Stress Management: Concept, Approaches, and Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: *Enhance well-being; acquire adaptive decision-making skills; Relationship breakdown, mental health enhancement, and unemployment problem-solving are all focus areas.*
Design/Methodology/Approach: *Secondary data for this study came from a wide range of places, such as case studies, books, periodicals, journals, articles, and online searches.*
Findings/Results: *Stress has many facets, both in terms of its causes and its effects. It's more of a personal journey than a general truth to determine what helps you cope with pressure. The client will be taught techniques for dealing with every day and unexpected tension sources. Cognitive and behavioral strategies are helpful for stress management.*
Mindfulness-based stress reduction therapies have received much research and attention recently. Due to its association with numerous diseases, stress management is paramount.
Outcome: *The outcomes include the concept of stress management, various stages of stress and how to overcome the stress, the causes and effects of individual stress, the management of stress effectively through the use of cognitive behavioral techniques, and how to use mindfulness-based interventions for stress management.*
Originality/Values: *This research sheds light on the many sources of stress in the lives of humans, including but not limited to increased workload, increased risk of physical and mental illness, and strategies for coping with stress at different levels. How one chooses to spend one's life determines the particular sources of stress that they will face.*
Type of Paper: *Literature review*
Keywords: Stress Management, individual and social life, stressors, personality, and cognitive behavioral.

1. INTRODUCTION :

There is much pressure in today's society. Having lofty goals and feeling pressure to reach them are well-known sources of tension. A person's incapacity can also cause stress to make decisions or adjust to new circumstances. How stressed you feel is influenced by various individual and environmental factors. Those prone to stress have more difficulty keeping relationships strong and worry more about their health. Although stress is unavoidable, it can be controlled to some degree. It might help keep connections with people on an upbeat track. It's essential to talk about practical ways of coping with stress in humans. One definition of stress by Lazarus and Folkman (1984, p. 19) [1] suggests that stress and coping are dynamic phenomena: "particular interaction between the person and the environment, that the individual perceives as tiring or exceeding their resources and damaging their well-being." A developing brain is more vulnerable to stress while moving along a continuum between two poles, such as "does" and "does not." Long-term stress, which can lead to mental and physical illness, rises with the volume and length of perplexity. Psychological stress, as defined by Coffer and Appley (1967) [2], is the perception that one's physical or social well-being is threatened and that one must take steps to mitigate this threat. According to Vingoi (1981) [3], prolonged exposure to aggravating activities or conflictual circumstances is a significant contributor to mental health issues.

Stress is a standard component of life because of how common stressful events are among humans. Learning positive coping strategies can reduce your chances of developing psychopathology. One's environment greatly influences the ability to perceive and react to stressful events. Bower (1973) [4] argues that people experience emotional pain when they are placed in situations that are inappropriate for them.

Stressors:

The pressures of daily life, whether at the job or home, can be overwhelming at times. The decision to live alone places stress on everyone. There are numerous origins for both short-term and long-term stresses. Researchers Holmes and Rahe (1967) [5] found that disruptions in a married couple's routine—such as the death of one partner, a divorce, or a trip abroad—can be just as stressful as other significant life changes. Cohen and colleagues examined both short-term and long-term stress in their 1998 study [6]. Compared to marital discontent or unemployment, they found that even a severe reprimand at work or a disagreement with the spouse resulted in less chronic stress.

Selye (1950 [7], 1956 [8], and 1958 [9]) identified three stages of stress that make up the general adaption syndrome: alertness, resistance, and weariness. A person under stress may go through each of these stages. In certain situations, overcoming each stress level may be doable or impossible.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER :

(1) To review the concept of stress management.
(2) To study the various stages of stress and how to overcome the stress.
(3) To know about the causes and effects of individual stress.
(4) To manage stress effectively through the use of cognitive behavioral techniques.
(5) To focus on mindfulness-based interventions for stress management.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE/RELATED WORKS :

Weiss M. (1983) [10] -The author looked at what causes job stress, which is associated with being unhappy at work, experiencing stress and anxiety on the job, and being less productive and successful overall. He tried to lessen his stress levels to avoid any potential health problems. His research showed that having a strong social network can help mitigate the adverse effects of stress.

