

WORK STRESS- IMPACT ON INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOUR AND UTILITY OF STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUE.

Dr. Noel Parge, Ahmednagar College, Ahmednagar, Email : noel_parge@yahoo.co.in

Abstract –

Stress is not a new phenomenon for all of us. Work stress can be experienced by most of the employees because of long working hours, tight deadlines, ever-increasing demands by the employer, etc. work stress may result into an adverse impact on the behaviour of an individual/employee. This can be seen more in the BPO industry. The main aim of this paper is to find out the impact of work stress on the behaviour of employee by focusing on their behavioural symptoms and the utility and impact of the stress management technique provided by some companies and its actual utility in reducing the stress among the employees.

Introduction –

Stress is a factor, which is harmful to psychophysical health and to the quality (Selye, 1946). Stress is a strong unpleasant emotion or pressure that produces feelings of tension or strains. Work stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or need of the worker. Work stress can lead to poor health and even injury. Work-related stress is the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope. Stress occurs in a wide range of work circumstances but is often made worse when employees feel they have little support from supervisors and colleagues, as well as little control over work processes. There is often confusion between pressure or challenge and stress, and sometimes this is used to excuse bad management practice.

Stress can be experienced by everyone in their day-to-day life whether at work or outside. Employees of some industries like the Business demand Process Outsourcing (BPO) experience more stress due to their work-profile. They have high demand for performance, unrealistic targets, Odd and long working hours as they have to work as per the day time schedule of western countries which is usually at night time in India, high competition, peer pressure, monotonous work and work culture. Many a times they are given a new identity or name i.e. they have to impersonate as if they belong to the client country and have to use their language tone.

In this research the researcher has used random sampling method to select 300 employees (150 male and female each) working as Customer Service Associates (CSA) of 10 BPOs in Pune, Maharashtra. The selected companies have 500 or more employees and are providing Stress Management Techniques (SMT) and facilities for their employees for reducing stress. After meeting the HR managers, it was observed that the companies use SMT like Yoga and meditation, Dance and Music therapy, Exercise (Gyms, Aerobics, Games), Counselling (Employee Assistance Programme), Social groups (Art of living) along with facilities like Parties, tournaments, competitions Smoking zones etc.

Impact of Work Stress on Individual Behaviour:-

Behavior is the combination of Cognition, affect and response pattern of the person. It is a reaction given to the stimuli coming from the internal or external environment. Any kind of stimulation is nothing but the change in such environment. Human behavior has an impact on its environment or surroundings and also affected by the same. The BPO industry is a highly competitive industry and to survive in such a competitive work environment a person undergoes stress. Therefore stress

management has to be an integral part in the BPOs. The stress affects the behavior of the employee which in turn affects his/her productivity, which has a cost to the company.

Behavioural Symptoms

The impact of stress can be seen by the mere changes in the behavioural factors of the employees. In the present study, the following behavioral factors are taken into consideration i.e. Passive/Aggressive Behavior, Irritability (getting irritated), Accident Proneness, Disturbed Sleep Patterns, Withdrawing/ Sulking, Clenched Fists/ Banging with Fist, Compulsive/Impulsive Behavior, Poor Time Management, Low/Poor Work performance, Absenteeism from work, Addiction to Tea/Coffee/ Alcohol, Craving for Food/Pastries/Chips/ Chocolates/Biscuits and Eating Hurriedly.

Impact of Stress Management Training (SMT)-

Stress Management starts with the adaptation process of Coping. Coping is what people actually do when confronted with stressful situation. Coping may be formally defined as cognitive and behavioural efforts to Master, Reduce or Tolerate internal and external demands and conflicts that tax or exceed a person's resources. Generally people deal with stress in two different ways. First through problem solving, sometimes called problem focused coping and another way is reducing stress by regulating emotional responses, which is called emotion focused coping.

The following table shows the impact of SMT on the behavioural symptoms of employees after using the various SMT's

Table no-1 Behavioral symptoms & impact of SMT

Sr. No	Symptom	Out of 300 respondents	Respondents in %	Change among sufferers			
				No Change (%)	Reduced (%)	Increased (%)	Total
1	Passive/Aggressive Behaviour	20	06.67	30.00	65.00	05.00	100
2	Irritability (getting irritated)	106	35.33	72.64	27.36	00.00	100
3	Accident Proneness	152	50.67	59.87	38.82	01.32	100
4	Disturbed Sleep Patterns	57	19.00	29.82	47.37	22.81	100
5	Withdrawing/ Sulking	14	04.67	50.00	50.00	00.00	100
6	Clenched Fists/ Banging with Fist	27	09.00	88.89	11.11	00.00	100
7	Compulsive/ Impulsive Behaviour	6	02.00	33.33	66.67	00.00	100

