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Article

The Impact of Stress Management Skills on Employee Job Performance

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between stress management skills and employee job performance across diverse organisational contexts. Drawing on empirical studies published since 2019, the review synthesises evidence regarding the efficacy of various stress management approaches in enhancing workplace performance. Findings reveal a robust positive correlation between stress management competencies—encompassing time management, relaxation techniques, healthy lifestyle choices, and social support mechanisms—and both task and contextual performance dimensions. Time management emerges as particularly efficacious, demonstrating widespread adoption and consequent improvements in productivity and engagement. Similarly, mindfulness meditation and progressive muscle relaxation show considerable efficacy in mitigating physiological manifestations of occupational stress, whilst social support networks provide essential emotional and practical resources. Despite compelling evidence supporting these interventions, implementation challenges persist, reflected in continued work-related health issues and absenteeism. Organisations would benefit substantially from integrating comprehensive stress management training into professional development frameworks, thereby fostering workplace environments conducive to enhanced performance, reduced absenteeism, and improved psychological wellbeing. Future research should investigate broader organisational contexts and longitudinal effects of stress management programmes.

Keywords: occupational stress; stress management; employee performance; mindfulness; time management; workplace wellbeing; task performance

1. Introduction

The contemporary workplace environment presents employees with increasingly complex challenges that often manifest as occupational stress. With globalisation, technological advancement, and heightened competition, organisations are placing escalating demands upon their workforce, inadvertently creating conditions conducive to stress proliferation. The resulting psychological and physiological strain has been well-documented as detrimental to both individual well-being and organisational outcomes, with particular implications for job performance. This systematic literature review examines the relationship between stress management skills and employee job performance, providing a comprehensive analysis of existing scholarly research.

Occupational stress represents a significant concern for modern organisations, with the Health and Safety Executive reporting that work-related stress, depression, and anxiety accounted for 17 million working days lost in the United Kingdom during the 2021/2022 period. According to Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development Beyond absenteeism, stress manifests through presenteeism, wherein employees attend work whilst psychologically disengaged, thereby reducing productivity and performance quality. The economic implications are substantial, with estimates by Deloitte suggesting that workplace stress costs UK employers between £42-£45 billion annually.

Against this backdrop, stress management skills have emerged as crucial competencies for contemporary employees. These encompass cognitive-behavioural techniques, mindfulness practices, time management strategies, physical exercise regimens, and social support mechanisms.

Whilst these interventions have demonstrated efficacy in ameliorating psychological distress, their precise relationship with job performance metrics remains less thoroughly examined in a systematic manner.

Job performance constitutes a multidimensional construct encompassing task performance, contextual performance, and adaptive performance. Task performance refers to activities directly contributing to organisational technical processes; contextual performance involves behaviours supporting the organisational, social, and psychological environment; whilst adaptive performance concerns employee capacity to adjust to novel or changing work circumstances. The potential influence of stress management skills across these performance dimensions warrants rigorous investigation.

Previous reviews have examined stress management interventions in isolation or have focused exclusively on stress reduction outcomes rather than performance implications. This systematic review addresses this gap by synthesising empirical evidence concerning the relationship between stress management skills and multidimensional job performance. Furthermore, it examines potential mediating and moderating variables influencing this relationship, including individual differences, organisational culture, and industry-specific factors.

The present review employs a methodologically rigorous approach adhering to PRISMA guidelines for systematic reviews. Through comprehensive database searches, quality assessment of included studies, and thematic synthesis of findings, this review aims to provide practitioners and researchers with evidence-based insights regarding the efficacy of various stress management approaches in enhancing workplace performance.

By elucidating the complex interplay between stress management capabilities and job performance metrics, this review contributes to both the theoretical understanding of workplace stress dynamics and practical approaches to performance enhancement through targeted stress management interventions within organisational contexts.

2. Methodology

This research employed a comprehensive systematic literature review as its methodological framework. The process encompassed question formulation, bibliographical source identification, inclusion and exclusion criteria establishment, and rigorous data analysis procedures. A systematic literature review constitutes a structured approach to examining, critically appraising and synthesising extant research concerning a specified topic, in this instance, the interrelationship between stress management competencies and employee performance outcomes.

The initial phase comprised research question delineation and scope determination. The researchers formulated interrogative statements designed to elicit the most pertinent data to enrich the inquiry, predominantly through exploration of research content. The review parameters were established through careful consideration of temporal boundaries (publications from 2019 onwards were exclusively considered), keyword terminology (stress management skills, job performance), database selection (Google Scholar and premier business management periodicals), and inclusion/exclusion criteria. Only English-language publications were incorporated.

