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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK-RELATED STRESS AND EMPLOYEE'S PERFORMANCE IN THE SAUDI'S ELECTRICAL COMPANY (SEC)

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This study examined the relationship between the work-related stress and employee's performance in the Saudi Electricity Company (SEC). A sample of 181 respondents selected for this study using a simple random sampling method. The study was guided by 20 questions designed to cover the main indicators of the relationships between the work-related stress factors and employee's performance. A self-administered questionnaire used a five-point Likert structured has sent by emails to 300 respondents. The questionnaires had reliability co-efficient of 0.65 (Cronbach's Alpha). Data collected was analyzed using a descriptive statistics. Correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis were also used to examine the correlation between independent variables and dependent variable. A well-known Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 was used to analyze the data of this study. The main findings have shown a significant correlation between the variables of this study.

Keywords: Work-related, Stress, Employee, Performance, Saudi's Electrical Company

INTRODUCTION

Today many organizations face the work-related stress and try hard to minimize its side effects. This situation might occur when there is an unbalance between the demands of the job and the resources and capabilities of the individual worker to meet those demands. Therefore, the role of human resources management will be considered and a healthy working environment should be created and maintained. According to CIPD annual survey report (2010), the top causes of stress at work are workloads, external

relationships, organizational change/restructuring and management styles.

The world today has witnessed many economic crises like the oil and stocks prices fluctuations around the globe generally and in the Arab countries specifically. Because of these changes and crises, many organizations have decided to cut its workforce and adopt a downsize strategy. These changes are assumed to increase the possibilities of stress cases at work.

Established in April, 2000, the Saudi Electrical Company (SEC) with its specific mission to be

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committed to provide its customers with safe & reliable electric services, to meet the expectations of its shareholders, caring for its employees, and ensuring optimum utilization of available resources. The company is working hard to achieve high levels of satisfaction for various customers by meeting their expectations, actively communicating with them, and providing them with value-added services and products. The researchers have chosen this company as a case for their study because of the hard working environment as well as job-related risks which might increase the level of stress at this company.

LITREATURE REVIEW

The Meaning of Stress at Work

Stress has been defined by many definitions. Most of these definitions agreed that stress is a personal experience, caused by pressure or demands and might impact the individual's ability to cope with these pressures and demands. Palmer (1989) defined it as a psychological, physiological and behavioral response by an individual when they perceive a lack of equilibrium between the demands placed upon them and their ability to meet those demands, which, over a period of time, leads to ill health. Some people might lack the ability to create equilibrium between their life and the work-related demands. The role of the line managers as well as HR functions and activities will be crucial at this case.

Cooper and Palmer (2000) have defined stress as a situation happened when someone perceives pressure that is higher than his ability to cope with this pressure. This definition focuses on the personal experience and it puts the solution on the ability to cope with any pressure. Therefore, HR department has a huge role to train people

on how to make balance between their work demands and life pressures.

Also, Raymond (2000) described stress as a situation where demands made on individuals do not match the resources available or meet the individual's needs and motivation. Stress will be the result if the workload is too large for the number of workers and time available.

What are the mainwork-related stressors?

According to Cooper (1986), there are many factors that are considered as work-related stressors which include the following:

i. The intrinsic factors related to stress

As explained by Cooper (1987), these factors might have a serious negative impact on workers' physical health and psychological well-being. Like a poor working conditions, such as lighting, noise, and smells (van Kempen *et al.*, 2002), work hours (De Raeve, Jansen, and Kant, 2007; Sparks, Cooper, Fried, and Shirom, 1997), risk and danger, new technology (Cartwright and Cooper, 1997; Korunka, Weiss, Huemer, and Karetta, 1995), work overload (Warr, 1994), and work underload (Melamed, Benavi, Luz, and Green, 1995).

