

# OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG WORKERS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Tehseen Ahmad<sup>1</sup>, Qamar Afaq Qureshi<sup>2</sup>, Iftikhar Ahmad<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Administrative and Political Sciences, <sup>2</sup>Department of Public Administration, Gomal University,

<sup>3</sup>Department of Community Medicine, Gomal Medical College, Dera Ismail Khan, Pakistan

## ABSTRACT

The work related stress, occupational stress and job stress are used synonymously. Stress has now become the universal issue. Present era is known as the era of stress. Everyone has the right to spend his life more happily. How? Is the question that arises here. Everyone experiences stressful situations, though people react to them in different ways. The objective of this study was to identify the main sources of occupational stress affecting different occupational settings in the developing countries. This study utilized qualitative research methods of theoretical Network Approach (TNA). Various papers were studied to get the final conclusion. Respondents identified the most frequent sources of stress, their outcomes and the information about the types of stress on their places of work. It provides an opportunity to the employers & employees to take various steps to reduce stress among employees.

**KEY WORDS:** Occupational stress; Stress; Work performance; causes of stress; Occupational health.

**This article may be cited as:** Ahmad T, Qureshi QA, Ahmad I. Occupational Stress among workers in developing countries. Gomal J Med Sci 2017;187-90.

## INTRODUCTION

Stress has increased in the present era. The stress meaning has changed over the years. Most of the peoples use this word in their daily vocabulary but its meaning and significance remain dubious, which takes us to address what is called stress. Selye (1956) characterizes stress as physical, mental & psychological response to a specific condition. Stress affects when the capacities of individual are not enough to cope with the pressures and demands of the situation. Other researchers have characterized stress from numerous points of view. Yet at the same time there is absence of exhaustive meaning of employment stress.<sup>1</sup>

### Literature review

Stress is a side effect of current living. Individual is introduced to an extensive variety of stressors that can impact him on all areas.<sup>2</sup> The low productivity as a result shows up as poor performance of occupational workers, working in different enterprises. Sound judgment and coherent research suggest that staff lacking diverse resources

exhibit execution decrements.<sup>3</sup>

Stress results as a result of gap between weight and adapting resources for a particular condition. Scholastics and media experts don't agree on a single point regarding significance of stress, however they understand that stress exists and is unavoidable.

### Types of stress

Over Stress (hyper-stress) is the situation in which workload is too high and the jobs demands are greater than the individual.<sup>4</sup> Under Stress (hypo stress) occurs when an employer has to do a very little work and it leads to depression, under-stimulation, lack of motivation and possibly boredom. Desired Stress (Eustress) results when the employer has to face a very challenging and motivating environment. Undesired Stress (Distress) makes the employees irritable, exhausted, and frustrated as shown in figure 1.<sup>5</sup>

Model of stress based on Hans Selye (1956) four dimensions

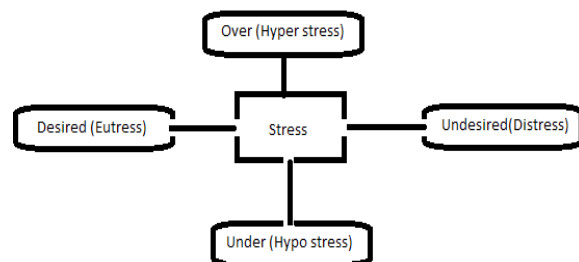


Figure 1: Model of Occupational Stress by Hans Selye (1956).

### Corresponding Author:

Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad  
Assistant Professor Community Medicine  
Gomal Medical College  
D.I.Khan, Pakistan  
E-mail: iftikharahmadgandapur@yahoo.com

**Date Submitted:** 09-07-2017

**Date Revised:** 12-11-2017

**Date Accepted:** 06-12-2017

### Causes of stressors

Individual stressors depend on the character and personality of the individual. Human being have two types of personalities; Type-A and type-B. The individuals having type-A personality have an aggressive drive & more stressed. Whereas those having type-B personalities are relaxed during work and personal life. The following are the individual stressors.

Job demands are physical, mental & social parts of a livelihood that require incessant energetic effort. Job demand may provoke constructive as well as adverse outcomes depending upon the demand itself and on the individual's coping abilities. Positive responses may be motivation or satisfaction while negative responses can be depression, anxiety & burnout.<sup>6,7</sup>

Overworked individual may get physically & emotionally exhausted that may manifest both psycho-behaviorally as well as psychosomatically. Irritable and inflexible behaviour, sleep problems, headache, gastric ulcer and coronary heart disease are common.<sup>8</sup>

Role conflict or role ambiguity, described by the role theory occurs when different demands of different people make wrong decisions. It includes lack of clarity regarding responsibilities and duties of employees. An employee must have clear cut instructions about his/ her role in the organization. An employee having insufficient information regarding job considers himself helpless.

