



IMPACT OF STRESS ON PROFESSIONAL WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

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Abstract

Stress is the single non-specific reaction of the body to a demand made upon it. Everyone experiences some form of stress or the other and in many cases, the stress or the adverse reaction, to the demand of the situation gets reduced with the passage of time or when one gets used to the situation. Organizational stress, resulting from the demands of the work environment is one such psychological situation. When an women entrepreneurs gains experience and confidence in her work, the stress is bound to decline. It is also believed that training the employee in the proper method of doing the work reduces stress. However, the demanding nature of the job, the aging process, the ever increasing work pressure, the constant need to achieve the target, the peer pressure and unsympathetic higher ups are some of the factors which affect the psyche of the women entrepreneurs very much and affect her ability to perform. The professional women entrepreneurs are found to experience greatest amount of stress. Many factors contribute for the increasing stress level of these women entrepreneurs and an attempt is made in this study to analyze such causative factors.

Key Words: Stress – Professional - Women Entrepreneurs - Causative Factors.

INTRODUCTION

“People are as happy as they make up their minds to be” - Abraham Lincoln

Stress is the known as the ‘silent killer’ all over the world. Along with it its corrosive companies come knocking on every door. It is an inevitable concomitant of organizational life. Its source in an organization is task or role related. An organization being a network of roles performed in interconnected positions is dynamic in nature. The complex and dynamic environment in which organizations have to exist adapt themselves and grow, add to further stress at work. These environmental forces include rapid technological advancements, their adaptations in organizations of consequent changes, in the nature of jobs , the demands made on employee skills, increased employee expectations about the quality of work - life and incongruence between these expectations and the perceived organizational outcomes or benefits, changes in organizations in terms of downsizing, mergers, expansions closures and the like affecting employment security, social relations at work and upward mobility.

As business environment and organizations grow more competitive and complex, stress at work is also bound to increase. Dr. Hansselye, one of the prominent psychologists of the twentieth century, undertook a breakthrough study in the understanding and defining of stress. Stress, according to him is the “Single nonspecific reaction of the body to a demand made upon it”.

Every one experiences stress, in some cases major stress, in many cases unprecedented levels of stress. It is the wear and tear on one’s body. Author Marilyn Manning says that stress is a by-product of pressures, changes, demands, and challenges that one faces every day. Stress is the psychological and physiological reaction that takes place when one perceives an imbalance in the level of demand placed on the capacity to meet that demand on individuals.

Many people today work long hours, face constant deadlines, and are subject to pressure to increase income while keeping costs in check. To do things faster and better, but with fewer people, is the goal of many enterprises today. An unfortunate effect of this trend is to put too much pressure on the results to have increased performance, higher profit, and faster growth. But stress, burnout, turnover, aggression and other unpleasant side effects also occur. Thus, there appears little doubt that one of the major adverse influences on job performance, productivity, absenteeism and turnover is the incidence of stress at work.



Demands for improved business competitiveness and lower operating costs have frequently led to restructuring of organizations and reduction in staff levels. This has placed greater pressures on the remaining staff and resulted in growing number of health problems, work stress and a less efficient work force.

The cost of stress is huge. It is deviating to the individual and damaging to the business at a time when the need to control business costs and ensure an effective and healthy workforce is greater than ever. Both managers and employees need to understand the effects of work stress, the relationship between stress and performance and the source of stress within an organization. In order to ensure the health of work force, reduction in occupational stress is a worthwhile time investment for managers and supervisors as it will only stand to improve productivity, morale and overall organizational climate.

Stress is our body's way of responding to any kind of demand. It can be caused by both good and bad experiences. When people feel stressed by something going on around them, their bodies react by releasing chemicals into the blood. These chemicals give people more energy and strength, which can be a good thing, if their stress is caused by physical danger. But this can also be a bad thing, if their stress is in response to something emotional and there is no outlet for this extra energy and strength. This class will discuss different causes of stress, how stress affects you, the difference between 'good' or 'positive' stress and 'bad' or 'negative' stress, and some common facts about how stress affects people.

CAUSES OF STRESS

Many different things can cause stress – from physical (such as fear of something dangerous) to emotional (such as worry over family or job.) Identifying what may be causing stress is often the first step in learning how to better deal with stress. Some of the most common sources of stress are:

Survival Stress - The phrase “fight or flight” before. This is a common response to danger in all people and animals. When you are afraid that someone or something may physically hurt, body naturally responds with a burst of energy so that will be better to survive the dangerous situation (fight) or escape it all together (flight).

