

## **A STUDY ON WORK AND JOB PRESSURE AT THE WORKPLACE: LEADING TO ILL HEALTH AMONG PROFESSIONALS.**

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### **Abstract**

The main aim for writing the paper is to find out the relationship between job pressure and the ill health among the employees. In the today's competitive world each and every person is dealing with the work overload and the job is like a pressure for them due to the work life imbalance. All the employees have one and the other type of pressure due to various reasons. The pressure due to job among employees is not a matter of negligence. Job pressure leads to the ill health. The employees are facing the mental illness and physical illness due to job pressure. The main hypothesis for the research paper is that there is a relationship between the job pressure and the mental and physical illness. The OSI questionnaire developed by Cooper et al was used to collect the data. The data was collected from 79 professionals. Data was analysed by means, descriptive and correlation using SPSS software.

**Keywords:Source of job pressureStress Physical illnessMental illness.**

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### **“GOOD MORNING , LET THE PRESSURE STARTS”**

In today's competitive world every morning when employees get up and going for the office they are having the feeling of going and fighting to the pressure. More than 50 percent of the employees say that their jobs are extremely under pressure. Almost \$250 billion are cost to the companies as healthcare expenses and missed work cost. Employees should learn how to manage the work pressure effectively and it is vital for employers and employees. Work pressure is a very important topic now days to think upon the researchers. Competition among the organizations and profit making by organizations are directly affecting the employees. Employees in various sectors and industries are just considered as the source of profit making and gaining competitive advantages.

When spoken to the employees we found out that working is not a problem among the employees. Each and every employee wants to work and earn money for their daily expenses and for living better life. But the problem arises when the employees have to work more than their limits. Employees mentioned that there are some limits up to which they can perform the work and handle the responsibilities effectively. They also mentioned that not only this but each and every employee is different they have individual ways and capabilities of doing the job and also handling the responsibilities effectively. Top management expects that each and every employee is capable of doing each and everything. This expectation also leads to the pressure among the employees.

Researchers have defined work pressure as the state of being pressed. Few researchers have mentioned it as harassment, oppression, stress and also the pressure of life. Work pressure is a negative terminology. When the expectations from the employees are more and the employees are not able to perform them properly or not able to meet the expectations in the stipulated time period then the work is known as work pressure. The healthy job is a place where the work pressure on the employee is according to the abilities of the employees. Along with the proper distribution of the responsibilities management should also provide the employees with proper resources and support and also the enough time and proper remuneration to perform the work. This is known as the healthy work environment which is a dream now a day for the employees in multinational organizations. The healthy environment has a positive relation with the health of

the employees. In this paper we are going to discuss the work pressure and the effect of the same on the physical and mental health of the employees. But before that we are going to discuss the introduction and concepts related to work pressure and health of the employees.

Work related pressure is also known as work related stress also. The situation happens when the knowledge of the employee and capabilities to perform the work are not able to match with the expectations of the management from the employees and it challenges the ability of the employee to perform the job.

There are various causes of work related stress. Few will be discussed in detail in this paper. Research conducted by various executives have discussed that more than a million people in MNCs are stating the work pressure as the main reason for their illness. More than 2 million people mentioned that they are suffering from high level of stress at their work place. Researchers have also mentioned that the illness among the employees costs very high for the MNCs.

Factors related to job pressure:

1. **Work overload and control over the job:** the main pressure exists among the employees when unrealistic deadlines and expectations are imposed on the employees. And this results in the less of control on the job. Employees are not able to understand what they should actually do. Due to the lack of time and overload of technology and work employees don't have control over the various aspects of time and they are not able to involve in proper decision making and results in lack of influence over targets and performance.
2. **Ambiguity about your responsibilities:** Now a day the problem that employees feel is that they don't know about their job responsibilities as well. Due to so many job responsibilities and lots of expectations and less number of workforce employees are confused about their work profile.
3. **Feeling Isolated:** Isolation can also be defined as loneliness. Loneliness is an unpleasant experience among the employees which is a matter of concerned for the human managers in organizational behaviour. Isolation is an emotional condition where employees feel themselves neglected, rejected and deprived from the proper secure and close relationship.