The subsequent stage centred upon literature identification. Relevant databases within the business management discipline were identified and accessed. To facilitate comprehensive searching, appropriate keywords and Boolean combinations were developed. Google Drive served as a repository for search outcomes, enabling straightforward retrieval and enumeration of accumulated references. Citation management systems were utilised for bibliography compilation and search result organisation.

Study selection and evaluation constituted the ensuing phase. This involved preliminary screening through title and abstract examination to identify potentially applicable research; comprehensive full-text assessment, which necessitated procurement and thorough reading of selected studies; and methodical quality and relevance evaluation employing established criteria. Research design and methodological approaches, data analytical techniques, findings, and potential

limitations or biases underwent careful scrutiny. Predefined inclusion and exclusion parameters governed the ultimate selection of studies incorporated within the review.

Data extraction and synthesis followed, with relevant information systematically derived from each publication, including authorship and publication chronology, research objectives, methodological design, and principal findings and conclusions. Thematic commonalities, patterns, and interrelationships amongst the studies were meticulously identified. The findings from selected research were subsequently synthesised and integrated to form a coherent narrative.

The final phase involved the composition of the literature review. Structurally, the review adopted a logical organisation, predominantly following thematic or chronological arrangements. Contextual background was provided, followed by research problem articulation and review scope explication. The literature underwent critical evaluation and synthesis, with particular emphasis on key thematic elements and conclusions. Principal findings were discussed, and their theoretical and practical implications thoroughly explored.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Stress Management Skills of Employees

Stress management skills encompass a variety of habits and practical techniques that are used to cope with various life and occupational stressors to mitigate or prevent any negative psychological and physical outcomes. It is the ability to maintain control when a situation, person, or event brings an excessive level of pressure on an individual. Stress management skills can be described as emotion-oriented, action-oriented or acceptance-oriented. In the context of employees in the workplace, stress management may be viewed at the individual level, the organisation level, or through the interplay of both. Although organisational initiatives may be implemented in the workplace to mitigate stressors, how an individual inherently perceives and handles stressful events also plays a part in his/her stress management capabilities. Stress management skills entail determining the best way to deal with the expectations and pressures placed on a person. According to Julianah Funmilayo Akintunde-Adeyi and colleagues, controlling and lowering stress is also part of the process. Stress management employs techniques that must be used properly to operate effectively in the workplace. They include relaxation techniques, time management, lifestyle choices, and seeking social support.

3.2. Time Management

Effective time management is an essential skill for handling stress. Research by Sonia Singh supports these practices, noting that structured schedules and goal-setting contribute significantly to reducing workplace pressure. Existing research has also demonstrated that employees who participate in flexible time arrangements and work-life balance initiatives are less likely to experience burnout and are more dedicated than those who do not. According to Chet and Steven, workers who demonstrate effective time management techniques and good work-life balance report being more engaged and productive at work. Flexibility in accomplishing tasks in the workplace is also linked to improvements in workers' physical and mental well-being. Moreover, employees with a high work-life balance perform significantly better than employees with a moderate or low degree of work-life balance. They are more engaged and less likely to look for other employment, have better physical and mental health, and possess lower levels of stress. Furthermore, in the study by Ogomegbunam, it was found that workers in manufacturing firms in Edo State, Nigeria predominantly relied on time management as their primary stress management strategy, and they implemented it extensively.

3.3. Relaxation Techniques

In the study by Saleem, relaxation techniques such as mindfulness, meditation, and relaxation exercises were identified as effective stress management skills that help mitigate the adverse effects

brought about by prolonged exposure to stress hormones. Relaxation and meditation techniques, according to Kihara and Mugambi, are effective stress management skills since they reduce symptoms of stress by slowing breathing and heart rate, lowering blood pressure, minimizing stress hormones, reducing muscle tension by increasing blood flow to major muscles, lowering fatigue, reducing anger and frustration, and increasing confidence to handle problems. The most commonly used stress management skills are muscle relaxation and cognitive-behavioral skills, or a combination of two more relaxation techniques. Studies have indicated that even a brief period of meditation can yield instant advantages. Additionally, studies by Asthana indicated that mindfulness meditation practices, which emphasise detached observation and awareness of one's consciousness, may constitute a potent cognitive behavioral coping approach for changing how we respond to stressful situations. In fact, in a study conducted on nurse leaders, mindfulness meditation course participants demonstrated a greater improvement in stress management. According to Bruning, another effective relaxation technique is progressive muscle relaxation, which is a psychological stress management technique that involves releasing tension through physical activity. The findings of the study of Ogomegbunam revealed that relaxation techniques are adopted by employees. However, its adoption was relatively low as compared to other stress management skills and strategies. In contrast, the studies of Dey and Dey, Bartlett and colleagues as also Bolm and colleagues revealed that engaging in mindfulness and relaxation activities is considered the most effective approach to stress management among employees worldwide.

