

Stress among medical representatives of pharmaceutical industry in Karimnagar City

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Abstract

This is an attempt to study the relation between stress, performance, and pressure at work environment of Medical Representatives in the karimnagar city, Telangana and how demographic factors impact on them. There is abundant scope for the pharmaceutical industry in karimnagar, on this basis huge job opportunity for marketing jobs are available. This scope and opportunity motivate the individuals to try for a better career in this area. This wide scope and competitive environment creates pressure and stress on the mindset of medical representatives of this region. Pressure on mind will lead to decrease the performance of the employees and further it drives to stress on the mind. Stress has become significant due to dynamic social factor and changing needs of life styles. Stress is man's adaptive reaction to an outward situation which would lead to physical, mental and behavioural changes. If stress is cope with an appropriate way the performance will not be reduced.

A survey is made by using a questionnaire, which is circulated within the employees of karimnagar region and based on the responses given by the medical representatives of pharmaceutical industry the analysis has done with statistical method called Correlation between various variables. The interpretation is done on the analyzed reports of the data collected through a well-structured questionnaire.

Keywords: stress, job performance and pressure to produce

Introduction

The study is an attempt to understand the stress, performance and pressure at work of Medical Representatives of pharmaceutical industry in karimnagar city. This study mainly focuses on the relation of pressure at work and performance of employees. In the era of global competition, stress and pressure has become most important factors affecting individual effectiveness and performance. The instabilities in the present work systems pose a threat to the employees leading to high levels of stress. Stress is related to the role or position that a person occupies in a given job. It is generally accepted as a determinant factor of poor performance of employees, both the employees and employers are trying to find a solution to this problem so that their employees could give them better work performance.

In today's challenging environment, stress and pressure is an unwelcome guest and comes in the way of both performance and quality of life one has to live. Along with tight schedules, high aspirations and high standards of performance set, an employee forces himself to have a stressful life. If the problems are slightly light, an individual can easily deal with them either by self or with the help of family members or friends or relatives and colleagues; conversely, if the problems are big, he is stuck in a crisis for success. Occasionally, the ups and downs of life can spill over into our workplace and make working life seem a little overwhelming and stressful. Personal life and work life interact and cause stress.

In this study the respondent, Medical representatives, are the key contacts between the pharmaceutical industry and the medical profession. They have the responsibility of promoting their companies major products directly to hospital doctors.

They do this via face to face meetings or medical presentations at various types of meetings.

Duties often include

- Arranging appointments with doctors, pharmacists and hospital medical teams, which may include pre-arranged appointments.
- Making presentations to doctors and pharmacists in the retail sector. Presentations may take place in medical settings during the day.
- Organising conferences for doctors and other medical staff.
- Building and maintaining positive working relationships with doctors, medical staff and supporting administrative staff.
- Keeping detailed records of all contacts.
- Reaching (and if possible exceeding) annual sales targets.
- Planning work schedules and weekly and monthly timetables. This may involve working with the area sales team or discussing future targets with the area sales manager. Generally, medical sales executives have their own regional area of responsibility and plan how and when to target health professions.
- Regularly attending company meetings, technical data presentations and briefings.
- Keeping up to date with the latest clinical data supplied by the company, and interpreting, presenting and discussing this data with health professionals during presentations.
- Monitoring competitor activity and competitors' products.
- Maintaining knowledge of new developments in the National Health Service (NHS), anticipating potential negative and positive impacts on the business and

adapting strategy accordingly.

- Developing strategies for increasing opportunities to meet and talk to contacts in the medical and healthcare sector.
- Staying informed about the activities of health services in a particular area.

All representatives tend to work in a 'territory'. A territory is your area, or it is you and your territory team area. As sometimes companies have double manned territories rather than single manned territories. The territory size, geography etc varies according to companies. The day to day work of the representative tends to be target based around, sales, call rates and other objectives set around individual personal development plans. These many duties have to be undertaken by them which need of lots of patience and commitment towards the accomplishment of targets in their territory or area.

Stress Means

According to Selye (1936) ^[8] "Stress is a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraints or demand related to what he/she may desire and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important" called stress. Persons face stress whenever there is lack of connectivity between the individual and organizational environment, the human potential and the quality, productivity, health, and morale of the employees reduced if organizational stress is not managed properly. The word "stress" is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as, "a state of affair involving demand on physical or mental energy". Another definition describes it as "a condition or circumstance (not always adverse), which can disturb the normal physiological and psychological functioning of an individual." Employee stress is the body's reaction to a change that requires a physical, mental or emotional adjustment or response. Stress can come from any state or situation or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, nervous, or anxious. Stress is caused by an existing stress-causing factor, known as "stressor." Cooper (1983) ^[4] has listed several sources of work stress including job conditions, role stress, interpersonal factors, career development, organizational structure and home-work interface.