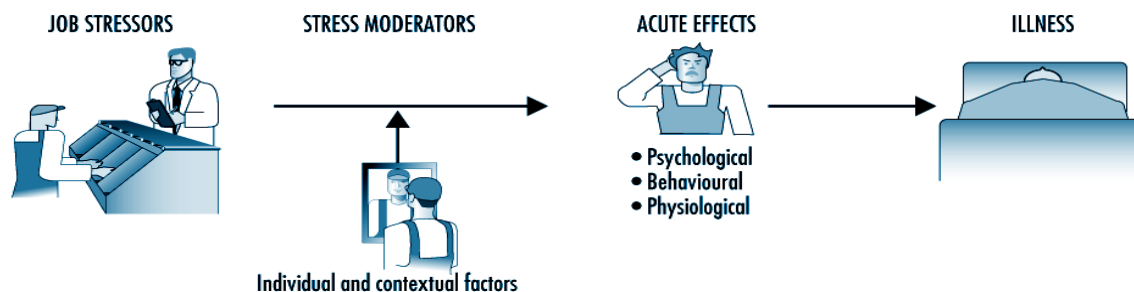
4. **Covert discrimination and Favouritism:** few organizations with traditional environment sometimes directly or indirectly promote discrimination and favouritism in an organization which is a main reason of stress or we can say job pressure among employees. There are various human rights laws that prohibit discrimination and encourage equality.

5. **Work life balance:** now a day in the 21<sup>st</sup> century single bread winner is not enough to lead a well standard life. Increasing demand of money and expenses employees have to work a lot and directly or indirectly he is neglecting the family which leads to a work life imbalance. Secondly, husbands and wives have to work for the family and when both the members in the family are working then it will be very difficult to have a work life balance. Stress and work life balance are intertwined and can be documented both as a cause and outcome of job pressure.

6. **Employees are considered undervalued:** while having an informal discussion with the employees it was found that few employees have the problem with the management. They told that most of the time they are not appreciated for their hard work and they are not given the assignment which they actually deserve. This happens especially with the female employees. It was very difficult for them to prove themselves during the task assignment, speaking up in the meeting etc. We have discussed the concept about the job pressure and the causes of work pressure. Now another important point that we are going to discuss in the paper is the effect of job pressure. As we have already discussed in the starting of the chapter that job pressure leads to various physical and mental health illness. This concept we are going to study in detail in the paper now.

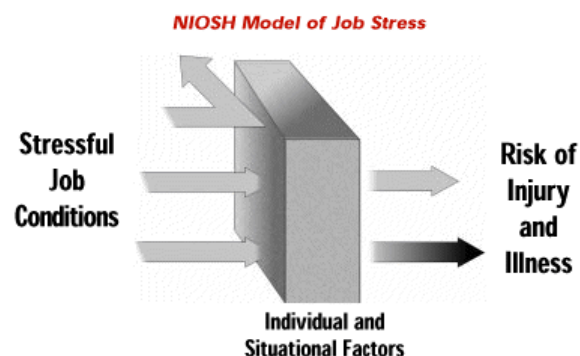
### Physical and mental illness

According to few researchers work pressure or we can say work stress can be a positive phenomena as it is a push for the employees to work with full efforts and dedication. But as we all know excess of everything is not good. More pressure leads to the reverse effect on the employees and finally ends with the illness.



If we are talking about illness we would like to divide illness into physical illness and mental illness. First we will discuss about the physical illness. "Stress doesn't only make us feel awful emotionally," says Jay Winner, MD, author of *Take the Stress Out of Your Life* and director of the Stress Management Program for Sansum Clinic in Santa Barbara, Calif. "It can also exacerbate just about any health condition you can think of". Various studies have mentioned that job pressure or stress due to work are reasons for various health related issues. Various diseases like obesity, diabetes, depression, asthma are very common among youngsters now days and the main reason for all this is the stress at the workplace. World Health Organization has shown a high level of commitment to psychological health issues as one of its priorities. Psychological health issues among employees were the main topic of discussion on the World Health Day 2001 and also the World Health Report 2001. Various factors and the solutions related to mental health issues were discussed. World Health Organization is ever mindful of the need to highlight activities that foster good practices in mental health. In this monograph the issue of work as it relates to mental health is addressed.

**NIOSH Approach to job stress:** The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has made a great contribution by conducting various studies on work related illness and injuries. NIOSH is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIOSH works in collaboration with various industries and organizations to study the psychological aspect of employees and the effect of stress on the physical and mental illness of employees.



In the paper we are going to discuss the following factors of physical and mental illness.

