



The Relationship between Employee's Work-Related Stress and Work Ability based on Qualitative Literature Analysis

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Abstract

Purpose: The greatest asset to all organizations is the employees and they should be guarded against factors hindering their work ability. Nevertheless, most organizations are always more concerned about making profits to the extent of forgetting their employee's welfare. On this point, this study aims to examine employee's work-related stress and its relationship with work ability. **Research design, data and methodology:** This study focused on obtaining mostly peer-reviewed works to suggest research findings, assuming that qualitative literature approach allows researchers to explore in-depth information concerning complex issues in a standard life setting. Numerous prior researchers applied their research design in content analysis, especially where various concepts are present for analysis. **Results:** Based on numerous qualitative textual resources, this study found that human resource practitioners should plan stress management strategies for their employees to apply five kinds of solutions that the current study suggests because it is vital to ensure their wellbeing towards sustaining their performance. **Conclusions:** All in all, based on the findings, this study concludes that employee's work stress negatively impacts their work ability with affecting their mental health. As a result, there is little doubt that practitioners should regularly monitor the working environment for stress-related factors besides creating a healthy working environment for all employees.

Keywords: Workplace Stress, Employee Management, Qualitative Textual Analysis

JEL Classification Code : J50, J53, C35

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Work-related stress is one of the most significant problems for both employees and organizations. Employees' workability and performance are the greatest concern for any organization planning to improve its success overall. Employee work ability refers to the

individual's capability of coping with the demands of work to a particular time with their human resources. Employee performance and work ability are significantly related to an organization's effectiveness, survival, and profits. There are several increasing and changing factors affecting work like stiff competition, a more remarkable achievement, innovations, and quality service pressures (Amaya, Melnyk, Buffington & Battista, 2017). Therefore, most organizations require employees to work for long hours to meet the rising expectations regarding work performance, thereby creating stress among employees globally.

There are increasing complaints by employees about their bosses, jobs, and colleagues. Stress is an increasing issue in organizations as it negatively affects their performance. Stress decreases organizational performance, decreases employee performance, reduces work quality, and high staff turnover. It also increases absenteeism due

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to health issues that it causes, like headaches, depression, and anxiety. Institutions need to examine their practices, which exposes their employees to demanding and unfavorable work environments since workers' psychological and physical demands increased their susceptibility to higher stress levels (Choi, 2018). This study aims at examining employees' work-related stress alongside its relationship with employees' work ability.

1.2. Statement of Problem

There are increasing concerns about stress among employees globally. Most organizations suffer a lot from the inefficiencies caused by work-related stress. The current pandemic has led to several changes in the workplace in both government institutions and non-governmental organizations alongside other organizations. As a result, employees are required to work extra hard by the government towards ensuring government programs are urgently implemented (Kniffin, Narayanan, Anseel, Antonakis, Ashford, Bakker, & Vugt, 2021). As a result, employees take heavy workloads besides working for long hours towards achieving their targets. Therefore, the current change in the workplace brought by the covid-19 pandemic prompted the curiosity of the research towards examining work-related stress and its relationship with work ability.

1.3. Study Objectives

The main objective of this research was to examine work-related stress among employees and its relationship with work ability and performance. The objectives entail: (1) To assess work-related stress factors among employees in local governments in the United States. (2) To determine the existing strategizes utilized in managing stress among employees' local governments in the United States. (3) To determine the relationships between work-related stress and work ability among employees in local governments in the United States. (4) To determine effects of psychological and physiological stressors on employee work ability.

This research is crucial in deepening knowledge regarding work-related stress and its relationship with employees' work ability and performance to the researcher. The study will assist an organization in managing stress among their employees towards increasing their overall performance. It is also crucial in raising awareness among managers regarding how to utilize preventive measures against stress among their employees. This research is vital to other researchers as it acts as a spur among students and scholars interested in researching more about work-related stress and work ability.

2. Literature Review

This section has discussed literature related to the research objectives. The reviewed literature focused on the effects of stress on employee work ability and performance. The chapter has been crucial in analyzing the existing literature, thereby enabling identifying the current research gap. The next chapter focuses on offering solutions for managing work stress among employees towards ensuring improved employees' work ability and performance.

