STRESS AFFECTING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE WOMEN EMPLOYEES' IN BPO SECTOR

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Abstract

Stress is very common in present in present. The stress affects the performance of the employees in both positive and negative way. Upto a limit stress is good for the performance of the employees, after that level it have negative impact upon the performance of the women employees. With the increase in the stress level of the women employees, performance of the women employees decreases. In this study, descriptive cum exploratory research has been used. To study the impact of stress on the performance of the women employees a sample of 250 employees has been taken, further regression has been used. The region of the study is BPO sector from Delhi NCR. The result shows that personal, organizational, social and environmental and workplace factors affect the stress level of the women employees which further affects their performance. To analyze the results SPSS (version 26) has been used and the impact of stress has been anayzed with the help of regression, various methods both individual and organizational has been introduced which can help in reducing stress level of the women employees.

Key words: Stress, Performance, Management, Organization.

INTRODUCTION

Stress is a natural reaction to the demands and pressures of life. It can be caused by various factors, such as work, relationships, financial difficulties, health issues, or major life changes. While some stress can be motivating and help us perform better, excessive or chronic stress can have negative effects on both our physical and mental health.

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Some common signs of stress are:

- **Physical symptoms** – Headaches, muscle tension, fatigue, digestive issues, sleep problems, and frequent illness due to a weakened immune system.
- **Emotional symptoms –** Anxiety, irritability, mood swings, feeling overwhelmed, and difficulty concentrating.
- **Behavioural symptoms –** Changes in appetite, increased use of substances such as alcohol, tobacco or drugs, social withdrawal, and avoiding responsibilities.

It is quite important to manage stress effectively to prevent it from becoming overwhelming and harmful. There are various ways to cope with stress. These strategies includes:

- **Identify Stress –** It is quite important to identify the reason or factors behind stress and try to address or eliminate those factors when possible.
- **Exercise –** Physical activities helps in reducing stress by releasing endorphins, which are natural stress relievers.
- **Practice Relaxation Techniques –** Techniques like deep breathing, yoga. Mindfulness and meditation can help to calm down mind and reduce stress.
- **Maintain a Healthy Lifestyle –** By eating balanced diet, avoid excessive use of caffeine, alcohol or any other substance, and getting enough sleep.
- **Seek Social Support** – Sharing feelings or what someone is going through can provide significant relief. This talk can be with friends, family or a therapist.
- **Set Realistic goals** – Break larger tasks into smaller, manageable steps, and prioritizing activities to avoid feeling overwhelmed.
- **Time Management** – By organizing time efficiently, stress can be reduced from deadlines and responsibilities.
- **Engage in Hobbies –** By doing activities that a person enjoys can distract him/her from stress and help to boost mood.
- **Limit Exposure to Stressors** – Whenever possible, a person should try to limit exposure to the situation of people that causes stress.
- **Consider Professional Help** – When stress becomes too overwhelming and affects daily life significantly then a person should not hesitate to take support from a mental health professional.

Everyone experiences stress, but coping with it varies from person to person. If stress becomes unmanageable or causes severe distress, then professional help is quite important. A mental health professional can provide personalized strategies and support to help in navigating through challenging stress.

Stress can be classified into different types based on various factors, such as its duration, source, or impact. Some of the common types of stress are:-

- **Acute Stress –** This is short-term stress that occurs in response to immediate challenges or threats. It's a natural and normal reaction, and our body's "fight-or-flight" response is activated. Once the stressor is removed or resolved, the body returns to its normal state.

- **Chronic Stress –** Chronic stress persists over an extended period. It can result from ongoing issues like financial problems, dysfunctional relationships, or work-related pressures. Chronic stress can have significant long-term effects on physical and mental health if not managed properly.

- **Eustress –** Eustress refers to positive stress that motivates and energizes us to perform well. It is also known as "good stress". For example, getting excited about a new opportunity or preparing for a challenging event like a competition or presentation.

- **Distress –** Distress is the negative or harmful type of stress that overwhelms and strains an individual. It is usually associated with adverse life events, such as the loss of a loved one, a traumatic experience, or a chronic health condition.

- **Workplace stress –** This type of stress stems from pressures and demands in the workplace. It can result from factors like heavy workloads, tight deadlines, lack of control over one's work, poor work-life balance, or conflicts with colleagues.

- **social Stress –** Social stress arises from challenges in social interactions and relationships. It can be caused by feelings of isolation, peer pressure, rejection, or conflicts with family or friends.

- **Financial Stress –** Financial stress is related to concerns about money, such as debt, unemployment, or the inability to meet basic needs. It can be a significant source of anxiety for many individuals and families.

- **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) -** this type of stress occurs as a response to a traumatic event, such as natural disaster, combat, physical assault, or a life-

threatening experience. PTSD can lead to ongoing distress, nightmares, flashbacks, and avoidance behaviors.

- **Environmental Stress –** Environmental stress is caused by factors in the external environment, like noise, pollution, overcrowding, or extreme weather conditions.

- **Physiological Stress –** This type of stress is related to physical strain on the body caused by factors such as illness, injury, or lack of sleep.

