An Empirical Study on Level of Stress Amongst Administrative Staff of the State Universities in Sri Lanka

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Introduction

The study has expressed the relationship between job stress and job performance of Administrative Staff, who are serving in the State Universities in Sri Lanka.

The purpose of this study is to determine the level of stress of administrative staff. In this context, stress refers only to a stress with significant negative consequences. The stress situation, which prevails at the workplace, has an adverse effect on the output of the organization.

In Sri Lankan context no research was done on the scope area of this topic. Studies reveal that stress condition prevails in all public and private sector organizations in Sri Lanka. Here the researcher is interested to study the level of stress prevails in the State Universities in Sri Lanka.

In Sri Lanka, the State Universities are recognized and listed under the Association of Commonwealth Universities as higher educational institutes. In this context employees are privileged is working in the State Universities and they are paid better remuneration. It is observed that in the recent past Trade Union actions were staged by all the categories of employees of State Universities including Administrative staff members, and due to this reason, the educational activities of State Universities were paralyzed for a long period. Here the researcher's question is "Why Administrative Staff of State Universities are frustrated, provided that they are recognized, better paid and compensated, and working in the place of learning excellence?"

The performance of the organization may be below the agreed upon performance, due to increasing level of stress. The stress produces numerous physical and mental symptoms, which vary according to each individual situational factor. Therefore the study about the Job stress may help to improve the performance of the organization concerned.

Literature Review

Stress prevails at the workstations can be a serious problem for the organization as well as for its employees. Stress is recognized as a major challenge to employees' health, and the organization's healthiness. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), conducive management and working environment can be the best practice to prevent stress from happening.

There are numerous definitions of stress just as there are numerous theories of stress. Stress in early definitions was stated in terms of a stimulus, response or the interaction between the two (Cooper, Dewe&O'Driscol 2001). Workers under traditional management philosophy did not get enough attention as the prevalent view was titled towards a more traditional economic view of workers.

But this image was changed under behaviourism factor, which has stressed on the importance of paying attention to the needs and wishes of the workers, and provides a suitable environment for them to work (Gary 1966).

New Management topic including the stress of work has emerged with the increased attention to the human elements (Thomas G. Cummings & Gary 1999).

Work stress can arise from multiple sources, the ambiguity of the role of competition, organizational and personal problems are leading to increasing work stresses (Beehr 1976).

One of the direct results from work stress is to create a state of imbalance between the individual abilities, needs and expectations on the one hand and between what is asked to do from the other hand.

Ganstor&Loghan, (2005) have pointed that key factors such as work environment, role conflict role ambiguity management support, workload etc. are factors that determine the level of stress at work, which can affect employees' physical and mental health.

Objectives of Study

The objectives of the research study are to find out the level of Job stress prevails amongst the Administrative Staff, to find out the level of the Job performance of the Administrative Staff, to identify the impact of Job stress on job performance and to suggest the techniques to manage the stress and reducing managerial problems.

The scope of the Study

The study was conducted on State Universities in Sri Lanka in order to determine the impact of stress on Administrative Officers.

Significance of Study

The proposed study will cover the effective strategies to reduce the level of stress among Administrative staff in the State Universities in Sri Lanka. The study will consider both the individual and organizational approaches to reduce stress. Stress is one of the pervasive problems of an organization. For an institution to prosper, it is prerequisite that employees work in a stress-free ambience. It leads to a decrease in employees' efficiency, increase in absenteeism and turn over. In Universities, especially, if the faculties work without any stress, they can deliver better to students and also engage themselves actively in University development. Therefore, it is important to study the relationship between stress and job performance.

Stress is one of the burning issues that organization have to deal so that employees can comfortably produce quality work. Stress causes an imbalance in one's life because it leads to depression and thus damages health, attitude and work behaviour. Causes of stress are called stressors, which can be workplace conflict, role conflict, role ambiguity and workload.

Stress is also linked with "Demands" and "Resources". Demands are the expectations, situation, and circumstances in the organization whereas resources refer to the stuff used in meeting demands. The level of stress minimizes when resources are adequate to meet demand.