Job Performance

The work related activities expected from an employee and how well those activities were performed. The behavioural aspect refers to what people do while at work, the action itself (Campbell, 1990) ^[3]. Employers assess the job performance of each employee on an annual or quarterly basis in order to help them to identify suggested areas for improvement.

Pressure to Work

Pressure at the workplace is inevitable because to the demands of the modern work environment. There is always pressure which is to be acceptable by an individual, may even keep workers alert, motivated, able to work and learn, depending on the available resources. Hence, when that pressure becomes excessive it leads to stress which can also be said as pressure at work. Stress can damage an employees' health, family relation and the performance in his/her job.

Work Backdrop

Karimnagar is a city in the state of Telangana, governed by a

Municipal Corporation. It is located on the banks of Manair River, a tributary of the Godavari River. As of 2010 it is the fourth most populous city in the Telangana region. There are various small scale industries in the district. Most of the industrial units are relate to agriculture, engineering, forest and mineral sectors and animal husbandry. These units are mostly of small scale and consist mostly of rice mills, saw mills, oil, dhal and other grain mills, and other agro-processing mills. The other non-agro industries relate to engineering, manufacture of paper and tiles, stone dressing and crushing, cement concrete pipes, repairing of motor vehicles etc.

The marketing related job is mostly connected with field work and had to deal with different psychology of customers. There is huge scope for the pharmaceutical industry market in karimnagar, on that basis plenty of job opportunity for marketing jobs are available. The employees of pharmaceutical industry are struggling for their better working environment in karimnagar because of high pressure from organisations. The medical representatives union is established before 30years in karimnagar city for the betterment of MRs working in the city. There is wide range of hospitals in the city with small, medium and super specialty levels with more than 200 in number, so around 350 MNC and Indian pharmaceutical companies want to capture the market of these hospitals and they insist the employees to grab market before their competitor. With this high competition the pressure increased on the marketing executives of pharmaceutical companies. With the establishment of union for MRs, 720 registered, they have got better environment to do work with limited timings in the city. With the union rules, competitor unethical practices are caught and stopped by the members. The union is established for protecting the rights of employees according to Sales Promotion Employees Act 1976, wages, employees' benefits, bonus, PF, leave policy and to go with HR policy of the companies, educate the fresher for handling work area troubles. The MRs apart from their duty, they look for social responsibility activities, they protest the decisions taken by government against the citizens of this country.

Review of Literature

Stress arises due to be poor coordination of person - environment fit. It further leads to reduce in quality, productivity, health as well as wellbeing and morale. According to Kahn and Quinn (1970) "occupational stress is the outcome of fact of the allocated work role that caused harmful effect for individual. It is considered as harmful factor of the work environment."

Beehr, Jex, Stacy and Murray (2000) analysed the relationship between job-stress and performance of employees. They found that job-stress has significant negative relationship with job performance.

Performance of an employee at his/her workplace is the amount of output from their work activities assigned. Consequently the employees are considered to be very important asset for their organizations. (Qureshi & Ramay, 2006) A good performance of the employees of an organization leads towards a good organizational performance thus ultimately making an organization more successful and effective and the vice versa (Armstrong, 2009) ^[1]. The problems arise for the organizations when they start

perceiving that their organizations are already performing at their level best and with great efficiency furthermore, there is no need for further improvement in their organizations (Summers & Hyman, 2005) [9].

Rakesh (2012) tried to find out the relationship between organisational role stress and social support of individual employees. The study concluded that there was a positive and significant correlation between organizational role stress and social support of industrial employees analysed. Social support helps the employees' relations and performance well in their job.

Statement of the Problem

A large number of youngsters are joining in Pharmaceutical industry as marketing executives to create an identity for their professional life, majority of the executives are affected by life-cycle problems. In Pharmaceutical industry, career development takes place through hard work, training, application and continuity in learning. The industry requires long hours of continuous work and follow up for accomplishment of the goals. Stress and commitment for work is, therefore, inevitable and cannot be avoided as uncertainties and unexpected changes keep occurring in the environment.

Objectives of the Study

- To analyze the relation of stress, performance and pressure with demographic variables.
- To analyze the relation between stress, performance and pressure.

Methodology

The study is aimed at determining the level of stress of employees working as medical representatives in Karimnagar. It is expected to throw focus on issues such as their perceived stress, job performance and pressure to produce. For this

purpose, a questionnaire was made and circulated at random among 95 employees of marketing executives of pharmaceutical industry in the Karimnagar town. Only, 73 employees have returned the filled questionnaires. The response rate is 76.84%.

Instrument

Perceived Stress Scale Sheldon Cohen Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) is the most widely used psychometric instrument for measuring the perception of stress. It is a measure of the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as stressful. Items were designed to tap how unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded respondents find their lives. The scale also includes a number of direct queries about current levels of experienced stress. The questions in the PSS ask about feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, respondents are asked how often they felt a certain way. The sample items include: 1. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life? 2. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and "stressed"?

