

Perceived Stress and Psychological Adjustment Among Employees

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Abstract

Perceived stress is the amount of stress that employees experience in response to their job expectations and working environment. Psychological adjustment is defined as an individual's ability to regulate their emotional well-being while efficiently coping with the demands of their workplace. This study was to investigate the correlation between perceived stress and psychological adjustment among the employees with the sample size of 150. The research instruments used were perceived stress scale (PSS) and brief adjustment scale (Base-6). The statistical techniques used to analyze the data were correlation and one-way ANOVA. The results revealed that there is positive correlation between the variables. The one-way ANOVA results revealed that there is no statistically significant difference in the study variables based on gender and marital status.

Keywords: Psychological Adjustment, Perceived Stress, Employees.

Introduction

The relationship between employees' perceived stress and psychological adjustment has become a crucial subject of research in the modern workplace. The mental health of the employees is widely being addressed as an important factor of the productivity, job happiness, job satisfaction and overall organization performance. By exploring the dynamics, this study aims to emphasis on the elements which lessen the negative effects of stress causing factors on the mental health of the workers. Increased work pressure, targets, dynamic changes, technical breakthroughs, rivalry are the factors at workplace which the employees too difficult to adjust and manage.

According to Lazarus (1966), stress arises when the individuals perceive that they cannot adequately cope with the demands being made on them. Stress results from an imbalance between demands and resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Perceived stress is the relationship between an individual and the environment that they see as threatening or overloading their resources in a way that will affect their well-being (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Perceived stress refers to the degree to which events in a person's life are assessed as stressful, unpredictable and uncontrollable (Cohen et al., 1983; Phillips, 2012)

Stress at work can result in the same symptoms as stress from any other source headaches, high blood pressure, indigestion, and other physical symptoms, anxiety, irritability, anger, depression, and other psychological symptoms, and behavioural symptoms such as overeating, drug use, poor job performance, or changes in family relationships (Anschuetz, 1999, Chandola et al., 2006)

Some studies have indicated that employees experiencing high levels of perceived stress may exhibit symptoms of anxiety, depression and lead to other mental health conditions, and also indicated that high

levels of perceived stress can also lead to increased absenteeism, decreased productivity, moreover perceived stress can have influence on interpersonal relationship at work, hence resulting in conflicts, lack of communication and poor teamwork (Chao et al., 2019). High perceived stress individuals in the workplace experienced cardiovascular complaints having a negative impact on the physical health (Limm, et al., 2010).

The relationship between perceived stress and psychological adjustment explains that higher the perceived stress levels are associated with lower psychological adjustment and vice versa, lower levels of perceived stress are associated with higher level of psychological adjustment. Which emphasis the need for effective stress management at workplace.

According to Skinner (1952), adjustment involves the organization of personality, this organization promotes stability, which is a dynamic adjustment of the individual to social and physical surroundings. According to Smith & Lazarus (1990), psychological adjustment involves cognitive processes and behavioural efforts to manage the internal and external demands that are perceived as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person. Some studies have revealed that higher perceived stress resulted in the poorer psychological adjustment, and also indicated high levels of anxiety and depression (Limm et al., 2010). The psychological adjustment was influenced by coping techniques and also concluded that the perceived stress can be management can be determined their psychological adjustment levels (Peter et al., 2007). The psychological adjustment is directly associated to the positive psychological climate at the organization and in turn psychological climate influences the adjustment of the employee, and self-efficacy plays a role in regulating the psychological climate and psychological adjustment (Martin et al., 2005).

The relationship between perceived stress and psychological adjustment among employees is influenced by various factors. The psychological adjustment is the ability manage and adapt to the demands and on the other hand we have perceived stress referring to the individual experience of stress, which occurs at workplace. Some studies have indicated poorer psychological adjustment is associated with higher perceived stress, and individuals with high stress are likely to encounter with anxiety, depression, and cardiovascular conditions (Xu et al., 2021). The good psychological adjustment can enhance the job performance and higher perceived stress levels can affect the job performance causing the cognitive overload, this emphasises the importance of effective stress management and concentration (Meunier et al., 2022).

