



IMPACT OF SELF-PERCEPTION ON STRESS AMONG PRODUCTION EXECUTIVES IN MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN CHENNAI

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ABSTRACT

Stress is the result of an individual's response to a situation or action on account of which it exercises psychological or physical demands, or both, on the individual which can be termed as stressors. It can thus be stated that stress results in the interaction of the individual with his or her environment. Stress is both positive and negative. The positive and negative effects of stress are more apparent in the relationship between stress and performance. Though low level of stress may help in improving performance up to a certain level, when it is low it may also fail to arouse alertness among employees, may not make them feel challenged or keep them away from being performing their best at work. To evaluate the impact of self-perception on stress among Production Executives in manufacturing firms in Chennai. This study attempts to measure the stress level of Production Executives in manufacturing firms in Chennai and tries to identify the variables that contribute to self-perception of Production Executives in manufacturing units in Chennai. The study has helped in highlighting the predominant factors of self-confidence, self-esteem, locus of control, latent personality and open-mindedness.

Keywords: Stress, Self-perception, self-confidence, self-esteem, locus of control personality and open-mindedness.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Stress is the result of an individual's response to a situation or action on account of which it exercises psychological or physical demands, or both, on the individual which can be termed as stressors. It can thus be stated that stress results in the interaction of the individual with his or her environment.

The stressors which influences a person's response even though can be of different kinds have something in common in the sense that they lead to stress or act as a potential for stress especially when the individual perceives the stressors as being too demanding on account of which they may influence the ability of the individual to perform effectively.

When stress crosses the threshold, it brings about anxiety in the individual which makes them get agitated thereby preventing them from giving their best at work. Research related to stress has shown that there is a very high level of negative correlation between amount of stress at work and overall performance at work. Thus it is very important for corporates to ensure that stress level of its employees is kept t low in order to increase productivity. This is especially true of Production executives who face a lot of stress at work especially while handling crisis situations at work due to reasons beyond their control. It need not be emphasized here that at lower levels of stress such executives will be alert at work willing to face challenges and be more involved in their work. Thus it is the responsibility of the management to ensure that stress levels at work are optimal so as to provide a meaningful work environment.

2. ASSOCIATES OF SELF-PERCEPTION

- **Sensation versus perception:** The perceptual process involves a highly complex association of selection, organization and interpretation of raw data which largely depends upon the cognitive abilities of the individual. .
- **Locus of control attributions:** Using locus of control, work behavior may be explained by whether employees perceived their outcomes as controlled internally or externally. Employees who perceived internal control feel that they personally can influence their outcomes through their own ability, skills or effort. Employees who perceived external control feel that their outcomes are beyond their own control; they feel that external forces such as luck or task difficulty control their outcomes. This perceived locus of control may have a differential impact on their performance and satisfaction. Employees who tend to be internally controlled are seen to be having more job satisfaction and tend to occupy various managerial positions. They are also seen to advocate a leadership style which is participatory as compared to those employees who are externally controlled.
- **Personal effectiveness:** One pre-condition for personal effectiveness is self-awareness and self-perception. A person who understands himself is likely to be more effective. Personal effectiveness depends partly on self-understanding and partly on the use of such understanding with care.
- **Self-esteem:** This refers to the ability of an individual to perceive his competence in handling or coping with the basic challenges posed by life, and perceiving self as a person who is worthy of happiness. Confidence requires individual responsibility, self-direction, and self-management. Confidence develops out of the trust in the processes by which you reason, understand, learn, choose, decide and take action. Individuals with low self-esteem tend to use passive forms of coping more than their high self-esteem counterparts. This makes lower self-esteem individuals more vulnerable to the effects of role stressors, because coping with role conflict may require considerable effort on the part of employees. Self- esteem and self-efficacy are central to sustained success of any individual. They combine to work against distress, depression, helplessness, dependency and irrational cognition. They are key to optimism, positive behavioral change and achievement of goals.

- **Self-confidence:** Confidence is closely related to our self-esteem. Confidence may even be a barometer of our self-esteem. In other words our self-esteem gets reflected or manifested in our behavior in the form of self-confidence. In other words our inner self esteem finds outward expression in the form of our level of confidence. As we experience success in over careers, in our relationships, in our service to others our self-esteem is bolstered. We become more confident of our abilities and more assured that our efforts will have positive outcomes. Confidence is a conviction that we have some control over our own lives and that we can influence the world around us.
- **Positive thinking:** Everyone is aware of the virtues of positive thinking. However, developing positive thinking is easier said than done. Keeping the spirit of positivism alive at all times may not be possible. Optimism makes one believes that defeat is a challenge or a temporary setback. Unlike positive attitude, pessimism internalizes negative events, believing they will last a long time and undermine everything.. One should also bear in mind that one can keep away from pessimism by acquainting oneself with new cognitive skills which would help in getting grip of the situation, get rid of depression and make oneself happy by accomplishing that will enable you to take charge, resist depression and make yourself feel better and accomplish more.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many studies have established the importance of task, domain-specific and general self-efficacy in understanding human behaviour. Mosley, Jr., et al (2008) have conducted a study among employees of two furniture manufacturing organisation in different locations in south eastern United States. The results of the study showed strong relationship between pre-hire self - efficacy and post-hire job performance. By developing a self –efficacy scale specifically for manufacturing sector the authors have taken an important step in moving self-efficacy measurement towards domain specific assessments. A study conducted by Rengamani J. Shameem. A. and Poongavanam S. (2018) has shown that fatigue based on occupational stress needs to be appropriately managed to ensure smooth flow of work.

