

The following Dissertation is submitted to Auckland
University of Technology in partial fulfilment of the degree
Master of International Hospitality Management.

TECHNIQUES USED TO MANAGE STRESS AND ITS
IMPACT ON MIDDLE MANAGEMENT'S
PERFORMANCE IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY
IN INDIA.

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2006

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ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by any other person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution or higher learning.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to my Supervisor Robert Steele, Senior Lecturer at the School of Hospitality and Tourism at AUT University, for his constant support and guidance throughout the process of writing this dissertation.

I would like to thank Dr. Jill Poulston, Programme Leader for MIHM at AUT, for her constant support throughout my dissertation.

I would also like to thank the Ethics Committee at AUT University for considering and approving my application.

Finally thanks Charles Grinter, Ethics Coordinator at AUT University for assistance with the application and ethical approval, Margaret Linzell-Jones for proofreading and editing the final work.

ABSTRACT

In today's complex and volatile environment, the hospitality industry has developed a close link with job stress. Most factors resulting from this are job specific or organisation related. The globalisation and liberalisation of the world economy has made jobs more competitive and demanding. The acceleration of workers moving to multi-national companies has influenced cross-cultural conflicts between members of the same team. In addition, the faulty lifestyle of employees travelling to different countries, or excessive business visits away from the family, has exaggerated the problem. Hence, the increase in job stress that has taken place in the past two decades is related to globalisation, organisational change and lifestyle of employees. Various demands placed by organisations tend to pressurise employees, leading to stressful working environments. These stressful environments in turn affect performance, leading employees into stressful situations. Many hospitality organisations have started stress management programmes but staff turnover still remains high due to job stress. This research investigates stress management techniques adopted in hotels to manage organisational stress and the impact of stress on middle managements performance in five star hotels in the city of Mumbai, India.

CHAPTER: 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study:

‘Stress’ is rarely understood and there is no a clear definition of the term (Stranks, 2005). Today, there is a general acceptance of stress as a problem in every industry that needs to be addressed urgently. The term ‘stress’ is often misused and has become a sunshade term.

Stress can be defined in several ways and hence it is important to use a directed approach that covers various aspects of this concept. In simple terms, stress can be defined as an influence that disturbs the natural equilibrium of the living body (Stranks, 2005). Cranwell-Ward and Abbey, (2005) defines stress as a reaction by the individual to pressure, external and internal, self-imposed, and which gives rise to physiological, psychological and behavioural changes. Stress is the response by the body to the demands placed on it; the individual’s capacity to cope with this demand will determine the level of stress the person is faced with. Of course, this will vary from one individual to the other.

Stress damages people and it damages their organisations. Work related stress is estimated to affect at least a third of the workforce in any one year. While this has been the case, the hospitality industry has a disadvantage as it costs billions of dollars for lost productivity and accounts for high absenteeism and sickness (Williams & Cooper, 2002). Various studies have proven that individuals working in the hospitality industry show signs of stress and overwork, due to demands placed by organisations that tend to pressurise the employees. Stress management is the issue of managing such demands and pressure placed on the individual, in the most effective way. Many hospitality

organisations have started stress management programmes but staff turnover still remains high due to job stress.

Organisational stress or job stress can be defined as physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities and resources provided (Lo & Lamm, 2005). Job stress, or occupational stress, is a worldwide phenomenon and the hospitality industry loses millions of dollars every year on it.

While there are other consequences related to occupational stress, such as absenteeism, alcoholism, drug abuse, costs of the errors made on the job, poor decision making because of impaired conditions at work, the insidious costs of relationships of managers with their family and colleagues that are affected due to the high levels of stress cannot be quantified (Ross & Almaier, 1994).

In this research project, an effort has been made to draw out the major stressors affecting middle managers and incorporating the importance of stress management in the work place.

1.2 The Purpose of the Study

The aim of this research is to investigate the techniques used to manage stress in the hospitality industry and to study its impact on middle managers' performance in five star hotels in Mumbai, India.

The objectives of this research are as follows:

- To establish the impacts of stress on productivity and the effects on the organisation due to high levels of job stress.
- To identify the awareness level of both managers and the organisation regarding job stress.
- To investigate the stress management techniques being used for coping with organisational stress, by the middle managers in five star hotels in Mumbai.

The researcher synthesises various stressors identified during the research and makes recommendations to maintain optimum levels of stress in the industry.

1.3 Contribution of the Study

This research intends to create awareness regarding the growing problem of stress and stress related illnesses. The research identifies stress as a vital factor that affects employee performance in any organisation. The literature review assists in providing a base to carry out the research. The research further recognises ‘stressors’ that perform an important role contributing towards job stress and its effects on the middle managers in the hospitality industry. Secondly, the research aims to identify the impact of job stress on the performance of the middle managers. Finally, the research concludes by presenting some suggestions and techniques for reducing stress at both a personal and professional level. The research follows a case study approach using three major hotels in India and analyses the responses of participants in relation with the literature provided.

1.4 Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation provides an understanding of stress, by comparing the work of a wide range of authors. Chapter one provides a basic introduction to the concept and determines the aims of the research.

In chapter two, details of certain theoretical facts about stress and stressors have been outlined. The chapter examines the sources, psychology and the consequences of the stress response. It also identifies the ill effects caused to the individual due to stress. The next feature describes the effects of stress on the productivity of the individual. In addition, it identifies the effects of the different stressors on performance. Finally, it investigates factors of stress in the organisation. It draws out the major factors causing organisational stress and also surveys the costs of stress on the business. Various techniques to reduce job stress for the organisation and the managers are also discussed.

Chapter three outlines the methodology explored in the study. It explains the choice of research design, shows justification for the research technique and vehicle used, in relation to the study.

In chapter four, the findings of the research are discussed and an analysis of the responses presented.

In chapter five, the final conclusions of the research are discussed, and suggestions given for the organisation and employees, for ways of coping with job stress.

CHAPTER: 2

OVERVIEW OF STRESS

2.1 Understanding Stress

Stress occurs where there is a perceived imbalance between pressure and coping resources for a particular situation (Cranwell-Ward & Abbey, 2005). While there have been many definitions that particularly specify the same purpose, authors have differing views. The main objective of the term recognises the interaction between people weighing up a situation, and then assessing the demands, and their perception of their ability to meet these demands on a particular occasion.

According to Williams and Cooper (2002), stress needs to be addressed in a structured and effective manner as a part of an overall strategy for improving the well-being of a person. When the individual successfully completes a task, by the use of his/her resources, the stress associated with resolving this task is reduced and the individual's well-being is improved. On the other hand, if this task is not resolved, the individual's well-being will deteriorate. However, even if the conditions are appropriate for stress to surface, it does not necessarily mean that it is caused, as it is the individual's capability to cope with the stress that actually causes stress to occur (Stranks, 2005).

Academics and media experts do not agree on a detailed definition of stress but they know that stress exists and is inescapable (Williams & Cooper, 2002). According to European Foundation (Cooper, 2002) 10% of the workforce of every business reports very low levels of job satisfaction. While it is stress that may look as the main cause, Cranwell-Ward and Abbey (2005) suggests that the level of pressure imposed on the person and his /her coping ability is the main cause.

Stress can be categorised in different ways:

- Hypo-stress: little pressure or boredom can be a source of stress.
- Eu-stress: optimum pressure leading in maximising performance by an individual.

- Hyper-stress: excessive pressure leading to hyper-stress.
- Distress: prolonged stress leading to distress.

Woodham (1995) describes good or positive stress as the amount of pressure required by the body in order to stimulate it into action. Thus managing stress is a delicate balancing act to keep pressure at the optimum level. When stress is at an optimum level, stress is positive; when too low or too high, stress is viewed as negative (Cranwell-Ward & Abbey, 2005). Selye (1974) states that positive stress acts on the body before a presentation and motivates the individual to try his/her best to accomplish the task, whereas bad or negative stress is defined as the amount of pressure on the body, which demonstrates the individual from getting the job done (Stranks, 2005).

While this concept of stress (explained above) summarises a positive understanding, certain awareness should be reflected on recognising the causes and factors linked with stress. The following literature review gives a brief idea about factors and causes that are linked in creating stress in any individual.

2.2 Defining Stressors:

Many factors influence the human system and performance that result in stress. The causes of stress are known as stressors (Stranks, 2005).

