AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON STRESS AMONG EMPLOYEES IN HOTEL INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

People in hotel industry have to deal with customers from diversified options in all aspects. When dealing with all kind of people, the employees mind should be free and he should have stress free environment to work with. Companies are introducing new technology, target fixation, continuous monitoring for completion of assigned work and downsizing to compete in the global market. This changing scenario creates more stress on employees in service industry particularly hotel. There are many factors which causes stress among employees. The environment where the employees living, organizational factors, group factor and individual factors trigger the stress among employees. If we understand the specific trigger, then only we can alleviate the stress among employees. If the stress persists among them, it would affect the service quality delivered to the customers. So the research question here is to find what the causes are for stress, what is the stress level each and every employee is facing. This research would try to find out the answer for these questions and it would suggest the strategies to reduce stress among the employees in hotel industry.

Key Words: Stress level, Causes of stress, Hotel industry, Stress management, Work-related stress

Introduction

In this globalised era, the people working in hotel industry have to face the customers from different countries, different languages and different culture. When dealing with all kind of people, the employees mind should be free and he should have stress free environment to

work with. Companies are introducing new technology, target fixation, continuous monitoring for completion of assigned work and downsizing to compete in the global market. This changing scenario creates more stress on employees in service industry particularly hotel. For executing work in effective way, some kind of stress may be necessary. Otherwise the work won't be inspiring one. But the stress might be bearable one. The unbearable load of stress would make the human life becomes extremely unpleasant.

The hotel environment has been described as being characterised by shift work and fatigue as a result of working long hours, unpredictable shifts, few breaks, heavy physical demands (manual handling of heavy loads, etc.), and mental and emotional demands[1].

Cooper C, Dewe P. Well-being stated that although there exists general agreement that addressing and reducing stress in the hospitality industry is not only a noble goal, but is capable of resulting in expense reductions for employers, the nature and quantity of hotel industry employee stress is not fully understood[2]. There are many factors which causes stress among employees. The environment where the employees living, organizational factors, group factor and individual factors trigger the stress among employees. If we understand the specific trigger, then only we can alleviate the stress among employees. This research paper tried to uncover the level of stress faced by the employees, causes of stress in hotel industry and also suggest the ways to reduce stress.

Review of literature

In the study of Ross, It is stated that within the hospitality industry, work stress has been regarded as one of the most important issues facing mangers because, among other things, it affects the performance of all levels of employees, including both managers and hourly employees[3]. From the research made by Kim, he has found that employee stress in the hospitality industry is important because it can result in workers becoming exhausted and cynical which can have negative effects on service delivery[4].

The stress in hospitality industry not only affect the employee productivity also leads to health related issues[5]. Axelsson, Vanagas suggested that the reason for stress in most of the time is individual characteristics and work environment[6]. In the view of Orth-Gomer,It is perceived that one and the same stressor can be very differently perceived and dealt with by different individuals. One person can be strongly affected by any stressor, when another may be hardly affected at all[7]. According to Axelsson et al, individual responses to stressful situations can vary greatly and that certain people are more likely to experience high levels of stress in their jobs than others[8].

According to Malik, both demands and pressures cause stress and structural and social resources to counteract stress. He also stated that workplace factors that have been found to be associated with stress and health risks can be categorized as those that have to do with the content of work and those that have to do with the social and organizational contexts of work[9].

Michie stressed that factors that are intrinsic to the job (long hours, work overload, time pressure, difficult or complex tasks, lack of breaks, lack of variety and poor working conditions); under work or conflicting roles and boundaries; under promotion, lack of promotion, lack of training and job insecurity are sources of stress at the work place. He concluded that two sources, that is, relationship at work and the organizational culture can either cause or reduce stress at the workplace[10].

Di Salvo et al. found that work related stress is generally as a result of an imbalance between environmental demands and individual capabilities[11]. Other sources of stress identified by Ramires et al. include: work feeling badly managed and resourced, managerial responsibilities and dealing with customers[12].

HSE argued that control over work includes: how much say and involvement the person has in the way they do their work. The implication is that lack of control in relation to the demands of work, lack of autonomy and too much supervision can lead to work related stress[13]. The experience of pressure is strongly linked to perceptions of control. Lack of influence and consultation in the way in which work is organised and performed can be a potential source of work related stress[14].

Azian et al added that it may also have more subtle effects on personal well-being and productivity[15]. Marmot et al noticed that the well known 'Whitehall Study' which measured the effects of work characteristics including decision latitude (control), job demands and level of social support at work, found that unequal work leads to unequal health outcomes. Work characteristics despite of other independent work- related risk factors found to be associated: *low decision latitude* (little control) with poor mental health, alcohol dependence, poor health functioning, increased sickness absence; *high job demands* with poor mental health and poor health functioning; *low social support* at work with poor mental health and poor health functioning as well[16].