Taylor & Brown (1988) have taken illusion as a construct in assessing well-being. They trace earlier researches which argues that accurate perceptions of the self is essential for mental health. Obaduru (2012) has taken an entirely new dimension of self- perception by introducing the construct of alternative selves. The author discusses on how alternative selves develop and how they influence people’s professional lives. Knowing about one’s own self has been the crux of research by Mc Adams (2001) who says that who am I? Who should I strive to become? What kind of work would be meaningful? are the questions which have led to numerous sources offering guidance. These sources include self-help books, motivational speakers, personal coaches, life style experts and so on.

In another study conducted by Rengamani J. Shameem. A. (2018) has divided stress into three types namely, work related stress, physical stress and psychosocial stress. the study has shown that majority of stress factors tend to be those associated with psychological and social issues that are related to both personal and work lives.

Chandra Mohan, Balaji & Kishore Kumar (2013) have done an empirical study on stress levels among software professionals in Chennai city. They have attempted to study the relationship between self- esteem and stress and impact of job stress on the health of the employees. They used the Self- Esteem Scale developed by A.H Eagly for their study and found that even employees with high self - esteem feel high stress. They established that there is no significant relationship between self-esteem and stress through their study.

Shahin Vaezi & Nasser Fallah (2011) examined the relationship between self-efficacy and stress among 108 EFL teachers in Iran. They used Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI) developed by Fimian to measure teachers’ perception of stress as it relates to their occupation and Friedman and Kass’s Teacher Self –Efficacy Scale. Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation was

run to test the relationships between teacher's self - efficacy and stress and found that there exists a negative correlation. The analysis revealed that higher the teachers' self-efficacy lower is their level of stress. **Bandura** (2000) revealed that people with high confidence are able to handle stress effectively and even regard difficult tasks as challenges.

4. NEED FOR THE STUDY

Stress is both positive and negative. The positive and negative effects of stress are more apparent in the relationship between stress and performance. Though low level of stress may help in improving performance up to a certain level, when it is low it may also fail to arouse alertness among employees, may not make them feel challenged or keep them away from being performing their best at work. Thus it is very important that corporates ensure that an optimal level of stress exists which brings about a healthy culture as any level of stress over and above this optimal level may lead to deterioration in the performance of employees in their work..

At excessive levels of stress employees are too agitated, aroused, or threatened to perform at their best. Studies of the stress performance relationship in organizations often show a strong negative correlation between the amount of stress in a team or department and its overall performance. That is, the greater the stress the employees are experiencing the lower will be their productivity. Managers and Executives in these situations need to find ways to reduce the number and magnitude of stressors. If the situation continues it is quite probable that the impact of self-perception on stress would increase further.

In the context of the above, the researcher has decided to carry out this study titled "Impact of Self Perception on Stress Among Production Executives in Manufacturing Firms in Chennai.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Primary Objectives

- To evaluate the impact of self-perception on stress among Production Executives in manufacturing firms in Chennai.
- To measure the stress level of Production Executives in manufacturing firms in Chennai

Secondary Objectives

- To identify the variables that contribute to self-perception of Production Executives in manufacturing units in Chennai
- To identify factors causing stress to such production executives
- To provide solutions that would enhance their self-perception and reduce their stress levels.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study has been descriptive research. Stratified random sampling has been adopted as the sampling technique. The sample size has been limited to 56. A well- structured non disguised questionnaire was utilized for collecting the necessary data. The questionnaire was pretested before being administered over the entire chosen sample.