8	Poor Time Management	72	24.00	68.06	15.28	16.67	100
9	Low/ Poor Work performance	177	59.00	47.46	45.76	06.78	100
10	Absenteeism from work	108	36.00	53.70	34.26	12.04	100
11	Addiction to Tea/Coffee/ Alcohol	34	11.33	20.59	44.12	35.29	100
12	Craving for Food/Pastries/ Chips/Chocolates/Biscuits/Eating Hurriedly	33	11.00	12.12	21.21	66.67	100
Behavioural Symptoms, N=300							

From the above table the following impact was observed on the behavioural symptoms of employees after using SMT by employees:

a) Passive/Aggressive Behaviour: The above table (table no.1) shows that 20 respondents or 6.67 percent out of the total respondents have accepted that they have passive or aggressive behavioral tendency.

It can be seen that after using the stress management techniques around 30.00 percent respondents said that there is no change in their passive or aggressive behavior. The remaining 65.0 percent felt that the passive or aggressive behavior is reduced. Around 5 percent of the respondents felt their passive or aggressive behavior increased. After the use of SMT. One female respondent has said that there is increase in passive and aggressive behavior even after using SMT. After going through demographic characteristics of the respondents i.e. age is 25 years, unmarried, education is graduate, work experience is 3.6 years and 08 numbers of family members. All these things may be affecting her stress leading to aggressive/passive behavior.

b) Irritability: The above table (table no.1) shows that 106 respondents or 35.33 percent out of the total respondents have accepted that they get easily irritated at the job.

It can be seen that after using the stress management techniques around 72.64 percent respondents said that there is no change in their irritable behavior. The remaining 27.36 percent felt that the passive or aggressive behavior is reduced.

c) Accident Proneness: The above table (table no.1) shows that 152 respondents or 50.67 percent out of the total respondents have accepted that they are accident prone due to job stress.

It can be seen that after using the stress management techniques around 59.87 percent respondents said that there is no change in their accident prone behavior. The remaining 38.82 percent felt that the accident prone behavior is reduced. Around 1.32 percent of the respondents felt their accident prone behavior increased after the use of SMT. Only one 25 years old post graduate married male is respondent that his accident prone behavior is increased when after using SMT.

d) Disturbed Sleep Patterns: The above table (table no. 1) shows that 57 respondents or 19 percent out of the total respondents have accepted that they have disturbed sleep pattern due to job stress.

It can be seen that after using the stress management techniques around 29.82 percent respondents said that there is no change in their disturbed sleep pattern. The remaining 47.37 percent felt that the disturbed sleep pattern reduced. Surprisingly around 22.81 percent of the respondents felt their disturbed sleep pattern increased after the use of SMT. Both male and female have responded in the same manner. Almost all of them are graduates and post-graduates with age from 22 to 25 years.

e) Withdrawing or Sulking: The above table (table no. 1) shows that 14 respondents or 4.67 percent out of the total respondents have accepted that they have withdrawal or sulking tendency.

It can be seen that after using the stress management techniques around 50.00 percent respondents said that there is no change in their withdrawal or sulking behavior. However, the remaining 50.0 percent felt that the withdrawal or sulking behavior is reduced. Zero percent answered that there is no increase in their withdrawal or sulking behavior in effect of SMT.

f) Clenched Fists or Banging Surface with Fist: The above table (table no. 1) shows that 27 respondents or 9.00 percent out of the total respondents have accepted that they have Clenched Fists or Banging Surface with Fist tendency.

It can be seen that after using the stress management techniques around 88.89 percent respondents said that there is no change in their Clenched Fists or Banging Surface with Fist behavior. The remaining 11.11 percent felt that the clenched fists or banging surface with fist behavior is reduced. Zero percent answered that there is no increase in their clenching or banging behavior in effect of SMT.

g) Compulsive or Impulsive Behavior: The above table (table no. 1) shows that 06 respondents or 02 percent out of the total respondents have accepted that they have compulsive or impulsive behavior due to job stress.

It can be seen that after using the stress management techniques around 33.33 percent respondents said that there is no change in their compulsive or impulsive behavior. The remaining 66.67 percent felt that the compulsive or impulsive pattern reduced. Zero percent answered that there is no increase in their compulsive or impulsive behavior in effect of SMT.

h) Poor Time Management: The above table (table no. 1) shows that 72 respondents or 24 percent out of the total respondents have accepted that they have poor time management due to job stress.

It can be seen that after using the stress management techniques around 68.06 percent respondents said that there is no change in their poor time management. The remaining 15.28 percent felt that the poor time management reduced. Surprisingly around 16.67 percent of the respondents felt their poor time management increased after the use of SMT. Majority of the respondents who have respondent an increased in the tendency of the time management after SMT are boys except one girl who are post graduated in professional courses. Majority of them are above 25 years.

i) Low/Poor Work Performance: The above table (table no. 1) shows that 177 respondents or 59 percent out of the total respondents have accepted that they have low or poor work performance due to job stress.

