

Impact of Stress on Employees

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Abstract— this paper attempts to focus on the relationship between stress and optimism in the media industry. Career is an important aspect of life and professional stress is becoming a part of this journey. Media professionals are no exception. The National Advertising Benevolent Society (NABS) released a study which highlights that 23% professionals in the creative and media sector are amongst the most stressed. Stress has been defined “the rate of all wear and tear caused by life.” It can be positive and negative. There are various causes of stress at work. Stress is also caused due to different external factors. Coping with stress can be complicated and confusing. Optimism conveys the driving force to propel one towards handling stress. It has its ramifications in the industry at large and towards the improvement of well-being, hope and resilience at an individual level. Optimists also appear to fare better in handling stress.

Keywords- Stress, Optimism, Industry

I. INTRODUCTION

Career is an important aspect of life and professional stress is becoming a part of this journey. Media professionals are no exception. Stress at workplace is like a black hole, once one stumbles across it, one is sucked in. Media sector in India is one of the most stressed industries despite the advances. Technological innovation has made media professionals more edgy as they have to work under faster deadlines and dynamic work environment. Coping with these changes have resulted in stress for the media professionals.

The National Advertising Benevolent Society (NABS) released a study which highlights that 23% of professionals in the creative and media sector are among the most stressed. Also another major point that was highlighted was, two-thirds (65%) reach a point where they are unable to cope. It was noted that 84% of employees of the media and advertising sector felt that their jobs had become very demanding over the last year. There is a firm relation between profession-related stress and performance and there is evidence to support that the stress affects organizational and individual productivity (Bradley & Sutherland, 1994).

Ito1 Help.net, a professional counseling company conducted a study, on “Mental Health Status of Employees in Corporate India”, reported that 80% of the respondents, who showed signs of anxiety and 55 % with symptoms of depression reached out for professional help after about a year. Long term stress due to work was identified as triggers of mental illness.

Broadcast stresses cover a broad range including “stresses produced by deadlines uncooperative news sources, difficulty reporting assignments, etc” (Weaver and Wilhoit, 1991, p, 20).

Other television stresses include time constraints (condensed stories), travel demands, ratings, cable and satellite service competition, increased workload(due to staff and expenses downsizing- a result of budget cuts), and “substantially more reliance on local affiliates to cover the (network-level)news” (Fensch, 1993,p,2). Corporate ownership and new technology brought change and “enormous pressures”(Jones, 1993).In addition, local stations are experiencing budget cuts and increased reporting responsibilities due to satellite access (Small, 1993)News programs are influenced by the station owners’ objective to earn advertising profits”- which in turn are dependent on good rating that attract sponsors (Jones, 1993; Whitworth, 1993). Added pressure is placed on news personalities who are judged by their looks, vocal tones, and “on-camera charm” (Zoglin,1993).

Weaver and Wilhoit (1991), added that besides, concern regarding appearance, stresses like deadlines and demanding reporting assignments many men and women end their careers in their forties.

II. STRESS

Stress is defined as “a state of psychological and physiological imbalance resulting from the disparity between situational demand and the individual's ability and motivation to meet those needs.” According to **Dr. Hans Selye**, one of the leading authorities on the concept of stress, defined stress as “the rate of all wear and tear caused by life.”

Stress can be positive or negative:

1. Stress is good when the situation offers an opportunity to a person to gain something. It acts as a motivator for peak performance.

2. Stress is negative when a person faces social, physical, organizational and emotional problems. There are various factors that are accountable for causing stress.

Causes of Stress at Work Place

The various reasons that lead to stress at work or in organization [11]:



1. **Career Concern:** The reason for this type of stress is because of competitive culture prevailing within the system for example if an individual or an employee thinks that he/she is lagging much behind in the corporate ladder, thus he/she may experience stress or if he/she thinks that there are no openings for him for further growth, then he/she may experience stress. Hence, unsatisfied career prospects are the important reasons of stress.
2. **Role Ambiguity:** It is a situation in which the person is confused and he doesn't know what he is supposed to do, on the job or business. 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 results in stress[11].
3. **Rotating Work Shifts:** Under this situation an individual may experience stress due to different work shifts. The individual or an employee may have to work for few days on day shift and later on the night shift. The change in timings might create problems for employee as he/she might not be able to adjust his personal and professional life as per the timings.
4. **Role Conflict:** Every individual has particular role to perform in his personal as well as professional life. Often it happens that person is expected to perform a particular role which is against his moral values. Thus there is a role conflict which creates stress.