2.1. Workplace Stress

Harris and Fleming (2017) state that approximately all employees are likely to suffer from stress-related illness or anxiety disorders. In addition, there is an increasing number of employees requesting sick leave because of depression, anxiety, or stress. The authors believe that a person's response to and perception of a given event is crucial in determining how they view it to be stressful or not. According to the authors, stress is caused by internal and external factors. Therefore, they view stress as a response to internal or external processes causing psychological and physiological strain.

According to Eldor (2018), Poor working conditions significantly result from working stress among employees. It entails the physical; job surrounding, including low or high lighting, noise, poor ventilations, and poor odor alongside any stimuli negatively affecting employees' senses, mood, and mental state. Likewise, El Sayed, Sanford,

and Kerley (2019) state that a poorly designed office can also cause stress among employees since it can hinder effective communications, thereby causing poor working conditions. Ganster, Rosen, and Fisher (2018) found that long working hours at the workplace also negatively affect employees. It impacts employee's health making them suffer from stress. Kallus and Gaisbachgrabner (2017) also state that long working hours might deny an adequate employee sleep and misbalancing their work and family life, eventually leading to stress. Working for long hours reduces employees' work ability, thereby interfering with their work quality.

According to Richardson (2017), new technologies always come with a lot of pressure, thereby causing stress on employees who have to adapt to them.

Duxbury, Stevenson, and Higgins (2018) state that role overload entails employees having a lot of work towards meeting a strict deadline. Having too much work to do with very short deadlines causes stress among employees. Role ambiguity entails the act of role requirements lacking clear and specific information. Role ambiguity makes employees feel that they are in a problematic scenario since they have

no clear obligations. Role ambiguity makes employees to be dissatisfied with their jobs, besides lowering their creativity. Another stressor is role conflict within the organizations. Role conflict results whenever employees are confronted with role expectations that are not compatible with their social status. Such occurrences make employees begin feeling stressed.

According to Dinh (2020), Employees are greatly affected by how they relate at the workplace with one another. A poor working relationship in which employees are not relating well with their bosses and colleagues increases their stress level since they can hardly share duties or assist each other. Such an environment may make employees not offer their best at work due to the negative impacts of a poor working relationship. The author also states that when employees lack job security, they are more likely to feel stressed. Likewise, employees might feel stressed when they are subjected to several unnecessary performance appraisals. The frustration of not being promoted at work can make one stressed.

2.2 Employee Work Ability and its Relationship with Work Stress

Generally, work ability refers to an individual's capability to cope with the work demands to a particular time with their human resources. Work ability significantly impacts employees' wellbeing alongside influencing sick leaves, organizations' productivity, and early retirement (Oakman et al., 2018). An individual is considered to have workability if they possess mental, physical, intellectual, social health and competencies besides having occupational virtues and specific virtues relating to the job. Competent and healthy employees are more flexible at work and can easily cope up.

Work ability increases the more an individual is more competent, flexible and the more they have occupational virtues and coping strategies. Work ability is associated with every factor of working life, including the individual, organization, society, and the immediate environment. Work ability is crucial in specifying employees' expectations regarding their competence required for various work within the company. Yunita and Saputra (2019) considered employees to have work ability if they have good health and needed work-related competence for particular work duty. Work ability enables employees to perform their tasks and responsibilities at the workplace. Jobs' stress interferes with the functional capacity of an employee to efficiently meet their job requirements.

Gharibi et al. (2016) argue that stressed employees find it challenging to meet their organization's expectations since such employees face psychological, physiological, and organizational burnouts. Thus, work-related stress

negatively impacts employees' wellbeing, thereby creating dissatisfaction and negative emotions towards their work and eventually decreasing their job performance.

Hessels, Rietveld, and van der Zwan (2017) state that stress drastically affects employees' job performance. Employees with no control over their work and lack financial rewards are more likely to be stressed at the workplace, making them experience various health issues such as headaches, heart illness, and high blood pressure. Stress affects both the financial, psychological, and physical balance of employees. Stress makes employees absent from work as they seek medical attention, thereby reducing their working hours. Likewise, stress increased employee turnover, which negatively impacts their job performance and overall organization performance.

