

Is Stress a Bad Factor in Employee Work Performance (EWP) in Sri Lankan Public Sector?

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Abstract- *Stress experienced by employees has been identified by plenty of scholars as a horrible phenomenon that should be eliminated so that the employee work performance (EWP) could be enhanced. In other word, stress has mostly been noted as a negative phenomenon as far as the EWP is concerned. This notion of idea was tested in the present enquiry by analyzing data obtained in Sri Lankan public sector organizations. The study was conducted in the months between July to December 2013 in association with Sri Lankan public sector organizations covering three provinces (Western, Southern, and North Central). The sample studied was composed of 661 employees belonged to three employee categories (managerial, clerical, and below clerical) working in three organizational categories (national, provincial, and district). The methodology of the study was the survey method in which a questionnaire was used as the key data gathering tool. Data analysis process was occurred by the use of computer based SPSS package (version 20), and one-way ANOVA system was used to investigate co-relations among variables. The study clearly identified those who had experienced some level of stress reported over 30% work performance as compared to those who experienced no stress. According to the result of the hypothesis test, it was found that there is no significant difference in mean impact level due to stress among employees belonged to diverse employee or organizational categories. These findings are a clear indication to suggest that stress caused by employees (irrespective of their employee and organizational categories) is no longer a horrible factor in taking EWP into account, and what is the truth is the opposite. Last but not the least, the findings of the study makes a counter argument against the dominant ideology, to state that some level of stress experienced by employees is a positive factor that enhances EWP.*

Keywords: Stress, Employee Work Performance (EWP), Findings

I. INTRODUCTION

Stress is a fact, and a normal part of everyday life (Klinic Community Health Centre, 2010). Stress is often described as a feeling of being overloaded, wound up tight, tense, and worried. We all experience stress at times. It can sometimes help to motivate us to help to get a task finished, or perform well. But stress can also be harmful if we become over-stressed and it interferes with our ability to get on with our normal life for too long (Australian Psychological Society.2014). Stress has also been most often linked to organization setup, and plenty of studies have been focused on organizational employees. What is equally important is that most of studies have noted the relationship between employee work performance (EWP) and the level of their stress, to say that more stress causes low EWP and vice-verse. Thus, stress has mostly been noted as a negative phenomenon as far as the EWP is concerned. This notion of idea was tested in the present enquiry, and it was intended to investigate whether this ideology (concerning stress as a negative factor as far as the EWP is concerned) would come into reality by analyzing data obtained in Sri Lankan public sector organizations. This purpose would be achieved by addressing three research questions (as discussed later).

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Even though organizational studies have been plenty in the field of management, surprisingly few studies are to be found organizational studies in sociological perspective. Sociological inquiries in this particular field would in fact bring a remarkable insight particularly on social factors in

organizations, that on the other hand could be used in order to enhance the employee work performance in general and organizational effectiveness in particular. Specifically, the study brings some hidden factors of stress in employees. Accordingly, this study unveils certain novel pathways in the study of organizations, and thereby, the study carries an enormous significance.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study tends to raise following three questions;

1. What sort of correlation does exist between EWP and the level of stress faced by employees in the context of organizations?
2. Whether there is a significant difference of the level of stress faced by employees according to organizational category?
3. Whether there is a significant difference of the level of stress faced by employees according to job category?

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the months between July to December 2013 in association with Sri Lankan public sector organizations covering three provinces (Western, Southern, and North Central). The sample studied was composed of 661 employees belonged to three employee categories (managerial, clerical, and below clerical) working in three organizational categories (national, provincial, and district). The methodology of the study was the survey method in which a questionnaire was used as the key data gathering tool (quantitative data). In addition, case study and simple observation methods (Qualitative data) were used in the study. Data analysis process for quantitative data was occurred by the use of computer based SPSS package (version 20), and one-way ANOVA system was used to investigate correlations among variables, whereas qualitative data were thoroughly analyzed to come into logical conclusions.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

I. EWP and the Level of Stress

The study clearly identified those who had experienced some level of stress reported 31.19% work performance as compared to those who experienced no stress. According to case studies, it was clearly found that almost all respondents

admitted the positive character of their stress..For instance, most of them elaborated (See Box 1) that their stress would enhance their work performance