(Pedler & Boydell, 1985) have divided the stressors into different categories: -

- The organisational structure and climate – an individual experiences stress when the expectations of the individual conflict the demands of the organisation. Role conflict and ambiguity are considered to be the major stressors for managers. The lack of predictability on the demands placed on the managers, ineffective communication with employees, long hours of work and high levels of responsibility etc. can be a significant cause of stress to managers.
- Individual or self-imposed stressors – this is dependent on the personality and character of the individual. As suggested by Cooper & Payne (1978), there are two distinct types of personalities. Type A, which thrive on power,

responsibility and have an aggressive drive, hence tend to be more stressed than Type B personalities; which are more relaxed in their approach to work and personal life.

- The family – the family is not always considered as an asylum from stress, as stress from the workplace can penetrate home and vice-versa (Marshall & Cooper, 1978). When there is a conflict between the organisation and the family demands, it can cause anxiety to the individual. Although Cooper and Payne (1989) suggest that family is a resource, which helps an individual to cope better with job stress.
- Environmental: factors arising from extreme temperature variations, ventilation, noise, vibration and presence of airborne contaminants such as dust, gases etc.
- Occupational stressors: caused due to too much or too little pressure. Conflicting job demands, excessive work hours and interchanging work and family demands.
- Social stressors: caused due to every day problems coping up in life such as family issues, marital problems etc.

2.3 Internally generated stress:

Internally generated stress is caused by an individual's personality, as it can affect the individual's experience on the job. A person's behaviour at work, interaction with colleagues and his/her characteristic to respond to a situation depends on the ability and pattern of that person to react in other domains of life. Friedman and Rosenman (1974) suggest two types of broad categories of in which people's personalities lie:

1. Type A – are characterised as having time urgency in doing things and have a competitive drive. They are impatient, and try to do everything themselves. They seek new targets and work hard to meet deadlines. These individuals seek recognition and show high levels of mental and physical alertness. This type of a personality is common among professionals (Girdano & Evarly, 1986). Previous

research linked these personalities to having coronary heart diseases, and recent research has shown a strong relationship between type A personalities and hostile behaviour. Smith and Pope (1990 as cited in Cranwell-Ward & Abbey, 2005), suggest that hostility in an individual's behaviour has a strong relationship with heart diseases, as they are more physiologically reactive than non-hostile people. Secondly, these individuals take a far longer time to 'cool down' when aroused than non-hostile individuals.

2. Type B – They are the complete opposite to the type A personalities, exhibiting none of the habits or traits as those shown by them. They do not suffer from the need of time urgency, are more easy-going, work steady and generally take their time over their work. They are patient and take difficulties in their stride, without getting frustrated or upset. These individuals display less aggression, hostility and competitiveness and are generally more relaxed. They are known for their free-floating hostility and feel no need to impress others with, or prove their, successes to others. They are able to work without agitation and find time for relaxation and fun (Watts & Cooper, 1992).

Although, these two categories are extreme, most people fall into only one of these categories.

2.4 Externally generated stress:

Externally generated stress is caused by the environment or the job. The stress and individual experiences may come from the following:

- Environmental stress
- Chemical and nutritional stress
- Lifestyle and job stress
- Fatigue and overwork

("Stress Management Techniques", n.d)

2.4.1 Environmental stress

The physical surroundings affect the mood and overall mental state of any individual. The environment in which the individual works may be a source of unpleasant and distracting stimuli states Cooper and Smith (1985 as cited in Payne & Cooper, 2001).

The following conditions of the environment can cause stress:

- Dirty and untidy condition of the work environment.
- Crowding and insufficient working space.
- Noise and pollution.
- Badly organised or run-down working conditions.

2.4.2 Chemical and nutritional stresses

Girdano & Evarly (1986) suggest that the food and drink that people consume contribute to the stress that they experience. The following can cause the stress that a person experiences:

- Caffeine – excess of which increases the stress hormones in the body and makes it difficult for the individual to sleep, hence making him/her more irritable.
- Alcohol, smoking and drug abuse – research by Selye (1974) in the United Kingdom suggests that these are the most common ways of dealing with stress. These allow an employee to temporarily escape from the problem by relaxing the muscles and reducing mental tension but are a major cause of stress itself (Fontana, 1994).
- Burst of sugar from chocolates or sweets – making the individual energetic in the short term, however, the body's reaction to stabilise the sugar level is to release insulin, thereby causing a dip in the energy level shortly after the sugar high.
- Unbalanced or unhealthy diet – in terms of dietary excess or deficiency, causing discomfort and illness, thereby generating stress. For example, too much salt in the body may raise the blood pressure on the individual, and cause chemical stress (Cooper, 1989).

2.4.3 Lifestyle and job stress

The individual due to his/her lifestyle or job may experience stress. This includes: -

- Too much or too little work
- Satisfaction with the job
- Performance on the job
- Time pressure and deadlines
- Lack of information, support and advice
- Lack of clear objectives
- Responsibility for people and budgets
- Career development stress
- Stress from the organisation or clients
- Personal and family stress

("Understanding Stress", n.d)

2.4.4 Fatigue and overwork

The body experiences stress it has built up over the long term; this occurs when the individual tries to achieve too much work in too little time. When the body repeatedly experiences this type of behaviour, it causes fatigue to the individual , ("Understanding Stress", n.d).

2.5 Short term and Long term stress:

Various authors suggest that the symptoms of stress can be divided into short-term stress and long-term stress. Short-term stress is the immediate reaction of the body towards the stressor; it is when a person gets under pressure due to the situation. Anxiety due to the adrenalin rush in the body during difficult meetings or sporting events is related to short-term stress. However, short term stress is essential for the individual to feel alert and respond to the particular situation, whereas long term stress is referred to as the build up of fatigue and high levels of adrenaline in the body of the individual over time (Marshall & Cooper, 1981).

2.6 Symptoms of stress:

Stress can have both short and long term responses. The symptoms of stress may be caused due to any organic illness of the body, but may also be regarded as the signs or symptoms of excessive stress. The bodies of different individuals do not react in a similar way when under stress; hence diverse symptoms of stress occur when the individual experiences job stress. Some of the symptoms of stress are problems on their own and can aggravate the job stress being experienced while other symptoms, if not managed, can have serious consequences on the performance and health of the individual.

Various authors have categorised symptoms of occupational stress, Beehr and Newman (1978) categorised as follows:

2.6.1: Psychological symptoms – are the emotional and cognitive problems experienced by the individual under conditions of job stress. The emotional reaction to stress has been identified as fear, guilt, panic, denial, anger, feeling numb, aggression and irritability; while the cognitive reactions are confusion, disorientation, uncertainty, confusion, poor decision-making etc ("Symptoms of Stress", n.d).

2.6.2: Physical symptoms – these occur, when the body adapts to a physical threat by the release of adrenaline in the body. This excess adrenaline in the body allows it to fight the stressor and assists in survival. Selye (1974) suggests that the physical symptoms are more difficult to quantify, as there may be an overlap between these symptoms of occupational stress and other aspects of the individual's life. The physical symptoms have been characterised as fatigue, dizziness, skin diseases, weakness, chills, headaches, cardio-vascular disease etc. ("Signs & Symptoms of Critical Incident Stress", n.d). Certain physical symptoms, i.e. cardio-vascular disease and gastro-intestinal conditions are the most common of the physical symptoms, and are proven to be caused by stressful working conditions. These are more prominent and are often found in the Type A personality (Sutherland & Cooper, 1990).

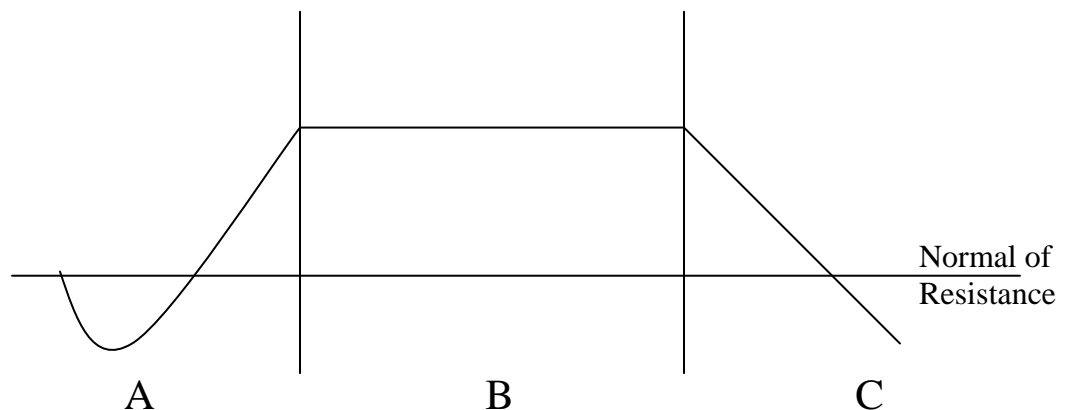
2.6.3: Behavioural symptoms – there can be significant changes in the person's behaviour when exposed to stress over time. These have been characterised as increased consumption of alcohol and drug abuse, absenteeism, inability to rest, changes in speech pattern, being accident prone etc.