According to Olsen, Bjaalid, and Mikkelsen (2017), Employees performance depend on various factors such as the ability to work, the support given for doing the job, and the level of effort put in doing the job; however, work-related stress negatively impacts such factors thereby making their job performance to reduce. The authors state that sometimes in the organization, an increase in pressure leads to increased performance; however, employee performance and work ability begin to decline whenever stress increases past the optimum point. When stress reaches an acute level of discomfort, it begins causing harm to the employees. According to Jalagat (2017), Excess stress is destructive and harmful to employee wellbeing and work ability. Individual wellbeing is negatively affected by stress resulting in dysfunction in various areas, leading to reduced performance and work ability.

In the case of the Covid-19 pandemic, many organizations have had to comply with the WHO regulations to aid in preventing the spread of the virus. Such regulations include social distancing, working from home, avoiding a lot of human contact, sanitizing, among others. According to Habibi, Burci, de Campos, Chirwa, Cinà, Dagon and Hoffman (2020), most organizations have embraced working from home as a way to prevent the spread of the virus which means that employees have now been faced with new work-related challenges to be able to perform to the optimum levels as expected by the organization. Working in an office is different from working at home given that the office environment provides a quality environment for maximum concentration. Parents have had to deal with the distractions from their children who are craving for their attention without the consideration that they need to work. Spouses also have to deal with the demands of marriage which may interfere with their work and result in work-related stress that affects their performance.

Therefore, despite the comfort of working from home,

employees may be pressured by deadlines they have to meet and how to balance well for effective working which may affect their work ability. Working from the office provided a good environment for teamwork especially for tasks that need a lot of consultation but working from home results in employees figuring out things on their own and can slow down work performance. Additionally, being used to working from home may also pose another challenge in employees taking time to adapt to the system in the post Covid-19. The pandemic has also brought about some work-related stress that affects employee work ability (Ipsen, 2020).

2.3. Empirical Review

Karatepe et al. (2018) carried out a study aiming at determining the impacts of works stress on job performance and work ability on graduate employees in a bank in the United States. According to the findings, work stress negatively affects employees' work ability and performance. However, the research never outlined the specific ways that can be used by management to support employees in reducing stress.

Hakanen, Seppälä, and Peeters (2017) researched the impact of work stress on work ability and company performance. The study involved 30 organizations. According to the research findings, stress increases corporate performance. Its primary focus was on anxiety and its impacts on performance. The authors stated that managers should understand the effects of stress on their employees and review policies that subject employees to stress. According to the study, there should be regular stress audits within the organization towards determining stress levels and impacts on the organization and employees.

According to a study by Kabat-Farr, Walsh, and McGonagle (2019) on the impacts of stress on employee workability and performance, the organization should avoid low financial rewards to their employees and excess workloads alongside conflicting roles towards minimizing their employees work stress. It was recommended that workloads be reduced, implementing a rewards system, and setting clear job roles to reduce work stress.

2.4. Research Gap

Most previous studies regarding work-related stress and employee work ability focused on causes of work-related stress; however, they did not profoundly analyze the relationship between work-related stress and employee workability besides not giving clear solutions. In addition, there is limited research on the impacts of stress on employees on local government employees' work ability

(Kim, 2017). Thus there is an existing gap regarding local administration in which employees work extra hard toward implementing government policies. Therefore, there is a need to examine work stress in local administration employees and its impacts on work ability.

3. Research Design

3.1. Textual Data Collection

The collection of data in qualitative content analysis is carried out through five significant steps. Initially, a researcher selects the content that one needs to analyze. Based on the type of the research question, the researcher selects among many texts that are efficient for analysis. At this point, the researcher considers many factors, such as the medium through which data is collected. Such mediums include books, newspapers, websites, or videos.