The current study focusing relationship between psychological adjustment and perceived stress among the employees holds significance for many reasons such as employee's well-being. The organization can develop targeted interventions to promote well-being for productivity and performance. This leads to improved job performance, which impacts reduced absenteeism and lower turnover rates. Furthermore, there is a need to study the relationship between these variables to address the research gap to understand the dynamics. The current study also suggests that understanding this connection can guide treatment and policy-making to promote resilience and psychological well-being. The results and findings of this current can contribute to the further investigation considering different demographic detail and allowing the investigator to draw their insights.

Objectives

1. To investigate the relationships that exist between perceived stress and psychological adjustment.
2. To know the difference in psychological adjustment and perceived stress based on gender among

employees in the workplace.

3. To know the difference in psychological adjustment and perceived stress based on marital status among the employees in the workplace.

Hypotheses

1. There is a significant relationship between psychological adjustment and perceived stress in the workplace.
2. There is a significant relationship difference in psychological adjustment based on gender among employees in the workplace.
3. There is a significant relationship difference in perceived stress based on gender among employees in the workplace.
4. There is significant difference in psychological adjustment based marital status among employees in the workplace
5. There is significant difference in perceived stress based marital status among employees in the workplace

Methodology

Participants

The study sample consists of 150 employees from the Bengaluru district of Karnataka state, comprising 80 males (53.3%) and 70 females (46.7%), aged between 20 and 60. Among the participants, 127 (84.7%) were unmarried and 23(15.3%) were married. Also, 113 (75.3%) were graduates, 25 (16.7%) were postgraduates, pre-university qualified were 9(6%) and SSLC qualified were 3(2%). The participants hail from various organization, including 117 (78%) from private sectors, 14 (9.3%) from government sectors, and 19(12.7%) were self-employed individuals.

Instruments

1. PERCEIVED STRESS SCALE

It was developed by Cohen in the year 1983. The PSS is a ten-item with a 5-point Likert scale self-report measure of perception of stress. Showed adequate internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.74 to 0.91). The scale has shown strong construct validity. It also has criterion and predictive validity.

2. THE BRIEF ADJUSTMENT SCALE-6 (BASE-6)

It was developed by Peterson in the year 2015. The Brief Adjustment Scale-6 (BASE-6) is a six-item self-report measure of general psychological adjustment. To address reliability, author examined internal consistency (via Cronbach's alpha) in all sample's reliability was in the moderate range, with the BASE-6 exhibiting an ICC (2, 2) of 0.76, 95% CI = [0.68, 0.83]. The scale has convergent and construct validity.

Procedure

Quantitative methods are the primary source of data collection, simple random sampling technique was applied and google forms have been adopted to serve as the tool, every participant who took part in the study were assured that their demographic details remain confidential and solely utilized for the purpose of research. The google form were sent along with the consent form and the participants were strongly encouraged to fill the form actively and honestly. After the collecting the required data, the investigator carried out scoring as per the instructions given in the manual, and then the data were put into a spreadsheet for the purpose of statistical analysis, followed by the execution of the SPSS analysis.

Results and discussion

To find out the nature of the distribution of the collected data, the descriptive statistics were calculated.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of the variables under study.

Statistics	Perceived stress	Psychological adjustment
Mean	19.40	20.99
Median	20.00	21.00
Mode	20	24
Std. Deviation	5.676	9.124
Skewness	-.224	.291
Kurtosis	.638	-.508

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the variables under the study, the arithmetic mean of the perceived stress and psychological adjustment were 19.40 and 20.99, the median for the variables were 20.00 and 21.00, the mode for the variables were 20 and 24, St. Deviation for the variables were 5.676 and 9.124, the skewness for the variables were -0.224 and 0.291, kurtosis for the variables were 0.638 and -0.508 respectively. From the above table values it can be concluded that the collected is normally distributed and viable of parametric statistical techniques.