Internal Stress – Have ever caught worrying about things can do nothing about or worrying for no reason at all? This is internal stress and it is one of the most important kinds of stress to understand and manage. Internal stress is when people make themselves stressed. This often happens when we worry about things we can't control or put ourselves in situations we know will cause us stress. Some people become addicted to the kind of hurried, tense, lifestyle that results from being under stress. They even look for stressful situations and feel stress about things that aren't stressful.

Environmental Stress – This is a response to things around that cause stress, such as noise, crowding, and pressure from work or family. Identifying these environmental stresses and learning to avoid them or deal with them will help lower stress level.

Fatigue and Overwork – This kind of stress builds up over a long time and can take a hard toll on body. It can be caused by working too much or too hard at job(s), school, or home. It can also be caused by not knowing how to manage time well or how to take time out for rest and relaxation. This can be one of the hardest kinds of stress to avoid because many people feel this is out of their control. Later in this course will show that do have options and offer some useful tips for dealing with fatigue.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Stress is believed to be both cause and effect of frustration. Frustration is the result of a motivation being blocked to prevent one from reaching a desired goal. By and large frustration in real life is a manifestation either of resolved conflict or of real failure. The women entrepreneurs can understand the negative consequences of professional stress on their performance. Since continuous stress can lead to serious emotional disorders as well as physiological problems, it may affect their performance because stress is directly related to job performance.



Performance is poor at low levels and also at high levels of stress. Low level of stress results in disinterest in work and high level of stress impairs the ability to make effective decisions, and the cost of wrong decision can be very high.

Stress has serious impact- on physical health, psychological and behavioral consequences of the individuals. For an employer the work stress may cause absenteeism, low productivity and excessive health care expenses. Women react differently to stress than men. Women report stress related symptoms and diseases more than men. In some professions, Women have a significantly higher risk of health problems due to psychological factors than men, any factor that causes negative effects on women entrepreneurs physical and psychological well-being is expected to affect their work behavior.

Since stress is directly related to performance of women entrepreneurs. Therefore an attempt is made to study the impact of professional stress on the performance of women entrepreneurs. It is very significant for an entrepreneur to assess the level of stress among them and take steps to reduce or increase stress to acceptance level which will help to control entrepreneur's absenteeism, low productivity and health care expenses and as a result performance will improve. This is very useful to women entrepreneurs to develop coping techniques and strategies that will help to reduce their stress level at an acceptable and optimum level.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the specific objectives of the study.

1. To study the relationship between stress and the performance of women entrepreneurs
2. To analyze the level of stress among women entrepreneurs
3. To find suitable coping strategies to overcome the professional stress among the women entrepreneurs.

METHODOLOGY

This article deals with the impact of stress on women entrepreneurs and suggests improvements for the better management of stress. Both primary and secondary data were collected, primary data were collected through observation, personal interview and structured questionnaire. Data were obtained from entrepreneurs belonging to the business of Tailoring, toy making and beauty parlors. Secondary data were collected from books, journals, daily newspaper and published records.

Convenient sampling method was adopted to select 100 women entrepreneurs based on type of business. The stress level score of an individual may range from 40 to 200 and are classified into three groups based on their stress level like less than 100 minimum, 100 to 140 optimum, 140 and above maximum. Inferential statistical techniques were percentage analysis and chi-square tests are employed for the purpose of analysis.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant association between the stress level and type of business.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant association between the stress level and nature of business.

Hypothesis 3: Marital status does not play a very important role in determining the stress level of respondents.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between the stress level and the type of family

Hypothesis 5: There is no significant association between the stress level and the experience.

Hypothesis 6: There is no significant association between the stress level and profitability in business of the respondents.

Hypothesis 7: There is no significant association between the stress level and turnover in business.

Hypothesis 8: There is no significant association between the stress level and sales in business of the respondents.

Hypothesis 9: There is no significant association between the stress level and goodwill of the business.

