INTRODUCTION TO WORK PSYCHOLOGY

Understanding Basic Human Behaviors at Work

One of the earliest studies of human behavior at work was done at AT&T's Western Electric Hawthorne Plant in 1927 by Harvard's Elton Mayo and published in a widely influential report ON Management and the Worker.

Their principle findings are still relevant today: when workers have an opportunity to contribute their thinking and learning to workplace issues, their job performance improves. The initial study set out to discover how lighting affects performance and fatigue of workers. The findings revealed that it is not so much physical conditions that matter. People were motivated to perform well by the mere fact that someone took the time to pay attention to what they were doing. They were also encouraged to interact socially and to contribute ideas. Their social needs were shown to have a powerful impact on their behavior at work.

Several of the current top business books emphasize this same concept.

"The success of your organization doesn't depend on your understanding of economics, or organizational development, or marketing. It depends, quite simply, on your understanding of human psychology: how each individual employee connects with your company and how each individual employee connects with your customers.

Subsequent research in the over seventy years that have passed since the Hawthorne study continues to reveal much the same thing: in order to tap into the potential of human capital, executives and leaders must pay attention to their employees, on a level that respects their basic human nature and individual differences.

Yet a growing number of executives intuitively know what research reveals: most organizations are running at about one third of their human potential. As one CEO puts it, "In today's business world there are really only two important challenges: One is to reduce costs and cut prices. The other is to grow margins by acquiring and sustaining profitable customers. I can't do that. My employees must do it, one customer at a time."

Companies on the path of extreme competition must be able to provide more than price advantage**.** In order to do so, organizations must tap into employee motivation and discover what drives them. When they do, they unleash tremendous energy and potential.

What Are the Basics of Human Motivation?

What many organizations don't see is that employee performance and its subsequent impact on customer engagement revolve around motivation determined in the brain. This motivation defines specific talents and the emotional mechanisms everyone brings to work. Recent discoveries in neurosciences support the fact that emotional processes are integral to learning, reasoning and decision-making. How can leaders improve their understanding of their employees' strengths and motivating drives?

Several theories of human nature provide perspectives for understanding basic human drives. A review of these will remind leaders of how important it is to understand how employees behave at work and how they are motivated. However, a note of caution: While assessment tools will categorize and simplify human behavior, they cannot fully represent a person's complexity. Each theory and its measurement merely provide a basic framework. Theories

and assessment profiles are helpful in understanding how and why humans behave. Attention and respect must always be paid to individual differences.

Employees are not the same, and in order to gain greater understanding of an individual's strengths and values, it is necessary to look at certain categories or classifications of personalities, styles, preferences and interests

Carl Jung said that people either derive energy from relating to others or from internal thoughts. They also tend to gather information in different ways, either by focusing on data, or by intuitively seeing the big picture. They express themselves in different ways, either with a focus on rational thinking, or on feelings and values. And they also have tendencies to make decisions rapidly with planning and organization, or to be more spontaneous and pressure-prompted.

A trait is a temporally stable, cross-situational individual difference. Currently the most popular approach among psychologists for studying personality traits is the five-factor model or "Big Five" dimensions of personality. According to statistical factor analysis, there is much evidence that there are five basic personality traits. Researchers generally agree that the following descriptions define the factors:

• **Emotional stability (also called Neuroticism):** The degree to which an individual is calm, self confident, and cool versus insecure, anxious, depressed and emotional
• **Extraversion:** The extent to which an individual is out going, assertive and positively interactive with others, instead of reserved and quiet
• **Openness:** Defines individuals who are creative, curious and cultured, versus practical with narrow interests (some call this a **Culture**dimension)
• **Agreeableness:** Concerns the degree to which individuals are cooperative, warm and agreeable versus argumentative, cold, and antagonistic
• **Conscientiousness:** The extent to which individuals are hard working and organized, dependable and persevering versus lazy, disorganized and unreliable

Four basic behavior preferences:
1. **Dominance:** Response to problems and challenges
2. **Influencing:** Ability to influence others to personal point of view
3. **Steadiness:** Response to the pace of the environment
4. **Compliance:** Response to rules and procedures set by others

The general meaning is that people will demonstrate by their behaviors a natural tendency to be high or low on each of the four dimensions. A person high on the D factor is usually task oriented, competitive and a risk taker. A high I rating indicates a "people-person," who enjoys interacting and developing relationships. A high S means a person is reliable, organized and conscientious, albeit non-demonstrative. A high C refers to a person who is compliant and who is concerned with rules and paper work. The implications for job placement are obvious.

Assessment tecknique frequently used is that defines personal interests, attitudes and values based on work of psychologist, Eduard Spranger, rates a person's degree of interest in six domains:
1 **Utilitarian:** Usefulness and efficiency of activities, including economy of time and resources
2 **Aesthetic:** Beauty and harmony in the environment
3 **Theoretical:** Learning, with a high regard for knowledge and research

4 **Individualistic:** Influencing others, and having power

5 **Social:** The good of mankind, justice and fairness for all

6 **Traditional:** A social system, which could be religious, political or philosophical

According to this theory, each person holds these interests in a hierarchical manner, and will seek to satisfy their first and second interests in all of their activities, including at work. The implications are important for job placement, as well as for job enrichment.