Singh A. P. & Singh S. (2009) [11] –His research centers on employee happiness on the job. He argues that Working conditions and stress levels significantly contribute to whether or not an employee feels fulfilled. He divided stress into two primary categories, eustress, and distress, and pinpointed its genesis in three distinct areas. Furthermore, he emphasized the significance of positive stress and happy occurrences for enhanced productivity and worker happiness.

Gladies J. J. & Kennedy V. (2011) [12]- The author found a robust connection between an organization's culture and female IT workers' stress levels on the job in India. He thinks that IT firms should prioritize training their employees to deal with stress if they want to lessen its effects on productivity and morale in the workplace.

Charu M. (2013) [13] -According to his findings, IT professionals' quality of life at work decreases as their stress levels rise. He listed a few elements that directly impact the quality of life at work, including fair pay structure, steady role demands, supervisory support, a friendly work environment, capacity fit of the job, role autonomy, and stress. IT workers' primary source of anxiety is the industry's penchant for constant technological upheaval.

Khalid A. (2012) [14] -Stress and work performance go hand in hand in any workplace. Employees who receive strong support from their superiors are more likely to succeed. Therefore, even in dire circumstances, an employee's performance can be enhanced by having a leader who is encouraging.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY :

The majority of the data in this qualitative investigation came from secondary resources. Case studies, books, periodicals, journals, papers, and online searches or publications were consulted to compile the data used in this study. Google Scholar, Research Gate, and SSRN were used to locate the necessary data for the investigation.

Sources of Stress:

The two most common types of stress are high-frequency and low-frequency. The increased workload is an example of low-frequency stress that can have a considerably more significant impact than high-frequency pressures like those encountered in daily living (Delongis et al., 1988 [15]; Kenner et al., 1981[16]; Lazarus et al., 1985 [17]). Because of this, we may argue that stress is an inevitable part of being human and can manifest itself in any facet of an individual's existence, including but not limited to personal relationships, work, and school. Remember that the things that stress you out are different for everyone. Depending on one's lifestyle choices, stress can have a wide range of causes.

5. PERSONALITY AND STRESS :

The effects of stress and one's ability to handle them vary significantly from person to person. Based on the research of Jung and Sheldon, Mohanty (1991) [18] concluded that ectomorphs are less vulnerable to stress than endomorphs and geomorphs. Carl Jung found that introverts and the geomorphic personality type were very similar. Jung categorizes extroverts and introverts similarly to Sheldon's endomorphic and ectomorphic personality types.

Scheier and Carver's (1988) [19] study found that pessimists generally have better stress tolerance. According to research by Scheier and Carver (1992) [20], pessimists use multiple coping mechanisms. Optimists, on the other hand, are less competent in this setting. Segerstrom and coworkers found in 1998 [21] that law students with a positive outlook performed better academically than their more pessimistic peers. Because of these dissimilar responses to stress, it is evident that people of varying personalities utilize various coping strategies. The fact that introverts worry more and hold themselves to higher standards makes them more susceptible to stress is not debatable.

Women are more easily overwhelmed by stressful situations than men. Potter and Stone (1995) [22] found that males and females approach stress differently. Gross's (1992) [23] medical research demonstrated that while male and female doctors experienced pressure from the time commitments required by work, female doctors had the added burden of handling family duties. Female family physicians are more likely than their male counterparts to show signs of mental illness, per research by Rout (1999) [24]. Male doctors, on the other hand, are more prone to show signs of anxiety and depression. His studies found that men generally have lower "floating anxiety" levels than women. In contrast to women, men are more likely to experience somatic anxiety. The depression rate is considerably higher in men than in women.

6. STAGES OF STRESS :

The range of possible degrees of stress is quite extensive. There are four distinct stages of stress, as described by Seaward (1999, p.7) [25]. The senses are the first to send information to the brain. The second level is some mental decoding. The brain makes an instantaneous assessment of risk. The stress reaction would be expected if the brain didn't sense a threat. Failure to do so triggers stage three, during which our bodies stay on high alert until the threat has gone. The last step is to bring the body and mind back into homeostasis or balance. First, the body experiences what Hans Selye (1976) [26] calls "alarm," the sympathetic nervous system is activated, and hormones are released to prepare the organism to deal with the threat. If the stress is prolonged, the body enters a second stage called resistance, characterized by a lower arousal level than the first. Physical and mental weariness will set in if the tension continues for a long enough time.