FINDINGS

Based on the analysis and interpretations and hypothesis testing, the following are the important findings about the study of stress on women entrepreneurs

1. Out of 100 respondents, 54 of the women entrepreneurs are experiencing maximum stress and 38 of them are under optimum stress. There are 8 under minimum stress. This result shows, their involvement in their work as well as commitment towards their family increases the work load and is creating more stress.
2. The type of business taken up by women entrepreneurs does not influence the stress level. Out of the 100 respondents, most of them are in tailoring and are experiencing maximum level of stress.
3. The study shows that there is no significant association between the stress level and nature of business. Most of the respondents who are in manufacturing type of business are experiencing more stress compared to trading and service.
4. The study shows that there is no significant association between the stress level and marital status of the women entrepreneurs. The investigator has found that. Out of 82 married respondents, 48 of them experienced maximum stress level.
5. The study shows that there is no significant association between the stress level and the type of family they have. The study reveals that out of 64 respondents living in joint family, 38 of them are experiencing maximum stress which is near about 60 percent whereas out of 36 respondents living in nuclear family, only 16 of them are experiencing maximum stress level and optimum stress.
6. The study shows that there is no significant association between the stress level and experience of the women entrepreneurs. The study shows that, 34 respondents are less than 5 years of experience category which is near about 38 percent are experiencing maximum stress, whereas in case of highly experienced individuals the percentage of stress level is tolerable.
7. The study shows that there is no significant association between the stress level and the profitability. Out of 100 respondents, 64 of them are satisfied with profitability in their business and 24 of them are extremely satisfied and 12 of them are satisfied.
8. The study shows that there is no significant association between the stress level and turnover in business.
9. The study shows that there is no significant association between the stress level and sales in business. Since most of the respondents are in maximum stress category, they are only satisfied with the sales.
10. The study shows that there is no significant association between the stress level and Goodwill of their business.
11. The study shows that there is no significant association between the stress level and Growth and Development of their business. Most of the respondents are only satisfied with growth and development of their business, 54 percent of them are experiencing maximum stress, and they are only satisfied about the growth and development of their business.
12. The respondents in the study are under maximum stress level (54) i.e., 54 percent, optimum stress level (38) i.e., 38 percent and minimum stress (8) i.e., 8 percent.
13. The satisfaction level in case of Profitability, Sales, Turnover, Goodwill, Growth and Development of their business is not very high, they are only satisfied. All these factors are concerned with their performance. Increase in these factors have no significant relationship to stress level but to some extent, the reduction in stress level from maximum to optimum level will surely increase their performance from satisfaction level to extremely satisfaction level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Division of Responsibilities

Women entrepreneurs have to look after many things in their life. So, they must change style with the growth of the enterprise by delegating the responsibilities and must deal with the most important. The remaining part of the work can be given to others who can be trusted as of the division of responsibilities which reduce the burden, ultimately leads to lowering of stress.

2. Awareness and Development Programme

There are many entrepreneurship development institutes which are conducting workshops, seminars and conference particularly for women entrepreneurs to develop their self-improvement and confidence in work. This will improve their knowledge particularly in their field which will help them to eradicate their problems smoothly, as well help in reducing the stress level.



3. Relaxation Techniques

Stress can be effectively managed by using relaxation techniques such as meditation, yoga, participating in indoor games and involving in family and social activities. Spending time with nature can also help people to overcome their fatigue as well the impact of stress on physical and psychological behavior will reduce.

4. Feeling in Control

It is better to exert some control over the situation rather than collapsing in a helpless heap. People who have an internal locus of control, that is, they feel their life is under control and are generally less addicted to stress, than those with an external focus of control who think they are at the mercy of fate and outside circumstances.

5. Government's Support

The policies and decisions announced by the government regarding the financial assistance with its subsidies particularly pertaining to women entrepreneurs have to be communicated in time to them. So, that they can get the benefit to improve their business. This will in turn reduce not only their financial constraint but also stress.

CONCLUSION

The Characteristics of men and women entrepreneurs are generally very similar. The differences are found only in age, personality, motivation and type of business started. Women are by and large born managers as they manage their home. They can do simultaneously do more than one task at a time and have good coordination skills. They invariably think of entering a business once their children are grown up and household responsibilities get reduced. Women rely on their own finance and avoid availing of loans. They also differ from men in the type of business they start.

Sharing of responsibilities will reduce the work overload and utilize their time for proper planning and decision making attending the workshops, seminars and conferences conducted by the Entrepreneurship Development Institutes will improve their skill and gain others work experience related to their field. This will give them confidence and leads to growth of their business.

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