of stress stipulated in the research tool do not entirely apply in the manufacturing organizations because they were met with uncertainty the employees. This means that they could be there or not and at this point they cannot be verified. Among these includes whether the organization offers the employees a variety of tasks such that they do not have to do repetitive tasks every now and then, whether their jobs require a great deal of concentration, whether their jobs require them to work very fast with little time to do it, whether the level of lighting in the areas they work is poor, whether they are well protected from exposure to dangerous substances and whether their jobs exposes them to verbal abuse and confrontations with clients or the general public.

However, it is clear that exposure to legal liability is not a cause of stress in the manufacturing organizations. It is important to note that the observations above do not generally apply across the board in the respondent base. This is because most of the standard deviations are more than 1 ($SD \geq 1$) which implies that there is lack of consensus in the various views. This could be explained by the different job descriptions in the job categories and also the personalities which dictate how far one can cope with stress.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the data analysed, it was found out that majority of the employees were suffering from some type of stresses the researcher studied. The response from the employees showed that at least one of the conditions that pertain to each of the stresses was prevailing in a respondent. Respondents who are suffering from each of these stresses shared that they are not in their desired field of the job or field, there were excessive demands of task from their supervisors, they panic at least situation and feeling of depression at the work place. Some respondents again reported the feeling of anxiousness by performing a certain task at a work place, easily provoked at least situation, being involved in an accident at the work place, performing multiple task at a time and few of them reported sexual harassment. Lack of direction can prove stressful, especially for people who are low in their tolerance for such ambiguity. These unclear roles may involve expectations for behaviour or performance level. These were the factor that leads to the causes of the main stresses as identified by the researcher and was found present in employees of selected organization in study area. Based on empirical findings, it is concluded that job stress is a real challenge for employees' who are working in the manufacturing sector and have a negative effect on job environment and decreased the employees' performance.

Based on the findings of the research, it is recommended that the following measures be put in place to help employees of manufacturing sector manage and reduce stress on their work. The managers need to explore the causes of the dissatisfaction of employees within the working environment and try to handle such factors so that they can give employees with job maturity and control over their job. Furthermore, the leaders should facilitate an employee skill audit that will help to place employees that feel underutilized. Management should introduce stress management technique at their organization so that productivity level increases.

Area of the present study can explore some other factor that contributes to occupational sector and finds out the ways to resolve the lecturer's stress effectively. Other demographic details can be added in the future research and various other statistical tests can be used for comprehensive analysis & findings.

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