Physical illness:

1. Inability to go to sleep
2. Headaches

3. Feeling unaccountably tired
4. Decrease in sexual interest
5. Pricking sensations or twinges in parts of your body
6. Feeling as you don't want to get up in the morning
7. Feeling dizzy

Mental illness:

1. During an ordinary working day there are times when employees feel unsettled though the reasons for this might not always be clear.
2. There are times at work when employees feel so exasperated that they think to themselves that 'life is all really too much effort'.
3. When employees do their job they have noticed themselves questioning their own ability and judgment.
4. Do employees usually feel relaxed and at ease?
5. If the jobs employees are doing start to go wrong do they sometimes feel a lack of confidence and panicky?
6. Concerning work and life in general, would employees describe themselves as a 'worrier'?
7. Do employees find themselves experiencing fairly long periods in which they feel melancholy for no apparent reason?

These are the few points that are able to explain the physical and mental illness among the employees. In this research paper we are going to emphasize on the job pressure and its effect on the health of the employees. Various literature reviews are assessed for the secondary data and primary data was also collected from the employees. The data collection will be discussed in detail in further pages of research paper.

### **Literature review**

1. Krit Jarinto in the research paper "Understanding Stress": Comparing between US, Japanese and Thai management styles" discussed that stress is general phenomena that can happen with anybody irrespective of age, gender, profession, education, marital status, job profile etc. There are various sources or we can say causes of job stress which are consists of inappropriate work environment, job overload, ambiguity about work profile and job

responsibilities, poor relationship with colleagues, lack of career growth opportunity, etc. Author has also mentioned that the human resource plays very important in the success of any business.

2. Dan J. Braaten (2000) in the research paper “Occupational Stress in Mental Health Counselors” discussed that occupational stress which is a synonymous of job pressure is not a private matter of concerned for the employees but also it has a negative effect on the organizational activities also. For the organizations it results in lower productivity, less profit margins, etc. If we are talking about the employees job pressure results in physical health issues, distress, and various behavioural disorders. In the study author have discussed about the stress management and pressure reduction techniques for the employees. Author said that empathic ability, sense of achievement, prolonged exposure, burnout, etc are various stress reduction techniques. Author discussed about the various stress reduction intervention.

3. Melanie Bickford 2005 in the research paper “Stress in the Workplace: A General Overview of the Causes, the Effects, and the Solutions” discussed that there are various physiological responses towards job pressure. High BP, increased metabolism, decrease in protein synthesis in body, increased cholesterol at a very young age, increase blood sugar level, insomnia, frequent illness. Author have also discussed about the effect of long term exposure to stress. Various coronary heart disease, arthritis, irritable bowel syndrome, depression, strokes, chronic fatigue syndrome ME, indigestion and heartburn. Author has also discussed about the mental health issues. Author said that employee’s mental health is an effective tool for the success of an organization.

4. Jungwee Park 2007 discussed in the research paper “work stress and job performance” that job pressure can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional response. It takes place when the capabilities of the employees don’t match with the job requirements. Author has explained the concept with the help of Psychological demand/ decision latitude model. Author has discussed that the work stress is known as job strain and the other important aspect is known as control over the various elements of the job. When employees do not have the ability to control the job strain and various elements of the job they feel the job as a job pressure.

5. Joseph C K Yeung discussed in the research paper “Role of traditional values on coping with stress among manufacturing workers in China: An Empirical Study” discussed that job pressure has become a key reasons for various physiological and psychological problems. Balancing the work and job is difficult for each and every individual and is a matter of research

for the management and government as well. Author has discussed the concept of individualistic culture in detail and as the main reason of stress among professionals in the research paper.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Objectives:** On the basis of the above discussion the objectives of the study will be as follows:

- To identify the highest effective factor related to job pressure, mental illness and physical illness related to job among employees.
- To study the relationship between job pressure and mental illness among employees.
- To study the relationship between job pressure and physical illness among employees.

**Hypothesis:** In the light of the above discussion I propose:

- Hypothesis1: There is a relationship between job pressure and mental illness among the employees.
- Hypothesis2: There is a relationship between job pressure and mental illness among the employees.

**Methodology:** The research is conducted with the 79 professionals working with various organizations. Occupational stress questionnaire developed by Cooper is taken to identify the sources of job pressure and mental and physical illness. Data is collected by using convenience sampling. SPSS tool is used to analyze the data. The name of the companies is not disclosed due to the privacy issues.

