

Underlying Factors that Contributed to Job Stress in an Organisation

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Abstract

Job stress is a significant issue in many organisations, with potential negative impacts on employees' well-being, productivity, and job satisfaction. This study reviews the causes, and effects related to job stress in terms of an organisational context. Causes of job stress may include workload, role conflict, poor working conditions, lack of control, poor relationships with colleagues or supervisors, job insecurity, lack of recognition or rewards, and poor work-life balance. Negative effects of job stress can manifest as physical symptoms, psychological symptoms, and behavioural symptoms, with implications for both the employees and organisations. Interventions for addressing job stress may include individual-level interventions, organisational-level interventions, or a combination of both. Future research could assist in addressing these limitations and provide a more nuanced understanding of job stress and its impacts. In conclusion, job stress is a critical issue, whereby organisations should address to promote employees' well-being and productivity. Moreover, effective interventions are available to assist in achieving this goal.

Keywords: Job Stress, Organization, Employees

Introduction

The issue of job-related stress is a pervasive phenomenon that impacts employees across various industries and sectors on a global scale. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has reported that work-related stress has a significant impact on a large number of workers globally (Isfahani, 2022; Tang, 2014). It is estimated that this issue results in substantial financial losses for businesses worldwide, due to decreased productivity and increased healthcare expenses (Cox et al., 2008). The occurrence of job-related stress exhibits variability across diverse countries and regions, with certain nations encountering elevated levels of job stress in comparison to others. Research findings indicate that job-related stress is more widespread in developed nations, including the United States of America (USA), Japan, and Europe. This is attributed to the high job demands and long working hours expected of employees in these regions. Nevertheless, work-related stress is also widespread in emerging

economies, where the working environment may be substandard and available resources are restricted (Wani, 2013). As per the findings of the American Institute of Stress, job-related stress is the primary cause of stress among the American populace, with a significant proportion of employees, approximately 80%, reporting experiencing stress while at work (Kumareswaran et al., 2023). The prevalent factors contributing to job-related stress in the United States comprise of excessive workload, inadequate job security, and suboptimal work-life equilibrium. As per the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, a majority of European employees, i.e. over 50%, have reported experiencing job-related stress (Salmon, 2001). Job insecurity extended working hours, and inadequate social support at work are among the primary factors contributing to job-related stress in Europe. According to (Kumareswaran et al., 2022), there is a notable issue of job stress in Japan, as numerous employees report experiencing elevated levels of stress attributable to extended working hours and the obligation to meet deadlines. Job stress is a prominent concern in China, as a considerable number of employees report experiencing elevated levels of stress attributed to factors such as job insecurity, fierce competition, and extended working hours. As per the International Labour Organisation (ILO), work-induced stress is a noteworthy concern in Africa, where a considerable number of workers have reported elevated stress levels owing to substandard working conditions, employment uncertainty, and insufficient resources. Moreover, a considerable number of African nations exhibit a significant prevalence of workplace violence, which can potentially augment job-related stress (Kumareswaran & Kumareswaran, 2023). As per the Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO), work-related stress has emerged as a burgeoning issue in Latin America. Numerous workers have reported elevated levels of stress owing to prolonged working hours, increased workload, and job insecurity. Furthermore, (Muhadi, et al., 2022) have noted that numerous Latin American nations exhibit a significant prevalence of workplace violence, which may serve as a contributing factor to job-related stress. The incidence of occupational stress within a corporation can yield significant ramifications for both the workforce and management. The likelihood of physical and emotional health issues, such as anxiety, depression, heart diseases, and diabetes, is higher among employees who encounter job-related stress. Moreover, occupational stress has the potential to result in reduced job contentment, heightened rates of absenteeism, and diminished productivity.

Work Overload

The phenomenon of work overload arises when employees are faced with an excessive amount of work to be completed within a restricted timeframe. This phenomenon occurs when there is an insufficient number of personnel, resulting in the remaining workforce having to undertake supplementary duties to fulfil work requirements. Excessive work demands may result in job-related stress as workers may experience a sense of being inundated, apprehensive, and incapable of managing their workload (Mukhlis et al., 2022). There exist multiple factors that can lead to an increased workload, ultimately resulting in job-related stress experienced by personnel within an organisation. Insufficient staffing is a significant contributor to workload, as noted by (Janssen et al., 2018). Insufficient staffing levels can result in current employees being burdened with additional responsibilities, resulting in heightened job demands and stress. Insufficient staffing levels may lead to extended working hours, diminished job satisfaction, and heightened susceptibility to burnout, as noted by (Assi et al., 2022). Inadequate distribution of tasks is identified as a contributing factor to job stress that is associated with workload. This phenomenon may arise