The build up of any of the above mentioned symptoms of stress can have serious mental and physical ill-effects on the individual, thereby causing the person's performance to suffer (Marshall & Cooper, 1981). The consequences of these psychological, physical and behavioural symptoms are job dissatisfaction and employee absenteeism as the affected employee dislikes going to work and has little encouragement to perform well on the job. Uncorrected job stress for long periods of time may have another very important consequence, such as 'burnout'. Burnout occurs when excessive job stress exceeds a threshold and an individual collapses due to his or her inability to cope with it (Marshall & Cooper, 1981; Froggatt, 1997a, 1997b). Many authors conceptualise burnout as prolonged stress. Buick and Thomas (2001) explain stress is an adaptation process that is temporary and is accompanied by mental and physical symptoms, whereas burnout refers to breakdown by chronic malfunctioning. Burnout can lead the individual to suffer from fatigue, show lack of enthusiasm in the job or leave the job altogether. Burnout is the third phase of the Hans Selye's G.A.S. (1974) model of stress, explained in Figure 2.

2.7 Model of Stress

The work by Selye (1974), describes stress related illnesses in three stages in the model called the General Adaptation Syndrome Model (G.A.S.). The three stages of G.A.S. have been illustrated in the figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 General Adaptation Syndrome Model



Source: Selye 1974, p. 39 adapted from Sutherland and Cooper 1990, p.48.

Stage A – The alarm reaction, in which the body initially reacts to a stressor. In this phase, there is lowered resistance by the body, which is followed by counterattack, and causes the ‘individual’s defence mechanisms’ to become active. This is known as the ‘fight or flight’ response of the body. Cannon (1930 as cited in C. L. Cooper 1988) suggests that in this ‘fight or flight’ reaction, the individual’s body undergoes a complex physiological and biochemical reaction and it decides whether to stay and fight the stressor or tries to escape the conflicting stressful situation. “At this point, there is an increase in the individual’s heart rate and blood pressure; the blood supply from the skin and viscera are redirected to the brain and skeletal muscles. Also the glucose stored as glycogen in the liver is released for muscular action, the blood coagulation process is enhanced and the supply of blood lymphocytes is increased in order to combat potential injury and infection” (Sutherland & Cooper, 1990). In this stage, if the stressor acting on the body is very severe, i.e. exposure to extreme temperatures; it can cause the body’s resistance to fail and may result in death (Selye, 1974).

Stage B – The resistance stage, in which the body adapts to the situation; this is followed by the successful return to equilibrium for the individual. If there is continuous exposure of the body to the stressor, the body's resistance rises above normal in order to counterattack the stressor and “in this stage, if the stressor continues to act or the defence does not work, the body will move to the exhaustion stage” (C. L. Cooper, Cooper & Eaker, 1988).

Stage C – The exhaustion stage, after the long-continued exposure to the stressful condition by the body; this is when ‘adaptive mechanisms collapse’, as the body is unable to cope with the stress indefinitely. Selye (1974) suggests that the body adaptation energy to any stressor is finite; hence the stress acting on the body cannot be resisted indefinitely. As every individual's body reacts differently to the stressor, the length of resistance of the body depends on the individual's adaptation energy. If the stressor continues to act on the body indefinitely, exhaustion, collapse or death occurs.

This view has been criticised by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), suggesting that a person's reaction to the stressor depends on the individual's perception of the situation. Also, it is the individual's capability of coping with the stressor that will determine the outcome of the situation; whether it reacts harmfully or challenges the individual, depends on the interpretation of the event. Etzion (1987) argues that burnout is a dormant process and more related to prolonged job stress rather than any stressor. Furthermore, Christian and Lolas (1985, as cited in Sutherland, 1990, p.52) debate that the G.A.S. model is too simplistic, as it is valid for physical stressors, e.g. severe burns, noise etc. and cannot explain physiological stress.

2.8 Summary

The above section summarises a broad view of stress and the perception that every individual interprets. It focuses on various different categories of stressors and how stress generates with internal and external conditions resulting in various results. Differing views by various authors also brought up insights on symptoms of stress. However, every individual reacts to and interprets stress in a different manner. This model has been explained in the above chapter. The model elaborates on any individual's resistance towards stress in a given situation and phases that the individual reacts. The model designed by Selye (1974) is a simplistic version and cannot be justified on the level of resistance every individual adapts. While authors have criticised the model to a certain extent with differing views, the fact remains that any individual's resistance towards stress depends on the situation that he or she undergoes. Thus, the GAS model has provided a set example of the resistance adapted by any individual facing a prolonged stressor; it can be inferred that burnout in this phase is a latent process and specific to job stress rather than any stressor. The next section explores effects of stress on productivity or performance of any individual. It also explains the relationship of any individual's anxiety levels with performance levels at work place. Finally, the chapter highlights facts for stress in any individual and the reasons he/she fails to recognise it.

PERFORMANCE AND STRESS

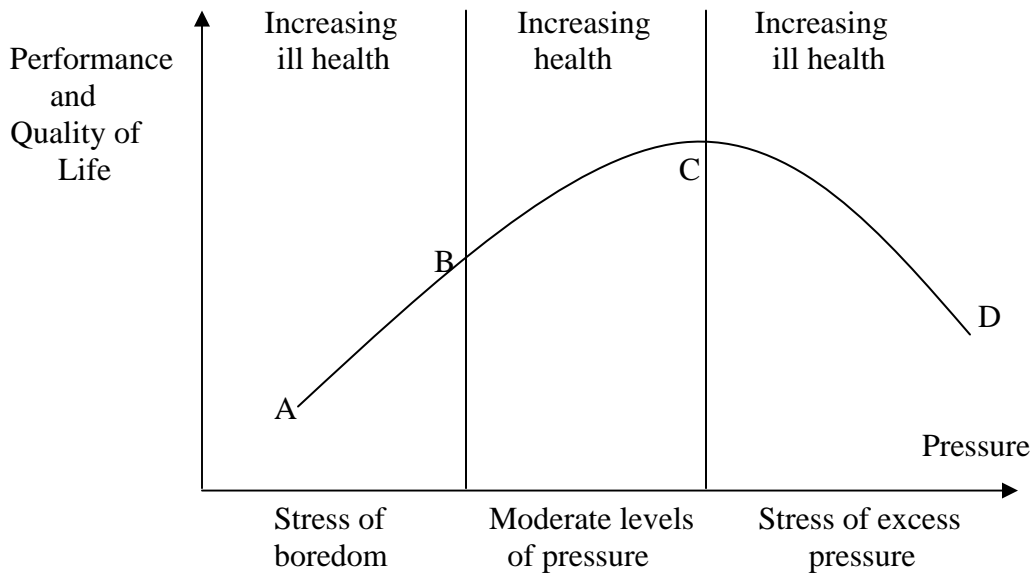
2.9 Understanding optimum level of stress

Stress can have a significant effect both on the individual and the organisation. Various studies have shown that certain levels of stress enhance performance. (Selye, 1974) pointed out stress does not have to be seen bad - it depends on how it is perceived (Cranwell-Ward & Abbey, 2005). It is the level of stress under which people operate that is important: if they are not under enough stress, they might find themselves bored and unmotivated, hence their performance suffers. On the other hand, excessive stress generates stress related problems decreasing the level of performance. As Selye (1956) suggests, unsuccessful adaptation causes serious health effects, while successful adaptation brings growth and increased resistance to stress (Stranks, 2005).

2.10 Performance and Stress:

As various authors suggest, a person needs to be under certain amount of stress in order to function or perform a task successfully. Stress increases the level of anxiety in the body and helps the individual to perform at peak efficiency (Williams & Cooper, 2002). The Yerkes-Dodson law suggests that with certain limits, an individual's performance improves with increased levels of stress, while after a certain point of increasing stress levels, the performance actually declines (Arnold J. Cooper & C.L, 1998, p 40). The Yerkes-Dodson law has been shown in the figure 2.2 and reflects the relationship between the level of anxiety and its effects on any individual's performance.