Additionally, determining the criteria for inclusion is vital. Analyzing the parameters to choose the data range and amount of evidence follows whereby limited amounts of texts result in all concepts' analysis. In contrast, huge volumes force one to choose from a sample. Elo and Kyngas (2008) assert that content selection is the vital process in content analysis data collection that involves data preparation before analysis. Thus, all activities that take place during selection prepare the range before being analyzed (Sung, 2021; Kang, 2020; Shin, 2014).

The second step in the data collection process involves defining the units and categories of analysis. At this stage, the researcher determines the level at which analysis of the selected data will be performed. The groups of meaning such as the frequency, characteristics, themes, or image presence at which a particular text appears are determined. Similarly, the researcher defines the level of categories that one wishes to apply in coding. Category levels are based on object characteristics, concepts, or descriptions. According to Elo and Kyngas (2008), images such as gender, age, marital status, and occupation are some of the units of meaning that researchers employ when defining different divisions and categories for analysis. Hence, defining units and classes becomes an essential step after the selection process.

The third stage in data collection involves developing a set of coding rules. The coding process entails classifying different units of meaning into their specified categories. Consistent coding is ensured when rules are clearly defined on what to include and omit in categorizing. Applying coding rules, especially where there is more than one researcher helps minimize controversies and ensure uniformity (Elo & Kyngas, 2008). For instance, when analyzing a particular book on thematic matters, practices

in coding will ensure that before coming up with a theme in the book, other aspects are put into consideration. Coding rules thus provide a systematic, reliable, and transparent analysis of content.

The next step involves coding the concept according to the rules formulated in step three. The coding process entails going through all the selected materials and noting down relevant information in the respective categories. While some researchers prefer software such as Nvivo to carry out this, others manually carry out the whole process. However, in cases where there is a lot of data, the manual approach becomes tedious and time-consuming. Following the coding rules, a researcher examines all the materials assembled and record specific details according to the categories provided (Woo, 2021; Elo & Kyngas, 2008). One distinguishes different characteristic information through coding, such as phrases and themes, of each data provided.

The last step in the data collection process involves the analysis of results and concluding. In most cases, researchers apply statistical analysis to establish correlation, trends, and patterns in the collected information (Elo & Kyngas, 2008). Additionally, discussing the findings and interpreting them is vital at this stage. Therefore, concluding from such interpretations implies that the right, valuable and detailed data is collected and is ready for use (Lee, 2021; Richard & Kang, 2018). Thus, after data selection, defining units and categories, setting coding rules, and analyzing the final results comprise the data collection process in qualitative content analysis.

3.2. Qualitative Content Approach

According to qualitative content analysis should be designed in significant ways, namely, grounded theory, ethnographic, and case studies. Qualitative content analysis that applies ethnography is whereby researchers study the experiment character through observation or interviews (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano & Morales, 2007). The ethnographers can easily categorize the population sample according to specific character components by analyzing people's cultural practices. In this study, researchers are obliged to learn the artistic techniques of the subjects under investigation to avoid clashing with them over cultural practices.

Ethnographic Research in QCA is further divided into two categories, namely, classic and contemporary. In the classical ethnographic approach, researchers study the cultural practices away from their country of origin (Crabtree et al.,2012). After interacting with the population under study, the researcher then outlines the findings in a detailed report. The contemporary ethnographic study investigates the ordinary lives of people living within the country of origin. By carrying out the qualitative content

analysis of the studies, the collected information is taken through the five analytical stages to come up with valid, credible, and transparent results. The data is both descriptive and interpretive.

Secondly, researchers apply the grounded theory research in designing QCA research. In this respective design, researchers carry out a systematic analysis of theories to establish focused and conceptual data that is used to explain the behavior of a particular research finding. The idea only emerges after reviewing different types of data and categorizing accordingly to make meaningful assumptions. According to Selvi (2019), the grounded theory process undergoes six significant steps in research designing. In the first stage, a researcher assembles all the materials that are prospective for use in the study. Secondly, one comes up with an effective way of categorizing the available materials into specific components such as themes. Assembling the data from different category groups then follow. Accordingly, review the linkage between different categories. Using other connections between the classes, one can build different theoretical models while at the same time eliminating negative cases. Finally, one presents data for analysis using evidence from the collected data samples that imply a given theory. Generally, the grounded theory provides a basis for qualitative content analysis researchers with guidelines for data collection and analysis.