Abraham Maslow believed that satisfying physiological and safety needs alone is not enough to motivate a person. Once these needs have been met, there are others waiting to take their place. In Maslow's Hierarchy, a person progressively seeks to satisfy more sophisticated needs:

Self-Actualization
Ego
Social Needs
Safety Needs
Physiological Needs

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Physiological Needs: Basic physical needs such as the ability to acquire food, shelter, clothing, sex and other survival needs
Safety Needs: A safe and non-threatening work environment, job security, safe equipment and installations
Social Needs: Contact and friendship with fellow-workers, social activities and opportunities
Ego: Recognition, acknowledgment, rewards
Self-Actualization: Realizing one's dreams, using one's gifts, talents and potential.

Money doesn't really motivate people, but if inadequate, will cause dissatisfaction. People are motivated by interesting work, an opportunity to contribute and be heard, and appropriate recognition. Job enrichment is created by giving employees responsibility and participation in decision-making.

Three basic motivators
1. The drive to **achieve**
2. The drive for **power**
3. The drive to **affiliate** with others.

The key issue here is the way a manager defines success, i.e. what motivates the manager. in order to succeed in a complex organization, a manager needs to have a power motivation that is not a dictatorial impulse but a desire to have a strong impact and to be influential.
The human potential that can be unleashed in the work place is enhanced by teams working together with opportunities to contribute, participate in decisions and have social interactions.

PSYCHOLOGY AT WORK

The branch of psychological discipline that deals with people at work. It is also called industrial, occupational or organizational psychology.

The majority of adults spend much of their life at work and they are affected by its multiple and sometimes conflicting ways.

People work in many different settings. The focus here is upon paid work although many of the issues apply to non-paid activities in housework, voluntary work and do- it- yourself work.

Work is usually defined to indicate that it is an activity directed to valued goals beyond enjoyment of the activity itself. That does not mean that work cannot be enjoyed, merely that enjoyment is not the primary goal. Definitions of work often suggest that work is required and that it involves the expenditure of effort.

DEFINITION

1-The scientific study of the relationship between employee and the work setting. The study of the adjustment people make to the places they work,to the people they meet and the things they do in the process of making a living.

2-Psychology at work settings may be described in board terms as the study of employees' **well- being, behavior and attitudes in the job-related context** .The concern is mainly for psychological rather than physical well-being. Study of people's feelings about themselves in relation to their job.

DUTIES OF WORK PSYCHOLOGIST

Work psychologists are researchers who study all aspects of the relationship between people and their workplace. Their interest is mainly on

1-How work can be made more satisfying and productive

2-Aspects of behavior that relate to the workplace

3-Couses of the problems that result in lower performance or morale in workers and design programs to eliminate these problems.

4-Create employee training programs, counseling employees.

5-Set up systems for evaluating job performance.

6-Finding ways to help workers deal with the work stress, especially women in handling their dual responsibilities of home-work.

FIELDS OF WORK PSYCHOLOGY

1-Personnel psychology:

It is concerned with all aspects of applied individual differences. Personnel psychologist determine what human skills and talents are needed for certain jobs, how to assess potential employees, how to grade employees job performance and how to train workers to improve job performance.

2-Organizational behavior:

This area focuses on such factors as role-related behavior, pressures that groups can impose on individuals, personal feelings of commitment towards organization and pattern of communications within the organization.

3-Engineering Psychology:

It is concerned with the understanding of human performance of person-machine systems, including the design of equipment and machinery to enhance workers productivity and safety. Most tools, equipment and machines are designed for human to operate. It tries to modify the work environment to be compatible with human skills and talents.

4-Vocational and career counseling:

The counseling applies to people's problems at work. Industrial oriented counselors help employees choose a rewarding and satisfying career path, resolve conflict between work and interests and non-work interests, adjusting to changing career interests and prepare for retirement.

5-Organization development:

Psychologists in this are concerned with improving or changing organizations to make them more efficient. They must also be able to diagnose an organizational problem recommend or enact changes and assess the effectiveness of the changes.

6-Industrial relations:

It deals with problems between employees and employers and usually involves a union. Industrial psychologist interested in industrial relation and addresses such issues as cooperation and conflict between work parties, resolution of disputes in the work force and bargaining or negotiating agreement between various segments of the work force.

WELL_BEING, BEHAVIOUR, ATTITUDES

Three principal outcomes that have been studies by psychologists in work settings are people's well being, their behavior and their attitude. Different aspects of these 3 outcomes are examined and interrelationship between the three will be explored for better work performance.

NATURE OF WELL-BEING

Concern of work psychologist is mainly for psychological well-being rather than physical well-being. The concept of well- being is sometime called 'affective' well-being to emphasize the centrality of feelings.

The more restricted concern is 'job-related' or 'job-specific' well-being, people's feelings about themselves in relation to their job. The psychological well-being mainly depends on:

1-Job Satisfaction:

Job satisfaction means the overall job satisfaction, the extent to which a person is satisfied with his or her work as a whole. Satisfaction concern different aspects of the job, such as

a) Satisfaction with pay

b) Satisfaction with colleagues

c) Satisfaction with supervisors

d) Satisfaction working conditions

e) Job security

f) Promotion prospects

g) Training opportunities

h) Nature of work performed.