Research Methodology

The study was based on the review of the literature and a field of the survey in the State Universities in Sri Lanka to assess the level of stress of Administrative Officers and to assess the impact on the Job Performance.

Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires (Part I and II) with a Likert Scale Rating, which was filled by the respondents.

Secondary data were collected from books, journals, newspapers, magazines and research papers.

The random sampling method was used to obtain responses from the Administrative Staff members of the State Universities. Forty (40) numbers of responses were obtained from the Administrative Staff members of State Universities.
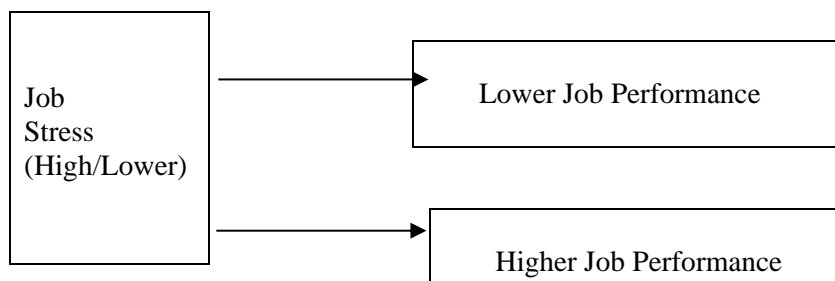
Hypotheses

Two hypotheses have been formulated in order to test the impact of the Job Stress of the Administrative Staff on the Job Performances.
H1: The higher the level of Job Stress the lower the Job Performances
H2: The lower the level of Job Stress the higher the Job Performances

Conceptual Frame Work

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data were entered into the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS 25) for analyzing the data. The mean value, standard deviation, correlation and coefficients, regression analysis, and ANOVA test were done in this study.

Job Stress in the perspective of Administrative Officers

The level of job stress in the perspective of the sample Administrative Officers is measured by 19 statements in the Questionnaire (**Part 1**). The questionnaires have been used to measure this variable. The data summary of this aspect is given below in **Table 1**.

The mean score mentioned in the above **Table: 1** indicates the degree of Job stress. The data summary shows the mean value of 58.83 with a standard deviation of 10.55. The mean value as a percentage of the possible maximum score is 61.93%. Here it is considered that there is a moderate level of Job stress prevails amongst Administrative Staff in the State Universities in Sri Lanka.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Obtained		Possible	
				Max	Min	Max	Min
Job Stress	40	58.83	10.55	85.00	35.00	95	19.00
Job Performance	40	54.82	8.85	68.00	32.00	95	19.00

***Source:** Survey Data*

Job performance in the perspective of Administrative Officers

The level of Job performance in the perspective of the sample Administrative Officers is measured by 19 statements in the Questionnaire (**Part 2**) has been used to measure this variable. The data summary of this aspect is given in **Table 1.**

The mean score mentioned in the above **Table: 1** indicates the degree of Job performance. The data summary shows the mean value of 54.82 with a standard deviation of 8.85. The mean value as a percentage of the possible maximum score is 57.7%. Here it is considered that level of Job performance in the State Universities in Sri Lanka is above average.

The simple correlation between job stress and job performance.

Simple correlation analysis carried out in this section in order to find the causal relationship between variables concerned. A causal relationship signifies that one variable is the cause of the other. The following **Table: 2** illustrates the simple correlation between the variables of the hypothesis.

Table: 2 Simple correlations between Job stress and Job performance**.**

	Job performance
Job stress	0.292
Significance (2-tailed)	0.000
	40

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.
Source: Survey Data

The above data summary shows a low case of negative correlation between job stress and job performance.