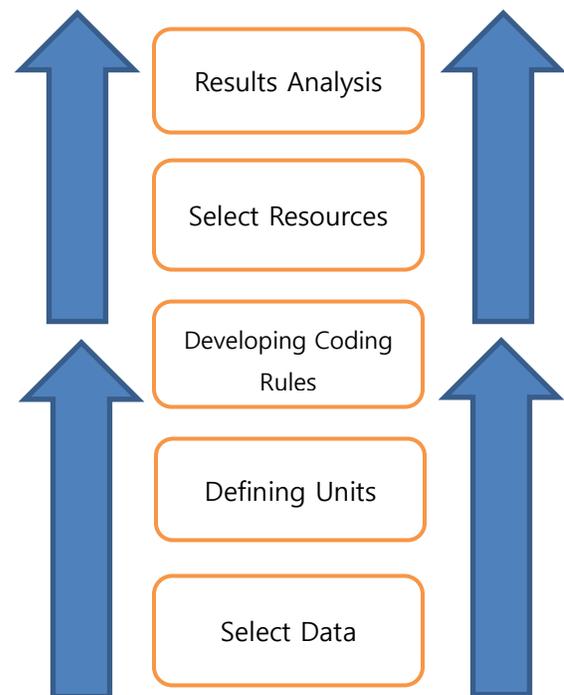


Figure 1: Process of Literature Textual Data Analysis

4. Research Solutions

4.1. Stress Management Strategies

According to Yunus, Musiat, and Brown (2018), employees are crucial assets within an organization; therefore, it is vital to ensure their wellbeing towards sustaining their performance. Thus, an organization must utilize coping skills to ensure that employee stress is effectively managed. Coping strategies refer to remedial action in which livelihood and survival are involved and endangered. There are various coping strategies, such as instrumental coping strategies utilized in tackling issues and changing reality and emotion-focused coping, which focus on nurturing an individual's emotions during stressful conditions.

Chiesa and Serretti (2009) state that engaging in cognitive therapy programs is crucial in managing stress among individuals; however, stress cannot be wiped out entirely. Counseling services aim at assisting employees in building stress management techniques that are crucial in minimizing the impacts of stress on them alongside preventing them from future stress. Other methods entail teaching employees better ways to manage their time well. Proper time management is crucial in meeting deadlines. Once an employee can handle their time well, they are sure of meeting job deadlines hence less likely to experience higher stress at the workplace. Employees can also be taught various techniques crucial in managing stress, such as mindful strategies like mediation and yoga exercises. Frequently laughing is also vital in reducing work stress. Eliminating environmental stress, especially those generating stress for employees, is crucial in managing stress levels within an organization. It can be done by reducing substance causing harm to employees, adjusting timelines and workload.

Avanzi et al. (2018) state that stress management techniques aim to prevent stress by controlling the sources of stress, such as playing football, running alongside other sporting activities. At the same time, techniques aim to assist individuals in responding to pressure in ways that do not cause them harm. Such techniques mainly aim at minimizing stress levels, for instance, increasing self-awareness and stress management skills through education and training on stress eliminations and coping mechanisms (Rodríguez et al., 2019). In addition, there are also stress management techniques aimed at rehabilitating the individuals undergoing stress. Such techniques act as a cure to the persons suffering from stress effects.

Stress can be managed at both the organization and individual levels. Regarding an individual's level, stress can be reduced through activities such as exercise. It implies that employees can manage stress through walking, jogging,

playing football alongside other activities. Individuals can also manage stress through relaxation (Perreault et al., 2017). Relaxations enable individuals to reduce tensions they experience while at the job. It entails techniques such as hypnosis and meditation aiming at ensuring that employees are physically relaxed. Relaxation techniques are crucial in minimizing physiological stressors. Additionally, opening up can be a critical way to manage stress since self-disclosure is essential in reducing stress. An organization should ensure that employees are adequately trained and the communication within the organization is effective for all level employees (Rabenu & Yaniv, 2017). To reduce their occupational stress, they must be allowed to control their work alongside receiving support from the management and their colleagues.