AXES OF WELL_BEING
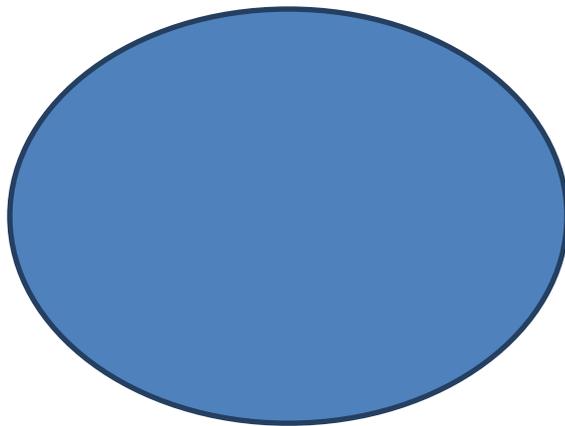
2-Job strain

It is the combination of 2 negative forms of well-being.

A specific form of strain is job-related burnout. This is typically viewed as an adverse reaction by workers in close relations with clients and in helping professions. Burnout contains 3 job related dimensions. 1-emotional exhaustion, 2-depersonalization (feeling distant from others) 3-reduced personal accomplishment.

Psychosomatic symptoms of strain are reported as sleeplessness, headaches, anxiety and physiological variables such as heart rate, blood pressure and digestion problems.

Well being and job characteristics

Investigates link between aspects of a person's work environment and psychological well-being.

1-Opportunity for personal control: Employee discretion, decision latitude, autonomy, absence of close supervision, self-determination, participation in decision making and freedom of choice.

WORK BEHAVIOURS

The second outcome variable of interest to psychologists is work behavior. A significant association is found between work behavior and psychological well-being.

5 aspects to be considered are

1-Performance in a job

2-Discretionary activities

3-Spesific skills

4-Absence from work

5-Staff turnover

<u>1-Job performance</u>

The term 'performance' is different from 'behavior'. Performance usually implies some evaluation of what is done. People behave in many different ways in the course of their work, but only few activities or actions are evaluated as desirable aspects of performance. Nevertheless the measurement of job performance is not easy. Although effectiveness in single tasks may be examined through specific activities in terms of quantity of production or service, in cases that in jobs which have no quantifiable output but multiple output, other means of measuring the performance must be used. The method of rating specific key behaviors is employed in such cases. Key behaviors or sometime called 'competencies' are described as desirable behaviors in a particular job. For instance managers' competencies might be assessed through their supervisors to the extent to which they exhibit behaviors that are innovative, demonstrate technical expertise, cope with pressure, control costs, define and organize team work and objectives and so on. Job performance is thus studied in terms of several different dimensions, often rated by a person's supervisor.

Supervisors' judgments are likely to be influenced by a range of factors and are far from being perfect. Ratings made by different supervisor and agreement between judgments brings reliability to the outcome.

A association was found between feeling of job-specific anxiety and job performance. Employees who report more job anxiety are experiencing difficulty in coping with the job demands and thus perform relatively less effectively.

It is apparent that employees with positive job-related feeling will be among the more productive. See axis of well-being. (Enthusiasm).

<u>2- Discretionary Activities</u>

Some work behaviors are discretionary, rather than being practiced as requirements. It might be expected that employee well-being will be particularly associated with those voluntary behaviors, rather than with activities demanded by a role or by technological

constrained.

One form of discretionary behavior is seen in *voluntary overtime*. Many jobs offer the possibility to undertake some unpaid work outside the required hours. Employees' job specific well-being is predictive of such behavior. It was found that overall job satisfaction correlated with the amount of additional unpaid time devoted to work-related activities.

Another kind of discretionary activity at work, referred as *organizational citizenship behavior,* include activities providing assistance to colleagues, volunteering to undertake needed tasks and making suggestions to improve effectiveness.

3-Specific Skills

Among behaviors of interest to psychologists are those that depend on prior learning. Such activities are referred to as *skills* and viewed in terms of expertise, wisdom or habitual routines. They are found both in cognitive processing and in physical-motor activities.

Skilled performers usually have more substantial knowledge than others but difference is not merely one of quantity. It is an issue of *declarative and procedural* knowledge.

In the first case, a person acquires information about individual facts and their relationships. During subsequent learning this declarative knowledge is converted into a set of behavioral or cognitive routines through which it is applied in dealing with the environment. These routines gradually become collapsed into longer sequences of actions or thoughts, which the person can execute as a whole.

Skilled behavior thus gets automatizised as people move from controlled, effortful thinking to the execution of smooth routines Those routines are often not under direct control once initiated, and they are free from mental resources (*procedural* knowledge) and permit simultaneous processing of information. It allows room for more rapidly process for new material within established knowledge structure.

4-Absence from Work

Another employee behavior is *absenteeism* (attendance at work). In addition to sickness, social and family pressures can affect decisions to attend.