The strategies suggested during the resistance and fatigue phases will lead to the normalization phase.

Stages of Stress:

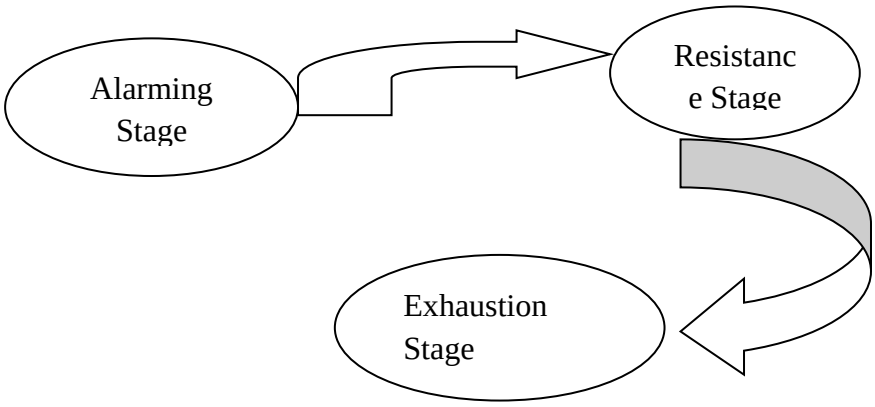

Fig. 1: Various Stages of Stress

(1) Alarm Stage: The initial exposure to the stressor occurs during the Alarm phase. The brain's nervous system immediately sends up a red flag. When we're under pressure, our bodies release more adrenaline hormones. So, breathing speeds get up. As stress levels grow, the body responds by increasing heart rate, blood pressure, oxygen delivery to the brain and muscles, slowed digestion, improved vision, increased perspiration, and a dry mouth. The "fight or flight" response is triggered by the quick release of adrenaline in response to stress.

(2) Resistance Stage: The resistance stage occurs when an individual's body cannot adapt to a stressor during the alarm stage. Increased irritation, exhaustion, and a diminished capacity to deal with stressful events are all symptoms of stress because the body is still trying to deal with the stressor. The process of adapting to a stressor by fighting it off until it can be removed is known as resistance. If the stressful situation continues, the body will maintain the adaptations it established previously. When no longer under stress, the body returns to its pre-stress state.

(3) Exhaustion Stage: The "exhaustion stage" is when a person has been subjected to a stressful situation for a long time, and their bodies have finally given up (weeks, months, or years). The third and final stress stage of exhaustion develops when stress continues past the second stage, and no corrective action is performed. Everyone involved has run out of steam and is spent.

7. STRESS MANAGEMENT :

Everyone is unique in their ability to recognize and respond to stressful situations, and everyone has unique resources. Although people utilize a vast range of coping strategies, a select handful could be helpful to everyone. The existence of coping strategies raises an interesting question. Specifically, Lazarus and Folkman define coping as "the process where the individual constantly alters his/her cognitive and behavioral attempts to manage certain external and internal demands that are assessed as stressful or beyond the person's resources" (1984) [27].

Stress originates in the individual's thought and activity processes, making the cognitive and behavioral functions vital in combating it. When dealing with stress and the accompanying emotions, "coping mechanisms essentially rely on the cognitive and behavioral of the person," as Halahan et al. (2004) [28] put it.