Table 1: **Demographic table**

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Age	20 years - 24 years	3	3.8
	25 years to 29 years	14	17.7
	30 years - 34 years	45	57.0
	35 years and above	17	21.5
Years of Experience	less than 2 years	1	1.3
	2.1- 4 years	9	11.4
	4.1- 6 years	11	13.9
	6.1 years and above	58	73.4
Education	UG	30	38.0
	PG	23	29.1
	Professional	25	31.6



	Others	1	1.3
Marital Status	Single	17	21.5
	Engaged	2	2.5
	Married	60	75.9
Gender	Male	43	54.4
	Female	36	45.6

On the analysis of the above table,

- **Age:** 30 years to 34 years achieved the highest score of 57%, 35 years and above achieved the score of 21.5%, and below 29 years also achieved the score of 21.5%.
- **Years of experience:** 6.1 years and above achieved the highest score of 73.4 while less than 6 years achieved the total percentage of 26.5%.
- **Education:** As the data is collected from the engineers so most of the employees are under graduates with the score of 38% and also professional graduates with 31.6%. PG achieved the score of 29.1%.
- **Marital Status:** The highest score of 75.9% is achieved by the married. Rest are single or engaged.
- **Gender:** Male respondents achieved the highest score of 54.4% while Female respondents achieved the lowest score of 45.6%.

### Objective 1

**Frequency table:** frequency table shows the reliability of the job pressure, mental illness and physical illness.

**Table 2: Frequency Table**

Constructs	Cronbach Alpha	No items	Means	Stdev
Job Pressure	.887	6	3.055	1.23
Mental Illness	.901	7	2.924	1.101
Physical Illness	.948	7	2.716	1.084

According to the first objective of the research paper we are supposed to find out the highest effecting factor in the professional life of the employees. With the help of frequency table and reliability statistics we can conclude that source of pressure is the highest factor which is 3.055

and the mental and physical illness which are 2.924 and 2.716 respectively. So we have achieved the first objective.

**Objective 2:** This is a correlation table which shows the relation between the factors of job pressure and mental illness.

**Table 3 Correlation between job pressure and mental illness**

		2a. feel unsettled though the reasons for this might not always be clear?	2b. feel so exasperated that you think to yourself that 'life is all really too much effort'?	2c. As you do your job have you noticed yourself questioning your own ability and judgment?	2d. Do you usually feel relaxed and at ease?	2e. If the jobs you are doing start to go wrong do you sometimes feel a lack of confidence and panicky?	2f. Concerning work and life in general, would you describe yourself as a 'worrier'?	2g. experiencing fairly long periods in which you feel melancholy for no apparent reason?
1a. Insufficient control over your job	Pearson Correlation	.313**	.270*	.273*	-.078	.226*	.257*	.335**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.016	.015	.493	.046	.022	.003
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79	79
1b. Ambiguity about your responsibilities	Pearson Correlation	.306**	.186	.264*	.027	.085	.183	.232*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.100	.019	.812	.455	.106	.040
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79	79
1c. Feeling isolated	Pearson Correlation	.315**	.349**	.117	-.061	.217	.396**	.251*

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.002	.305	.592	.055	.000	.026
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79	79
1d. Covert discrimination and favouritism	Pearson Correlation	.140	.160	.286*	.014	-.028	.154	.201
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.218	.158	.011	.903	.804	.177	.075
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79	79
1e. Pursuing a career at the expense of home life	Pearson Correlation	.272*	.183	.168	-.181	.094	.287*	.370**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	.106	.139	.109	.409	.010	.001
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79	79
1f. Being undervalued	Pearson Correlation	.257*	.226*	.260*	.149	.178	.295**	.331**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.022	.045	.021	.189	.118	.008	.003
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79	79

The correlation table shows that there is a positive relation between the sources of pressure and the mental illness and there is a negative relation between the source of pressure and feeling relax and at ease. The correlation proved the following points:

- The insufficient control over the job has a positive relation with various psychological issues like feeling unsettled with the score of .313\*\* which shows that it is highly significance. The other factor like life is too much efforts, questioning own abilities, lack of confidence, thinking oneself as a worrier and feeling as a long day also with the score of .270\*, .273\*, .226\*, .257\*, .335\*\* respectively. Analysis also showed the negative relation with relaxation which is -.078.
- The ambiguity about the job also has a positive relation with various psychological issues especially feeling unsettled, questioning ability and long day with the scores of .306\*\*, .264\*, and .232\* respectively .

- Feeling isolates also has a positive relation with various psychological issues like feeling unsettled with the score of .315\*\* which shows that it is highly significance. The other factor like life is too much efforts, thinking oneself as a worrier and feeling as a long day also with the score of .349 ,.396\*\*,.251\* respectively. Analysis also showed the negative relation with relaxation which is -.061.
  - Covert discrimination and favouritism has a very significant positive relation with questioning own responsibilities and abilities with the score of .286\*.
  - Another important factor of job pressure is the work life balance which has a significance positive relation with the psychological illness factors like feeling unsettled, life is like a worrier and feeling as the day is very boring and long day.
  - Being undervalued also has significance positive relation with almost all the psychological illness factors.
- Hence we are able to achieve our second objective and first hypothesis.