Although employee well-being at work is expected to be linked with absenteeism, other factors also have an impact. Absenteeism is measured in two different ways. Time-lost index and frequency index.

Time-lost index is the total duration of absence during a specific period. Involuntary responses like sickness

Frequency index is the number of separate incidents of absence in a specific period, regardless of their duration. Voluntary choices to take time off work for brief periods like a single day or three-months absence.

EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES

In addition to employee well-being and behavior, the third main outcome variable is attitudinal. Many studies have explained the environmental and personal factors that influence the attitude of people at work. Attitudes are evaluative tendencies (favorable or unfavorable) towards a person, group, thing, event or process. An attitude towards a particular object is thus a bias, relatively abstract values like racial equality, pollution, national identity predisposing a person towards evaluating responses that are positive or negative.

These evaluative tendencies are viewed as having 3 aspects. Cognitive, affective and behavioral.

a)   Cognitive: An attitude contains positive or negative beliefs about the object.
b)   Affective: Consists of feelings, moods and emotions experienced in relation to the attitude object.
c)   Behavioral: Responses exhibited in actions in relation to the object.

SHIFTWORK

Body Rhythm and Social Factors

Human kind has evolved as a diurnal species, one that is habitually active during daylight hours and sleep at night. Since the industrial Revolution, an increasing proportion of our workforce has attempted to overcome this natural bias and work at nights. This can result in a number of problems both for individuals concerned and for the organizations employing them. The concept underlying 'body clock', the characteristics of this clock and the problems associated with it are attempted to solve by the psychologists.

BODY CLOCK

Evolution in a Rhythmic World

The rotation of the earth on its own axis results in 24 hour light/dark cycle, while its rotation around the sun gives rise to seasonal changes in light and temperature. The combined influence of the moon and the sun lead to variations in gravitational pull on the earth's surface that are reflected in complex but predictable tidal movements of the sea approximately every 12.4 and 24.8 hours.

During the process of evolutions, these periodic changes have become internalized and it is now widely accepted that living organisms possess a 'body clock' as adaptive value for most species.

Circadian Rhythms and the internal Body Clock

Environmental events are mediated by regular cyclic changes in body processes. In humans, the most pronounced cycle is the 24 hour 'circadian' rhythms. The most important characteristics of these rhythms are:

A) Their period, which is the time taken for one complete cycle of the rhythm- normally 24 hours-

B) Their phase, which is a measure of their timing with respect to some external criterion such as clock time

C) Their amplitude, which is usually measured as the difference between the maximum value and the average value over a complete cycle.

The best evidence that human circadian rhythms are controlled by an internal or endogenous body clock comes from studies in which people have been isolated from their normal environmental cues (day-night). One of the best known studies carried by Siffre in 1964 , he removed individuals into an underground cave for two months and people continued to wake up and go to sleep on a regular basis, but instead of doing so every 24 hours, they did it every 25 hours.

However about third of the people who have been studied in this way have shown a rather different pattern of results that has important implications. In these cases, the sleep/wake cycle and the body temperature rhythms have become 'spontaneously internally desynchronized' meaning that the temperature rhythm continues to run with an average period of 25hours, while the sleep/wake cycle shows either a much shorter or a much longer period than 24 hours. (Especially with elder people)

Adjustment to Shift work

Instability in the human circadian system can pose problems if a mismatch arises between our internal timing system and our external time cues. The simplest example of this occurs when people fly across time zones. (Jet-lag)

This difference in time has implications on people working on shift system. When shift workers go on the night shift, most environmental zeitgerbers remain constant and discourage adjustment of the circadian system. The natural light/ dark cycle, the clock time and most social cues do not change while the timing of shift workers' work can be delayed by up to 16 hrs and that their sleep by up to 12 hrs. It is clear that the adjustment of a shift worker's body clock to these changes is very slow, if it occurs at all.

There is no doubt that shift work can result in a variety of problems for the individual worker. These range from difficulties with sleep that depend on disturbed circadian timing system, impair health and social life. These problems are often reflected in general feelings of dissatisfaction for both the individual and the employer.

Social/Domestic Factors

Family: Shift workers experience more family-related problems than do daytime employees because of the lack of synchrony between their hours on the job and their families' daily routines. The most serious family disturbance is that many people who work evenings and nights are less able to spend time with their children, especially small children who go to bed early, than are employees who work during the day." The time shift workers have to spend with their spouses can also be severely curtailed by hours of work, because a shift worker's wife or husband who works during the day or not at all is often awake at precisely those times when the shift worker must sleep. Spouses who wish to spend time with a mate who works during the evening or night usually have to alter their patterns of sleep, mealtime, and recreation to accommodate the shift worker's atypical schedule. The time that shift workers spend with their families may prove less satisfying than it could be because the worker's fatigue from poor sleep or lack of sleep can prevent normal social activity . Families may have difficulty just keeping track of the schedule of a shift worker in the family and knowing when the worker will be available for meals, social activities, or special events . Many wives of shift workers have also reported being frightened staying home alone

at night without a man available to afford a feeling of protection . Sexual activity is still another aspect of family life that is sometimes disrupted by shift work.