Figure 2.2 The relationship between anxiety and performance



Source: Arnold, Cooper, and Robertson, 1998, p. 427

As shown in figure 2.2 points B-C, the individual experiences optimum levels of stress in which the level of performance is improving and, within these limits, the quality of output and health is at its peak. As the levels of stress increases, from points C-D, the individual becomes anxious and unhappy, thereby making the performance and quality of output also decrease. At point C, there is optimum pressure and hence the individual is performing at the best of his/her capability. However, when there is inadequate stress or the level of stress is low, as shown, from points A-B, the performance of the individual suffers due to boredom; thereby affecting the health of the individual as a consequence (Arnold *et al.*, 1998, p. 427).

The above figure shows a smooth curve but if drawn from every individual's perspective it would vary. Individuals might vary from performing at optimum level of stress or could sustain the level of performance for a considerable time (Cranwell-Ward & Abbey, 2005).

2.11 Effects of Performance in stressful scenarios

2.11.1 Effect on performance in heat/cold

Hockey (1983, p. 39) suggests that an individual's working capacity and quality of output is affected in extreme temperatures. Continuous physical work at high temperatures generates physiological or psychological changes in the body, i.e. increase in heart rate, and body temperature and oxygen consumption. These changes in the body lead to the build-up of fatigue in the body, thereby reducing the productivity of the individual (Fleishman & Alluisi, 1982). The loss of performance of any individual is directly related to the reduction of output, decreased quality of work and fewer repetitions per unit time. As every individual's body reacts differently to stressors, the physical capability of the person will be affected by his/her physical fitness, age, sex, nutritional status and mental capability to perform under stressful situations. Horvath and Freedman (1957) suggest that the exposure of the body to low temperature results in the loss of productivity in most tasks, whereas the mental ability of the individual is far less affected by it.

Thermal comfort is essential for human beings to perform at their optimal capacity. For most of the population, carrying out continuous mental and physical tasks, the thermal temperature on which they would perform at the peak of their capability is in comfortably cool conditions (Fleishman & Alluisi, 1982).

2.11.2 Effect on performance in noise

Most of the sound that an individual hears is unwanted and has been characterised as noise (T Cox, 1978). The magnitude of the change in intensity of noise in the workplace determines the extent to which the performance of the individual is affected. Shoenberger and Harris (1965) suggest that the 'effect on performance is proportional to the change in noise level and symmetrical: an increase or decrease in level giving a roughly equivalent change.' The noise tends to be more distracting, especially when it is uncontrollable and the productivity of the individual is affected with frequent and unpredictable bursts of noise and with continuous noise, the attention of the individual gets diverted away from the low priority jobs (Corlett & Richardson, 1981). Noise tends to affect the mental and physical well being of the individual. The ill-effects of noise are responsible for

employees becoming less sociable with their colleagues, which includes the reduction of helpful behaviour, having a negative attitude or even exhibiting an aggressive behaviour towards others in the workplace (Girdano & Evarly, 1986).

2.11.3 Effects on performance in shift-work

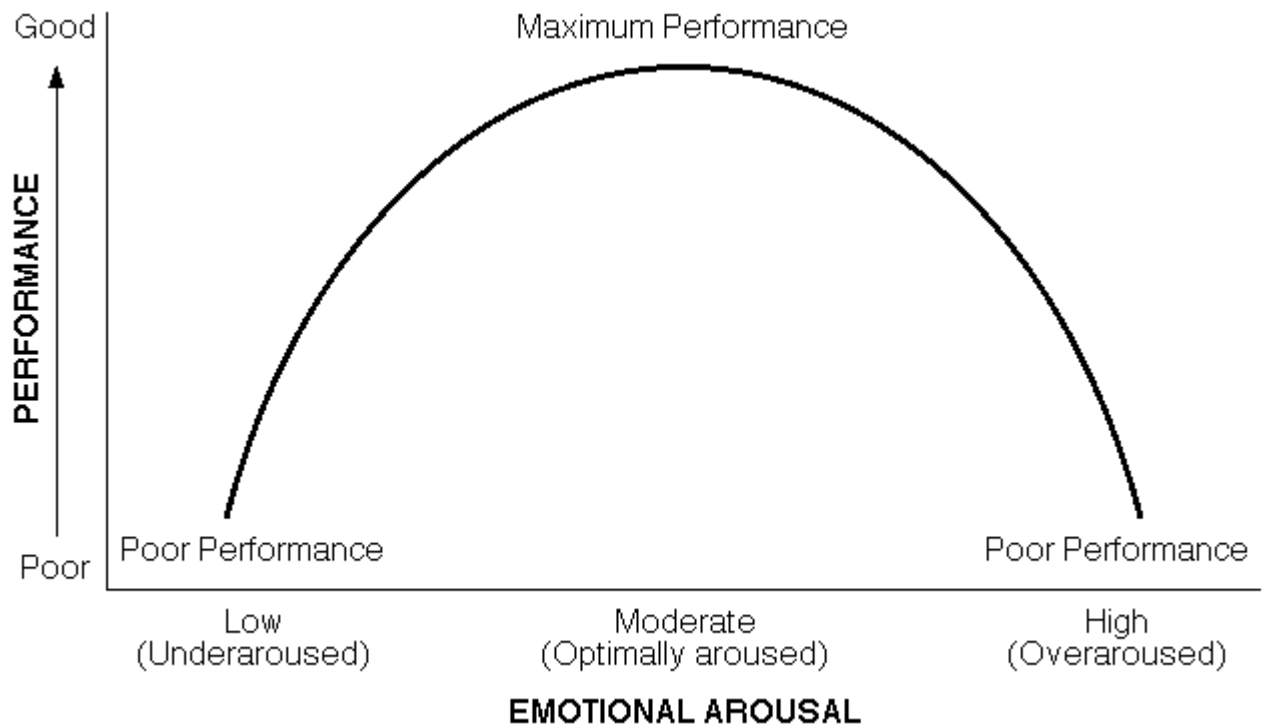
Many workers today, especially in the hospitality industry, need to work in shifts, some of which may be rotating shifts (Arnold *et al.*, 1998). People employed in night shift-work tend to find it stressful as it affects their sleep pattern and family lives. Shift-work has been labelled as a major occupational stress factor as it affects a person's blood temperature, metabolic rate, blood sugar levels, mental efficiency and motivation at work (Cartwright & Cooper, 1997). Individuals suffering from lack of sleep are more susceptible to work accidents and increased absenteeism. However, this view has been criticised by Hockey (1983), suggesting that some individuals react positively to shift-work scenarios. Research by Reinberg (1985 as cited in Sutherland 1990, p. 33) suggests, "Individuals with steeper adrenaline curves than normal are those which tolerate shift-work best." These individuals exhibit a pattern of high adrenaline during the day and very low levels at night, thereby making them less vulnerable to distortion. The rationale behind this behaviour is 'non-adaptation and is better than partial adaptation' (Sutherland 1990, p.33). Selye (1974) suggests that individuals tend to adapt themselves to their shift-work and hence become less stressed from it. According to Krone (1989), hospitality managers working over 70 hours per week in evening or night shift faced higher levels of emotional exhaustion than those working 60 hours, challenging the belief that managers working longer hours are more valuable to the organisation. Hockey suggests that there is no single optimal shift-system that would be appropriate for all individuals as a person reacts differently to every stressor, and thus shift-work needs to be tailored by the employers and organisation, in order for the individual to perform at optimal capacity (Sutherland & Cooper, 1990).

2.11.4 Effects on performance in states of under arousal/over arousal

The arousal theory of stress makes a further assumption, reminiscent of the Yerkes Dodson Law (Cooper 1998), suggesting that the relationship between the level of arousal and the level of performance of an individual take the shape of an inverted 'U'

(Broadbent, 1971). The arousal theory has been portrayed in the figure 2.3 and it reflects the relationship between the levels of emotional arousal in the body and its effects on an individual's performance.

The under arousal/over arousal inverted 'U' hypothesis. Figure:2.3



Source: (D. Clark, 1999)

The arousal theory suggests that if the stimulus provided to any individual on the job is too much or too little, it can cause stress (Buck, 1972). Over arousal occurs when the manager has too many responsibilities, and too little time to fulfil them in. This is rendered by him or her by working long hours, thereby causing stress and eventually the quality of work that is produced also declines. For the managers in the leisure industry, the peak and trough periods of the day or month can also be a major stressor, as it is difficult to balance and forecast the level of business (Jee & Reason, 1988). In order for the establishment to be competitive, managers need to originate new ideas, enhance sales and improve the quality, thereby causing continual mental, physical and intellectual strain

to the manager (Jee Reason, 1988). Under arousal occurs when the job is monotonous due to the repetition of tasks, thus making it stressful (Vroom & Deci, 1992). The perception of monotonous working conditions has been related to employees feeling bored and having job dissatisfaction; thereby leading to high labour turnover, increased absenteeism and a decline in output on behalf of the employees. Under arousal can affect an individual's physiological state, thus making him/her inattentive and may also lead to the employee not reacting appropriately in an emergency (Sutherland, 1990).