### Group stressors

Groups can also be a potential source of stress. Conflicts or poor interpersonal relationships lead to another cause of stress. These conflicts can be among subordinates and the boss or between members of the group. Unions or the groups have a lot of influence on the job satisfaction, performance and employees' behaviour. Group stressors can be divided into the following factors.<sup>10</sup>

Group cohesiveness is vital to the individuals, especially the subordinates. Absence of cohesiveness can be exceptionally distressing, particularly for those people who can't flourish in isolation.<sup>11</sup>

Organizational environment is also built with the help of the interpersonal or group relationships. Organizational climate must be task oriented, relaxed & friendly.<sup>12</sup>

### Organizational Stressors

Organizational Stressors include a number of factor that cause stress. Every aspect of work can be a stressor for somebody. There are numerous factors in the job that creates stress, the following are the different factors that have been shown to be particularly strong in inducing stress.

Long working hours, heavy workloads, shift work and infrequent rest breaks, hectic routine tasks

also affect the employees and promote a stressful environment in the organisation.

Workers should participate in decision making process. Poor communication in the organization, lack of participation by workers in decision-making, lack of family-friendly policies and poor management style become the reason of stress in the organisation.

### Extra-organizational stressors

Job stress is not only limited to things that happen during the working hours, within the organisation. Extra-organisational factors also contribute to job stress.

Poor provinces having lack of political stability & uncertainty and other political factors like ours make the workers under stress.

As economic uncertainty rises, people get worried about their own security as for example in the great depression of 1930s, suicide rates touched the sky. Minor recessions & downward swings in the economy are often accomplished by permanent reductions in the work force, temporary layoff or reduction in pay.

Technological uncertainty results from today's era of technological development. New innovations make an employee's skills and experience obsolete in a very short span of time as shown in figure 2.

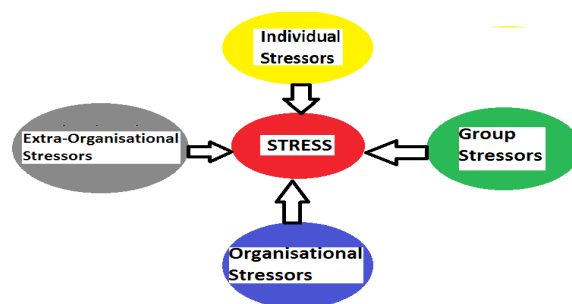
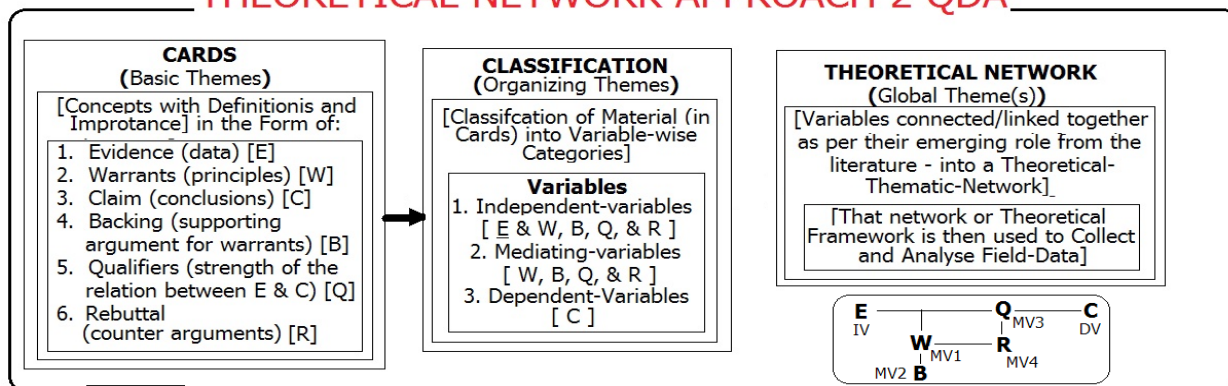


Figure 2. Model based on factors causing stress among workers.

### Research Methodology

Theory is used as a mentor in theoretical network approach (TNA) to conceptualize a topic, as a guide to identify and collect data, as a manager to organize and interpret data and as a role model to present the findings effectively. Theory is well documented for performing all these functions in a social research process. Like other similar approaches in the stream of contemporary Interpretivism, TNA capitalizes on the concepts of argumentation and grounded-theory in the line of thematic-analysis. TNA begins with preparation of Cards (basic notes of relevant material) which are then classified according to the research variables. Finally, this classified data is sequenced according to the principles of theory using argumentation method. The whole process is depicted in Figure 3.