All these factors should be considered by the organization's management when they decide to design the working area, the jobs and functions and the layout of departments inside the organization. Management should make sure that people – fit – environment is in place.

ii. Organizational roles

According to (Beehr, 1995), there are three major areas of organizational roles which may be sources of stress: the role ambiguity, role conflict and responsibility. A wide range of events can create role ambiguity. These events can be

summarized in three types of role ambiguity, lack of clarity about scope and responsibilities of job, lack of clarity of objectives for role, and inadequate information about work role. The stress indicators found to relate to role ambiguity are low job satisfaction, physiological strain, intentions to leave job, low self-confidence, low motivation to work, and depression. Role conflicts exist when an employee is divided by conflicting job demands, or required to perform tasks disliked, or outside of the job description. Role conflicts can lead to decline in job satisfaction and increased anxiety levels. The connection between role conflict and psychological stress is not as strong as that between role ambiguity and psychological stress (Jackson and Schuler, 1985).

As mentioned by Makin, Cooper, and Cox, (1996), there are two types of responsibility in an organization, responsibility for people, and responsibility for things (e.g., equipment, buildings).

iii. Career development

The lack of adequate training and effective development strategy at work might cause a lot stress for many people inside the organization. When employee feel that his organization pay attention to his knowledge, skills, and capabilities enhancement through a defined policy, this might give him a sense of trust towards the organization.

He or she might feel that this organization willing to keep him or her at work for long-term. If the organization has no equivalent budget for training and development programs, most of employees might leave or decide to leave for any work which addvalue for them. The situation will be very interested when the organization field of work is very risky.

iv. Health and Safety Regulations

As mentioned by Armstrong (2012), many organizations are continually seeking to create and maintain a healthy and safety working environment. They try to create a working environment that protects the health and safety of employees and minimizes stress.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (2008), has estimated that every year in the UK firms face the challenge of reducing about 350 fatalities at work, over 36 million days lost due to work-related accidents and ill-health. It has also been estimated by the Health and Safety Executive (2008) that, apart from the pain and misery caused to those directly or indirectly concerned, the total cost to British employers of work-related injury and illness is £6.5 bn a year.

Organizations should pay attentions for their people health and safety issues in order to be competitive by having a low level of accidents, injuries and death at work which might create a condition for high stress.

v. Lack of fair compensations

Employees should be treated fairly in all compensations and benefits procedures. Many organizations decided to be the employer of choice by adopting an attractive compensations strategies and policies. Stress might increase if and only if employee feels of the lack of fairness regarding the ways on which people compensated.

Equity at work is very important factors for motivating as well as encouraging employees for better performance. The lack of a fair compensation system might cause a high stress, high absenteeism, low productivity and high turnover.

It very important for HR managers and departments to create and maintain fair compensation systems to minimize the level of stress at work. Besides, people at work should be trained well before setting and goals individually or in group. A professional health and safety organizations should be invited to provide some training, workshops and seminars to improve the health and safety records and keep up-to-date with the latest practices.

Theoretical framework: From the given literature, following research model and hypothesis has been formulated.

The above model consists of work-related stress factors as independent variable and employee’s performance as dependent variable.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

The following hypotheses are taken for the study:

H1: *There is a significant relationship between the lack of effective career development programs and employee’s stress .*

H₀: *There is no significant relationship between the lack of effective career development programs*

and employee’s stress.

H2: *There is a significance relationship between the lack ofwork-life balance arrangements and employee’s stress.*

H₀: *There is no significance relationship between the lack ofwork-life balance arrangements and employee’s stress.*