**Objective 3:** This is a correlation table which shows the relation between the factors of job pressure and physical illness.

**Table 4: Correlation between job pressure and physical illness**

		3a. Inability to get to sleep	3b. Headaches	3c. Feeling unaccountably tired	3d. Decrease in sexual interest	3e. Pricking sensations or twinges in parts of your body	3f. Feeling as do not want to get up in the morning	3g. Feeling dizzy
1a. Insufficient control over your job	Pearson Correlation	.315**	.486**	.382**	.410**	.145	.282*	.093
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.005	.000	.001	.000	.204	.012	.416
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79	79

1b. Ambiguity about your responsibilities	Pearson Correlation	.235*	.363**	.326**	.336**	.184	.316**	.146
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.038	.001	.004	.003	.108	.005	.203
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79	79
1c. Feeling isolated	Pearson Correlation	.264*	.522**	.359**	.337**	.235*	.240*	.288*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.020	.000	.001	.003	.038	.034	.011
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79	79
1d. Covert discrimination and favouritism	Pearson Correlation	.236*	.396**	.340**	.373**	.135	.255*	.140
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.037	.000	.002	.001	.239	.024	.221
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79	79
1e. Pursuing a career at the expense of home life	Pearson Correlation	.389**	.496**	.419**	.627**	.460**	.470**	.341**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.002
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79	79
1f. Being undervalued	Pearson Correlation	.230*	.409**	.452**	.411**	.254*	.323**	.172
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.043	.000	.000	.000	.025	.004	.131
	N	79	79	79	79	79	79	79

The correlation table shows that there is a positive relation between the sources of pressure and the physical illness and there is a negative relation between the source of pressure and feeling relax and at ease. The correlation proved the following points:

- The insufficient control over the job has a positive relation with various physiological issues like inability to sleep, headaches, feeling unaccountably tired and decrease in sexual

interest with the score of .315\*\*, .486\*\*, .382\*\*, .410\*\* respectively which shows that it is highly significance. Even employees don't want to get up early in the morning also.

- Employees are having all the physical illness because of ambiguity about their job responsibilities. Headache, feeling tired, decrease in sexual interest and feeling like not to get up early in the morning with the scores of .363\*\*, .326\*\*, .336\*\*, .316\*\* respectively.
  - The highest score of correlation is .522\*\* which shows the relation between loneliness and headache. Employees are not having good colleagues and friends to discuss the problems so they feel headache. Isolation also results other physical illness like always feeling tiring, feeling dizzy and even feeling pricking sensations and twinges in the parts of the body with the score of .359\*\*, .288\*, .235\*\* respectively.
  - Covert discrimination and favouritism has a very significant positive relation with headache, feeling accountably tired, and decrease in sexual interest with the score of .396\*\*, .340\*\*, .373\*\* respectively.
  - Another important factor of job pressure is the work life balance which has a significance positive relation with all the physiological illness factors from inability to sleep to feeling dizzy. Work life balance has a very high significant relation with decrease in sexual interest with the highest score of .627\*\*.
  - Being undervalued also has significance positive relation with physical illness factors. Feeling accountably tired and decrease in sexual interest scored the highest with the score of .452\*\* and .411\*\*. Even headache and don't want to get up in the morning also have a significant positive relation with the source of job pressure that is being undervalued.
- Hence we are able to achieve our third objective and second hypothesis.

### **Conclusion:**

At the end we would like to conclude that pressure on the employees are good and sometimes act as positive force but the excess of each and every thing leads to the reverse effect. Each and every person has various stress tolerance levels. Few employees feel stress very easily and few are able to perform better under stress according to their level. There are various ways to increase the stress tolerance level. Each and every individual with less tolerance level should work on it as in today's competitive world the jobs have lots of pressure. There are various ways to increase the level of tolerance which we will mention here but not in detail. Physical activities

like regular exercise like jogging, weight lifting, outdoor games, etc is very important for all the employees to increase the tolerance level. Connect to others means employees should try to make friends and should have trips and outings with the friends and share the thoughts and burdens with the friends and spouse. This is a very helpful factor to increase the pressure tolerance level. Other factors like healthy diet, relaxation from the work, holidays, lazy day, proper sleep, change in attitude and outlook also play important role in increase the pressure handling abilities. Management should also help employees to overcome the effects of job pressure. Management should assign the work to the employees according to their abilities and the limits they can handle the pressure. Overburden them is not good for the organization also. Management should also provide training sessions to the employees and also the routine outings to burnout the stress.

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