7.1 Coping Strategies:

There are other approaches to stress management beyond the Western-based stress reduction (CBSR) techniques, where cognitive intervention plays a central role. Dysfunctional evaluations keep stress levels high and even increase them. Recognizing and changing such maladaptive evaluations or other cognitive processing problems is the main component of cognitive intervention. Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) is a modern field that draws inspiration from ancient Eastern practices to manage stress. In a small pilot study with 50 participants, Smith, Shelley, Dalen, Wiggins, Tooley, and Bernard (2008) [29] compared CBSR with MBSR. The Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programme aims to help its participants become more self-aware and attentive through deep breathing, body scans, meditation, gentle yoga, and open discussion. Stress management strategies, both cognitive and behavioral, were taught at the CBSR. The solution mainly consisted of cognitive retraining and behavioral methods for reducing stress. Across eight outcomes, the MBSR group's impact magnitude

was more significant than double that of the CBSR group (i.e., perceived stress, depression, psychological well-being, neuroticism, binge eating, energy, pain, and mindfulness). Stress from everyday life has been related to recurring bouts of depression. Britton, Shahar, Szepsenwol, and Jacobs conducted research in 2012 [30] on 52 individuals whose depression had only partially subsided. Those who performed MBCT had less of an emotional ability to withstand the effects of social stress. Happiness and stress are reciprocal (Carlson et al., 2003) [31]. Nykl & Kuijpers (2008) [32] examined this issue by surveying 40 distressed females and 20 distressed males. Emotional discomfort was found to decrease when participants participated in mindfulness-based therapies.

(1) Social support: A study including 232 senior patients found that the chance of dying within six months after open heart surgery was reduced when the patients participated in a social and community group program (Oxman et al., 1995) [33]. Multiple research (e.g., Berkman and Syme, 1979 [34]; Cohen and Wills, 1985 [35], 1988 [36]; Dunkel/Schetter and Skokan, 1990 [37]; Hobfollet al., 1990 [38]; House et al., 1988 [39]; Segerstrom, 2007 [40]; Strine et al., 2008 [41]) have found that people's mental and physical health improve after experiencing a supportive relationship.

(2) Relaxation Exercise: Relaxation is good for the practitioner's mental and physical health. Progressive muscular relaxation is one method of relaxation training among many—methods like meditation and autogenic training. Alternating periods of muscle tension and relaxation, as in progressive muscle relaxation, helps relax specific groups of muscles. However, various meditation techniques aim to induce a calm, reflective frame of mind. Meditation is a technique for calming the mind and body that has gained popularity far beyond its Eastern beginnings. References: Shapiro (1985) [42]; Dimatteo & Martin (2012) [43]. Autogenic training is a behavioral technique for controlling anxiety and learning to unwind at will. Autogenic training uses guided visualization and sounds to help people relax their bodies and mind. This technique can affect various physiological reactions, including breathing, blood pressure, heart rate, and skin temperature (e.g., Ernst and Kanji, 2000 [44]; Crowther, 1983 [45]).

(3) Time Management: Time management courses help participants plan their days more efficiently and set priorities. Increasing productivity is a must for effective time management. To assist people in modifying their actions and experiencing less stress, Lakein (1973) [46] suggested time management techniques like compiling a list and prioritizing tasks. When Richards (1987) [47] started using time management strategies, he felt less pressure and produced more. Robinson and Godfrey (1997) [48] confirmed the close relationship between time management and stress relief.

8. APPROACHES TO MANAGE STRESS :

- Treat your body with respect.
- Finding Peace of Mind.
- Establishing a system of social assistance.
- Physical and mental withdrawal.