5. **Occupational Demands:** Certain jobs are more challenging than others. Jobs which involve risk, and danger are supposed to give more stress. Thus according to various researches job that leads to stress needs constant monitoring of equipments and devices, unpleasant physical conditions, making decisions, etc.

6. **Lack of Participation in Decision-making:** Quite often it has been observed that in professional life higher authorities or management takes decision regarding senior employees without consulting them which creates a feeling of negligence thus leads to stress.

7. **Work Overload:** Extreme workload on an individual leads to stress as it puts a person under terrific pressure. Work overload may take two different forms:

- Qualitative work overload implies performing a job that is complicated or beyond the employee's capacity.
- Quantitative work overload is a result of many activities performed in a prescribed time.

8. **Work Underload:** Under this very less work or extremely easy work given to an employee results in underutilization of its capacities and the employee feels neglected and bored, which can lead to stress.

9. **Poor Working Conditions:** If an employee work under poor working conditions which include bad lighting and freshening, unhygienic sanitation facilities, excessive noise, and dust, presence of toxic gasses 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:** Under this situation employees working under the same department does not have any respect for each other, trust doesn't prevails, no group work, no unity among the department. There are frequent quarrels and jealousy among the employees exists. Thus it leads to high degree of stress in an individual which results in quitting of the job.

11. **Interpersonal and Intergroup Conflict:** This type of situation occurs when there is difference in insight, morals, ethics and beliefs among different group of individuals.

12. **Organizational Changes:** As per human nature people resist to adapt changes whether at workplace or personal life. Thus it becomes a major cause of stress.

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.

Causes of Stress outside the Work Place



1. **Civic Amenities:** [11] The reason for this type of stress is improper public amenities in the locality in which an individual lives. The public amenities might include improper connectivity, lack of power supply, water facilities and existence of air and noise pollution.
2. **Life Changes:** The various changes in the life of an individual are also a cause of stress. It might include parents getting older and their dependency increases, sudden accident or death within the family. The acceptance of this natural cause sometimes becomes very difficult and leads to stress.
3. **Frustration:** Every individual has certain set goals and works accordingly to accomplish them. If certain obstacles or hurdles come in the completion of the set goals then the individual gets irritated and thus it leads to frustration and stress.
4. **Racial, Caste, and Religious Conflicts:** Employees living in areas, which are often prone to conflicts among people based on differences seen in their race, caste and religion do suffer more from stress. In the case of a religion, the minorities and lower-caste people (especially in India) are subject to more stress.
5. **Personality:** The personality of individuals can be classified as 'Type A' and 'Type B'. The 'Type A' people:
 1. They feel guilty while relaxing.
 2. They get irritated by minor mistakes of self and others.
 3. They feel impatient and dislike waiting.
 4. They also multitask and prefer to do several things at one time.

The 'Type B' people are exactly opposite and hence are less affected by stress due to the above factors. [11]

Technological Changes: When there are any changes in technical fields, employees are under the constant fear of losing jobs or need to adjust to new technologies. It can be a source of stress.

Career Changes: When a person suddenly switches to another job, he is under stress to shoulder new responsibilities adequately. Under-promotion, over-promotion, demotion and transfers can also cause stress.

Various Stress Relievers

Following habits can remarkably help to relieve stress:

- Regular meditation,
- Physical exercise,
- Balanced diet,
- Focused thinking,
- Control of anger,
- Managing Depression,
- Maintaining calmness in stressful situations,
- Having a positive attitude towards life,
- Harmony towards self and others, etc.

Types of Stress

Stress management can be complicated and confusing because there are different types of stress — acute stress, episodic acute stress, and chronic stress — each with its own characteristics, symptoms, duration and treatment approaches.