Job Performance Scale Porter and Lawler's Job Performance scale was used for self-reporting the respondent's job performance. It consisted of items like: 1.The quality of my job performance is high; 2.My productivity on the job is high. Pressure to Produce Scale The scale of Patterson *et al.* to measure to pressure to produce was used. It consisted of items like: 1.My immediate supervisor requires people to work extremely hard; 2. People here are under pressure to meet targets.

Procedure

The questionnaire was given to each participant, who was requested to fill up and return the same. It was made sure that they read and answer each question carefully rather than giving stereotyped answers.

Results and Discussion

Table 1

Correlation Matrix		Education	Experience	Salary	JOB fits into the overall objective	career a success	life a success	training period	Perceived Stress	Job Performance	Pressure to Produce
Education	Pearson Correlation	1	-.337**	-0.107	0.121	-0.188	-0.158	0.069	-0.033	0.135	0.014
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.004	0.366	0.307	0.112	0.183	0.563	0.783	0.253	0.905
Experience	Pearson Correlation	-.337**	1	.506**	-0.106	-0.012	-0.119	.237*	-0.134	-0.022	0.036
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.004		0.000	0.374	0.921	0.315	0.043	0.258	0.854	0.764
Salary	Pearson Correlation	-0.107	.506**	1	-0.043	-0.200	-0.113	.388**	-0.044	-0.031	-0.159
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.366	0.000		0.716	0.089	0.341	0.001	0.712	0.797	0.178
JOB fits into the overall objective	Pearson Correlation	0.121	-0.106	-0.043	1	.305**	.305**	-0.053	0.097	-.290*	-0.116
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.307	0.374	0.716		0.009	0.009	0.655	0.413	0.013	0.328
career a success	Pearson Correlation	-0.188	-0.012	-0.200	.305**	1	.746**	-0.016	.260*	-0.175	.317**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.112	0.921	0.089	0.009		0.000	0.892	0.027	0.138	0.006
life a success	Pearson Correlation	-0.158	-0.119	-0.113	.305**	.746**	1	0.079	.425**	-0.221	0.145
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.183	0.315	0.341	0.009	0.000		0.509	0.000	0.061	0.220
training period	Pearson Correlation	0.069	.237*	.388**	-0.053	-0.016	0.079	1	-0.043	0.041	-0.002
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.563	0.043	0.001	0.655	0.892	0.509		0.720	0.731	0.989
Perceived Stress	Pearson Correlation	-0.033	-0.134	-0.044	0.097	.260*	.425**	-0.043	1	-0.221	-0.145
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.783	0.258	0.712	0.413	0.027	0.000	0.720		0.060	0.220
Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.135	-0.022	-0.031	-.290*	-0.175	-0.221	0.041	-0.221	1	.319**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.253	0.854	0.797	0.013	0.138	0.061	0.731	0.060		0.006
Pressure To Produce	Pearson Correlation	0.014	0.036	-0.159	-0.116	.317**	0.145	-0.002	-0.145	.319**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.905	0.764	0.178	0.328	0.006	0.220	0.989	0.220	0.006	

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

Some important findings from correlation analysis

1. Career success correlates with job fits into the overall objective of the organization ($r = 0.305$). That shows the career success of the employees have strong bond up with their awareness of the job activities and their contribution for the organizational objectives. The employee self-motivate himself when he realize his job performance.
2. Life success is correlated with job fits into the overall objective of the organization ($r = 0.305$) and career success ($r = 0.746$). Here an employee life success is majorly depends on his career success, as career grows he can lead a good life and of course it is in relation with the clarity of the organizational goals.
3. Training period moderately correlates with experience ($r = 0.237$). as the experience increase the training period of the employees is increased slightly to get success in their career, because their work area increased which demands for additional training.
4. Perceived stress moderately correlated with career success ($r = 0.260$) and correlates with life success ($r = 0.425$). The study reveals that there is a slight correlation between the stress employees perceived with their career and life success. Medical representative employees' success increases the responsibility and pressure to perform the work.
5. Job performance moderately correlated with jobs fit into the overall objective of organization ($r = 0.290$). This shows the employee performance is related with the awareness of their job activities for the organization.
6. Pressure to produce correlated with career success ($r = 0.317$) and job performance ($r = 0.319$). Pressure here on the job is correlated with the performance, because little pressure will encourage the employees to work more with the managing and controlling the consequences of pressure.

Conclusion

It is evident from the study that the medical representatives of karimnagar district are able to manage the Stress and Pressure at work place and capable to reach their work goals by performing job activities better. This coping environment is created by their union, it also encourage the employees to get success in their work performance and to contribute some for the society through social responsibility activities. This makes their career as well as life in success.

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