Other effects of stress on the performance of the individual as suggested by Corlett & Richardson (1981) are:

- It affects the judgment of the individual in making decisions.
- It may reduce the individual's enthusiasm towards work
- Increased error rates and incidents of accidents.
- Difficult situations may start to be seen as a threat to the individual and not a challenge.
- It may reduce the quality of work being produced by a constantly good performer.
- It consumes mental energy of the body thereby propagating frustration, anger and aggression.

2.12 Summary

This section intends to create awareness regarding the growing phenomenon of stress and stress related diseases. It highlights the fact that a major reason for stress is that a person fails to recognise that he/she is stressed. Stressors are constantly acting on the body; it is the individual's capacity to cope with them, which determine the levels of stress. The effects of short-term and long-term stress and the symptoms of stress have also been explored. Finally, the section determines the result of stressors on the performance of the individual. The model of emotional arousal in the above section explained the level of arousal an individual adapts during exposure to stressors. While many hospitality

managers still face 'role overloading' in their job description, the concept of under arousal is difficult to interpret. Managers are constantly on their feet during operations and allocate praise and reprimand to employees as necessary. These activities demand heavy intimate involvement, observation and people skills. Thus constant juggling and switching modes eventually lead to job stress rather than being depressed about the profile he or she holds.

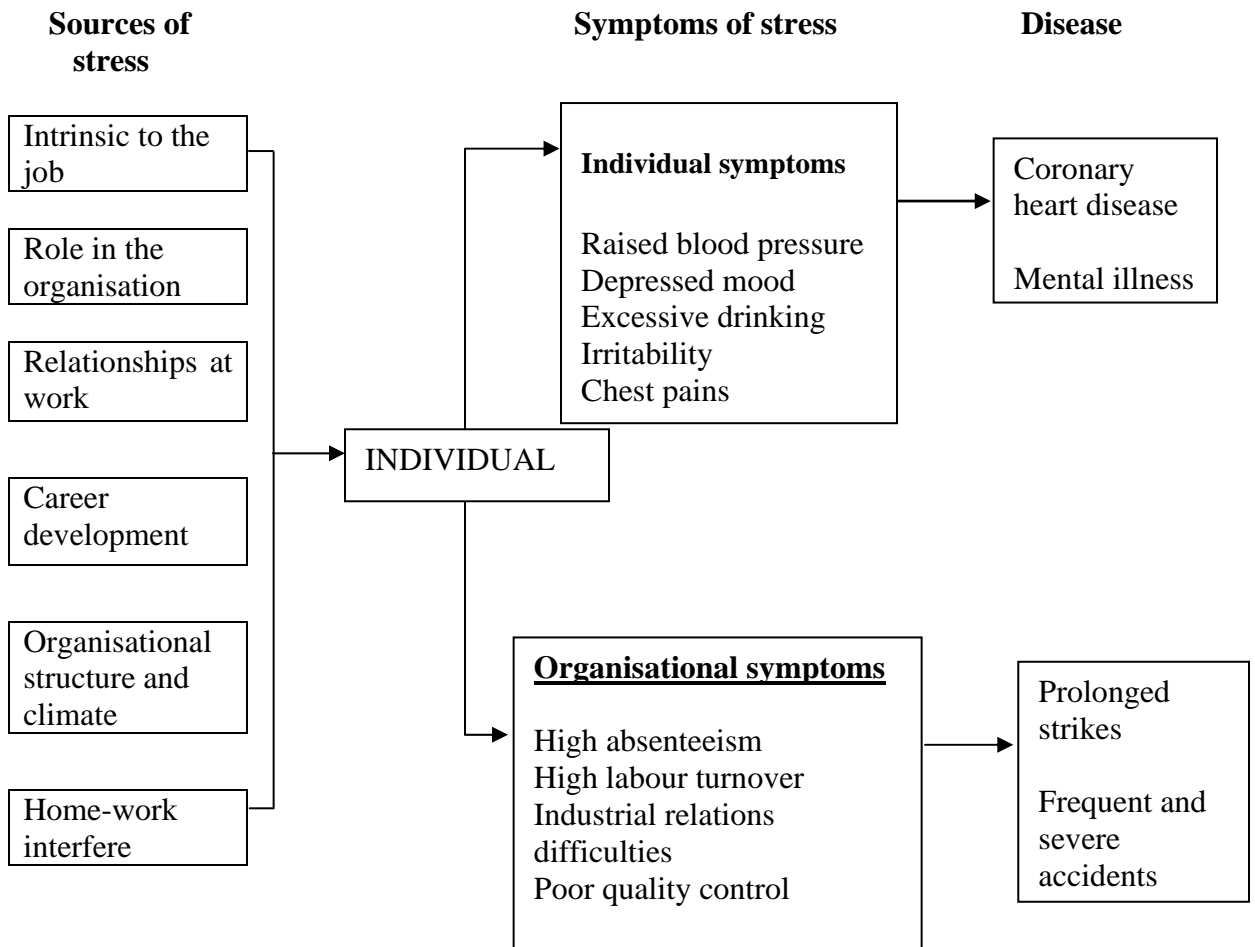
The next part of this research explains organisational stress as an important factor in reducing any individual's performance. A transactional model of stress is described in the literature that assists in determining the sources of work stress leading to symptoms of stress in an individual. Major stressors in the workplace have also been identified in the following literature. Finally, the section details stress management as a global problem and preventive measures that can be used to manage stress at an individual level.

ORGANISATIONAL STRESS

2.13 Defining Job stress:

Organisational stress, or job stress, in simple terms can be defined as physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities and resources provided (Lo & Lamm, 2005). Figure 2.4 illustrates major stressors and their symptoms faced by any individual at the workplace.

Figure 2.4 The Transactional model of work stress



Source: (Cooper & Robertson, 1998)

The major stressors for managers that were identified in the workplace are:

- **Factors intrinsic to the job:** These are the factors or major stressors that cause stress in employees at the workplace. While various authors have researched the effect of environmental factors such as light, noise, vibration in reducing the efficiency of any working employee, C. L. Cooper and Payne (1978) noted in their study that vibration and heat exposed to any working individual reduces efficiency by 30%. Factors such as the structure of the building, insufficient space to operate, lack of privacy and constant interruptions cause a high level of stress losing productivity of the employees (Stranks, 2005, p.17). Rapidly changing work environments and management styles have been a difficult change for employees. Adjusting to such management styles and creating a positive relationship with colleagues have always been linked as a stressor (Cranwell-Ward & Abbey, 2005). The rapidly altering work situation has brought about the use of new technology in the industry. This addition of new technology brings with it the potential threat of unfamiliarity and obsolescence among employees. Inadequate training with the use of the new technology may expose managers to experience overload and threat from subordinates, as the supervision given by them may be perceived as inadequate. This may deteriorate the quality of work relationships in the organisation (Dunham, 2001).
- **Role in the Organisation:** The various roles that managers have to adopt, due to the dynamically changing work environment, cause them stress (Williams & Cooper, 1997). Cranwell-Ward and Abbey (2005) and Stranks (2005) suggest that the organisation demands certain behavioural roles from the managers, which are associated with the fulfilment of the requirements of the job. Stress is caused when the manager is involved in a job that conflicts the demands placed on him/her by the organisation with those of the other members in the organisation or with personal values and beliefs. This role conflict, role ambiguity and duplication of the roles played by the manager on the job was claimed to be a potential stressor to managers. Buick (2001), states that constant juggling of conflicting interests of employees, customer and organisation, coupled with

dynamics of the environment makes middle managers vulnerable to high amounts of stress. The change in the role of the manager by relocation, travelling to different cities for conferences etc., is also considered as a stressful aspect of organisational life (Dunham, 2001). These inadequacies in the job and the lack of clarity of a specific behaviour are related to job dissatisfaction and inappropriate organisational behaviour on behalf of the manager (Stranks, 2005, p. 19).