Acute stress

Acute stress is the most common form of stress. It comes from demands and pressures of the recent past and anticipated demands and pressures of the near future. Acute stress is thrilling and exciting in small doses, but too much is exhausting. A fast run down a challenging ski slope, for example, is exhilarating early in the day. That same ski run late in the day is taxing and wearing. Skiing beyond your limits can lead to falls and broken bones. By the same token, overdoing on short-term stress can lead to psychological distress, tension headaches, upset stomach and other symptoms.

Fortunately, acute stress symptoms are recognized by most people. It's a laundry list of what has gone awry in their lives: the auto accident that crumpled the car fender, the loss of an important contract, a deadline they're rushing to meet, and their child's occasional problems at school and so on.

Because it is short term, acute stress doesn't have enough time to do the extensive damage associated with long-term stress. The most common symptoms are:

- Emotional distress — some combination of depression, irritability or anger, anxiety and the three stress emotions.
- Muscular problems including tension headache, back pain, jaw pain and the muscular tensions that lead to pulled muscles and tendon and ligament problems.
- Stomach, gut and bowel problems such as heartburn, acid stomach, flatulence, diarrhea, constipation and irritable bowel syndrome.
- Transient over arousal leads to elevation in blood pressure, rapid heartbeat, sweaty palms, heart palpitations, dizziness, migraine headaches, cold hands or feet, shortness of breath and chest pain.

Acute stress can crop up in anyone's life, and it is highly treatable and manageable.

Episodic acute stress

There are those, however, who suffer acute stress frequently, whose lives are so disordered that they are studies in chaos and crisis. They're always in a rush, but always late. If something can go wrong, it does. They take on too much, have too many irons in the fire, and can't organize the slew of self-inflicted demands and pressures clamoring for their attention. They seem perpetually in the clutches of acute stress. It is common for people with acute stress reactions to be over aroused, short-tempered, irritable, anxious and tense. Often, they describe themselves as having "a lot of nervous energy." Always in a hurry, they tend to be abrupt, and sometimes their irritability comes across as hostility. Interpersonal relationships deteriorate rapidly when others respond with real hostility. The workplace becomes a very stressful place for them. The cardiac prone, "Type A" personality described by cardiologists, Meyer Friedman and Ray Rosenman, is similar to an extreme case of episodic acute stress. Type A's have an "excessive competitive drive, aggressiveness, impatience, and a harrying sense of time urgency." In addition there is a "free-floating, but well-rationalized form of hostility, and almost always a deep-seated insecurity." Such personality characteristics would seem to create frequent episodes of acute stress for the Type A individual. Friedman and Rosenman found Type A's to be much more likely to develop coronary heart disease than Type B's, who show an opposite pattern of behavior. Another form of episodic acute stress comes from ceaseless worry. "Worry warts" see disaster around every corner and pessimistically forecast catastrophe in every situation. The world is a dangerous, unrewarding, punitive place where something awful is always about to happen. These "awfulizers" also tend to be over aroused and tense, but are more anxious and depressed than angry and hostile.

The symptoms of episodic acute stress are the symptoms of extended over arousal: persistent tension headaches,

migraines, hypertension, chest pain and heart disease. Treating episodic acute stress requires intervention on a number of levels, generally requiring professional help, which may take many months. Often, lifestyle and personality issues are so ingrained and habitual with these individuals that they see nothing wrong with the way they conduct their lives. They blame their woes on other people and external events. Frequently, they see their lifestyle, their patterns of interacting with others, and their ways of perceiving the world as part and parcel of who and what they are. Sufferers can be fiercely resistant to change. Only the promise of relief from pain and discomfort of their symptoms can keep them in treatment and on track in their recovery program.

