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The Influence of Occupational Stress on Work Performance: A Systematic Review of Evidence from the Corporate Sector

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Abstract:
Despite extensive scholarly and practical engagement with workplace stress, its prevalence demands innovative perspectives. This research addresses this need by integrating the lens of positive organizational behavior to examine the protective function of psychological capital. We posit that the positive psychological resources of efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience (collectively known as PsyCap) are critical personal resources that buffer against adverse stress-related outcomes. Empirical results from a sizable and diverse sample of employees demonstrate that PsyCap significantly explains variance in perceived stress, intention to quit, and job search behavior. The paper concludes with evidence-based recommendations for HR practitioners to cultivate psychological capital as a strategic intervention for stress management.

Keywords: Construction workers, Emotional stress, Injury incidents, Job stress; Stressors.

INTRODUCTION

Several job demands placed on construction professionals can have a detrimental impact on their psychological health. The effectiveness of both individuals and organisations may be negatively impacted by such demands. An exploratory study was conducted utilising the Stress and Mental Health Survey to better understand the nature of self- and social support systems and mental health among construction industry professionals.

In the construction industry work-related stress has become an inherent feature of the workplace environment and can negatively transcend into family and personal lifestyles if not appropriately managed (The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) 2006).

Construction project success and construction company profitability are directly and significantly impacted by construction worker (CW) performance. Due to the frequently constrained project budgets and deadlines in Vidharbh, which are currently even more constrained as a result of the unfavourable economic and industrial climate, construction workers are primarily production-oriented at the expense of the health and safety concerns of CWs. CWs are 1.7 times more likely than workers in other industries to experience psychological health issues, including emotional and stress-related issues. This is due to the fact that CWs must perform monotonous but physically demanding tasks in crisis-ridden environments while also having limited power and receiving little support from their organisations and the general public. Stress impairs CWs' awareness of and adherence to safety precautions, which are the main contributors to workplace injury events. So, the current study's objectives are to examine how stress affects CW injury incidences and how different stressors affect CW stress levels.

Leung et.al. (2006) investigated the impact of stress on the performance of construction estimators. It was found that stress leads to poor interpersonal relationships and task performance of cost estimators, and an inverted-U-shaped relationship was found between the stress of estimators and their organizational relationship in the company. Based on the nature of construction project management and the literature on stress, this study aims to investigate the impact of different types of stress on the performance of CPMs

LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of factors contribute to workplace stress, ranging from technological change and global competitive pressures to toxic work environments and managerial bullying (Colligan & Higgins, 2009). Heavier workloads and increased business travel also affect stress levels as more than one-fifth of U.S. managers and professionals work at least 60 hours a week and many are on call around the clock for clients across the globe (Hymowitz, 2009).

Managers may not always consider the factors that can affect the productivity of manpower.
The productivity risk factor has also a strong impact on the project duration. Namely, poor labour productivity probably causes time overruns in construction projects (Kazaz, Ulubeyli 2010).

Rewards and treatment of CWs are often overlooked due to their low position in organizations or even unreasonably diminished due to projects' tight budgets. Insufficient and unfair rewards and
treatment increase people's vulnerability to stress (Maslanka 2009; Niedhammer et al. 2010).
On the other hand, though ensuring safe working environments is the responsibility of organizations, employers may still fail to provide appropriate and regularly maintained safety equipment to CWs on site (Hinze 2008; Zou et al. 2010). Going without appropriate safety equipment certainly induces psychological stress in CWs, who work in crisis-ridden environments every day.

TYPES OF STRESS

Stress is sometimes thought of as a personal experience that people have when the responsibilities of life or job become too much for them to handle. Three broadly defined categories of stress objective stress, burnout, and physiological stress were included in this study to permit a thorough assessment.

OBJECTIVE STRESS

The assessment of a threat resulting from cognitive elements is referred to as objective stress. It depends on how capable a person feels they are of completing a task linked to their profession that is challenging or difficult in some way. The difference between a person's perceived capacity and actual ability to complete tasks causes objective stress to be produced.

BURNOUT

When relationships, life, or work fail to yield the desired results, fatigue and dissatisfaction result. Humans typically exhibit a variety of actions in response to stress. Changes in one's social life, such as avoiding conversations with people at work or in their private lives, and changes in one's attitude towards work, such as poor motivation and low dedication at work owing to ongoing irritation, are all signs of burnout.

PHYSIOLOGICAL STRESS

Stress can have a physiological impact on people. The brain releases hormones to help the other sections of the body through changes or stressful circumstances when the body is exposed to specific stressful scenarios. The body then makes physiological adaptations to combat stress. If the body is no longer subject to stimuli, these modifications may return to normal after some time. The "fight-or-flight reaction" is the term used to describe this process through which the body gets ready to respond to a threat.