Box 1: Some Level of Stress is Better

Gunawardena, a development assistant belonged to clerical and parallel services in a district level organization stated the positive side of his stress in his work
 “In my point of view, stress helps me to perform my work tasks on time, with no delay. It seems that I tend to neglect even my day to day activities when I feel no stress, According to my knowledge, my colleagues too work better when they have some level of stress. So, I feel some level of stress is advantageous in personal and organizational level”

Source: Field Study 2013

II. The Level of Stress Faced by Employees According to Organizational Category and Job Category

Here, it was intended to make findings through one way ANOVA. The related assumptions are indicated as follows;

- a. All three populations involved follow normal distribution
- b. All populations have the same variance
- c. The samples are randomly selected and independent of one another

According to our analysis, the above assumptions were found to be true, and resembled to the data in the study, and therefore continued with ANOVA.

VI. HYPOTHESIS APPLIED IN THE STUDY

- For the level of stress faced by employees according to organizational category

Null hypothesis (H_0) – The mean levels of the impact of work on the organization due to stress do not differ within the three levels of organizational categories.

Alternative hypothesis (H_a) – The mean levels of the impact of work on the organization due to stress differ for at least two of the three levels of organizational categories.

- For the level of stress faced by employees according to job category

Null hypothesis (H_0) – The mean levels of the impact of work on the organization due to

stress do not differ within the three levels of employee categories.

Alternative hypothesis (H_a) – The mean levels of the impact of work on the organization due to stress differ for at least two of the three levels of employee categories.

VI. RESULTS OF THE HYPOTHESIS TEST

Table 1: Level of Stress According to Organizational Category (Descriptive Statistics)

	N (No. of respondents)	Mean
National	133	32.59
Provincial	318	29.23
District	210	33.26
Total	661	31.19

Source: Field Study 2013

Table 2: ANOVA Table to Test The Level of Stress Faced by Employees According to Organizational Category

	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2385.826	2	1192.9	.929	.395
Within Groups	844706.913	658	1283.7		
Total	847092.738	660			

Source: Field Study 2013

Having understood the significance level $\alpha (= 0.05) <$ tested Significant value (0.395) according to Table 2, it was possible to reject the alternative hypothesis. Since we rejected the alternative hypothesis, there is sufficient evidence not to reject the mean levels of the impact of work on the organization due to stress do not differ within the three levels of organizational categories.

Table 3: Level of Stress According to Job Category (Descriptive Statistics)

	N (No. of respondents)	Mean
Managerial	162	30.56
Clerical	385	30.97
Below Clerical	114	32.81
Total	661	31.19

Source: Field Study 2013

Table 4: ANOVA Table to Test The Level of Stress Faced by Employees According to Job Category

	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	381.244	2	190.62	.148	.862
Within Groups	846711.495	658	1286.80		
Total	847092.738	660			

Source: Field Study 2013

Having understood the significance level $\alpha (= 0.05) <$ tested Significant value (0.862) according to Table 4, it was possible to reject the alternative hypothesis. Since we rejected the alternative hypothesis, there is sufficient evidence not to reject the mean levels of the impact of work on the organization due to stress do not differ within the three levels of job categories.

VII. CONCLUSION

it was found that there is no significant difference in mean impact level due to stress among employees belonged to diverse employee or organizational categories.

Findings of the study are a clear indication to suggest that stress caused by employees (irrespective of their employee and organizational categories) is no longer a horrible factor in taking EWP into account, and what is the truth is the opposite. Last but not the least, the findings of the study makes a counter argument against the dominant ideology, to state that some level of stress experienced by employees is a positive factor that enhances EWP.

According to findings, there is no significant difference of the level of stress faced by employees according to organizational and job categories.

So, is clear that employees in Sri Lankan public sector organizations admit their level of stress as a positive factor irrespective of to what category (organizational/ job) they belong.

Last but not the least, based on the findings, it could be suggested that some level of stress should be upheld in the maintenance of employees of diverse categories in organizations of many varieties so that the increase of employee

performance in general and the organizational performance in particular.

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