Anderson et al stated that "stress occurs when there is a state of disequilibrium between employee well-being, work experiences, coping processes, and enduring personal and organizational characteristics, provided that this state of disequilibrium brings about change, either positively or negatively, in the employee's normal levels of well-being[17].

According to Cox, work related stress occurs when a person realizes that he or she is unable to cope with demands placed at work and might experience discomfort[18].

When analyzing all these reviews, there are many factors in individual as well as organizational level create stress among employees in hospitality industry.

Statement of the problem

Hospitality industry is a service oriented industry in which the higher stress level would reduce the productivity. The stress level exercised by the employees in the hotel industry is more as they are dealing with people from different back ground and different culture. The employees need more training to cope up and deal with all kinds of people. If the stress persists among them, it would affect the service quality delivered to the customers. So the research question here is to find what the causes are for stress, what is the stress level each and every employee is facing. This research would try to find out the answer for these questions and it would suggest the strategies to reduce stress among the employees in hotel industry.

Objective of the Study

This research study has aimed to reveal the intensity of stress, the causes of stress and strategies to reduce stress among employees in hotel industry.

Research Methodology

150 employees under different levels from five hotels of Coimbatore city have been selected using simple random sampling method.300employees from each hotel have been selected. The survey instrument has been designed with likert scale to extract the employee opinion about the level of stress exercised in individual as well as organizational level, the causes of stress and their expectation in stress management programmes. This study analyses causes of stress inside the organization only. It has not considered the external and personal factors.

The simple percentage analysis, Factor analysis and Friedman Rank Test are used to find out the stress level, causes and ways to reduce stress. The opinion of operational, middle and strategic level of employees were considered for analysis.

Research Questions

This research study would bring the answers for the following questions:

What is the level of stress exercised by the individual employee in hotel industry?

What are the causes of stress among employees in hotel industry?

What are the strategies can be followed in the organization to reduce stress?

Data Analysis

Stress level in the Hotels

Simple percentage analysis is used to find the stress level among the employees in hotel industry.
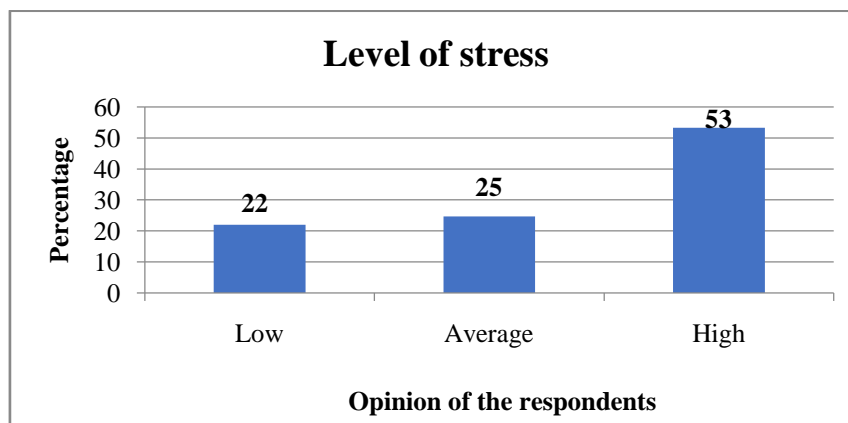
Table 1

Table showing the opinion of the employees about the level of stress exercised by the individual employee in hotel industry

Stress level	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Low	33	22
Average	37	25
High	80	53
Total	150	100

Figure 1

Figure showing the opinion of the employees about the level of stress exercised by the individual employee in hotel industry

Causes of stress

Factor Analysis is used to reduce the data complexities by reducing the number of variables being studied[19]. The reduced factors would give the major causes of stress.

Table 2

Table showing Factor Analysis for causes of stress - Total Variance Explained

Component	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Eigen values	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.334	33.34	33.34
2	2.129	21.29	54.63
3	1.784	17.84	72.47
4	1.253	12.53	85.00
5	1.102	11.02	96.02

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

(*Source*: Primary Data)

Table 3

Table showing Factor Analysis for causes of stress-Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis – Factor Matrix

Causes of stress	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
My salary is not up to my expectation	0.033	0.028	0.965	0.023	0.123
My colleagues are not cooperative with me	-0.020	0.934	0.081	0.021	0.324
I am not getting my salary on time	0.213	-0.073	0.973	0.231	0.245
My supervisor is not interacting with me	0.029	0.976	-0.154	-0.154	-0.154
I am subject to bullying at my work	-0.087	0.971	0.014	0.014	0.014
I feel I am always neglected by my collegues	-0.056	0.943	0.012	0.012	0.012
Training given by me is not related with job	0.955	-0.111	0.063	0.072	0.132
There is no training conducted in the organization	0.978	-0.001	0.019	0.124	0.213
I have no learning in my current job	0.943	0.012	0.211	0.291	0.325