when assignments are distributed without due regard for the employee's workload, competencies, and proficiencies. (Bartholomew et al., 2014) suggest that when employees are given assignments that exceed their skill set or experience, they may experience feelings of being overburdened and stressed, which can ultimately result in reduced productivity and job satisfaction. Elevated performance standards set by superiors and peers may also serve as a contributing factor to job-related stress stemming from excessive workload. It is possible for employees to experience pressure to meet deadlines that may be deemed unrealistic, or to exceed their capacity in order to showcase their competence and worth to the organisation. Experiencing high expectations may result in negative outcomes such as anxiety, burnout, and reduced levels of job satisfaction. Moreover, the absence of authority in managing workload may lead to occupational stress. According to (Bambi et al., 2018), employees may experience emotions of helplessness and frustration when they perceive a lack of influence over the workload assigned to them or the processes they are expected to follow. Insufficient regulation may result in a reduction in drive, efficiency, and contentment with one's occupation. Cordes & Dougherty (1993) have identified technology overload as a contributing factor to job stress associated with workload. The incessant influx of electronic correspondence, alerts, and communiqués can prove to be an excessive burden, thereby contributing to sensations of excessive strain and exhaustion. The persistent requirement for connectivity and responsiveness can pose challenges for employees to disengage and revitalise, resulting in persistent occupational stress. According to (Naghieh et al., 2015), workload-related job stress may be influenced by internal organisational modifications, such as restructuring, mergers, or downsizing. Organisational changes may necessitate that employees undertake supplementary tasks or responsibilities, resulting in heightened job demands and stress. Moreover, ambiguity surrounding employment stability and the prospective outlook of the organisation can result in emotions of apprehension and employment uncertainty.

Job Insecurity

The issue of job insecurity has been identified as a major contributor to job-related stress experienced by employees within an organisational context. Job insecurity is a phenomenon that arises when employees experience uncertainty regarding their job continuity, which may be attributed to various factors such as organisational restructuring, downsizing, or mergers, as noted by (Kuehnl et al., 2019) The possibility of losing one's job can result in job-related stress as workers may experience apprehension and ambiguity regarding their prospects. Job insecurity can be caused by economic factors, such as a recession or a downturn in the industry. In the event that an organization's financial stability is jeopardised, employees may express concern regarding potential layoffs, decreased work hours, or salary reductions (van Vilsteren et al., 2015). The presence of economic ambiguity may have a bearing on the development of sentiments of vulnerability, strain, and unease among the workforces. Job insecurity can be a consequence of organisational changes, such as restructuring, mergers, or downsizing. According to (Bakker & de Vries, 2021), employees may experience apprehension regarding the future of their employment or the organisation, leading to ambiguity concerning their positions within the newly established framework. The implementation of organisational changes has the potential to elicit emotions of uncertainty, tension, and apprehension within the workforce. Job insecurity can be attributed to performance issues as well. According to (Greiner et al., 2022), employees may experience concerns regarding job security when they receive negative feedback or are unable to achieve their performance

objectives. The possibility of job insecurity can elicit emotions of anxiety and unease among employees. The engagement in contractual or temporary employment arrangements may result in a sense of precariousness regarding one's job security. The concern regarding job security and the possibility of obtaining another position after the expiration of a fixed-term contract is a common issue among employees who are engaged in short-term employment (Nikolova et al., 2019). The aforementioned circumstance may result in emotional responses such as insecurity and stress among employees, who may perceive a lack of appreciation for their contributions or a sense of job instability. Moreover, inadequate communication may be a contributing factor to the precariousness of employment. In situations where employees are not adequately apprised of organisational modifications, performance criteria, or the future trajectory of the organisation, they may experience a sense of ambiguity regarding their job stability. The lack of transparency regarding employees' future prospects within the organisation may result in emotional distress and a sense of uncertainty, as noted by (Vassos & Nankervis, 2012). Inadequate leadership can potentially be a contributing factor to the experience of job insecurity. In situations where employees perceive their leaders as lacking in competence or trustworthiness, concerns may arise regarding the future of the organisation and the stability of their employment. The potential outcome of this situation is the development of emotions such as insecurity and stress among employees. This may be attributed to the perception of organisational instability or lack of recognition for their employment positions, as noted by (Boyd et al., 2014).