4.2. Work Stress Solutions

4.2.1. Encouraging Open Communication

According to the existing studies, most employees' work-related stress comes from their managers (Isa et al., 2019). Research has shown that most employees are lower levels do not have good relationships with their managers. Some managers believe in threatening and pressurizing employees with work deadlines. Likewise, some bosses usually overload their junior employees with many duties, which eventually makes them stressed (Hutchins, Penney & Sublett, 2018). Such behaviors lead to hostile work relationships between bosses and their employees at work. They can result in anxiety, depressions, and an increased risk of high blood pressure and heart diseases. Ineffective communication within an organization can cause employees frustrations besides causing distrust and confusion. Employees will always not feel that their voices are heard if they have no clear communication channels with their managers. As a result, their commitment and loyalty to the communications decreases (Walden, Jung & Westerman, 2017).

Therefore the management must ensure open communications towards ensuring a positive working relationship with their employees. Manager can coach their employees through open training programs on issues such as implementing regulations and conflict management. Such training programs encourage communication among employees and also assist in improving their stress level awareness. Self-aware employees are better equipped for handling workplace stress. By ensuring open communication, employees will be encouraged to share their concerns and ideas either negatively or positively, thereby making them feel valued within the organization. The feeling of being valued increases the motivations and morale of employees and their overall performance in return (Shin, 2020). Thus, ensuring open communication within

the organization is one of the most excellent solutions to reducing stress as it encourages communication between employees, making them speak out.

4.2.2. Encouraging Workplace Wellness and Recognizing Employees

Organizations must ensure that their employees do exercise and live healthily. Healthy living and exercise are some of the most excellent techniques for managing work-related stress. Through exercising, employees can move their minds away from stressing things towards focusing on activities at hand (Amaya et al., 2017). Exercising improves employees' moods by enhancing the production of endorphins that makes the brain feel good. An organization can ensure workplace wellness through various activities. For instance, an organization can encourage employees to take a walk during lunch hours. Walking is a form of exercise which is crucial in reducing stress levels. An organization can also set a gym for its employees towards encouraging them to do exercise, which is essential in reducing stress levels. Moreover, an organization can also bring physical educators regularly to teach and train employees on how to exercise and both at home and workplace. Fitness competition within an organization can also encourage employees to maintain physical fitness through exercise (Hatami & Afshari, 2019). Encouraging healthy foods at the workplace is also crucial in encouraging workplace wellness.

Looking into an employee's health makes them feel highly valued within the organization. Most employees are encouraged by an organization that offers healthy foods and snacks (Isa et al., 2019). When an organization recognizes their employees' success, they will feel recognized, increasing their job morale and motivation while reducing stress levels. Recognizing employees through various techniques such as offering rewards makes them more comfortable and happier, decreasing their stress levels.

4.2.3. Offering Flexible Work Environment

According to Choi (2018), offering employees a flexible work environment is crucial in managing their stress levels. Most employees thrive on flexibility alongside the power to get things done when they are more productive and creative. Moreover, in most cases, employees might be tired of physical checking in at the workplace. Thus, offering a flexible working environment such as allowing employees to work at home can reduce their stress levels of working up early in the morning to get to the job (Maulik, 2017). Generally, every individual flourish at their schedule; thus, giving employees a flexible working environment will provide them with the freedom to choose their working hours besides improving their work-life balance.

According to Berkery et al. (2017), offering a flexible working environment is more likely to assist the

organization in attracting and retaining experienced and skilled employees since most professionals highly prefer flex time. An organization's office should feel like a cell; instead, it should be a place that facilitates a job done. It is crucial to inform employees that their job is defined by the timeliness and quality of their work and not the time they check in and out of the office. Allowing employees to work remotely alongside giving them flexible start and end times is very important in decreasing stress levels while improving their work ability (Choi, 2018). Such flexibility increase employees' office morale which reduces stress while improving employees' works ability.