3.4. *Lifestyle Choices*

Saleem identified healthy lifestyle choices as an effective stress management technique. A balanced and nutritious diet, adequate and quality sleep, regular exercise, and avoiding or limiting substance use, such as cigarettes, liquor, and illicit drugs, are all examples of healthy lifestyle choices. Although adequate sleep is an effective stress management skill, the research conducted by Hailu on University students in Ethiopia observed that only 10.7% of the participants got six to eight hours of sleep each night, suggesting that this is an uncommonly used stress management skill.

3.5. *Social Support*

Seeking social support, especially from co-workers, is one of the individual level stress management skills identified by Kaveh and colleagues that has a positive effect on an employee's ability to cope with stressors in the workplace. This problem-focused coping technique actively seeks practical, informational, and emotional help from relevant persons in order to alleviate a specific stressor. A positive impression of one's social support is linked to improved mental and physical well-being and quality of life, and has been found to protect people from the negative impacts of stressful situations. The empirical study of Ogomegbunam demonstrates that employees in manufacturing firms receive the most workplace social support, which helps them deal with difficult work situations. Another form of social support is seeking counselling services and professional help. According to Lee, therapy seeks to change an individual's perception of stress, allowing them to cope with events that previously caused issues. Counseling assists an individual in managing stress by evaluating threats and then providing resources to deal with them. Both Philippine-based and international studies underscore the importance of stress management skills such as relaxation techniques, lifestyle adjustments, time management, and social support in improving employee well-being. By adopting these strategies, organisations can foster healthier work environments that enhance productivity and job satisfaction.

3.6. *Employee Job Performance*

Improving employee job performance has been a concern of most firms and organisations since the contributions of its employees are critical to achieving organisational objectives. Job performance refers to the quality and quantity of work achieved by an employee in fulfilling their responsibilities.

It is influenced by factors such as job satisfaction, rewards, individual skills, and abilities, and is often measured by indicators like productivity, goal achievement, customer satisfaction, and efficiency. Job performance may also be defined as a method for carrying out tasks that have been delegated to them in order to attain a particular goal. It may also pertain to the results that are achieved through a specific course of action. Organisational job performance measurements can help assess whether an employee's performance is great, good, average, or poor. Evaluating workforce performance is crucial for meeting organisational goals. In the study by Koopmans and colleagues as also by Pradhan and Jena, employee job performance is measured based on task performance and contextual performance.

3.7. Measurement of Job Performance

(1) Task Performance: Task performance refers to completing specific job responsibilities effectively. This dimension encompasses executing job responsibilities, staying current with relevant knowledge, ensuring precise and orderly work, as well as strategizing, coordinating, and addressing challenges. It depends on cognitive ability and is driven by task knowledge (technical expertise and multitasking ability), task skills (applying knowledge to complete tasks independently), and task habits (natural tendencies that help or hinder performance). In the Philippines, the study of Chico and colleagues indicated that the overall mean score for job performance is 3.95, indicating a high level of performance, which suggests that the employees' work is efficient. The study of Cuyos also supports the previously cited study as it revealed that employees in a City Government at General Santos City demonstrated a high level of employee work performance in terms of task performance with a mean of 4.45. Employees rated themselves very high in focusing on results (4.69) and planning work to meet deadlines (4.56). They also scored high in prioritizing main issues (4.46) and performing tasks efficiently. The lowest score was for optimal planning (3.96). The high rating for task performance indicates that employees' work performance is strong when they focus on achieving desired results.

(2) Contextual Performance: Contextual performance involves voluntary behaviors that enhance the organisational climate, such as teamwork, adaptability, and interpersonal relations. Globally, contextual performance is recognised for its role in strengthening organisational culture and social networks. For instance, studies emphasise how discretionary behaviors like helping colleagues and cooperating with others contribute to a positive workplace environment, boosting overall organisational performance. The study of Cuyos showed that employees in a city government at General Santos City, Philippines exhibited a high level of job performance in terms of contextual performance with an overall mean score of 4.47. They rated themselves very high in taking on challenging tasks (4.58), keeping job skills updated (4.65), and assuming extra responsibilities (4.63). They also scored high in starting new tasks promptly (4.26), updating job knowledge (4.44), finding creative solutions (4.46), seeking new challenges (4.23), and participating in meetings (4.47). This indicates that contextual performance plays a crucial role in helping employees build strong social networks. The high level of contextual performance suggests that employees.

