

OCCUPATION AND MENTAL HEALTH: STRESS MANAGEMENT UNDER WORK PRESSURE

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**Abstract:** Stress management in the organization is focused on the prevention of stress in the workplace, the development and application of methods for neutralizing the negative effects of stress, the development of technologies for the rapid recovery of strength and staff performance. Work and professional stress can deplete human resources and lead to a decrease in productivity, mobility and dynamism of the strategic development of the organization. Thus, the objective of this article is to review past research studies to discuss occupational restlessness and suggest potential means to support employee wellbeing.

**Key words:** *stress, work pressure, external environment, types of stress, emotional distress, stressful environment, stress management*

**Introduction**

The workspace has changed significantly due to the addition of a number of psychological, socio-economic and technological factors. This is due both to the growth and expansion of information and communication technologies, the increase in the requirements for the professionalism of employees, and the simultaneous increase in the complexity and number of tasks, the expansion of the functions and skills required by the employer, the intensity of communications and the increased requirements for the speed of decision-making. A significant increase in the risk of psychological stress, occupational diseases and the instability of the human factor in modern organizations has led to the emergence of such a direction as stress management. A high level of organizational stress leads to an increase in the level of conflict relationships in the team, the emergence of psychosomatic diseases (Fortes, Tian, & Huebner, 2020).

Human mind and body experience mental distress due to many factors. Any kind of occurrence, whether favorable or unfavorable, has the potential to produce stress, which is a natural aspect of life. Although it is common to believe that stress can be harmful for an individual, not all the stress is damaging. For instance, in challenging situations a fair amount of stress can be an effective source of drive to complete a certain task.

Workplace stress, on the other hand, can be short-term or long-term, mild or severe in time and intensity. Confronting work stress weakens people both physically and psychologically. Emotionally drained workers withdraw from work and begin to feel helpless. The most stressful are the professions associated with the provision of various types of assistance: medical and social workers, teachers, dispatchers, rescuers.

**Physical and psychological aspects of stress**

Physiological stress is caused by exposure to some stimulus through some sensory or metabolic process. Psychological stress is of two types: informational and emotional. Informational stress arises in situations of information overload, when a person cannot cope with a task, does not have the energy to make a decision, etc. Emotional stress arises in situations of threat, danger, resentment, etc. The term "emotional stress" has undergone a number of transformations in the scientific literature, similar to those that the term "stress" has undergone. Initially, emotional stress was understood as a situation that generates strong emotions. The concept of stress has attracted the attention of specialists in the development of human life regimes in extreme conditions. Being fascinated by the study of manifestations of stress that are extremely unfavorable for the body, they used this term to designate those adaptive emotional reactions that accompanied physiological and psychophysiological changes

85	ISSN 2277-3630 (online), Published by International journal of Social Sciences & Interdisciplinary Research., under Volume: 12 Issue: 05 in May-2023 <a href="https://www.gejournal.net/index.php/IJSSIR">https://www.gejournal.net/index.php/IJSSIR</a>
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that were harmful to the body. Accordingly, emotional stress was understood as affective experiences that accompany stress and lead to adverse changes in the human body. When information was accumulated about the existence of a wide range of physiological and mental reactions that are similar in negative and positive emotional experiences, that is, that the non-specific manifestations of stress proper are combined with specifically differentiated emotions, “emotional stress” began to be understood as a wide range of changes in mental manifestations, accompanied by pronounced nonspecific changes in biochemical, electrophysiological and other correlates of stress (Crum, Jamieson, & Akinola, 2020).

Psychological stress, much more than biological, depends on the individual psychological characteristics of a person, and its characteristics are less rigidly and unequivocally imposed by the specifics of external influences. The individual severity of stress, in particular its adverse manifestations, to a large extent depends on a person's awareness of his responsibility for himself, for others, for everything that occurs in extreme conditions, on the psychological attitude to one or another of his roles. Today, the role of stress in somatic pathology seems to be not only wider, but also more complex. Researchers believe that even if the disease is caused by purely physical factors, it, in turn, serves as a source of emotional stress. Thus, one third of patients who visit a general practitioner have symptoms of depression, and approximately 20% of hospitalized patients can be diagnosed with depressive neurosis (Lea et al, 2019). Without a doubt, emotional factors can, in turn, influence the course of the disease, its severity and outcome, which means that the study of somatic pathology and psychological factors is inseparable.

Thus, psychological stress is a special mental state characterized by non-specific systemic changes in the activity of the human psyche, expressing its organization and mobilization in connection with the increased demands of the new situation that have arisen. Psychological stress cannot be identical to physiological, since it has its own psychological characteristics, it can occur independently, as well as initiate and change biological stress.

