

## EXTENDED ABSTRACT

# A STUDY OF THE OCCUPATIONAL STRESS, CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES AND MANAGEMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEES IN SRI LANKA

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### Abstract

Every human being entitles only one life to live and therefore, he or she needs to manage that life very carefully without getting stressed. The intention of the current research is to study regarding occupational stress, causes, consequences and management of occupational stress among university employees in Sri Lanka. The current study was conducted among the university employees. Both academics and administrative staff were represented the sample. 50 university employees in Sri Lanka representing the whole country have contributed to this study by providing data. The study employed the mixed research approach using the survey questionnaire as its instruments and utilized convenience sampling to obtain the sample. Two focus group discussions were also conducted with 8 university employees. Gathered data has been analyzed following the mixed method. As per the findings of this study, internal factors which contribute to the work stress of university employees were identified as poor fitness levels due to lack of physical exercise, lack of emotional well-being, individuals' inability to control stress and the less volume of sleep and rest. Other factors contribute to the work stress of university employees were the imbalance between demands and the individual's abilities, having to work under time pressure to meet deadlines, red tape bureaucracy and lack of flexibility. Consequences among the university employees due to the stress were recognized as being frustrated, arguments with colleagues, experiencing bad health conditions, missing some works, demotivated towards the work and decreasing the work recognition among themselves. Moreover, suggestions for manage the stress among university employees also provided.

**Keywords:** Bureaucracy, employee performance, job stress, workload

### 1. Introduction

Stress may be beneficial or harmful. Not all types of stress are bad. Stress is required for employee development, motivation, and transformation, as well as for the organization's growth (Ahmad & Ashraf, 2016). Workplace stress is a source of contention for both employers and employees (Correlates of Job Stress among University Lecturers in Rivers State, 2017). Gender also has an impact on the degree of stress at work, with women experiencing higher levels of stress than males. As

a result, females are unable to fulfill several tasks, which hinders their advancement (Damiani, 2004). Work-related stress was previously linked with top management roles, but it is now recognized that it affects employees at all levels (Elvine, 2018).

Scholars put a lot of attention on work stress and expressed their worries about it (The Correlation of Length of Work and Mental Workload with Work Stress at University Lecturers, 2020). Workplace stress has been deemed as crucial as job performance or a company's financial security. Individuals' work environments are thought to be a cause of stress for them (Jadav, 2011). Employees suffer physical and mental damage as a result of job stress (Mark & Smith, 2012). It has a negative impact when occupations do not match the capacity and potential of people (Newton & Teo, 2013). It causes employees to be stressed at work, which has negative consequences for their health. Employees who are under a lot of stress at work have a detrimental influence on the business and employee happiness (Phuong, 2021).

## 2. Methodology

The self-prepared structured questionnaire was designed based on the variable identified through the literature review. The questionnaire was employed both open ended and close ended questions. Further, two focus group discussions were also conducted with 8 university employees. 50 university employees working in Sri Lanka contributed to this study providing responses to the distributed questionnaire. Academic members and administrative staff members in all levels have provided data for the current study. Gathered data has been analyzed using mixed method. This study used descriptive research design to present data on occupational stress, causes, consequences and management of occupational stress among university employees in Sri Lanka.

## 3. Results/Analysis and Discussion

As per the findings of this study, causes for the work stress of university employees were poor health and fitness levels (73%), lack of emotional well-being (68%), individuals' inability to control stress (80%) and the less volume of sleep and rest (56%). A study was conducted by the researchers for identifying the factors affecting to occupational stress among graduated employees previously and the results were almost same with the results of the current study. Other factors revealed were the imbalance between demands and the individual's abilities, excessive work load and long working hours, pressure of early deadlines for complex tasks, red tape bureaucracy and lack of flexibility during work.

Consequences among the university employees due to the stress were recognized as being frustrated, arguments with colleagues, experiencing bad health conditions, missing some works, demotivated towards the work and decreasing the work recognition among themselves.

To manage the stress the positive side of the stress should be communicated among employees by reliable resource personnel. For an instance, the stress cause to meet deadlines naturally. Although, it is stressful ultimately the employees will satisfy with their ability to meet the deadlines or finishing the work before deadlines. It will reveal the employees hidden capacity to the front. Employees will feel proud of their capability. Those positive side should be communicated and it will help employees to enjoy being stressed.

## 4. Conclusion and Implications

Positive side of stress should be promoted as per the recommendations made by the respondents. Stress management techniques have to be adopted to manage the stress level among employees and the managers should realize that it will enhance the productivity of the employees. Ample number of studies evidenced that the bad consequences of the stress. However, the current study have revealed some positive aspect of the stress as well. It is believed that it will direct the future researchers towards

a new path. Further, the present study will help to have an overall image of the occupational stress among university employees in Sri Lanka.

The sample limited to 50 employees due some constraints. This was a major limitation of this study because the accuracy of the findings will be completely determined by the considerable representative participation. Therefore, it is expected to conduct the same study with a larger sample to make sure the reliability of this study in future. Future researchers also encouraged to contribute to the existing knowledge by filling the research gap identified through this study.

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