It can be seen that after using the stress management techniques around 47.46 percent respondents said that there is no change in their low or poor work performance. The remaining 45.76 percent felt that the low or poor work performance is reduced. Surprisingly around 6.78 percent of the respondents felt their low or poor work performance increased after the use of SMT. Majority of the respondents are boys except one girl who are post graduated in professional course.

j) Absenteeism from Work: The above table (table no. 1) shows that 108 respondents or 36 percent out of the total respondents have accepted that they have a tendency of remaining absent from work due to job stress.

It can be seen that after using the stress management techniques around 53.70 percent respondents said that there is no change in their absenteeism from work. The remaining 34.26 percent felt that the

absenteeism from work is reduced. Surprisingly around 12.04 percent of the respondents felt their absenteeism from work increased after the use of SMT. Both male and female have responded in the same manner. Majority of the respondents are boys except three girls who are post graduated or masters in professional courses (IB).

.k. Addiction to Tea/Coffee/Alcohol : The above table (table no. 1) shows that 34 respondents or 11.33 percent out of the total respondents have accepted that they have addiction to tea, coffee or alcohol due to job stress.

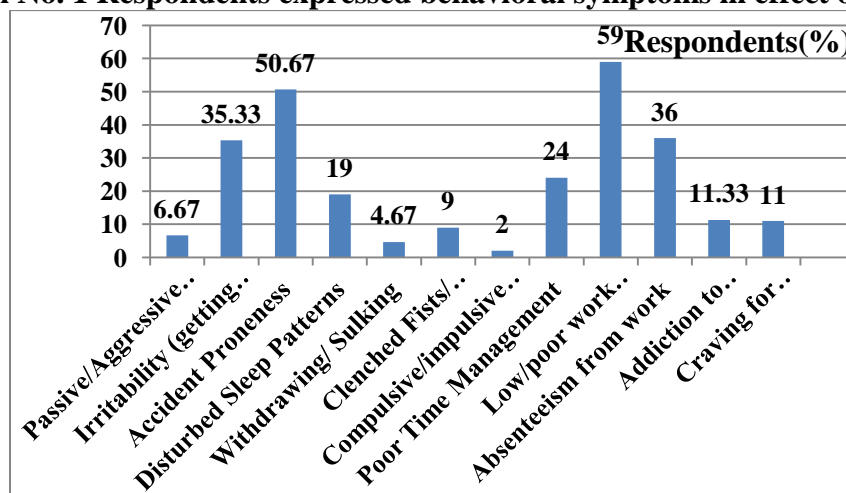
It can be seen that after using the stress management techniques around 20.59 percent respondents said that there is no change in their addiction to tea, coffee or alcohol. The remaining 44.12 percent felt that the addiction to tea, coffee or alcohol is reduced. Surprisingly around 35.29 percent of the respondents felt there is increase in change of addiction to tea, coffee or alcohol. All the respondents who said that there is increase in the addiction to tea, coffee or alcohol after SMT are girls aged 22 years.

Craving for Foods, like Pastries, Chips, Chocolates, Biscuits etc/Eating Hurriedly: The above table (table no. 1) shows that 33 respondents or 11 percent out of the total respondents have accepted that they Craving for Foods, like Pastries, Chips, Chocolates, Biscuits etc/Eating Hurriedly due to job stress.

It can be seen that after using the stress management techniques around 12.12 percent respondents said that there is no change in Craving for Foods, like Pastries, Chips, Chocolates, Biscuits etc/Eating Hurriedly. The remaining 21.21 percent felt that the Craving for Foods, like Pastries, Chips, Chocolates, Biscuits etc/Eating Hurriedly is reduced. Surprisingly around 66.67 percent of the respondents felt their Craving for Foods, like Pastries, Chips, Chocolates, Biscuits etc/Eating Hurriedly increased after the use of SMT. Both males and females responded that the craving for the food increased.

Graph 1 shows the number respondents reported behavioral symptoms in effect of stress in percentage

Graph No. 1 Respondents expressed behavioral symptoms in effect of stress



Conclusion:

In conclusion we can say that there is mostly a positive impact of the SMTs in reducing the stress among the BPO employees and more and more companies should provide the SMTs for their employees. Also employees should be encouraged and motivated to use the SMTs provided by the companies.

Reference –

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/99-101/default.html#What%20Is%20Job%20Stress?>

<https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/occupational-health-stress-at-the-workplace>
Selye, H. (1976). The Stress of Life (rev. edn.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
Pargue N, A Critical Study Of The Effectiveness Of Techniques Used For Stress Management In Selected Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Companies In Pune, 2012, ch 4, page no 29.