Chronic stress

While acute stress can be thrilling and exciting, chronic stress is not. This is the grinding stress that wears people away day after day, year after year. Chronic stress destroys bodies, minds and lives. It wreaks havoc through long-term attrition. It's the weight of penury, of dysfunctional families, of being trapped in an unhappy marriage or in a despised job or career. It's the stress that the never-ending "troubles" have brought to the people of Northern Ireland, the tensions of the Middle East have brought to the Arab and Jew, and the endless ethnic rivalries that have been brought to the people of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Habitual stress comes when a person never sees a way out of a miserable situation. It's the stress of unrelenting demands and pressures for seemingly interminable periods of time. With no hope, the individual gives up searching for solutions. Some chronic stresses stem from traumatic, early childhood experiences that become internalized and remain forever painful and present. Some experiences profoundly affect personality. A view of the world, or a belief system, is created that causes unending stress for the individual (e.g., the world is a threatening place, people will find out you are a pretender, and you must be perfect at all times). When personality or deep-seated convictions and beliefs must be reformulated, recovery requires active self-examination, often with professional help. The worst aspect of chronic stress is that people get used to it. They forget it's there. People are immediately aware of acute stress because it is new; they ignore chronic stress because it is old, familiar, and sometimes, almost comfortable. Chronic stress kills through suicide, violence, perhaps cancer and heart ailments too. People wear down to a final, fatal breakdown. Because physical and mental resources are depleted through long-term attrition, the symptoms of chronic stress are difficult to treat and may require extended medical as well as behavioral treatment and stress management. (Adapted from *The Stress Solution* by Lyle H. Miller, PhD, and Alma Dell Smith, PhD.)

Stress Measuring scales

The various stress measuring scales are available in German Version

- (a) One of the popular instrument is the “Effort-Reward Imbalance Scale (ERI)”. (Siegrist, 1996; Siegrist, Starke, Chandola, Godin, Marmot, Niedhammer, & Peter, 2004), which is established on the premise of reciprocity. The model of effort-reward assumes that pessimistic emotions ensues when the attempt made by a person is much greater than the benefit the person receives, connoting that the essential proposition of reciprocity has been disregarded. Despite the fact that the initial scale was established to measure the extent of stress in the office. The study of Siegrist and his colleague further refined scales to address to schools (L, Shang. Wang, & Siegrist, 2010) and university students. The backbone of the ERI Scale- being well fitted for definite life issues such as being a professional or student- is an important handicap for the operation in multicohort panel research but also for cross- sectional surveys. There is no scale committed to jobless, self-employed, dependent or househusbands and – wives. Besides the fact, that no version of an ERI-scale is suited from school to old age.
- (b) The second stress scale – “Skala Sozialer Stressoren am Arbeitsplatz” (Frese & Sappf, 1987) – is confined to calculating stress in the professional setup and in particularly within teams at the workplace.
- (c) “The Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS)” implemented by Holmes and Rahe (1967) centers on the number and encounter of life changing events and these events are not limited to working professionals. But the SRSS is a result of its time consisting of issues such as, “working and non-working wives”, which are addressed to heterosexual men only.
- (d) The “Stress-Reaktivitäts-Skala (SRS)” by Schulz, Jansen, and Schlotz (2005) is useful for elderly people to analyse their stress level and more in use by clinical research. The last two scales are for universal use:
- (e) The “Trierer Inventar zur Erfassung von chronischem Stress (TICS)” by Schulz, Schlotz, and Becker (2004) includes various magnitudes of stress such as high work pressure, lack of social bonding, nervousness and incriminatory memories.
- (f) The “Perceived Stress Questionnaire (PSQ)” by Levenstein, Prantera, Varvo, Scribano, Berto, Luzi, and Andreoli (1993) is also available in a German version (Fliege, Rose, Arck, Levenstein, & Klapp, 2001; Fliege, Rose, Arck, Walter, Kocalevent, Weber,& Klapp, 2005).

This type of scale measures stress due to high level of strain.

III. 3 OPTIMISM

Optimism conveys the driving force to propel one towards achievements. It acts as an apparatus, a construct and theory to take forward the feeling of well-being of the individual. It has its ramifications in the industry at large and towards the improvement of well-being, hope and resilience at an individual level. People who are optimistic believe that negative setbacks are temporary and can be overcome. And what needs to be remembered that Optimism like any other characteristic exists and can be developed. It's possible for people to vary the degree of optimism in a situation, it is a shifting perspective. With this shifting perspective one can bring about more happiness and a sense of well-being.