3.8. Relationship with and Influence of Stress Management Skills on Employee Job Performance

According to Akintunde-Adeyi and colleagues, the goal of stress management is to guarantee that employees perform efficiently in the workplace, meet the organisation's goals, and provide effective services. Stress management is essential for mitigating the negative effects of work-related stress on employee performance, as proven by existing studies that affirm the use of stress management skills as a means of increasing employee performance in the workplace.

The relationship between stress management skills and job performance is well-documented in both international and Philippine studies. Grace and colleagues found a significant positive relationship between stress management skills and job performance, emphasizing that effective stress management serves as a significant factor that decreases the negative effects of stress on organisational outcomes. These findings suggest that individual stress management skills should be

encouraged as they are positively linked to employee productivity. Similarly, research highlights that stress management strategies such as time management, social support and relaxation techniques can improve both task efficiency and overall job satisfaction. However, the study of Akintunde-Adeyi and colleagues found that successfully implementing proper stress management skills and techniques have remained a major challenge for employees and managers alike, as seen in the prevalence of growing health issues and high rates of absence at work due to illness and exhaustion, both of which have led to poor employee performance over time.

In studies conducted on government workers in Kenya as well as on private employees in India and manufacturing firms in Nigeria, it was observed that there was a positive relationship between relaxation techniques and the job performance of the employees.

4. Future Directions for Research

Future research endeavours should expand significantly beyond the current scope to encompass a broader range of organisational contexts and industries, thereby enhancing our understanding of the complex interrelationship between stress management competencies and employee job performance. Whilst extant literature has predominantly focused on specific sectors—notably hospitality, manufacturing, merchandising, banking and education—there remains a substantial gap concerning other critical industries such as healthcare, information technology, public administration, creative industries, and emergent sectors within the knowledge economy. The investigation of these diverse organisational environments would likely yield valuable insights regarding sector-specific stressors and the differential efficacy of various stress management approaches across contextual boundaries.

Moreover, methodological diversification represents an essential avenue for advancing this field of inquiry. The preponderance of cross-sectional studies within the current literature restricts our understanding of causal mechanisms and developmental trajectories. Consequently, longitudinal investigations examining the sustained impact of stress management interventions on performance metrics over extended timeframes would contribute substantially to theoretical development. Such studies could elucidate whether performance enhancements are maintained, diminished, or augmented over time, whilst potentially identifying critical periods during which interventions might yield optimal results.

Additionally, future research should adopt more sophisticated analytical approaches to delineate the potential mediating and moderating variables influencing the stress management–performance relationship. Individual difference factors—such as personality traits, resilience capacities, emotional intelligence, and cognitive flexibility—may significantly modulate intervention efficacy. Similarly, organisational culture, leadership styles, and structural characteristics likely constitute important contextual variables worthy of systematic investigation. The exploration of these complex interaction effects would provide practitioners with nuanced insights regarding the targeting and tailoring of stress management programmes to specific employee demographics and organisational contexts.

Furthermore, comprehensive studies examining the economic implications of stress management programmes would provide valuable evidence for organisational decision-makers contemplating resource allocation. Cost-benefit analyses comparing various intervention modalities could identify approaches offering optimal return on investment across different organisational settings. Such economic evaluations should consider both direct performance enhancements and indirect benefits through reduced absenteeism, presenteeism, and staff turnover.

Lastly, the integration of emerging technologies in stress management interventions—such as biofeedback applications, virtual reality environments, and artificial intelligence-driven personalisation—presents promising research opportunities. Investigations into the comparative efficacy of traditional versus technology-enhanced approaches could potentially identify innovative methods for addressing contemporary workplace stressors in increasingly digitalised working environments.

5. Conclusion

This systematic literature review has elucidated a robust positive correlation between stress management skills and employee job performance across diverse organisational contexts. The evidence indicates that proficiency in stress management techniques, encompassing time management, relaxation practices, healthy lifestyle choices, and social support mechanisms, significantly enhances both task and contextual performance dimensions. Time management emerges as particularly efficacious, with empirical studies demonstrating its widespread adoption and consequent improvements in productivity and engagement. Similarly, relaxation techniques such as mindfulness meditation and progressive muscle relaxation show considerable efficacy in mitigating physiological manifestations of occupational stress, whilst social support networks provide essential emotional and practical resources for employees navigating workplace stressors. Despite compelling evidence supporting the efficacy of these interventions, implementation challenges persist, as reflected in continued work-related health issues and absenteeism. Future research should extend beyond the currently examined sectors (hospitality, manufacturing, merchandising, banking, and education) to investigate broader organisational contexts and longitudinal effects of stress management programmes. Organisations would benefit substantially from integrating comprehensive stress management training into their professional development frameworks, thereby fostering workplace environments conducive to enhanced performance, reduced absenteeism, and improved psychological wellbeing amongst their workforce.

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