The impact of Job Stress on Job performance

Since the correlation coefficient is of limited use, the regression analysis was carried out to describe the statistical relationship between the variables so that one variable can be predicted from the other.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Str	40	35.00	85.00	58.8250	10.54633
Jp	40	32.00	68.00	54.8250	8.85463
Valid N (listwise)	40				

Correlations

		Str	Jp
Str	Pearson Correlation	1	.292
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.067
	N	40	40
Jp	Pearson Correlation	.292	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.067	
	N	40	40

Regression

Variables Entered/Removed[a]

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Str[b]	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Jp

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. The error of the Estimate
1	.292[a]	.085	.061	8.57920

a. Predictors: (Constant), Str

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	260.875	1	260.875	3.544	.067[b]
	Residual	2796.900	38	73.603		
	Total	3057.775	39			

a. Dependent Variable: Jp

b. Predictors: (Constant), Str

a. Dependent Variable: Jp

From the above data variable, the following equation is formulated to find out the relationship between them and the significant effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

$y = \beta_0 + \beta_2 x_2$

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	40.399	7.782		5.192	.000
	Str	.245	.130	.292	1.883	.067

From the above Regression summary, one can find out the effect of the job stress on job performance. Thus the job stress of Administrative Staff contributes to job performance for a certain extent in the State Universities at 8.5%, and the remaining 91.5% can be attributed by the other factors.

The other factors may be co-operation among team members, salary, fringe benefits, the opportunity for growth, sabbatical leave entitlement, concessionary vehicle permit, the opportunity for growth, study leave entitlement, rule conflict etc. To examine the impact of job stress on job performance, the following equation is derived.

$y = 40.4 - 0.245 \, x_2$

According to the above equation job stress of Administrative Staff has a certain impact on job performance. The job performance is decreased at the rate of 0.245 in every unit of increase in job stress.

Though there is a low case of negative correlation between the independent variable, it should be checked whether the correlation is as a result of sampling error. In other words, prior to accepting or rejecting the hypotheses, it should be checked whether the correlation is significant or not. Here the analysis of variance (**ANOVA**) shows the model significance and reveals whether there is any variable.

In response to the model significance indicated in the table, both the parameters are not equal to zero. Hence there is no evidence to accept the null hypothesis (There is no relationship between the job stress and the job performance). It means there is a relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable.

Therefore, in conclusion, the null hypothesis has been rejected and alternate hypothesis, that is, the stated hypothesis: **"The higher the job stress the lower the employee's job performance"** has been accepted. In other words, the other stated hypothesis: **"The lower the job stress the higher the employee's job performance"** has also been accepted.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The conceptual models considered the job stress as the independent variable and the job performance as the dependent variable. In this model correlation, statistical relationship and significance between the variable were examined and the stated hypothesis was accepted. According to the study, the researcher submits the following findings.

The descriptive analysis reveals that a moderate level of job stress prevails amongst Administrative Officers in the State Universities in Sri Lanka is above average. Here the second objective of the study is achieved.

Further, the analysis of correlation shows that there is a low case of negative correlation prevails between job stress and job performance. Only 8.5% of job performance is attributed to the job stress and remaining 91.5% can be attributed by other factors. The other factor may be family relationship, finance, fears and anxieties about the future etc.

With the testing of **hypotheses, 01 and 02** one can understand that the job stress has a low case of impact on job performance. Here, the third objective of the study has been achieved.

Therefore, the finding emphasizes the importance of reducing the job stress prevails among the Administrative Staff of the State Universities, as it has a certain level of negative impact on job performance. In order to achieve the last objective of the study, the researcher suggests techniques to manage the stress and reduce managerial problems.

1. The most consciences efforts to improve working condition are unlikely to eliminate stress completely for all administrators. For this reason, a combination of organizational change and stress management is often the most useful approach for preventing stress at work.

2. Organizations can reduce the level of stress on employees by redesigning jobs so as to lower the workload and cut back role conflict.

3. Organizations should also provide counselling for employees to learn stress management techniques.

4. The employees should try to overcome employees stress through some exercises, yoga and meditation.

5. The employees can extend their support to the employees to get rid of the job stress.

6. Provide more opportunity for promotion to staff with equitable chances.

7. Preparation for each position in a clear and precise manner.

8. Increase the degree of coordination and corporation between departments and administrations.

10. Understanding family problems facing staff.

11. Adopting the principle & unity of command and directions at work.

12. Performing further studies on work stress and its impact on performance.

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