- Career development: This has been categorised in two factors of potential stressor in the organisation. Firstly, the lack of job security, in terms of the fear of redundancy, obsolescence, the decision of the processes of the company and early retirement, etc. The fear of losing their job, disruption from their presumed career path and transfer and relocations which would lead to reduced power and status are common stressor for managers (Stranks, 2005). Hence, managers would try to portray an image, which would be more desirable to the top management. For instance, working late and taking greater responsibility can enhance the strain upon them. This portrayal of self-image can, in turn, lead to long-term stress symptoms and can harm the individual both physically and physiologically (Dunham, 2001). Secondly, status incongruity; in terms of under or over promotion and the frustration of having reached one's career ceiling, is a source of stress. Progression in their careers is of utmost importance to most managers (Cranwell-Ward & Abbey, 2005). A promotion in the job not only brings them monetary reward but also greater prestige. Hence, when the process of promotions slows down, it becomes a factor of stress to the managers. Also, if the individual's perceived abilities and status do not match in the organisation, the employee will incur stress (Stranks). Managers who have reached their career ceiling have the fear of retiring or becoming obsolete in the organisation and inevitably suffer from some erosion of status, thus causing them stress.
- Work relationships: The quality of relationships with subordinates, fellow managers and top management may cause stressful situations to occur. French and Caplan (1973 as cited in Ross & Almaier 1994, p. 45) suggest that poor

- Organisational Structure and Climate: Jee Reason,(1988), Cooper and Eaker, (1988) and Dunham (2001) suggest that simply being a part of the organisation itself causes managerial stress. When the individual's freedom and identity is at threat in the organisation, it causes him/her stress. If the beliefs and expectations of both the managers and the organisation as a whole are the same, stress is reduced, but if they contradict each other, it can cause job dissatisfaction. Stress is caused when the manager has little or no participation in the decision-making process or feels that his/her work contradicts the personal values and beliefs. Also, when there is lack of communication between the colleagues and the policies of the company cause restrictions on the behaviour of the manager, it causes anxiety to them (Stranks 2005 ;Coch & French 1948, as cited in Cartwright & Cooper 1997, p.20) suggest that the greater the participation of the employees in the decision making process of the company, the higher the productivity and greater job satisfaction, which in turn would lead to lower turnover of staff and enhance the relationship between the management and the employees of the organisation. Cranwell and Abbey (2005) suggest, as cited in Marshall and Cooper (1978, p.23), that non-participation on behalf of the employees in the decision making process of the company is a dominant indicator of job related stress. Its side effects on the employees are poor physical health, low self-esteem,

depression, abuse of drugs and drinking, low job satisfaction, high employee turnover, and absenteeism (Stranks 2005).

- Homework interference: This includes the events that occur in an individual's personal life and their effects on his/her productivity and adjustment at work. Family conflicts, financial difficulties, personal beliefs and conflicting demands of the organisation and family cause strain to the individual. When a spill-over occurs between the domains of the family and the organisation, it adversely affects the satisfaction of the person (Cooper, Dewe & O'Driscoll, 2001). The type of work and the shift hours of work affect the emotional well being of the individual. Research conducted suggests that nightshift workers reported that stress was caused due to marital problems; whereas, afternoon shift workers claimed to have difficulties in their parental role. Research conducted by Buick (2001) found that almost 50% of the middle managers enjoyed family support during their careers in hospitality. Dunham (2001 as cited in Cooper, 1988, p.56), suggested that when overseas relocation occurs among executive families, the executives' job satisfaction is influenced by the adjustment of their partners to the foreign environment.

2.14 The effects of organisational stress on the business:

It is very important from the management perspective to understand that job related stress has become a serious health issue and can be responsible for low productivity of the managers in their jobs; the costs of which are borne by the organisation (Sauter & Keith, 1999). "In the United States, data from multiple surveys suggests that, one-fourth to one-third of the workforce experience high levels of stress at work. Econometric analysis shows that health care expenditures increase nearly 50% for these workers, and nearly 200% for workers reporting both high levels of stress and depression" (Sauter & Keith, 1999, p.2). There are other costs related to occupational stress, i.e. absenteeism, alcoholism, drug abuse, costs of the errors made on the job and poor decision making because of impaired conditions at work. The insidious costs of relationships of managers with their family and colleagues that are affected due to the high levels of stress cannot

be quantified (Ross & Almaier, 1994). A study conducted in UK in 1996 estimated annual staff turnover of 27% due to stress resulting in a loss of 430 million pounds to hospitality organisations (Buick, 2001).

2.15 Occupational Stress Management – A Global Perspective

The globalisation and liberalisation of the world economy has made jobs more competitive and demanding. The acceleration of workers moving to multi-national companies has brought about cross-cultural conflicts between members of the same team. In addition, the faulty lifestyle of employees travelling to different countries, or excessive business visits away from the family, has exaggerated the problem. Hence, the increase in job stress that has taken place in the past two decades has been related to globalisation, organisational change and lifestyle of employees (Kawakami, 1999).

2.16 The behavioural changes that indicate the effects of stress

In order to recognise that an individual is under stress the management does not require much information about the illness itself, stressed individuals demonstrate certain characteristics in their behaviour, performance and habits that can be identified easily (Marshall & Cooper, 1981). The behavioural changes that can be identified in an individual experiencing job related stress can be categorised as follows:

- Avoidance of work
- Lower productivity by a consistently good performer
- Increase in the number of errors made in the job
- Increase in the time required by the employee in doing routine jobs
- Increased alcohol consumption and drug abuse
- Deteriorating relationship with co-workers, friends and family
- Aggression, irritability and loss of sense of humour
- Change in the health of the individual – overeating as an escape, leading to obesity or loss of appetite and sudden weight loss as a result (Ross & Almaier, 1994, p.96).

2.17 How to manage occupational stress

In order to maintain optimum levels of stress, the managers should monitor their stress levels on a frequent basis. This may be accomplished through observation, employee questionnaires, interviews, meetings and surveys. To prevent the phenomenon of workplace stress, a therapist or occupational psychologist may be beneficial for counselling and giving advice to managers on ways of reducing stress levels and enhancing productivity (Woodham, 1995).

There are various different techniques that can be used by managers in order to reduce the stress in the workplace. While choosing an effective stress management technique that would suit the individual, it is important to understand the source of the stress. Some of the different approaches have been identified as the following: -

1. Cognitive-behavioural approach – this focuses on the thoughts of the individual, and his/her reaction towards them. Although there are many different techniques within this approach, the fundamental guidelines are as follows:
 - “Individuals do not respond directly to their environment; they respond to their own cognitive interpretation of the environment.
 - Cognitions (thoughts), emotions (feelings) and behaviours (actions) are causally interrelated
 - The prediction and understanding of negative cognitions and behaviours are enhanced by paying attention to a person’s expectancies, beliefs and attributions
 - It is possible and desirable to combine and integrate cognitive approaches to correcting problems with performance-based and behavioural contingency management” (Kendal & Bemis, 1983; Mahoney, 1977).

2. The rational emotive behavioural approach – this technique focuses on useful physical processes that can be used by the individual to reduce stress. Taking frequent exercise, meditation and yoga are effective methods to aid relaxation. All

these techniques temporarily calm the body by distracting the individual's mind away from the stressor (Edelmann, 1992 & Palmer, 2003).

3. Techniques for reducing stress in the long term – This is concerned with adjusting one's working methods and lifestyle. Formal relaxation techniques have a part in this but equally important are time management skills, a positive attitude, a healthy diet with sufficient exercise, and a pleasant environment. Adjusting these in order to suit the individual will improve the quality of life of the person and increase his/her resistance to stress (Woodham, 1995).

(Sutherland & Cooper, 1990) suggest different programmes that can be used by the organisation to manage the levels of stress of its employees. The programmes are as follows: -

- Education/Awareness building – can be used to make the employees aware of the potential stressors in their personal life and the workplace and also provide them with information about the cause and symptoms of these stressors and help them to cope with the stress (Farmer, Monahan, & Hekeler, 1984). This is a cost effective way of dealing with stress in the organisation as it can reach a large number of people at a time by the means of written material, lectures and presentations.
- Assessment focused programmes – this aims to identify individual stress profiles, and is conducted in small groups. These are conducted by the means of interviews and group discussions, and can assist managers to compare with colleagues, their experiences on stress related subjects (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).
- Therapeutic counselling – also referred to as employee assessment programmes (EAP), these provide counselling to employees to cope with issues, like alcohol and drug abuse, work and career problems and family issues (Payne & Cooper, 2001). Companies, like Kennecott Corporation and the Post House have

introduced these stress counselling programs in the organisation and it has proven to reduce the absenteeism rate by 60% in one year and decreased the medical costs of the company by 55% (Sutherland & Cooper, 2000).