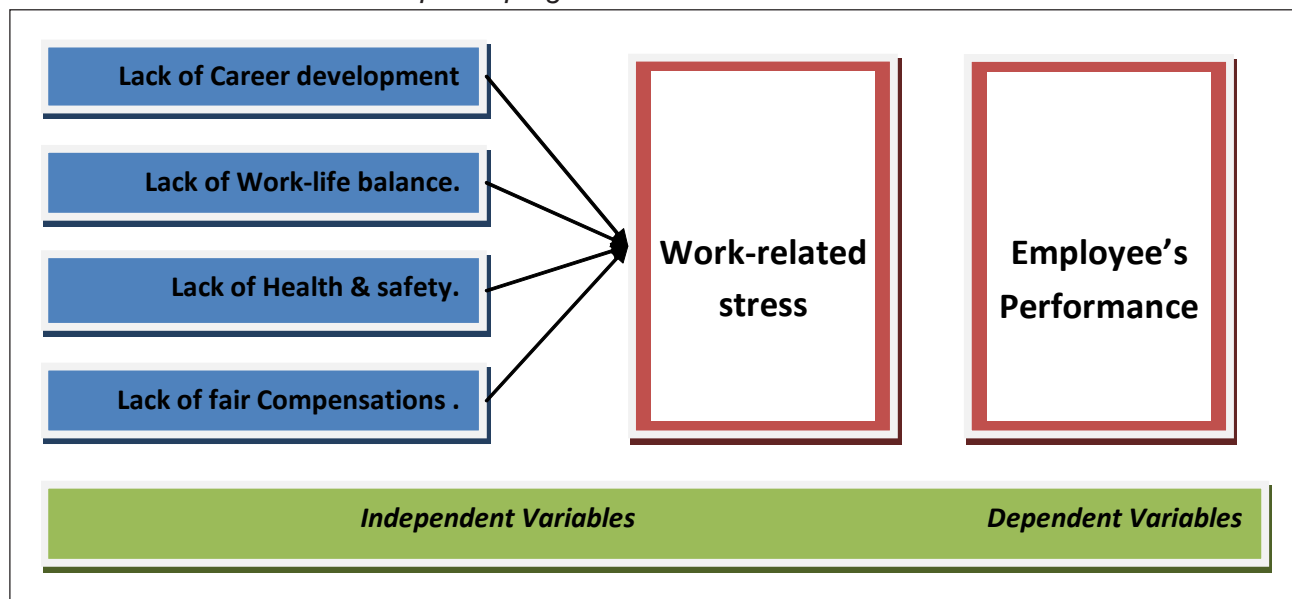
H3: *There is a significance relationship between the lack of health and safety programs and employee’s stress.*

H₀: *There is no significance relationship between the lack of health and safety programs and employee’s stress.*

H4: *There is a significance relationship between the lack of compensation programsand employee’s stress.*

H₀: *There is no significance relationship between the lack of compensation programs and employee’s stress.*

H5: *There is a positive relationship between the work-related stress and employee’s performance.*



H₀: There is no positive relationship between the work-related stress and employee’s performance.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to find out the relationship between the work-related stress factors and employees’ performance in the Saudi Electrical Company, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. More specific objectives are:

1. To find out the relationships between the work-related stress factors (lack of effective career development, lack of work-life balance arrangements, lack of health and safety programs, lack of effective compensation programs) and the employee’s performance.
2. To find out the relationships between the work-related stress factors.
3. To find out the most stressful factors that face SEC employees.
4. To measure the level of stress for SEC employees.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a descriptive study, used a cross-sectional design which considered to be best suited to studies aimed at finding out the prevalence of a phenomena, situation, problem, attitude or issue, by taking a cross-section of the population. A sample of 181 employees was randomly selected from the Saudi’s Electrical

Company (SEC). The total population of this study is 300 employees. The study was guided by 20 questions designed to cover the main indicators of the relationships between the work-related factors and employee’s performance. A self-administered questionnaire used a five-point Likert structured has sent by emails to all respondents. The questionnaires had reliability co-efficient of 0.65 (Cronbach’s Alpha). Data collected was analyzed using a descriptive statistics. Pearson’s Correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis as well as test of significance were also used to examine the correlation between independent variables and dependent variable. A well-known Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 was used to analyze the data of this study. The main findings show a significant correlation between the variables of this study.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Biographical Information of the Respondents (N = 181)

In terms of experience, Table 1 indicates that (68.5%) of the respondents had working experience more than 10 years; (30.4%) had 1 to 10 years; and only (1.1%) had less than one year of experience. This table is clearly indicated that most of the respondents are experienced employees which support the reliability of the answers for our survey.

Table 1: Indicating the Frequency and Percentage of the Working Experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	less than 1 year	2	1.1	1.1	1.1
	1-10 years	55	30.4	30.4	31.5
	above 10 years	124	68.5	68.5	100.0
	Total	181	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Indicating the Frequency and Percentage of the Age Distributions

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-30 years	23	12.7	12.7	12.7
	30-40 years	63	34.8	34.8	47.5
	Over 40 years	95	52.5	52.5	100.0
	Total	181	100.0	100.0	

In terms of age distribution, Table 2 indicates that only (52.5%) of the respondents are over 40 years of age ; (34.8%) had 30 to 40 years , and only (12.7%) had 20 to 30 years of age .