4.2.4. Setting Clear Goals

Managers should ensure that their teams have clear set goals. Setting clear goals will assist employees in avoiding ambiguity and effectively performing their duties. Clear goals make employees focused on the tasks at hand rather than just doing things that could result in erroneous results. When an organization has no set clear goals for employees, employees will more likely spend more time working, which reduces their performance. Clear goals also are crucial in giving employees people a peaceful mind since they know what they are required to do and focuses on achieving it (Grover et al., 2017).

According to previous studies, ambiguity can increase stress levels among various employees within the workplace. Employees with unclear work assignments are more likely to get confused and stressed. Therefore it is crucial to ensure that an organization always has clear outlines for the task to be completed alongside how they should be done. Moreover, managers should regularly check if the people assigned to a particular job have relevant training and experience (Zhang, & Parker, 2019). Most employees are always stressed when their managers give them the task without explicit instruction and goals to be met. Therefore, by setting clear goals and instructions for such employees, their stress levels will significantly be reduced, and their work performance will increase. In addition, setting clear instructions and goals for employees assist in ensuring that they are giving the right roles they can perform without much stress (Grover et al., 2017).

4.2.5. Increasing Psychological Safety and Regular Work Breaks

Employees cannot develop the trust required to ensure true innovation and collaboration when they perceive the workplace as a threat to their wellbeing (Rabenu, Tziner & Sharoni, 2017). There are various ways of improving psychological safety at the workplace. For instance, ensuring that expectations are made obvious through setting clear goals. Ensuring that everyone's voice is heard is also crucial in increasing psychological safety. Organization open meetings and brainstorming sessions are critical than

imposing top-down decisions within an organization since they make employees feel involved and engaged (Edmondson, 2018). Developing a work environment that is in threatening but challenging is also crucial. Managers need to inform their employees that it is okay to fail. Asking for employee feedback makes them feel more involved and recognized.

It is also crucial encourage employees to get out of their offices during break and mentally disengaged from challenging duties. Moving around during break times will increase their mental capacity to work efficiently. In addition, it is essential to ensure that employees receive supportive and constructive criticism at the workplace towards improving their psychological safety. Workplace culture encouraging nonstop work has diverse effects on employees. Overloading employees makes employees sacrifice their leisure time towards meeting their target. Such employees should be encouraged to take work breaks besides changing their expectations to make them feel less stressed (Prause & Mujtaba, 2015).

which eventually affects their work ability. It is clear that local administration employees mostly experience stress at their workplace from reviewing the existing literature. Factors increasing their stress levels entail higher workload and inadequate resources for meeting the expectations. Work-related stress affects the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual parts of employees' lives. Exposure to a prolonged stress work environment adversely affects employees as it increases their risks of severe mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and even heart disease.

According to existing literature, work stress is highly correlated with work ability and performance. Employees are expected to cope with their stressful conditions to improve their work ability. Therefore, organizations and employees have to deal with work-related stress towards increasing performance. Previous literature did not provide better stress management strategies; however, this research has identified some effective stress management strategies critical in reducing work stress levels. Stress is a factor endured by most local administration employees as it is evident that most employees report to work under pressure and feel unrecognized at their workplace. Based on the literature review, it is concluded that work stress is a major challenge for local administration employees.

Therefore it is essential to regularly monitor the working environment for stress-related factors besides creating a healthy working environment for all employees. Role conflict, role ambiguity, and workloads significantly contribute to work stress. The findings have shown that stress negatively impacts employee work ability. However, the organization and employees can reduce work stress towards enhancing employees' work ability, especially during the current pandemic. This study implies that organizations should be aware of their workforce regarding the diversity of skills, experience, and present work culture to deal effectively with work stress. Likewise, the research implies that both employees and the organization are responsible for managing workplace stress. Stress management strategies are done at the individual level and organizational levels. Organizations encouraging teamwork and respects employees' health assist in stress reduction. The study also implies that employees should note the job-related problems linked to work troubles, work expectations, and lack of support.