Lack of Control

The absence of control is a notable factor contributing to job-related stress in numerous establishments. According to (Ateş & Ihtiyaroğlu, 2019), a lack of perceived control over the work environment and tasks can result in negative emotions such as frustration, anxiety, and stress among employees. Micromanagement is a prevalent approach to leadership characterised by a high level of supervision and regulation of employees' work by their managers. According to (Buttigieg & West, 2013), such circumstances may result in employees perceiving a lack of autonomy over their work environment and the duties they undertake. The practise of micromanagement has the potential to induce job-related stress among employees, who may perceive it as an indication of their skills and competencies being underutilised, and a lack of trust in their ability to execute their duties effectively. Insufficient autonomy can be a contributing factor to the experience of stress in the workplace. Karimi & Alipour (2011) suggest that a lack of decision-making autonomy and limited opportunities for providing input in the workplace may lead employees to perceive a lack of control over their work environment. The aforementioned circumstance may result in emotions of dissatisfaction, apprehension, and strain among employees, who may perceive their job duties as lacking in gratification or stimulation. According to (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), the absence of employee involvement in decision-making may result in a perception of limited control over the work environment and assigned tasks. The aforementioned circumstance may result in emotional states of frustration, anxiety, and stress among employees, who may perceive their viewpoints and suggestions as undervalued or disrespected. Insufficient training and development opportunities for employees can lead to a perception of limited control over career advancement and job performance (Chen et al., 2022). The aforementioned situation may result in emotional responses such as frustration, anxiety, and stress among employees. This could be attributed to a perceived inability to achieve their maximum capabilities or a lack of utilisation of their skills and abilities. Employees who are

bound to rigid work schedules may perceive a lack of autonomy over their work-life equilibrium and their capacity to handle their personal obligations. According to (Gaines & Jermier, 1983) the lack of consideration for personal needs and priorities among employees can result in negative emotions such as frustration, anxiety, and stress.

Interpersonal Conflict

The presence of interpersonal conflict within a workplace setting has the potential to substantially contribute to job-related stress experienced by employees. Interpersonal conflict pertains to a circumstance in which two or more individuals in a professional setting experience disagreement, tension, or antagonism. According to (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008), variances in personalities, work styles, and communication styles may result in workplace conflicts. In a workplace setting, a scenario may arise where an employee who exhibits assertiveness and vocalises their opinions may encounter a clash with a colleague who demonstrates a more reserved demeanour and tends to steer clear of confrontations. Disparities of this nature have the potential to result in misinterpretations, strains, and hostilities which can be a contributing factor to occupational strain (Rampling et al., 2022). Inadequate communication is a notable factor that contributes to interpersonal conflicts within the workplace. Inadequate or erroneous communication can result in misapprehensions, discontentment, and disputes. In accordance with (Aydın et al., 2020) observations, it can be posited that instances where an employee is not provided with unambiguous instructions pertaining to a particular task may result in the emergence of conflicts with their supervisor or colleagues. In situations where resources are limited, there is a possibility of employees engaging in competition for these resources, which may result in conflicts within the workplace. When two employees compete for a promotion, it may result in tensions and conflicts between them. According to (Sarazine et al., 2021), the competition may result in job stress among employees who perceive their job security or career progression to be at risk. The implementation of organisational modifications, such as mergers, restructuring, or downsizing, can generate ambiguity and unease among personnel, resulting in workplace discord. In the event of an organisational restructuring, employees may experience uncertainty regarding their forthcoming roles and responsibilities, which may result in interpersonal tensions and conflicts (Luken & Sammons, 2016). The manifestation of personal matters, such as familial concerns, monetary constraints, or health-related challenges, can permeate the professional setting, resulting in interpersonal discord with co-workers. According to (Kumareswaran et al., 2023), an employee experiencing a divorce may exhibit irritability and direct their frustrations towards colleagues, resulting in interpersonal conflicts.

Time Pressure

The prevalence of job stress in various organisations can be attributed to the common factor of time pressure. This phenomenon arises when workers are compelled to fulfil duties within narrow time constraints or impractical temporal parameters. A significant contributor to time pressure in the workplace is a heavy workload. The delegation of an excessive number of tasks or the imposition of unrealistic deadlines upon employees can result in the manifestation of stress and anxiety (Moffatt-Bruce et al., 2019). An excessive workload may result in insufficient time for self-care or breaks, ultimately resulting in burnout. In addition, inadequate time allocation skills may lead to temporal constraints in the professional setting. Ineffective time management and the inability to prioritise tasks among employees can result

in missed deadlines and a build-up of work, as noted by (Vidotti et al., 2019). The aforementioned circumstance may result in psychological distress such as stress and anxiety among employees, who may perceive themselves as overburdened and incapable of meeting their job demands. The presence of time pressure in the workplace can be attributed to ineffective systems or processes, as noted by (Suyi et al., 2017). In cases where an organisation employs outdated technology or inefficient processes to accomplish tasks, the duration of task completion may be prolonged, thereby inducing time constraints and stress. Unanticipated circumstances or exigencies have the potential to impede work routines and result in temporal constraints. The occurrence of an unforeseen event or emergency can potentially cause disruption to an employee's work schedule, resulting in time constraints and pressure to complete tasks within the designated timeframe, as noted by (Peterson et al., 2019). Unreasonable expectations from superiors or managers may result in temporal constraints and occupational strain. When an employee is presented with a task that has an impractical deadline or is required to complete a project with restricted resources, it can result in heightened levels of stress and anxiety.