BPO

BPO strands for "Business Process Outsourcing". It is a business practice where companies contract out specific business processes or tasks to external service providers. The aim of outsourcing these processes is to leverage specialized expertise, reduce costs, and increase efficiency, allowing the company to focus on its core competencies and strategic objectives.

Business Process Outsourcing refers to the process in which a company will choose to outsource a process to another company rather than doing it in-house. Liberalisation 1994, gives a great boost to the ITES/BPO Sector. BPO Sector is valued at USD 187.91 billion in 2018 and expected to reach at USD 341.81 billion by 2025 with a CAGR of 7.65% over the forecast period.

There are two types of BPOs:

1. **Back-Office Outsourcing –** Back-Office processes refers to internal business functions that are essential for the company's operations but do not directly involve customer interactions. Common back-office outsourcing tasks include human resources management, payroll processing, accounting, data entry, and other administrative functions.

2. **Front-Office Outsourcing –** Front – Office processes are customer-facing activities that directly interact with clients or customers. These may include customer support, technical support, sales, marketing, and other services that require direct interaction with the public.

BPO services are often provided by specialized companies, known as BPO service providers or outsourcing firms. These service providers have the expertise, infrastructure, and resources to handle the outsourced tasks efficiently.

Some advantages of BPO include:

- **Cost Saving –** Outsourcing certain processes to countries with lower labor costs can result in significant cost as result in significant cost savings for the client company.

- **Focus on Core Competencies –** By outsourcing non – core tasks, companies can focus on their core strengths and strategic objective, leading to improved overall performance.

- **Access to Expertise –** BPO service providers often have specialized knowledge and experience in the outsourced processes, leading to better quality and efficiency.

- **Scalability –** Outsourcing allows companies to quickly scale their operations up or down based on demand without the need for significant investments in infrastructure or human resources.

- **Global Reach –** BPO enables companies to extend their services and operations to a global market, as service providers can operate from different locations worldwide.

However, there are also potential risks and challenges associated with BPO, such as data security concerns, communication issues, cultural differences, and the risk of losing control over critical processes. It's essential for companies to carefully assess their outsourcing needs and choose reliable and reputable BPO service providers to ensure successful and smooth operations.

Role of Women in BPO

The role of women employees in BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) sector has been significant and continues to grow in importance. Women have played a crucial role in shaping and contributing to the success of the BPI industry.

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- **Representation –** Women make up a substantial portion of the BPO workforce, particularly in customer service and back-office roles. Their participation has contributed to increased gender diversity within the sector.

- **Skilled Workforce –** Women in the BPO sector bring a diverse skill set, including strong communication skills, empathy, problem-solving abilities, and attention to detail. These skills are essential in customer service, which is a prominent area of focus in the BPO industry.

- **Leadership Positions –** Over the years, women have risen to leadership positions within BPO companies. They have demonstrated their capabilities in managing teams, operations, and projects effectively.

- **Flexibility and Adaptability –** The BPO sector often involves working in shifts and dealing with clients from different time zones. Women have shown great adaptability to these demands, allowing BPO companies to maintain seamless operations around the clock.

- **Contributing to the Economy –** The BPO sector provides employment opportunities for women, enabling them to become financially independent and contribute to their families and the economy.

- **Promoting Diversity and Inclusion –** Women's active presence in the BPO industry has contributed to promoting diversity and inclusion. Companies that embrace gender diversity tend to have better decision – making processes and a more inclusive work culture.

- **Supporting Career Growth –** Many BPO companies offer opportunities for career growth and skill development. Women in the sector have been able to advance in their careers through training programs and promotions.

- **Work-Life Balance Initiatives –** Some BPO companies have introduced initiatives to support work – life balance , which is beneficial for women employees who often balance professional responsibilities with family commitments.

- **Empowering Rural Women –** BPO companies have expanded their operations to rural areas, providing job opportunities for women who might not have access to employment opportunities in urban centres.

- **Driving Innovation –** Women's perspectives and experiences in the BPO sector contribute to innovation and creativity in problem-solving and service delivery.

LITERATURE REVIEW

BPO sector has both positive and negative perspective, on one side where it makes women financially independent and improves their spatial and temporary mobility. On the other side it bring health hazards, social problems and psychological stress. So, it is quite important for an organization to introduce gym facilities and yogic management programs and other welcome environment with other employees specially with male like welcome parties, orientation programs, get together, group activities and outings so that they can feel satisfied and relaxed at workplace and can give maximum at their workplace and their productivity can be enhance (Bharti and Bhatia, 2018). Borker (2017) found that job motivation helps in increasing the motivation of employees and also reduces the absenteeism, this will further help in increasing job satisfaction of the employees in the organization. The implementation of the various programs to motivate employees helps an organization to enhance their employees' abilities, knowledge, experience and helps them to implement these new skills in their work and also helps in increasing productivity and long-term retention of the employees in the organization. Organization should focus upon the need and requirements of the employees so that they can give their best and helps an organization to grow up. Employees are not just material who come and work but they are important part of it. The success of organization is directly dependent upon the employees and employees' performance depends upon their satisfaction level in organization and this satisfaction comes from the environment provided by the organization (Mary, 2012). Moorthy, K. and Silambana (2022) stated that availing adequate resources, proper training to cope up with stress, good ventilation facilities to study, social support and relaxation activities at both individual and organizational level are to be provided to the young doctors so that they can cope up with their stress level. The women who participated in the Work-proMentH experienced low stress level, their absenteeism also reduces, physical and mental reactions also changes and it controls S-cortisol levels, social support and performance also increases, and helps them in their improved profiles (Ornek and Esin, 2020). Soman and Mohanan (2022) found that the introduction of work from home during COVID -19 pandemic proves to be more stressful for women as they were not able to meet up their work related responsibilities, they gives more preference to their family which affects their performance at the work place. Out of the sample taken more than 75% women employees experienced the higher stress level. This age group have no impact upon the perceived stressed whereas designation and profession have significant impact stress level. By introducing the behavioural and cognitive stress