In terms of marital status of the respondents, Table 3 indicates that (89.5%) of the sample are married; (10.5%) are unmarried. We try to reflect the data related to marital status for its importance as an external factor. We think that employee sometimes feel of stress because of some family reasons.

Table 4 shows the means and standard deviations for the stressor factors. It shows that SEC employees feel with high stress because of lack of opportunity for growth and development as main factor, heavy workload, undefined job expectations, low salary, long hours, and job insecurity respectively. See the below Figure 1 shows the same findings.

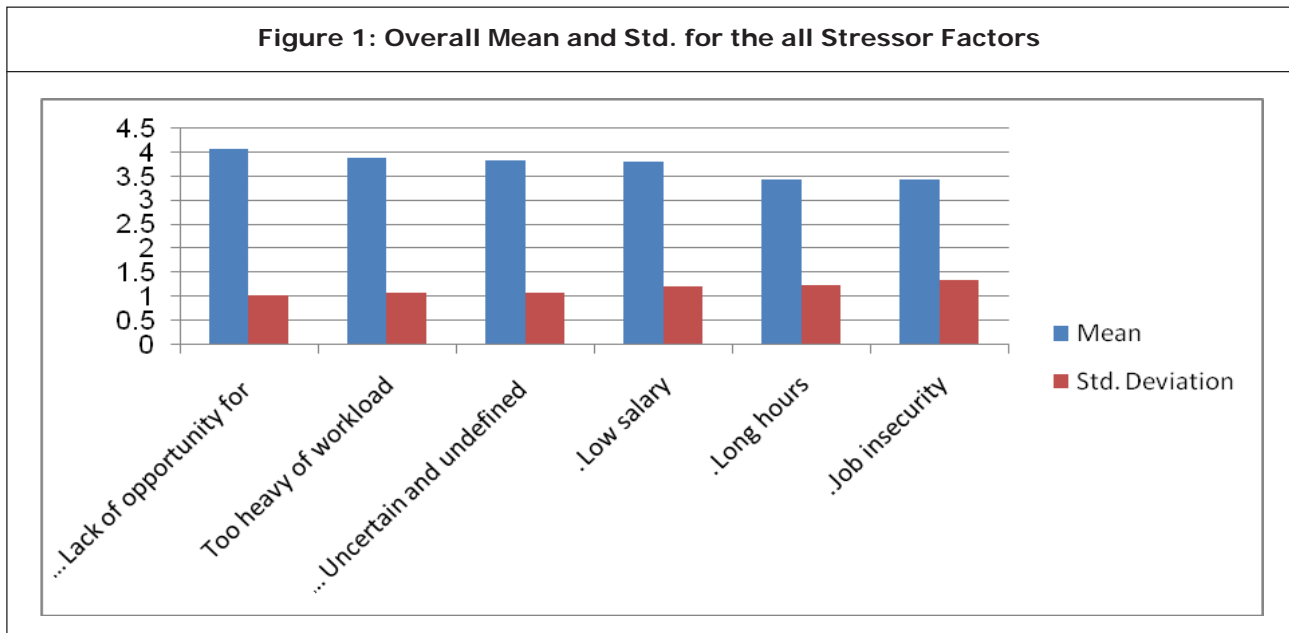
Results in Table 5 below shows the descriptive statistics in terms of arithmetic mean and standard deviation regarding employees' level of stress at SEC. The table shows employees'

Table 3: Indicating the Frequency and Percentage of the Marital Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	married	162	89.5	89.5	89.5
	unmarried	19	10.5	10.5	100.0
	Total	181	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics: Overall Mean and Std. for the all Stressor Factors

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Lack of opportunity for growth and development.	181	4.08	1.038
Too heavy of workload	181	3.89	1.095
Uncertain and undefined job expectations.	181	3.83	1.090
Low salary.	181	3.82	1.209
Long hours.	181	3.45	1.231
Job insecurity.	181	3.45	1.352
Valid N (listwise)	181		



stress level in this sample is above average (3.03). It seems above average level and it is highly recommended for the SEC management to study this problem and take all the recommendations of this study under consideration.