I am not sure about my career development	0.975	-0.210	0.085	0.214	0.087
The resources inside the organization is not adequate to execute the work	0.234	0.212	0.134	0.965	0.173
I am working for long hours	0.215	0.213	0.114	0.023	0.978
I am not getting deserved promotions	0.067	0.172	0.134	0.976	0.123
I am getting too many night shifts	0.345	0.012	0.005	0.321	0.945
I am not getting sufficient breaks	0.045	0.072	0.147	0.351	0.876
The rules and regulations are very rigid	0.145	0.453	0.112	0.897	0.176

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. 3 components extracted.(*Source*: Primary Data)

As evident from table 2 it is found that the three factors are extracted together account for 96.02% of the total variance. Hence the total number of 16 variables has been reduced to 5 underling factors. From the table 3 it is seen that variables training given by me is not related with job ,there is no training conducted in the organization, I have no learning in my current job, I am not sure about my career development have the high loadings of 0.955, 0978, 0.943, and 0.975 on factor 1 respectively. Hence the factor 1 is combination of these four variables. This factor can be named as Inadequate training issues.

For factor 2 in table 3, My colleagues are not cooperative with me, My supervisor is not interacting with me, I am subject to bullying at my work, I feel I am always neglected by my colleagues have the high loading of 0.934, 0.976, 0.971 and 0.943 respectively, indicating that factor 2 is the combination of these four variables. These variables can be clubbed in to a single factor called employee relationship issues.

From the table 3, it is seen that variables my salary is not up to my expectation and I am not getting my salary on time have the high loadings of 0.965 and 0.973 on factor 3 respectively. The factor 3 is combination of these two variables. Therefore, this factor can be interpreted as compensation issues.

From the table 3, it is seen that variables the resources inside the organization is not adequate to execute the work, I am not getting deserved promotions and the rules and regulations are very rigid have the high loadings of 0.965,0.975 and 0.897 on factor 4

respectively. The factor 4 is combination of these two variables. Therefore, this factor can be interpreted as work environment issues.

From the table3, it is seen that variables I am working for long hours, I am getting too many night shifts, and I am not getting sufficient breaks have the high loadings of 0.978,0.945 and 0.876 on factor 5 respectively. The factor 5 is combination of these two variables. Therefore, this factor can be interpreted as timing issues.

Strategies to reduce stress

Friedman's Test is used to check whether there is any significant agreement in the ranking of strategies to reduce stress among employees in hotel industry.

The following hypotheses are used to check significant agreement in ranking.

H_0 – There is no significant agreement between the respondents regarding the ranking of strategies to reduce stress among employees in hotel industry

H_1 – There is a significant agreement between the respondents regarding the ranking of strategies to reduce stress among employees in hotel industry

Table 4

Table showing results of Friedman Test for ranking of Strategies to reduce stress

Strategies to reduce stress	Mean Rank
Personality Training	10.02
Mind relaxation Training	11.11
Communication Enhancement	4.95
Participative decision making	5.79
Time management	4.05
Proper work load allocation	1.03
Maintaining proper work environment	2.11
Performance based Compensation	3.23
Job based training	6.98
Performance based promotions	8.01
Career development training	9.23
Top management commitment	11.98

(*Source*: Primary Data)

Table 5

Table showing Friedman Test for Strategies to reduce stress - Test Statistics

N	150
Chi-Square	1138.209
Df	11
Asymp. Sig.	0.000

(*Source*: Primary Data)

From the table 5, Friedman's test also confirms this positive agreement with the significance level 0.000 at 95 percent confidence level. From the table 4, it can be concluded that Proper work load allocation got the ranking of 1, Maintaining proper work environment got the ranking of 2, Performance based Compensation got the ranking of 3, Time management got the ranking of 4, Communication Enhancement got the ranking of 5, Participative decision making got the ranking of 6 Job based training got the ranking of 7, Performance based promotions got the ranking of 8, Career development training got the ranking of 9, Personality Training got the ranking of 10, Mind relaxation Training got the ranking of 11 and Top management commitment got the ranking of 12 among the strategies to reduce stress.

Discussions and conclusion

From this study, it has been found that the level of stress exercised by the employees in hotel industry is high. The main causes of stress in hotel employees are inadequate training, not an smooth relationship between employees, dissatisfaction in compensation plans, work environmental issues and timing issues. The hotel industries should concentrate on job related as well as need based training programmes. The compensation as well as promotions should be based on performance. The working hours and breaks given in between should be justifiable. The crucial area in which the hotel industries should concentrate on is the equal work load allocation and it should be transparent. The hospitality industry is fully service oriented and the quality lies in the attitude of employees. In order to maintain them in service attitude, the stress free environment is vital. So the hotel industries should continuously monitor the stress inducing factors and formulate necessary steps to reduce them.

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