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management methods the stress level of the employees reduces. The study shows that by introducing relaxing training programs such as progressive muscle relaxation and diaphragm breathing practices bring anxiety level at 17% from the 47% which is a huge difference (Yazdani, Rezaei, and Pahlavanzadeh, 2010). When look at the clerical group work overload and lack of control are the main stressors. In sales and academic group interpersonal conflict act as major reason of stress among the employees (Narayan, Menon and Spector, 1999).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology used in the present study is descriptive cum exploratory. In descriptive, the information has been collected from various sources to describe a situation or phenomenon. In this study, data has been collected from both primary and secondary sources. In primary data a sample of 248 women employees has been taken and further SPSS has been implemented to identify the impact of stress and methods used to reduce stress on the performance of the women employees. data has been collected from the journals, article, books, internet, magazines, etc. SPSS (version 26) has been used to analyze the data. To identify the impact of stress upon the women employees' performance regression and One way ANOVA has been used. The data has been collected from the women employees' of the BPO sector of the Delhi NCR region.

DATA ANALYSIS

Employees performance is affected by the various factors which includes social or environmental or organizational or personal factors which prevails in the organization. This study is related to the impact of stress upon the performance of the women employees' in BPO sectors.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.711[a]	.524	.547	3.19299

a. Predictors: (Constant), Stress

b. DV: Performance of the employees

The study shows that the degree of relationship between stress variables and performance of the women employee is 0.711 which shows the high degree of correlation that signifies the stress level has a significant impact upon the performance of the women employees in the

BPO sector in Delhi NCR. The value of R square is .524 which also satisfactory, that signifies that 52% of the variation in the performance is explained by the stress level.

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10423.171	4	2423.043	136.227	.000[b]
	Residual	8464.684	238	14.581		
	Total	18887.855	242			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of the employees

b. Predictors: (Constant), Stress

The study has shown that p value is 0.000 which is signifcant as compared to $\alpha=0.05$. hence overall regression model significantly predicts performance of the employees. So, following coeffiecient explain necessary information related to model building among these variables.

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	19.628	0.180		128.426	0.000
	WF	0.546	0.180	0.119	2.144	0.000
	PF	2.877	0.180	0.515	19.361	0.000
	OF	1.423	0.180	0.224	8.176	0.000
	SEF	1.880	0.180	0.294	9.547	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of the employees

The resultant regression equation is

Performace of the employees = 19.628 + 0.546*WF+ 2.877* PF+ 1.423*OF+ 1.880*SEF

The p value in each case signifies the effective and significant contribution of each type of stress upon the performance of the employees. The result shows that stress has direct impact upon the performance of the women employees.

DISCUSSION

The study has taken three factors i.e. work factors (WF), personal factors (PF), Organizational factors (OF) and Social and Environmental factors (SEF) which are considered as stress causing factors and whose impact has been studied in the performanc of the women employees. The resultant equation i.e. Performance = 19.628 + 0.546*WF+ 2.877* PF+ 1.423*OF+ 1.880*SEF shows that all the factors have significant impact upon the performance of the women employees. The p value of the factors is also significant.

CONCLUSION

The equation shows that all the factors i.e. Personal factors, Social and Environmental factors, Workplace factors and Organizational factors affects the performance of the women employees. The organizational factors includes role of ambiguity at workplace, shift rotation, pressure to meet deadlines; Social and Environmental factors includes negative attitude of the society towards women working in BPO sector, bullying, environmental exposures such as air pollution, noise; poor standard of living; Personal factors includes difficulty in managing household responsibilities, less frequently meeting to relatives, lack of time to take care of own health; and workplace factors includes career growth opportunities, feedback system, communication with top management. The equation shows the overall impact of all the factors upon the performance of the women employees. It is important for the organization to introduce the stress management intervention to reduce the stress of the women employees. Some of the interventions are meditation classes, yoga, exercise, timely break, holidays, etc.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is quite important for an organization to understand the reasons behind the stress among the women employees in the BPO sector. To reduce this impact BPOs should come up with some solid strategies to free up women employees from this stress and enhance their productivity

level. To reduce this stress BPOs can introduce stress management methods which can be both at individual level and organizational level.

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