- Eliminating stress from the work environment – if a person’s working environment is organised such that he/she cannot cope with it, then it can be a major source of stress. On the other hand, if the environment is well organised and pleasant, it can help to reduce stress and increase productivity (Fletcher, 1991). Improving the air quality, lighting, decoration and tidiness, level of noise, furniture and ergonomics and personal space, can reduce stress in the environment (Ross & Almaier, 1994).

2.18 Other preventative measures to reduce stress in organisations

The organisation can aid its employees in reducing the stress in the workplace by “discouraging individual’s from becoming workaholics, with no life outside the job” (Sutherland & Cooper, 1990, p.269). Certain preventative measures can be taken within the organisational system, which can help to reduce stress. These are recommended below:

- Redesign jobs in order to eliminate the stress in the workplace by involving the employees in the decision making process of the company and encouraging more flexibility in the job.
- Provide internal motivation, job enlargement opportunities and job rotation.
- Promote self-efficiency and self-monitoring of employees.
- “Develop management training in leadership, interpersonal skills, dealing with change and developing teamwork” (Sutherland & Cooper, 1990, p. 269).
- Encouraging professional growth of employees by the means of better training, supervision, advice, support and feedback
- Provide stress management courses and counselling to cope well with stress.
- Improve working conditions in terms of office ergonomics and stress-free resting. Places.

- Keeping employees informed of the company's decisions and support free communication among employees.
- Promoting a team culture within the organisation and having regular team meetings to encourage feedback from employees (Mathews & Knight, 1997).

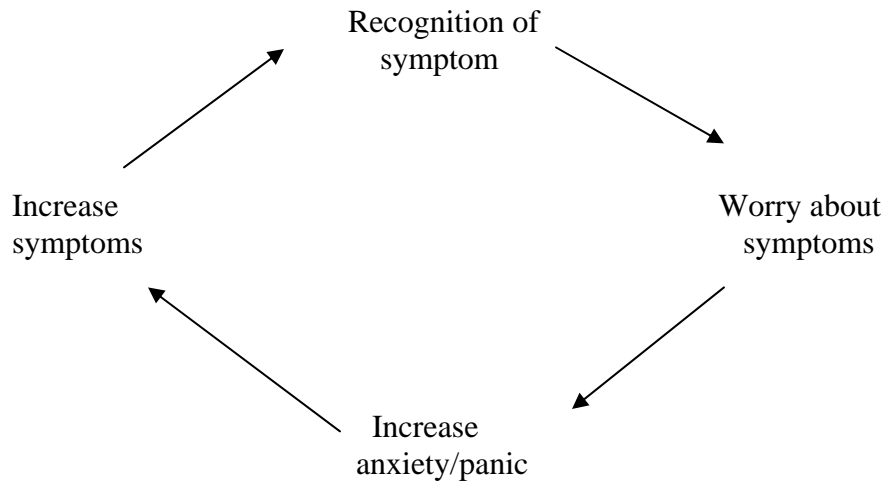
2.19 Manage stress at an individual level

A person can maintain a stress diary in order to monitor the causes and understand the signs and symptoms of stress. This helps to evaluate a person's performance under stress. Once there is an understanding of the major causes of stress, an action plan can be prepared for reducing it and moving towards a positive goal (Palmer & Dryden, 1995; Ross & Almaier, 1994).

There are a number of 'self-help techniques' that an individual can use in order to cope with stress in everyday life, these have been identified as the following: -

1. Relaxation Training – the use of relaxation techniques, e.g. meditation and yoga, have been regarded as the “best possible ways of dealing with stress” (Woodham, 1995, p. 90; Powel & Enright, 1990, p. 92). This aids the body to reduce its blood pressure, maintain the breathing rate and reduce the heart rate in order for the body to recover from over-arousal, by bringing the body's system back to normal (Girdano & Evarly, 1986). Additionally, it aims to reduce the muscular tension, and aids the individual to recognise the stressors and relax for themselves, without the use of drugs.
2. Distraction – thinking about the stressor itself tends to make the situation worse (Powel & Enright, 1990, p.104). It begins the 'fear of fear' cycle, which may provoke further symptoms and deteriorate the individual's health further. The 'fear of fear' cycle has been shown.

Figure 2.5 The fear of fear cycle



Source: Powel and Enright, (1990, p.104)

Distracting attention away from the stressors and not worrying about them will make the ‘fear of fear’ cycle less likely to start and it may lead to the stress fading away on its own.

3. Health, nutrition and exercise – the chemicals consumed by the body may lead to the increase in stress experienced by the body. Large amounts of sugar, processed foods, caffeine and alcohol consumption can have ill-effects on the overall health of the individual (Cooper, 1988). A healthy well-balanced diet may increase an individual’s resistance level and lower the reactivity of stressful situations. The accumulation of adrenaline and muscle tension is the body’s response to stress; hence it needs to be released from the body (Field, McCabe & Schneiderman, 1988). Exercise on a regular basis helps the body to relax its muscles and reduces the levels of adrenaline in the body. Exercise improves the circulation of the blood, lowers blood pressure and helps in clearing the mind from anxiety. It also increases the immunisation of the body, which in turn aids to combat diseases.
4. Goal planning – setting goals gives the person a sense of purpose and a direction to move towards. Moving towards set goals and their accomplishment increases

the self-esteem, happiness and performance of the individual (Fontana, 1994). Being able to plan for the future gives people internal control over the situation and makes them less vulnerable to stress related illnesses. Without goals, an individual may find life empty, without meaning and stressful.

5. Time management – once the planning of goals has been achieved, it needs to be timetabled in order to organise the time used to complete the activities more efficiently. Management of time has been identified as an effective way of coping with stress (Cartwright & Cooper, 1997, Ross & Almaier, 1994). It helps the employees to use their time in the most efficient and productive way, while being in control of their activities and allows them to relax outside their workplace. Education and skills should be developed in order to give prioritisation to the most important jobs. Ross and Almaier (p.81) suggest the Pareto principle or the ‘80/20 rule’, which states, “80% of the time at work is spent on duties that are related to 20% of important job outcomes.”

2.20 Summary

This section explores the effects of stress on the organisation. The employees form the backbone of the organisation and, in order for the organisation to perform well, the employees need to work at the peak of the capabilities. Hence, the well being of the employees should be of precedence for the organisation. The major stressors affecting the employees in the workplace, and the effects of stress on the business, have been examined. Finally, this section identifies the various techniques that can be used by managers at both a professional and personal level, for coping with stress. The following literature review highlights certain concepts about stress by various authors. The chapter explained an overview of stress and different stressors with models to base research on. Further, the research directs towards performance as a dependent variable of stress and the fluctuating levels any individual faces in stressful scenarios. Lastly, the chapter summarises with organisational stress as an important element and techniques used to manage it. The researcher has based this study by formulating and processing data from

various authors to conduct primary research. The next chapter deals with the methodology used to perform the primary research in the organisation. The next chapter also explains the type of investigation, data collection methods and the evaluation of the data gathered. A logical justification is also explained with views of various authors in terms of the type of research conducted and the constraints behind it.

CHAPTER: 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the basis of the research by formulating the research problem. The following chapter discusses the methodology used in the research procedure in order to gather information for the study. The research identified a research question that leads towards designing a hypothesis. The research problem focused on the relationship of job stress in managers and its relationship with their performance in organisations. The chapter further explains the choice of research design, shows justification for the research technique used and the research medium used, in relation to the study.

3.2 Type of Investigation:

According to Sekeran (2003) a qualitative or descriptive study is undertaken when the characteristics or the phenomenon are known to be present and one wants to describe them more clearly by offering a profile of the factors. Such descriptive studies present data in a more meaningful form, thus aiding the researcher to understand the characteristics of stress and the techniques used in order to reduce it.

This study was carried out using a qualitative research method. As suggested by Sekeran (2003), qualitative research describes the phenomenon of stress in the managers' work environment and shows their perception of work related stress. According to Van Maanen (1979, p. 520), it is an 'umbrella phrase' covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode and translate a meaning of naturally occurring phenomena in the social world (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005). An important explanation formulated by Pettigrew (1997) suggests that qualitative research is a sequence of individual and collective events, actions and activities unfolding over time in context. Thus, qualitative research tends to view social life in terms of processes and often conveys a strong sense of change and flux.

This study shows the major stressors in the environment and gives suggestions to the managers to contemplate some future course of action for coping with it.