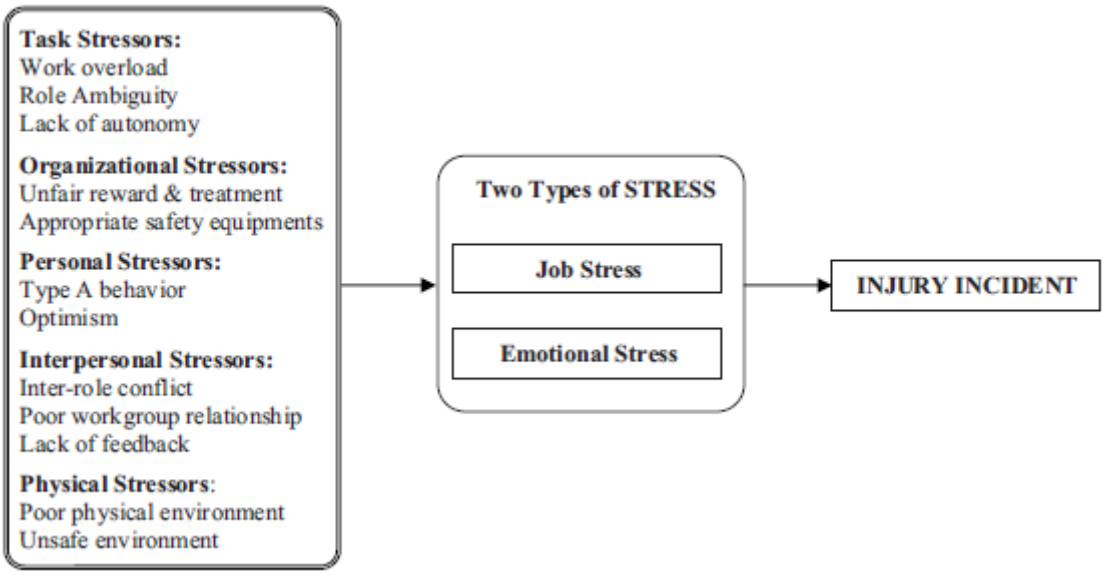

Fig. 1: Types of Stress

Stress has an impact that is not just restricted to particular actions or tasks. Stress can, to some extent, have additional effects on organizational effectiveness, and employers should take note of this. Organizational inefficiency is the term used to describe the financial toll that subpar employee performance takes on a business.

The majority of currently used stress measuring tools were developed over 30 years ago and were typically validated on Caucasian white collar professionals. Over this time, there have been substantial changes in the workforce in India, including a noticeable rise in the proportion of women, members of underrepresented groups, and elderly employees. Concerns have been raised about the applicability of these measurements and if they could favour some goods while downplaying the existence of others. With the variety of tools at their disposal, some researchers have advised against creating additional tools, arguing that they might not necessarily increase the measurement of stress.

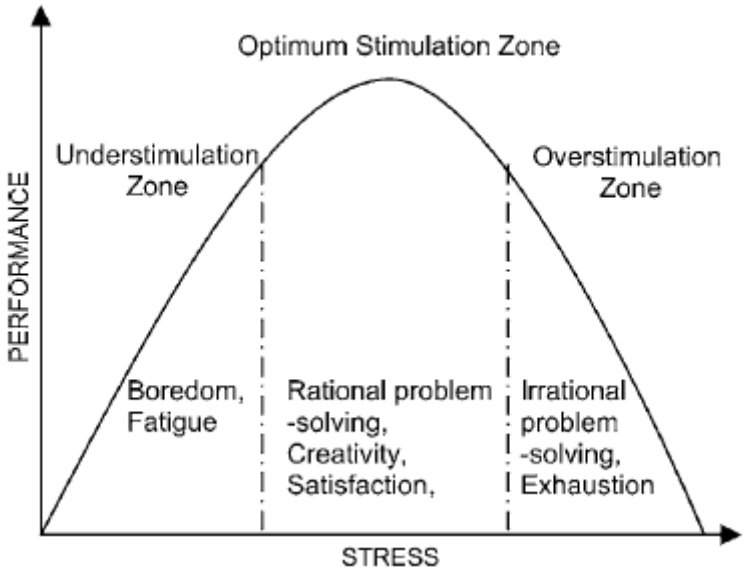

Fig.2: Inverted-U-shaped relationship between stress and performance

It has been discovered that excessive stress negatively affects construction industry workers, whereas little stress can result in boredom, a lack of focus, initiative, or motivation, as well as under stimulation. Only "moderate" stress is seen to be helpful, healthy, and ideal for fostering excellent performance in people. As a result, the link between performance levels and stress levels is inverted U-shaped. It is important to look into how stress affects CPM performance because of how complicated and dynamic construction project management is in the business.

CONCLUSION

According to the literature study, stress should not be solely categorised as either being related to one's employment or not. In this research, three categories of stress—objective stress, burnout, and physiological stress were distinguished from the stress management and psychological scientific literature. The study validated the effects of the three categories of stress on the performance of CPMs and identified three dimensions of task performance, interpersonal performance, and organisational performance. The association between objective stress and interpersonal performance was shown to be inverted-U shaped. Although the concurrent inverted-U-shaped correlation and the negative linear causal correlations between objective stress and task performance indicate that CPMs are overstimulated, the objective stress of CPMs needs to be reduced in order to maximise their task performance. Burnout and physiological stress were found to have U-shaped causal associations with organisational performance. CPMs' task performance can improve while they are burnt out.

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