## THEORETICAL NETWORK APPROACH 2 QDA



[SOURCES: Argumentation Theory (Toulmin, 1958); Grounded Theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) Thematic Network Analysis (Stirling, 2001)]

Figure 3 Theoretical Network Approach to QDA

### DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of this research was to explore the factors that influence the onset and management of occupational stress. Various studies indicated that stress arising from interpersonal difficulties; in particular familial discord and intimate relationship breakdown were a major source of stress in their lives.<sup>9</sup> The findings of the current study indicated that the employees experienced a variety of physical, psychological and social effects as a result of these stressful events. The current study in comparison to the literature reported a significantly higher number of daily stressful events and a greater level of impact related to these events than previously identified normative levels, thus indicating that current perceived levels of stress and impact have increased over time. These findings support current literature, which proposes that stress is an increasing concern.<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, whilst academic issues were identified as a source of stress, the work over load, job demand role ambiguity, lack of social support, conflicts and group cohesiveness etc were as important. Therefore, it would seem that much of the stress and impact experienced by employees is not necessarily specific to their professional life, but a component of the social environment.<sup>10</sup>

The present research indicates that all the four causes (Individual stressors, Group stressors, organisational stressors and extra-organisational stressors) creates stress; which is a complex phenomenon and a multifaceted reclamation approach needs to be adopted to bring about a visible and sustainable change. Husain<sup>14</sup> also indicated towards all four major causes of stress i.e (Individual stressors, Group stressors, organisational stressors and extra-organisational stressors).<sup>15-18</sup>

### CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions are the evaluations about different significant factors of the different worldwide problems

in the frames of local native environment, built on empirical findings as well as literature.

Humans have the tendency to take stress. Taking stress not only affects life but also relation with family, friends and colleagues. However, it does not mean that we have no solutions to reduce and cope with the stress.

Everything is possible by adopting positive attitude.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

There are several recommendations used to reduce the level of stress in the background of developing countries. The salaries, availability of information technology & computer literacy should to solve the problems. Accommodations, conveyance etc. to the workers so that they concentrate on their work, role clarity

### REFERENCES

- Ahmad A, Hussain A, Saleem MQ, Qureshi MAM, Mufti NA. Workplace stress: a critical insight of causes, effects and interventions. *Tech J* 2015;20:45-55.
- Beheshtifar M, Hoseinifar H, Moghadam MN. Effect procrastination on work-related stress. *European Journal of Economics, Finance and Administrative Sciences*, 2011;38:59-64.
- Colligan TW, Higgins EM. Workplace stress: Etiology and consequences. *Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health* 2005;21:90-7.
- Iqbal M. Mediation effect of stress coping strategies between workplace stress and organizational performance: A case study of air traffic controllers of Pakistan. *Cent Eur J Immunol* 2013; 1: 42-56.
- Jayashree R. Stress management with special reference to public sector bank employees in Chennai. *International Journal of Enterprise and Innovation Management Studies* 2010;1:34-5.
- Jackson L, Rothmann S. Occupational stress, organisational commitment, and ill-health of

- educators in the North West Province, S. Afr. j. educ. 2006; 26;75-95.
7. Ahmad I, Qadir S, Muhammad, Yasir, Irfanullah M, Khan MA, et al. Knowledge, Attitude and Practice related to occupational health and safety among textile mills workers in Dera Ismail Khan. Gomal J Med Sci 2014; 10:1-5.
  8. Ahmad I, Sattar A, Nawaz A. Occupational health and safety in industries in developing world. Gomal J Med Sci 2016;14:223-8.
  9. Manshor AT, Rodrigue F, Choy CS. Occupational stress among managers: a Malaysian Survey. Journal of Managerial Psychology 2003;18:622-8.
  10. Por J, Barriball L, Fitzpatrick J, Roberts J. Emotional intelligence: Its relationship to stress, coping, well-being and professional performance in nursing students. Nurse Educ Today 2011;31:855-60.
  11. Schaufeli WB, Bakker AB. Job demands, job resources, and their relationship with burnout and engagement: a multi-sample study. J. Organiz Behav 2004;25:293-315.
  12. Shadab M, Sattar A, Shadab A. Impact of stress management on job performance: An empirical study of textile sector employees in Karachi. Journal of Resources Development and Management 2016;17:48-53.
  13. Khan S, Khan RA. Chronic stress leads to anxiety and depression. Ann Psychiatry Ment Health 2017;5:10-91.
  14. Husain W. The levels of depression, anxiety and stress in police officers. Acad Res Int 2014;5:458-65.
  15. Mostafa NS, Momen M. Occupational Health and Safety Training: Knowledge, Attitude and Practice among Technical Education Students. Egyptian J Occup Med 2014;38:153-65.
  16. Pingle S. Occupational safety and health in India: now and the future. Ind Health 2012;50:167-71.
  17. Khadraa M, Mousa, Nawal A, Fouad, SOH Seir A, Bader El-dein. Assessment of Knowledge and Self-Reported Practices of Iron Mines' Workers about Pneumoconiosis in Baharia Oasis, Giza Governorate. Med. J. Cairo Univ 2014; 82: 23-9.
  18. Ishtiaq M, Rabnawaz, Khan K, Khan H, Zakir S, Sarwar G, Jehan N. Prevalance of pneumoconiosis among coal miners of Cherat, district Nowshera - Pakistan. J Postgrad Med Inst 2014; 28:139-44.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**  
Authors declare no conflict of interest.  
**GRANT SUPPORT AND FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE**  
None declared.

**AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION**

Conception and Design:	TA, QAQ, IA
Data collection, analysis & interpretation:	TA, QAQ
Manuscript writing:	TA, IA