Impact of Job Stress

The effects of job-related stress can be substantial for both individual employees and the organisations they work for. The impact of occupational stress can vary from reduced job contentment and efficiency to severe physiological and psychological health complications. The present investigation delved into the diverse effects of occupational stress within a given institution, as outlined by (Caruso, 2014). The physical health of an employee can be significantly affected by job-related stress. In the opinion of (Ali et al., 2020), the presence of stress in work environments can result in a range of physical health complications, including but not limited to headaches, fatigue, high blood pressure, heart disease, and other cardiovascular ailments. According to (Tian et al., 2013), prolonged exposure to stress can result in compromised immune systems, rendering workers more vulnerable to illnesses. Mental health concerns: The mental well-being of an employee can be significantly affected by job-related stress. Elevated levels of stress have the potential to result in the manifestation of mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, and related disorders. As indicated by (Jonsdottir et al., 2013), prolonged exposure to stress can result in burnout, which is characterised by a state of physical and emotional depletion that can impede an individual's performance in both their professional and personal domains. There is a negative correlation between job stress and job satisfaction among employees. This phenomenon has the potential to result in a reduction in motivation levels, an increase in absenteeism rates, and a decrease in overall productivity. In the view of (Sutherland & Cooper, 1992), elevated levels of job-related stress can result in employee turnover, as workers may actively pursue alternative employment options in order to alleviate the stressful work environment. The productivity of an employee can be significantly affected by job-related stress. Elevated levels of stress may impede employees' ability to concentrate and efficiently accomplish their tasks. The aforementioned circumstances may result in a reduction in productivity, failure to meet deadlines, and inaccuracies in the completion of tasks. The experience of job-related stress has the potential to result in escalated absenteeism rates, as employees may require time away from work to manage stress-induced physical or psychological health concerns. This phenomenon has the potential to result in a reduction in overall productivity and an escalation in the workload of fellow colleagues. The healthcare expenses of an organisation may be influenced by job-related stress, as noted by (Williams et al., 2017). The occurrence

of stress-induced physical or mental health problems among employees may necessitate medical intervention, resulting in augmented healthcare expenses for the company. According to (Wilson, 2016), elevated levels of job-related stress may result in a decline in the overall performance of an organisation. The phenomenon can present itself in diverse manners, including reduced efficiency, heightened rates of nonattendance, and diminished levels of job contentment. Experiencing stress can potentially result in reduced levels of innovation and creativity among employees, as they may prioritise managing their stress over generating novel concepts. According to (Tytherleigh et al., 2005), workplace conflict may arise due to job stress, as employees may encounter difficulties in managing stress-related concerns. The aforementioned phenomenon has the potential to result in interpersonal discord, diminished collaboration, and reduced efficacy within the organisation. Elevated levels of occupational stress may result in increased hazards to workplace safety. Employees experiencing stress may exhibit a higher likelihood of committing errors, potentially resulting in workplace accidents and injuries.

Conclusion

In conclusion, job stress is a common issue that can have negative impacts on an employee's well-being, productivity, and job satisfaction. This study examining the correlation between job-related stress and its contributing factors, including but not limited to workload, interpersonal conflict, and job insecurity. Through an analysis of the fundamental elements, the research enhances the all-encompassing comprehension of the characteristics and mechanisms of occupational strain within institutions. Additionally, the research has the potential to provide insights into interventions aimed at mitigating job-related stress and promoting the welfare of employees, thereby tackling a pragmatic issue confronted by corporations. The study offers valuable insights into the predominant sources of job stress in modern organisational contexts and proposes effective strategies for their management. The study's results may be utilised to formulate tactics aimed at alleviating job-related stress within organisations, thereby augmenting employee contentment, efficiency, and retention. Fortunately, there are a variety of interventions that organisations can use to address job stress and promote employees' well-being. These may include individual-level interventions, organisational-level interventions, or a combination of both. Some examples of interventions that have been shown to be effective in reducing job stress include mindfulness-based stress reduction, job crafting, and flexible work arrangements. However, it is important to note that there are some limitations to the existing research on job stress, including reliance on self-report measures and limited generalisability. Future research could assist in addressing these limitations and provide a more nuanced understanding of the causes, effects, and interventions related to job stress. Overall, addressing job stress is crucial for creating a positive work environment and promoting employees' well-being and productivity. By understanding the causes of job stress and implementing effective interventions, organisations can create a healthier and more supportive workplace for their employees.

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