Social life. Evening and night work does not appear to interfere significantly with how often shift workers visit friends, but it does deprive at least some shift workers of extensive friendships.

Zeitgeber

Circadian rhythms are kept in sync by "zeitgebers" a word that means "time givers."

For example, one zeitgeber is light/dark which causes us to generally want to sleep at night and wake up in the day.

Sleep times, mealtimes, exercise, and social stimulation, are all zeitgebers that help us keep in good rhythms/harmony.

Different clocks are sensitive to different zeitgebers. For example, the circadian clock in the liver is particularity sensitive to mealtimes. Clocks in the muscles are sensitive to exercise.

Shift work disrupts our zeitgebers our rhythms can become disrupted.

1. People's biological rhythms get disrupted
2. The disruption in their rhythms disrupts their life and behavior, which
3. Further disrupts their rhythms and makes it harder to get back to equilibrium.

OCCUPATIONAL /WORK RELATED STRESS

It is stress related to one's job

Work-related stress is the response people may have when presented with work demands unexpected responsibilities, and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge, skills, expectations and abilities and which challenge and usually inhibit their ability to cope.

Pressure at the workplace is unavoidable due to the demands of the contemporary work environment. Pressure perceived as acceptable by an individual, may even keep workers alert, motivated, able to work and learn, depending on the available resources and personal characteristics. However, when that pressure becomes excessive or otherwise unmanageable it leads to stress. Stress can damage an employees' well-being psychologically and physiologically and the business performance.

Sources of occupational stress come from

- A toxic work environment
- Negative workload
- Isolation
- Types of hours worked
- Role conflict & role ambiguity
- Lack of autonomy, career development barriers
- Difficult relationships with administrators and/or coworkers
- Managerial bullying
- Harassment,
- Organizational climate.

STRESS RELATED HAZARDS

Stress related hazards at work can be divided into two;

Work contents includes -

1- Job content (monotony, under-stimulation, meaningless of tasks, lack of variety, etc)
2- Work load and work pace (too much or too little to do, work under time pressure, etc.)
3- Working hours (strict or inflexible, long and unsocial, unpredictable, badly designed shift systems)
4- Participation and control (lack of participation in decision-making, lack of control over work processes, pace, hours, methods, and the work environment)

Work context includes –

1. Career development, status and pay (job insecurity, lack of promotion opportunities, under- or over-promotion, work of 'low social value', piece rate payment schemes,

unclear or unfair performance evaluation systems, being over- or under-skilled for a job)
2. Role in the organization (unclear role, conflicting roles)
3. Interpersonal relationships (inadequate, inconsiderate or unsupportive supervision, poor relationships with colleagues, bullying/harassment and violence, isolated or solitary work, etc)
4. Organizational culture (poor communication, poor leadership, lack of behavioural rule, lack of clarity about organizational objectives, structures and strategies)
5. Work-life balance (conflicting demands of work and home, lack of support for domestic problems at work, lack of support for work problems at home, lack of organizational rules and policies to support work-life balance)

Recognition and respect at work: a fundamental human need

Being respected and appreciated by significant others is one of the most fundamental human needs. Consequently, people go to great pain to gain acceptance and approval. Recent research in the domain of occupational health psychology shows that many stressful experiences are linked to being offended – for instance, by being offended or ridiculed, by social exclusion, by social conflict, by illegitimate tasks. On the other hand, being appreciated is one of the most important factors that increases motivation and satisfaction as well as health and well-being.

MODELS OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Because stress results from the complex interactions between a large system of interrelated variables, there are several psychological theories and models that address occupational stress.

1-Person Environment Fit Model: This model "suggests that the match between a person and their work environment is the key in influencing their health. For healthy conditions, it is necessary that employees' attitudes, skills, abilities and resources match the demands of their job, and that work environments should meet workers' needs, knowledge, and skills potential. Lack of fit in either of these domains can cause problems, and the greater the gap or misfit (either subjective or objective) between the person and their environment, the greater the strain as demands exceed abilities, and need exceeds supply. These strains can relate to health related issues, lower productivity, and other work problems.

2-Job Characteristics Model: This model "focuses on important aspects of job characteristics, such as skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. These characteristics are proposed to lead to 'critical psychological states' of experienced meaningfulness, and experienced responsibility and knowledge of outcomes. It is proposed that positive or negative work characteristics give rise to mental states which lead to corresponding cognitive and behavioral outcomes, e.g. motivation, satisfaction, absenteeism, etc.

3-Diathesis-Stress Model: This model looks at behaviors as a susceptibility burden together with stress from life experiences. It is useful to distinguish stressful job conditions or stressors from an individual's reactions or strains. Strains can be mental, physical or emotional. Occupational stress can occur when there is a discrepancy between the demands of the environment/workplace and an individual's ability to carry out and complete these demands. Often a stressor can lead the body to have a physiological reaction that can strain a person physically as well as mentally. A variety of factors contribute to workplace stress (sources of stress).

NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF STRESS

Stress-related disorders encompass a broad array of conditions like

a) Psychological disorders (e.g., depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder)
b) Emotional strain (e.g., dissatisfaction, fatigue, tension, etc.)
c) Maladaptive behaviors (e.g., aggression, substance abuse),
d) Cognitive impairment (e.g., concentration and memory problems).   These conditions may lead to poor work performance, higher absenteeism, less work productivity or even injury. If untreated, consistently high stress can become a chronic condition, which can increase the intensity of existing mental health conditions and chronic physical conditions (heart attacks, diabetes, hypertension, weak immune system). These conditions not only diminish the well-being of workers and increase the employer's health benefits expenses; they contribute to increased injury incidence. Consistently high levels of stress increase the risk of occupational injury.

STRESS AND :……1……/……7……………..

1-WORKLOAD: In an occupational setting, dealing with workload can be stressful and serve as a STRESSOR for employees. There are three aspects of workload that can be stressful.

- **Quantitative workload or overload:** Having more work to do than can be accomplished comfortably.
- **Qualitative workload:** Having work that is too difficult.
- **Underload:** Having work that fails to use a worker's skills and abilities.

2-LONG HOURS: A substantial percentage of Americans work very long hours. More than 26% of men and more than 11% of women worked 50 hours per week or more. These figures represent a considerable increase over the previous three decades, especially for women. An increase in extended work weeks (>40 hours) by men, and a considerable increase in combined working hours among working couples, particularly couples with young children.

3-STATUS: A person's status in the workplace can also affect levels of stress. While workplace stress has the potential to affect employees of all categories; those who have very little influence to those who make major decisions for the company. However, less powerful employees (that is, those who have less control over their jobs) are more likely to suffer stress than powerful workers. Managers as well as other kinds of workers are vulnerable to work overload.

4-ECONOMIC FACTORS: Economic factors that employees are facing in the 21st century have been linked to increased stress levels. Researchers and sociologists have pointed out that the computer and communications revolutions have made companies more efficient and productive than ever before. This boon in productivity however, has caused higher expectations and greater competition, putting more stress on the employee.

The following economic factors may lead to workplace stress:

- Pressure from investors, who can quickly withdraw their money from company stocks.
- The lack of trade and professional unions in the workplace.
- Inter-company rivalries caused by the efforts of companies to compete globally
- The willingness of companies to swiftly lay off workers to cope with changing business environments.

5-BULLYING: Bullying in the workplace can also contribute to stress. This can be broken down into five different categories:

- Threat to profession status
- Threat to personal status
- Isolation
- Excess work
- Destabilization i.e. lack of credit for work, meaningless tasks etc.

This in effect can create a hostile work environment for the employees that, which in turn, can affect their work ethic and contribution to the organization.

6-CONFLICT: Interpersonal conflict among people at work has been shown to be one of the most frequently noted stressors for employees Conflict has been noted to be an indicator of the broader concept of workplace harassment. It relates to other stressors that might co-occur, such as role conflict, role ambiguity, and workload. It also relates to strains such as anxiety, depression, physical symptoms, and low levels of job satisfaction.

7-SEXUAL HARASSMENT: Women are more likely than men to experience sexual harassment, especially for those working in traditionally masculine occupations. In addition, a study indicated that sexual harassment negatively affects workers' psychological well-being. Another study found that level of harassment at workplaces lead to differences in performance of work related tasks. Women who had experienced a higher level of harassment were more likely to perform poorly at workplaces.

PREVENTION OF WORK RELATED STRESS

A combination of organizational change and stress management is often the most useful approach for preventing stress at work. Both organizations and employees can employ strategies at organizational and individual levels. Generally, organizational level strategies include job procedure modification and employee assistance programs (EAP). Individual level strategies include taking vacation. Getting a realistic job preview to understand the normal workload and schedules of the job will also help people to identify whether or not the job fit them.

How an Organization Can Prevent Job Stress

- Ensure that the workload is in line with workers' capabilities and resources.
- Design jobs to provide meaning, stimulation, and opportunities for workers to use their skills.
- Clearly define workers' roles and responsibilities.
- Monitor the workload given out to the employees.
- Give workers opportunities to participate in decisions and actions affecting their jobs.

OCCUPATIONAL BURNOUT

The psychological concept of burnout refers to long-term exhaustion from, and diminished interest in, the work we do. Many people start their working lives full of energy and enthusiasm, but far fewer are able to maintain that level of engagement.

Burnout is a type of psychological stress. **Occupational burnout** or **job burnout** is characterized by exhaustion, lack of enthusiasm and motivation, feelings of ineffectiveness, and also may have the dimension of frustration or cynicism, and as a result reduced efficacy within the workplace.

Occupational burnout is typically and particularly found within human service professions. Professions with high levels of burnout include social workers, nurses, teachers, lawyers, engineers, physicians, customer service representatives, and police officers. One reason why burnout is so prevalent within the human services field is due in part, to the high stress work environment and emotional demands of the job.

DIAGNOSIS

Burnout is not recognized as a distinct disorder in the DSM-5. However, it is included in the ICD-10, and can be found under problems related to life-management difficulty.

Social psychologists Christina Maslach and Susan Jackson developed the most widely used instrument for assessing burnout, namely, the Maslach Burnout Inventory. The Maslach Burnout Inventory operationalizes burnout as a three-dimensional syndrome made up of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy. Exhaustion is viewed as the hallmark symptom.