Each individual approaches the world differently. Some individuals are favorable in their outlook. For Optimists, things go their way and they believe that good rather than bad things will happen to them. Some think of it entirely differently. They don't expect things to go in their favor and think of bad outcomes. Optimistic people in general are positive in their approach and it is not limited to a particular behavioral domain. Quite often on the other hand, pessimistic individuals are mostly glum and anxious. Viewing of life events vary from person to person. Scheier and Carver (1985) suggested that people tend to be either generally optimistic or generally pessimistic. Optimism, when viewed as a relatively stable personality characteristic, may account for the method by which individuals regulate their actions (Peterson, 2000, Scheier & Craver, 1985). Optimists look at problems or issues from the power of empowerment and they are always taking the step to overcoming and conquering challenges.

Carver and Scheier, coined the word, “Dispositional Optimism” to describe their approach- good things will be in abundance in the future and bad things scarce. They argued that optimism is associated with, and leads to, securing positive outcomes whereas pessimism is associated with greater negative outcomes (Scheier and Carver 1992, Scheier, Carver and Bridges 2001).

Martin P. Seligman, has stated in Positive Psychology, Positive Prevention and Positive Therapy, that in “learned optimism” training programs, we teach both children and adults to recognize their own catastrophic thinking and to become skilled disputers (Peterson, 2000; Seligman, Reivich, Jaycox, & Gillham, 1995; Seligman, Schulman, DeRubeis,& Hollon, 1999). It is a

skill that is self-reinforcing and it can prevent depression and anxiety.

As psychologists, a Therapeutic or Direct approach to help improve the quality of life is one approach but that's not the only one. The approach to make life better or enable life to be better, consists of what components or condition makes people more optimistic, happy and satisfied is the other one. And finally, habits and coping behaviors developed by the individual will have an important effect. Hope, optimism and the ability to experience flow can be learned and thus moderate one's level of happiness (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Seligman, 2002).

Dr. Banerjee developed the Optimism Index (Oi-A predictor tool for success) positioned on the model for success that she has called OAM- Optimism Attitude Model. Banerjee (2016) opines that development of the attitude of Optimism needs to be inculcated by teachers and parents from the school level, so that the same attitude become a natural habit as the child grows to be an adult. The conscious effort of the person to work on his attitude becomes a natural part of his personality.

IV. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRESS AND OPTIMISM

A direct influence of optimism is felt when they face adversity or encounter problems. When facing difficulties, peoples' emotions range from keenness and excitement to anger, apprehension and depression. The balance among the feelings relates to differences in optimism. Even when the going is tough, optimists expect good outcome. Optimism shows to confer resilience to events which are stressful in life, which are linked with risk for both onset and relapse of psychopathology (e.g, Ellicott, Hammen, Gitlin, Brown & Jamison, 1990; Finlay-Jones & Brown, 1981). Relationship between optimism and stress has been studied in varied contexts. The studies done differ in complexity and what they are able to put forth. Some show lower optimism related to reports of more stress during a challenging situation. These studies show how stress alters over time and circumstances. Optimism in life leads to a satisfied life.

Professional stress can be a continual life threatening syndrome that influences employees' productivity and personal wellbeing. There is presence of professional stress in electronic media journalism professionals (Shikha Shalini, 2017). The effects of optimism on stress have been found by various studies (Scheier, Weintraub and Carver, 1986; Aspinwall & Taylor, 1992, Fontaine,

Manstead and Wagner, 1993) to be mediated by coping strategies employed by optimists to deal with stress.

V. CONCLUSION

A vast number of research literature reveals that people who have a positive or optimistic approach, respond to adversity and difficulty in a more adaptive way. Moreover, optimism is likely to give benefits, both in the intrapersonal and interpersonal domains, even when there is stress. Optimism shares a similar relationship with stress and coping in the Indian context, as has been found across the globe. Optimism is found to be linked to low levels of stress and more effective ways of coping with stress, showing that optimism plays a major and prominent role in coping with stress effectively.

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