Results in Table 5 below shows the descriptive statistics in terms of arithmetic mean and standard deviation regarding employees' level of stress at SEC. The table shows employees' stress level in this sample is above average (3.03). It seems above average level and it is

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics: Mean and Std. for the Level of Stress at SEC

Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I always feel tense or stressed out during workday	181	549	3.03	1.206
Valid N (listwise)	181			

Table 6: Chi-Square Test Representing Statistical Independence Between Age and Work-related Stress

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.723 ^a	8	.461
Likelihood Ratio	8.231	8	.411
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.285	1	.257
N of Valid Cases	181		

Note: a. 6 cells (40.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .10.

highly recommended for the SEC management to study this problem and take all the recommendations of this study under consideration.

The above Table 6 represents the Pearson Chi-square analysis for the statistical independence between the work-related stress and employee’s age. The Chi-square value is 7.723 and there were 8 degree of freedom. The significance value is .461 > 0.05 which indicates that there no statistically difference between employee’s level of stress because of age .

Pearson Correlation Coefficient Analysis

Pearson’s correlation coefficient (r) is a measure of the strength of association between the two variables. In research studies that includes several,

beyond knowing the means and standard deviations of the dependent and independent variables, the researcher would often like to know how one variable is related to another.

As shown in Table 6, the correlation matrix indicates that the independent variables (lack of growth and development, lack of work-life balance arrangements and lack of effective compensations systems) are positively correlated with the work-related stress . lack of work-life balance arrangements achieved the highest positive correlation, lack of effective compensations system comes second, and lack of growth and development come last. The lack of health and safety programs reflect a negative correlation. Thus, hypotheses H1, H2, H4, were supported. H3 was not supported.

Table 7: Correlations

Variables	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5
Work-related stress	1	.021	.032	-.020	.025
Lack of growth and development opportunities.	.021	1	.192**	.066	.312**
Lack of work-life balance arrangements.	.032	.192**	1	.033	.240**
Lack of health and safety practices.	-.020	.066	.033	1	.100
Lack of effective compensations system.	.025	.312**	.240**	.100	1

Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 8: Correlations Between the Work-related Stress and Employee’s Performance

		Correlations	
		Work-related stress	Employee’ Performance
Work-related stress	Pearson Correlation	1	.027
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.722
	N	181	181
Employee’s Performance	Pearson Correlation	.027	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.722	
	N	181	181

The data in Table 8 shows a positive relationship between the work-related stress and employee's performance. The Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.027. This clearly indicates that work-related stress might affect employees' performance as well as the company performance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Today, many business organizations faced by the work-related stress. People inside these organizations being stressed because of many internal and external factors. This study examined the relationship between the work-related stress and employee's performance at the Saudi's Electrical Company (SEC). Based on a result from Pearson Correlation Analysis, the study found a positive relationship between the work-related stress factors (lack of growth and development, Lack of work-life balance arrangements, Lack of effective compensations system) and a negative relationship with (Lack of Health and safety regulations). Thus, hypotheses H1, H2, H4, and H5 were supported. H3 was not supported.

Statistical analysis also shows that SEC employees feel with high stress because of lack of opportunity for growth and development as main factor, heavy workload, undefined job expectations, low salary, long hours, and job insecurity respectively. Also the study shows that there is no statistical significance difference between employees for their level of stress because of age.

This study also finds that there is a positive correlation between employee's performance and

the work-related stress. This result provide some evidence that the overall business performance might be affected if the management ignore the work-related stress and the recommended strategies to deal with it.

It is highly recommended that organizations should work hard to formulate some strategies in order to minimize the level of stress among its employees. The SEC management should pay attention and try seriously to evaluate the current practices regarding their employees training policy, compensations system and the work-life balance arrangements that currently in place.

It is also recommended for future studies to focus on others geographical locations, cultures and business industries in order to generalize the results of this study. It is possible to have different results if a future study carried at other countries.

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