Hypotheses framed for the study

	Impact of Age on Self Confidence
<i>H_o I</i>	There is no significant impact of age on one's own abilities
<i>H_o II</i>	There is no significant impact of age on confidence in responding
<i>H_o III</i>	There is no significant impact of age on doubtfulness of the outcomes of the work
	Impact of Education on Self Esteem
<i>H_o IV</i>	There is no significant impact of education on inferiority complex
<i>H_o V</i>	There is no significant impact of education on pessimism
<i>H_o VI</i>	There is no significant impact of education on one's success
	Impact of Education on Locus of Control
<i>H_o VII</i>	There is no significant impact of education on confidence in one's own efforts
<i>H_o VIII</i>	There is no significant impact of education on external locus of control
<i>H_o IX</i>	There is no significant impact of education on one's belief in chance.
	Impact of Marital Status on Latent Personality
<i>H_o X</i>	There is no significant impact of marital status on being type-A personality
<i>H_o XI</i>	There is no significant impact of marital status on being expressive.
<i>H_o XII</i>	There is no significant impact of marital status on being ambitious
	Impact Of Experience In Production Department on Locus Of Control
<i>H_o XIII</i>	There is no significant impact of experience on trust in one's own efforts
<i>H_o XIV</i>	There is no significant impact of experience on external locus of control
<i>H_o XV</i>	There is no significant impact of experience on belief in chance.
	Impact of Education on Open Mindedness
<i>H_o XVI</i>	There is no significant impact of education on seeking advice
<i>H_o XVII</i>	There is no significant impact of education on risk bearing capacity
<i>H_o XVIII</i>	There is no significant impact of education on consideration for one's image.

Inferences Drawn from Data Analysis

Predominant factors of self-confidence are seen to be:

1. Abilities of employees.
2. Confidence in responding.
3. Doubtfulness of outcomes of work.

Predominant factors of self-esteem are seen to be:

1. Inferiority complex.
2. Pessimism.
3. Success in career.

Predominant factors of locus of control are seen to be:

1. Confidence in one's own efforts.
2. External locus of control.
3. One's belief in chance.

Predominant factors of latent personality are seen to be:

1. Type-a personality.
2. Expressiveness.

3. Being ambitious

Predominant factors of open-mindedness are seen to be:

1. Seeking advice from knowledgeable people.
2. Risk bearing capacity.
3. Consideration for one’s image.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Chi Square Result
Impact of Age on Self Confidence	
There is no significant impact of age on one's own abilities	Rejected
There is no significant impact of age on confidence in responding	Rejected
There is no significant impact of age on doubtfulness of the outcomes of work	Accepted
Impact of Education on Self-Esteem	
There is no significant impact of education on inferiority complex	Accepted
There is no significant impact of education on pessimism	Accepted
There is no significant impact of education on one's success	Rejected
Impact of Education on Locus of Control	
There is no significant impact of education on confidence in one's own efforts	Rejected
There is no significant impact of education on external locus of control	Accepted
There is no significant impact of education on one's belief in chance.	Accepted
Impact of Marital Status on Latent Personality	
There is no significant impact of marital status on being type - A personality	Accepted
There is no significant impact of marital status on being expressive.	Rejected
There is no significant impact of marital status on being ambitious	Rejected
Impact of Experience in Production Department on Locus of Control	
There is no significant impact of experience on trust in one's own efforts	Accepted
There is no significant impact of experience on external locus of control	Accepted
There is no significant impact of experience on belief in chance.	Rejected
Impact of Education on Open Mindedness	
There is no significant impact of education on seeking advice	Rejected
There is no significant impact of education on risk bearing capacity	Accepted
There is no significant impact of education on consideration for one's image.	Accepted

Inferences drawn from Chi-Square Testing

- There is significant impact of age on one's own abilities
- There is significant impact of age on confidence in responding
- There is significant impact of education on one's success
- There is significant impact of education on confidence in one's own efforts
- There is significant impact of marital status on being expressive.
- There is significant impact of marital status on being ambitious.
- There is no significant impact of experience on belief in chance.
- There is no significant impact of education on seeking advice

7. SUGGESTIONS

Manufacturing companies should organize stress management classes. The ideal option would be to organise yoga classes for the benefit of Production Executives who take up a lot of stress at least during the week ends.

Manufacturing companies should encourage more team work among Production Department Executives and other Department executives especially from the Purchase Department, Quality Control Department, Marketing Department and Sales Department as this would help reduce work related pressures and build better understanding and rapport amongst the Executives thus helping in reducing the stress to be faced by them.

The study has helped in identified the following as reasons for poor self-perception concept thereby leading to a very stressful working atmosphere:

- Unclear role specifications spelt out by Management
- Role conflict among Executives of different Departments
- Unrealistic high self-expectation (perfectionism)
- Inability to influence decision making at the level of Production Executives thus making the feel the powerlessness.
- Frequent clashes with superiors occupying top Management positions
- Isolation from other Departments thereby not making them lose out on the cooperation and support of other Departments
- Poor communication system within the organisations.

Hence company should ensure that the following is done to improve image of self-perception and thereby reduce its impact on the stress to be borne:

- Make Production Executives become aware of stressors and his or her emotional and physical reactions.
- Help Production Executives recognize what they could change.
- Reduce the intensity of their emotional reactions to stress by proper counseling and yoga classes.
- Teach them to moderate their physical reactions to stress.
- Teach them how to build physical reserves.
- Teach them to be constant at maintaining emotional reserves.

8. CONCLUSION

Since not all stress is negative, it is important that proper attention needs to be paid to the stress that is to be faced by a person at his work spot. The impact of self perception on stress should always be borne in mind in order to ensure a proper work culture in the organisation.

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