Evidence suggests that burnout is clinically similar to depression. In a study that directly compared depressive symptoms in burned out workers and clinically depressed patients, no diagnostically significant differences were found between the two groups; burned out workers reported as many depressive symptoms as clinically depressed patients. A study by Bianchi, Schonfeld, and Laurent (2014) showed that about 90% of burned out workers meet diagnostic criteria for depression, suggesting that burnout may be a depressive syndrome rather than a distinct disorder.

RAS (responder apathy syndrome)

The term "responder apathy syndrome" (RAS) refers to a controversial psychological diagnosis connected to occupational burnout that is not recognized by most physicians or psychologists. Originally developed to explain the apathy seen in paramedics and firefighters toward those calling for their help, the definition has generally been expanded to include nurses, and other health care workers involved in direct patient care. Generally diagnosticians term the symptoms as generalized burnout and ignore the occupation specific burnout termed RAS.

Apathy: Lack of interest, concern or emotions.

TYPES OF STRESS

ACUTE STRESS

Acute stress is the most common form of stress among humans worldwide. Acute stress deals with the pressures of the near future or dealing with the very recent past. This type of stress is often misinterpreted for being a negative connotation.

While this is the case in some circumstances, it is also a good thing to have some acute stress in life. Running or any other
form of exercise is considered an acute stressor. Some exciting or exhilarating experiences such as riding a roller coaster is an acute stress but is usually very enjoyable. Acute stress is a short term stress and as a result, does not have enough time to do the damage that long term stress causes.

CHRONIC STRESS

Chronic stress is unlike acute stress. It has a wearing effect on people that can become a very serious health risk if it continues over a long period of time. Chronic stress can lead to memory loss, damage recognition and produce a decreased drive of eating. The severity varies from person to person and also sex difference can be an underlying factor. Women are able to take longer durations of stress than men without showing the same maladaptive changes. Men can deal with shorter stress duration better than women can but once males hit a certain threshold, the chances of them developing mental issues increases drastically.

CAUSES and STRESSORS

Evidence suggests that burnout's etiology is multifactorial in nature, with dispositional factors playing an important role. One cause of burnout includes stressors that a person is unable to cope with fully. Occupational burnout often develops slowly and may not be recognized until it has become severe. When one's expectations about a job and its reality differ, burnout can begin. One individual can experience few stressors, but be unable to handle the pressure well and thus experience burnout. Another person, however, can experience a far greater number of stressors, but effectively deal with them, and avoid burnout. How close someone is to a state of burnout can be determined through various tests.

Burnout is becoming a more common result as the modern workplace changes both economically and psychologically exhausting, the increasingly hostile and demanding environments in which employees work is being the cause. Its occurrence is more likely when a mismatch is present between the nature of the job and the person doing the job. A common indication of this mismatch is work overload. It involves doing too much with too few resources, going beyond human limits.

Burnout is supposed to be a work-specific syndrome. However, this restrictive view of burnout's scope has been shown to be groundless.

STRESSORS:

- The way employees are treated by their bosses/supervisors or company
- Lack of job security
- Company policies
- Coworkers who don't do their fair share
- Unclear expectations
- Poor communication
- Not enough control over assignments
- Inadequate pay or benefits
- Urgent deadlines
- Too much work
- Long hours
- Uncomfortable physical conditions
- Relationship conflicts
- Coworkers making careless mistakes
- Dealing with rude customers
- Lack of cooperation

PHASES

Psychologists Herbert Freudenberger and Gail North have theorized that the burnout process can be divided into 12 phases, which are not necessarily followed sequentially.

1. **The compulsion to prove oneself**: Often found at the beginning is excessive ambition. The desire to prove oneself in the workplace turns into compulsion.
2. **Working harder**: Because they have to prove themselves to others or try to fit in an organization that does not suit them, people establish high personal expectations. In order to meet these expectations, they tend to focus solely on work while they take on more work than they otherwise would. It may happen that they become obsessed with doing everything themselves to show that they are irreplaceable.
3. **Neglecting their needs**: Since they have to devote everything to work, they now have no time and energy for anything else. Friends and family, eating and sleeping start to be seen as unnecessary or unimportant, as they reduce the time and energy that can be spent on work.
4. **Displacement of conflicts:** They become aware that what they are doing is not right, but they are unable to see the source of the problem. This may lead to a crisis in themselves and become threatening. The first physical symptoms appear.
5. **Revision of values**: While falling into a state of denial of basic physical needs, perceptions and value systems change. Work consumes all energy, leaving none for friends and hobbies. The job is the new value system and people start to become emotionally blunt.
6. **Denial of emerging problems:** People may become intolerant and dislike being social. They may be seen as aggressive and sarcastic. Problems may be blamed on time pressure and all the work that they have to do.
7. **Withdrawal:** Minimal social contact turns into isolation. Alcohol or drugs may be used as a release from obsessive working "by the book". These people often have feelings of being without hope or direction.
8. **Obvious behavioral changes**: Coworkers, family, friends and others in their immediate social circles cannot overlook the behavioral changes in these people.
9. **Depersonalization**: It is possible that they no longer see themselves or others as valuable. Their view of life narrows to only seeing the moment and life turns to a series of mechanical functions.
10. **Inner emptiness:** They feel empty inside and may exaggerate activities such as overeating or sex to overcome these feelings.
11. **Depression**: Burnout may include depression. In that case, the person is exhausted, hopeless, indifferent, and believes that life has no meaning.
12. **Burnout syndrome:** They collapse physically and emotionally and need immediate medical attention. In extreme cases, Suicidal ideation may occur, with it being viewed as an escape from their situation. Only a few people will actually commit suicide.
13. Effects: Symptoms of burnout include dysfunctional attitudes towards work, exhaustion, loss of motivation, distress, and feelings of ineffectiveness. Poor coping mechanisms can contribute to or result from burnout.