The research on work-related stress and the impact related to the literature in the same field in various ways. The literature review and the research highlighted the impacts as decreased performance and affects the employee's abilities. The employees and managers have a role to prevent the negative effects of work-related stress. Some of the suggested solutions in literature review and the research suggests that stress can be managed both at the individual and at an organizational level. The work-related

Table 1: Research Findings

Solution	Summary
Encouraging open communication	Open communications create a positive working relationship among employees besides making them valued, making them feel less stressed.
Encouraging workplace wellness and recognizing employees	Workplaces wellness, such as healthy eating habits and exercise, improves employees' overall health. In addition, recognizing employees at work increases their job morale and motivations, thus reducing their stress levels.
Offering flexible work environment	A flexible work environment enables employees to choose their working hours hence improving their work balance.
Setting clear goals	Clear goals are crucial in avoiding role ambiguity and confusion.
Enhancing psychological safety and regular work breaks	Regular work breaks enable employees to refresh their minds, thereby reducing stress levels.

5. Conclusion and Implication

This study examined the relationship between work stress and work ability among employees based on prior studies' results. According to the findings, employee works related stress negatively impacts their work ability. Job stress affects the mental and physical health of employees,

stress studies performed by other scholars mainly focused on the causes of work-related stress and the solutions based on the research method used. They however failed to analyse the relationship between the work-related stress and the employee workability apart from giving clear solutions. The method used in carrying out the research is the literature view approach where various literature is used in carrying out the research in this study.

The prior studies in the subject highlighted the technical, legal and resource issues in the studies. The study addresses the gap of examining the work stress in the local administration employee and the impact of the work stress on the work ability. Scholars like Eldor (2018) identify the source of work stress as the employees. The results in the study reveal that most of the stress result from the managers. The communication and the relationship between the managers and the employees determine level of the work stress among the employees. The report suggests that managers have a responsibility to increase or reduce the work-related stress among the employees. The solutions in handling the work stress also involve the things to be done by the managers.

Additionally, follow up studies on the employee's work-related stress and its relationship with employee's work ability is necessary. This is especially regarding more qualitative solutions on how to mitigate the problem to provide employees with an efficient and quality work environment to achieve the best they can achieve in the workplace. Investigating matters in-depth would be significant because studies show that there are different kinds of people that respond in different ways when under stress. There are those who work more and can do their best under stress and there are those who shut down and their workability is affected under stress.

Further research is necessary to investigate how open communication is an important factor in relieving stress at the workplace. Majority of organizations also work with set goals and objectives and hence research can be done on the relationship between goal setting and work-related stress and how it increases employee workability. Encouraging workplace wellness and recognizing employees should also be investigated in terms of its ability to relieve work-related stress. The relationship between encouraging workplace wellness and recognizing employees and the employees work ability can be further followed up to find out its applicability in an organization. Further studies are also necessary on enhancing psychological safety and regular work breaks and its relationship to employees' work ability and the work-related stress. Additionally, it is also important to investigate how a flexible working environment can be essential in influencing employee work ability. Organizations are focused on getting the maximum

performance from their employees and it is therefore significant to work out on ways to make the employees most productive.

6. Limitation and Recommendation

This research has majorly focused on examining employees' work-related stress decreasing work ability among local government employees. Therefore, future research should be conducted towards determining other stressors increasing employees' work ability among local administration officers in the United States. In addition, more research is also needed to identify the association between work stress and work ability in other occupational settings.

Since the research utilized a literature review methodology, it has various limitations. First, the review lack details on how the analysis was conducted and the quality of search processes for identifying the relevant sources. Likewise, the review was restricted to the accessibility of sources. Only freely accessible sources were utilized in the research; however, there could be other sources with vital information regarding the research objective but were not included since they required payments for full access. This research could also overlook important grey literature, such as reports since it focused on peer-reviewed sources. There are higher chances of the research being biased since there is no set method utilized in ensuring that all the literature on the study topic was considered. The literature review majorly focused on five years old sources; therefore, valuable sources outside the five years were ignored. Finally, the research only utilized peer-reviewed sources; thus, it could have left out other sources with crucial information regarding the research topic but are not peer-reviewed.

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