Stress is a natural reaction that helps to prepare for difficult and dangerous situations. The stress response starts in the brain. Positive stress allows an individual to act or react quickly. A certain level of stress can contribute to success in achieving a goal, such as taking an exam, passing a job interview, or competing in a sport. But prolonged, intense, or chronic stress can take its toll on a person. When the body is repeatedly or constantly in a state of high alert, an individual can suffer physically, mentally, and emotionally. Due to chronic stress, a person can turn to alcohol, take drugs, abuse drugs, overeat, smoke, and indulge in other bad habits. It can even cause a person to become depressed, depressed, or have suicidal thoughts (Steenbergen et al, 2021).

Although it differs from person to person, stress can lead to a wide range of illnesses. Regardless of how much people are pleased with their jobs there may be some encounters of work stress at some point. Anxiety and tension at work can be brought on by schedules, coworkers, deadlines, and the fear of getting fired, and etc. A little stress is motivating and necessary to achieve goals, but if it is constant, it can lead to health issues, problems with interpersonal relationships, and poor job performance. It is for this reason that learning how to cope with stress at work can be of great help, both at work and in personal life.

### **Stress in the workforce**

Job stress refers to a state of tension that occurs when a person experiences a conflict between the demands of the work environment and their ability to cope with them. Factors that cause stress at work vary depending on the specific situation. For example, frequent night shifts, no overtime pay, cooperation with other employees, and mutual understanding between colleagues (Fortes, Tina, & Huebner, 2020). Stress and nervous breakdowns can be inevitable when organizing team projects with colleagues who have different points of view and are likely to act accordingly. Technology advancements and workplace improvements also increase stress. New and upgraded hardware, or a

new management-installed system cannot make it simpler to work. Due to these issues, reducing stress at work requires more than just improving individuals' skills through specialized training and courses.

A response to professional stress can be professional burnout, which manifests itself in emotional exhaustion, a feeling of fatigue, exhaustion of emotional resources. An important difference between burnout and fatigue is the fact that when tired, a person can restore their physical and mental strength, and when burned out, this process can be irreversible.

Stress can be related to heat, cold, noise, lack of light and fresh air in the workplace and generally poor working conditions. If your workplace is there, you work all day or spend 8-12 hours on your feet - stress and depression are presented to you. Organization - first of all. First, think about your schedule of responsibilities. It is important to know what you need to do during the day and how much time it will take you. This is where a notebook comes in handy. And don't miss anything and prioritize your personal affairs and appointments.

### **Stress management at work**

The structure and functioning of the workplace determine the way people communicate with each other and the outcome of their work. If the work environment does not recognize the human aspects of work, the risk of burnout increases. The burnout of an individual worker says more about the conditions of his work than about the person himself. The opposite of burnout is energy, commitment to work and the team, and efficiency. People usually start a new job with enthusiasm. In the classic case, burnout affects competent and talented people.

The process of stress management occurs in three basic areas:

- prevention of stress factors;
- reduction of tension from stress factors that cannot be eliminated;
- organization of a system for overcoming the effects of stress factors.

Stress management at the organization level involves changing the organizational climate and anti-stress support for employees within the framework of special programs. The great importance at this level is the understanding of the negative effects of stress. The management of the organization and HR specialists can organize stress monitoring and develop measures to minimize, mitigate and prevent the consequences of stress factors (Rasool et al, 2020).

The formation of a favorable organizational climate is one of the primary tasks of effective stress management in an organization, because such a climate is perhaps the best prevention of stress in general. If a stressful situation arises, the climate in the organization can either increase its impact or transform negative reactions of the staff into positive ones (Rasool et al, 2020). Interestingly, difficult situations can have a beneficial effect on team cohesion and enhance its creative potential. Based on this fact, the management of many organizations today takes all measures to create an atmosphere of trust and respect for each other within their teams, and this applies not only to employees of the same levels - constructive relationships are built between managers and subordinates. However, creating the right favorable climate is not an easy task, and "little things" that seem insignificant at first glance play a huge role in solving it. Therefore, to achieve this goal, it is possibly effective to use special methods:

- organization of a feedback system using corporate means of communication (website, mail);
- involvement of employees in making important decisions for the organization (reorganization of the structure, refinement of the technological process, etc.);
- application of command and project forms of labor organization.

Another factor of stress management at the organizational level should also be mentioned. It is to provide staff with more responsibility for the results of their activities. But this factor will act only in

conjunction with a clear distribution of functionality and workload, which can prevent both insufficient workload and work overload (Molek-Winiarska & Molek-Kozokowska, 2020). If employees decide for themselves what and how to do during work, the negative effects of stress can decrease significantly. However, in practice, this is very difficult to implement, although there are still some ways. For example, scheduled meetings to discuss tasks with each specific unit.

**Conclusion**

Stress is a common phenomenon not only in life but also at work. A huge number of cases and tasks, plans and reports, management requirements, proper performance of our duties, related problems and troubles - these are just a small part of the array of stress factors that can affect individuals. However, there are very few studies that focus on the perspectives on prioritizing work stress. Therefore, future studies should be conducted to explore stress-management intervention at organizations using evidence-based methods.

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