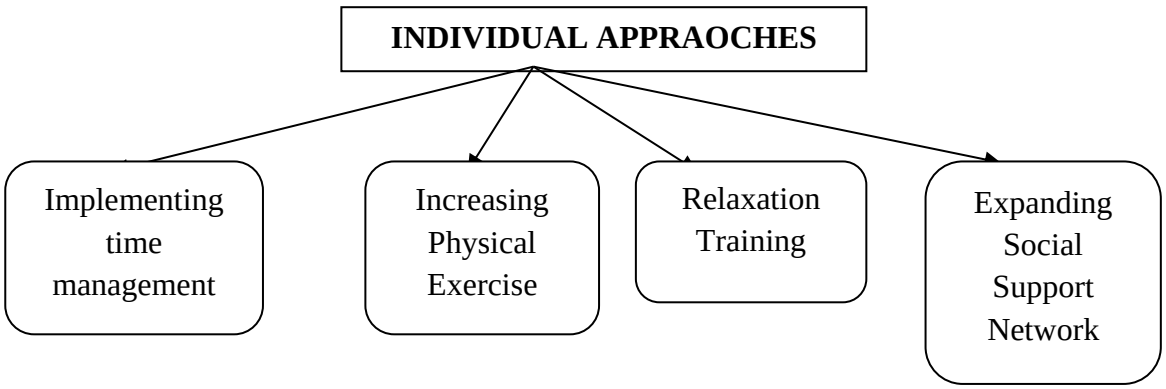

Fig. 2: Block Diagram of Managing the Stress by Individual Approaches

Reasons behind high levels of stress:

- When workers' workloads increase, their stress levels rise.
- The absence of growth and development opportunities
- An unacknowledged society

- ❖ Inadequate resources to complete regular tasks
- ❖ A lack of open dialogue and a toxic workplace atmosphere led to this.

Effects of Job Stress on Physical Health:

- Chest pain and rapid heartbeat
- improved breathing
- Muscle soreness, tightness, and stiffness
- poor health
- Headaches
- Abdominal pain and digestive issues that won't go away
- Insomnia
- Persistent viral infections and colds
- Fear and shaking
- Lipped dryness
- Clenched teeth
- Obesity

Effects of Job Stress on Mental Health

- possessing a propensity for outbursts of rage and frustration
- Weary of worrying about everything and overanalyzing everything
- Neglecting or avoiding one's responsibilities
- Having a hard time relaxing and calming down
- Confidence level dropping
- dislike of human company
- Lack of focus and memory
- Carelessness and poor decision-making
- Having a poor attitude
- Increase in Anxiety and Depression
- The prevalence of drug, alcohol, and cigarette use rises

Effects of Stress on Employee Performance

- business operations become less efficient
- Worker output as a whole suffers.
- Not very precise
- Poor output and a high rate of staff turnover.
- Absenteeism

9. PRIMARY TECHNIQUES FOR EMPLOYEE STRESS MANAGEMENT :

(1) **Improving communication:** This can be achieved by ensuring everyone in the company knows what they're supposed to do. Meeting consistently and having defined roles can help with this.
(2) **Increasing productivity:** This is accomplished by clearly communicating what is expected of workers and why and giving them the tools, they'll need to succeed.
(3) **Reducing costs:** One way to accomplish this is to lessen or eliminate sources of unneeded stress in the workplace. Such factors could include, for example, impossible deadlines, high workloads, or unfavorable working environment.

10. DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS :

(1) Take a break from news coverage on TV, radio, or social media.
(2) If you're feeling overwhelmed by stress, remember to take care of yourself by eating well, exercising regularly, getting plenty of sleep and water, and giving yourself a break.
(3) Maintain your physical health with frequent deep breathing, meditation, and exercise.
(4) Don't get into the habit of drinking, smoking, or using other drugs excessively.
(5) If your doctor has prescribed regular preventative care, such as immunizations or cancer screening, keep up with them.
(6) Protect yourself from contracting COVID-19 by being vaccinated.
(7) Share your situation with people you trust, including your parents, friends, a counselor, or a doctor, and let them know how you feel.

(8) Practicing self-care at work is especially important because it directly impacts productivity and health.
(9) Get more shut-eye; impaired cognition is a direct result of sleep deprivation.
(10) Boost workers' sense of psychological security to mitigate anxiety about potential dangers on the job.
(11) Foster an environment where employees may work in peace.
(12) The lines between time spent on the job and with friends and family tend to blur.
(13) Develop accommodating procedures for employees who must juggle work with caring for their families.
(14) Employees are most productive when engaged in meaningful work, receiving adequate support, and given opportunities to grow.

11. CONCLUSION :

Stress has many facets in terms of its causes and effects. It's more of a personal journey than a general truth to determine what helps you cope with pressure. The client will be taught techniques for dealing with everyday and unexpected tension sources. Cognitive and behavioral strategies are helpful for stress management. Mindfulness-based stress reduction therapies have received much research and attention recently. Due to its association with numerous diseases, stress management is paramount.

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