Many theories of burnout include negative outcomes related to burnout, including measures of job function (performance, output, etc.), health related outcomes (increases in stress hormones, coronary heart disease, circulatory issues), and mental health problems such as depression. It has been found that patients with chronic burnout have specific cognitive impairments, which should be emphasized in the evaluation of symptoms and treatment regimes. Significant reductions in nonverbal memory and auditory and visual attention were found for the patient group.

PREVENTION
At two levels

1-At the individual level

For the purpose of preventing occupational burnout, various stress management interventions have been shown to help improve employee health and wellbeing in the workplace and lower stress levels. Training employees in ways to manage stress in the workplace have also proven effective in prevention of burnout.

Burnout prevention programs have traditionally focused on cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), cognitive restructuring, didactic stress management, and relaxation. CBT, relaxation techniques (including physical techniques and mental techniques), and schedule changes are the best-supported techniques for reducing and preventing burnout in a health-care specific setting.

Additional prevention methods include: starting the day with a relaxing ritual; adopting healthy eating, exercising, and sleeping habits; setting boundaries; taking breaks from technology; nourishing one's creative side, and learning how to manage stress.

COPING TECHNIQUES at individual level

Many techniques cope with the stresses life brings. Some of the following ways induce a lower than usual stress level, temporarily, to compensate the biological tissues involved;

- Social activity
- Cognitive therapy
- Getting a hobby
- Meditation
- Mindfulness
- Music as a coping strategy
- Deep breathing
- Yoga
- Reading novels
- Prayer
- Relaxation techniques
- Humour
- Physical exercise
- Spas
- Spending time in nature
- Stress balls
- Spending quality time with pets

2- At the organizational level

While individuals can cope with the symptoms of burnout, the only way to truly prevent burnout is through a combination of organizational change and education for the individual.

Maslach and Leiter postulated that burnout occurs when there is a disconnection between the organization and the individual with regard to what they called the six areas of work life:

1- Workload: A better connection on workload means assuring adequate resources to meet demands as well as work/life balances that encourage employees to revitalize their energy.
2- Control,

3- Reward,

4- Community: A better connection on community means supportive leadership and relationships with colleagues rather than discord.

5- Fairness,

6- Values: A better connection on values means clear organizational values to which employees can feel committed.

Resolving these discrepancies requires integrated action on the part of both the individual and the organization.

STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Employee assistance programs can include in-house counseling programs on managing stress. Evaluative research has been conducted on EAPs that teach individual stress control and inoculation techniques such as relaxation, biofeedback, and cognitive restructuring. Studies show that these programs can reduce the level of physiological arousal associated with high stress. Participants who master behavioral and cognitive stress-relief techniques report less tension, fewer sleep disturbances, and an improved ability to cope with workplace stressors.

Another way of reducing stress at work is by simply changing the workload for an employee. Some may be too overwhelmed that they have so much work to get done, or some also may have such little work that they are not sure what to do with themselves at work. Improving communications between employees also sounds like a simple approach, but it is very effective for helping reduce stress. Sometimes making the employee feel like they are a bigger part of the company, such as giving them a voice in bigger situations shows that you trust them and value their opinion. Having all the employees mesh well together is a very underlying factor which can take away much of workplace stress. If employees fit well together and feed off of each other, the chances of stress are very minimal. Lastly, changing the physical qualities of the workplace may reduce stress. Changing things such as the lighting, air temperature, odor, and up to date technology.

Intervention is broken down into three steps: primary, secondary, tertiary. Primary deals with eliminating the stressors all together. Secondary deals with detecting stress and figuring out ways to cope with it and improving stress management skills. Finally, tertiary deals with recovery and rehabbing the stress all together. These three steps are usually the most effective way to deal with stress not just in the workplace, but overall

In order to develop an effective stress management programme it is first necessary to identify the factors that are central to a person controlling his/her stress, and to identify the intervention methods which effectively target these factors. Lazarus and Folkman's interpretation of stress focuses on the transaction between people and their external environment (known as the Transactional Model). The model contends that stress may not be a stressor if the person does not perceive the stressor as a threat but rather as positive or even challenging. Also, if the person possesses or can use adequate coping skills, then stress may not actually be a result or develop because of the stressor. The model proposes that people can be taught to manage their stress and cope with their stressors.

They may learn to change their perspective of the stressor and provide them with the ability and confidence to improve their lives and handle all of types of stressors.