To find out the relationship between the variables, perceived stress and psychological adjustment, the Pearson’s correlation coefficient is calculated.

Table 2 Pearson’s correlation coefficient among the variables

Variables	Perceived stress	Psychological adjustment
Perceived stress	-	
Psychological adjustment	.567**	-

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level(2-tailed)

Table 2 shows the correlation between the variables under the study. The correlation coefficient between perceived stress and psychological adjustment is .567 ($p < 0.01$). This indicates a moderate a positive linear relationship between the variables included in the study. Which conclude that, as perceived stress increases the psychological adjustment tends to increase as well. This indicates that the correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

Supporting to the results, some studies have concluded that psychological adjustment is related to high perceived stress levels and coping strategies and personal resources influence psychological adjustment to stress (Terry et al.,1997). Psychological adjustment is related to perceived stress among employees and stress level and work adjustment are interlinked in employee well-being (Manasvi et al., 2015), high stress reactivity is linked to poorer psychological adjustment at workplace (H at al., 2010).

To determine whether there is statistically significant difference in study variables based on gender, one way ANOVA is calculated and presented in the table 3.

Table 3 summary of one-way ANOVA of gender and variables under study.

Variables	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Perceived stress	78.107	1	78.107	2.448
Psychological adjustment	48.306	1	48.306	.579

Table 3 shows the results of a one-way ANOVA (analysis of variance) for the gender and variables under the study. From the above table it can be seen that for the perceived stress, the F-value is 2.448 which is not significant. This means that there is no statistically significant difference in perceived stress between the gender groups involved.

For the psychological adjustment the F-value is 0.579 which is not significant, this means that there is no statistically significant difference in psychological adjustment between the gender groups involved.

The summary of the one-way ANOVA results indicate no statistically significant difference in perceived stress and psychological adjustment between the study variable based on the gender, suggesting that the factors being tested has a minimal impact on the perceived stress and psychological adjustment.

Khan (2022) concluded that there is no clear difference in gender in psychological adjustment and perceived stress. According to another study, both genders show similar relationship between adjustment and perceived stress (Kambam et al., 2022).

To determine whether there is statistically significant difference in study variables based on marital status, one way ANOVA is calculated and presented in the table 4

Table 4 Summary of one-way ANOVA of marital status and variables under the study.

Variables	Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	f
Perceived stress	5.990	1	5.990	.185
Psychological adjustment	4.019	1	4.019	.048

Table 4 shows the results of a one-way ANOVA (analysis of variance) for the marital status and variables under the study. From the above table we get to know that for perceived stress the F-value is 0.185, the result is not statistically significant. This means there is no significant difference in perceived stress between the marital status groups.

For the psychological adjustment the F-value is 0.048, the result is not statistically significant, this means that there is no statistically significant difference in psychological adjustment between the marital status groups involved.

According to Avunduk (2021), there is no significant difference in perceived stress based on marital status. Another study has a contrary finding and has concluded that marital status affects stress levels and psychological adjustment in employees, marital employees show higher stress and lower psychological adjustment (Hakim & Bibi, 2023).

Conclusion

This study was conducted to investigate the relationship between perceived stress and psychological adjustment among the employees. The findings of the study revealed that there is a statistically significant

correlation between the variables under study those are psychological adjustment and perceived stress. This shows that the workers mental health is influenced by stress and which places importance on proper stress management strategies at workplace to improve the well-being of the employees. These findings and conclusion have important implication for human resource management, this highlights the importance of investing in mental health programs, such as counselling session and psychoeducation. Which can help them understand need of stress management and effectively manage it. This proper management of stress can lead to improved psychological adjustment, which is known to increase job satisfaction and job performance. Additionally, incentives and rewards can increase the psychological adjustment. Employees who exhibit higher engagement and productivity, they tend to create positive work environment. These findings emphasis on the importance of psychological evaluation. Which helps the employee gain insight regarding their mental health and well-being and seek proper treatment for managing their stress. The impact of stress on psychological adjustment are common across demographics, which highlights the need for universal supportive measures required to improve the overall employee's mental health.

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