The research principally reviews the literature on stress management by a wide range of authors who have written on the subject. This is to establish the framework for evaluation, in order to carry out the primary research, which was done through interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to interview middle managers in the following research. The discussion presented a series of questions by the interviewer, in a general form of an interview schedule but able to vary the sequence of questions (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Whilst every method of interview has advantages and disadvantages, semi-structured interviews can be formulated to fit the background and educational level of respondents, and the interviewer holds the right of terminating responses inapplicable to the research (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005). Thus, various authors consider interviews are flexible and more adaptable to practical organisations conditions, whereas questionnaires tend to be fixed to a specific hypothesis and always develop a hypothetico-deductive outlook. In simple terms, quantitative analysis assists in deriving a consensus from the hypothesis, which is difficult to derive in qualitative research. A hypothesis for the research was deduced which would determine the relationship between job stress and performance in organisations. Job stress in organisations is directly proportional to employee performance, where job stress is an independent variable.

This research aimed to allow interviewees to describe their feeling in their own words and without any constraints by the framework of questions scheduled by the interviewer.

Qualitative research is fundamentally described as a descriptive form of research combining observations, interviews and verbal descriptions (Welman, 2005). The aim of this research was to gain information on the perceptions of managers, within the field of job stress. This research focused on exploration of quality and views rather than quantifiable issues. Quantitative design would have focused on a measurement of

reactions of a large number of people to a limited set of questions identifying relationship between variables (Bryman, 2005). As various authors have their own perceived views on the designs that are more feasible and appropriate, Blumer (1956) argues that studies that aim to bring out the relationships between variables omit the process of interpretation or definition that goes on in human groups. In simple terms, we fail to understand what appears to be a relationship between variables, has been produced by people to whom it applies. While quantitative design has a more theory research approach Silverman (1993) criticises qualitative design since it does not acknowledge the variety of forms that the research strategy can assume (Bryman, 2005). Many writers on qualitative research are critical of such a rendition, as the distinctiveness of qualitative research design does not reside numerical data. Hence, a qualitative design was used, as it measures the reactions of a fewer members, but allows further questioning and probing, in order to analyse the perceptions and practices of individuals.

3.3 Sampling Design:

Sekaran (2003, p.276) suggests that “sampling is the process of selecting a sufficient number of elements from the population, so that the study of the sample and an understanding of its properties or characteristics would make it possible for us to generalize such properties or characteristics to the population elements”.

Probability sampling design has been used in this research and, to be more specific, random sampling. Sekaran (2003) also identifies two types of sampling design. The first is the probability design where the chance of the elements being chosen as subjects for the research is known. The latter one is non-probability sampling, which refers to the sampling design of those elements of the population that “do not have any probability attached to their being chosen as sample subjects” (Sekaran, p.276). While each sampling design has advantages and disadvantages, probability sampling enables the research to indicate the probability with which samples results deviate in differing degrees in relation to the population (Welman, 2005, p.56).

The research aims to identify job related stress in middle managers of the hotels in Mumbai, India. A case study approach is used in this research which formulated a theory

based hypothesis and then comparing this to the responses given by participants. Although the research emphasises on the middle managers, there is neither a specific group of middle managers nor a specific department of the hotels from which the managers will be apportioned; that has been determined. Hence, simple random sampling has been chosen; this is also due to the fact that there cannot be an estimate on exactly which managers in the hierarchy will be willing to participate, and with all managers having equal probability and opportunity to contribute. The researcher conducted 22 interviews across three hotels, with each interview lasting approximately 20 minutes. All respondents were middle managers within the age group of 26-35 from the five star hotels specified. All respondents approached for study contributed by participating in the interview. Interviews were conducted in different departments including Food & Beverage, Front Office, Sales & Marketing, Information Technology, Banquet Sales and Reservations. These results focused on the organisation rather than the specific department. No respondents declined to be interviewed since the researcher has previously informed all participants regarding the study.

This sampling design has been chosen as it has two important advantages. Firstly, such investigations have the least bias and the result can be considered as the general view of the population (Sekeran, 2003). Secondly, the process is not dependent on the employee's availability on that particular shift (Bryman, 2005 p. 96).

The researcher designed the interview script to direct the research towards a logical output. This sampling design assisted the researcher to direct the respondents and create a flow in the interview sessions. The main aim of directing open-ended questions was to create a detailed understanding in respondents about the research and filtering the responses towards the research problem.

3.4 Place of Data collection:

The research was conducted at three five star hotels in the city of Mumbai, India. Ethics approval was granted by the Ethics Committee at the Auckland University of Technology on 8th August 2006 for conducting the research and all hotel names were kept confidential. All the three hotels are a part of the Leading Hotels of the World and are

located in central Mumbai. These hotels cater to high business clientele and average occupancy is 85%. These hotels have been addressed as Hotel A, B and C in the following chapter. All interviews were conducted in two weeks in Mumbai due to time constraints. All participants were allotted time slots, which made it easier to co-ordinate for participants for breaks during operational hours.

3.5 Data collection methods:

The data was collected by both the primary and secondary research methods. The researcher accumulated information on stress by various authors through library research, journals, publications, worldwide web etc; this constitutes the secondary research (Sekaran, 2003). The primary research consists of the actual findings and interviews conducted by the researcher on-site. With the help of semi-structured interviews with the middle managers in hotels, the findings of the research have been produced. Interviews can have the form of face-to-face interviews, focus groups and projective approaches. In this study, face-to-face interviews were used as a technique to gather the primary data. The interviews conducted allowed respondents to put their views towards areas for research. A variety of responses in terms of areas that were addressed in the interview script were acquired.

Personal face-to-face interviews with the sampling population of 22 respondents were conducted to obtain information on the issue of interest and derive conclusions in the area of research (Sekaran, 2003). The interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions as “it is known at the outset what information is needed” according to the literature review; trying primarily to acquire any new data and information from the responses of the interviewees (Sekaran, p.227). This research is less formally structured than quantitative research; therefore, question phraseology is less important. Conversations were allowed to develop between the researcher and the interviewee, in such a way that issues were explored comprehensively. Sekeran (2003) suggests that this form of technique lowers the guard of the interviewee and makes the respondent willing to share more information. The questions designed in the interview script focused on job

stress as an important variable in the research design and assisted the researcher in directing the respondents to a logical output.

Various relevant areas of discussion were used in order to focus on the research problem and to avoid a bias in the findings. The interviews were planned to indicate the areas to be covered, but were allowed to proceed in their own pace, in a conversational style. This aided in identifying the issues that were of significance to the respondent.

3.6 Data Analysis:

Content analysis was used in this study as it can reveal completely new views, ideas or concepts. Various strands of literature indicate different qualitative research approaches that analyse the data collected. Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2000) suggest that there is no single most appropriate way to analyse qualitative data.

According to Welman (2005) content analysis can be described as a quantitative analysis of qualitative data. Content analysis methods assist in classifying data according to statements made by respondents, concepts put forward, themes, and various keywords. This assists in segmenting concepts and issues put forth commonly by respondents. Such analysis of data will assist in focusing on the concepts given by respondents and support the meaning behind every response. Also the reflection of much deeper meanings, which were desirable in this study, as different interpretations of the research problem were given by the respondents, in comparison to those that were known prior to the commencing of the interviews (Clark, Riley & Wood, 1999).

Data acquired from all 22 respondents was analysed logically. The researcher processed the data without coding it since the population was in small numbers.

Content analysis was used to classify the answers of each question as given by the sample. Further classifications of the specific answers in each question were pursued, in order to find their connections and similarities to the responses given by the managers. The acquired data have been interpreted in a simple logical fashion, so that the reason for the problem can be conceptualised (Sekaran, 2003). According to Krippendorf (2004) there is a distinction between obvious content of data and its concealed meaning. As

authors describe, obvious content is what they write and concealed meaning is what they intended. The study analysed data with the manifest meaning since content analysis is more about the text rather than it's meaning.

The population was drawn from a set of 45 managers across the three hotels and focused on middle manager category. The researcher had an advantage in this category since middle managers were scattered across management and operations resulting in differing views of stress.

The population was studied in order to identify their present stress levels, with comparison to their productivity standards. Interviews were carried out with managers in order to determine the awareness level of the organisations regarding stress and its effects on productivity. This helped to give insight on the organisations' view on stress, and explore the steps that the organisations are taking to deal with it. The semi-structured interviews were designed by the researcher in a manner to obtain a wide variety of responses, which consisted of open-ended questions that seek the opinion of the respondent, rather than being biased towards a pre-determined conclusion.

3.7 Evaluation of interview questions

The semi-structured interview was conducted in a conversation style. The open-ended questions, which can be found in appendix A, seek the opinion of the respondent, in terms of his/her understanding on job stress and the strategies used in order to prevent stress. The main objective of the interviews was to describe the link between job stress levels and the level of performance of middle managers. The questionnaire was designed to understand job stress as an independent variable and its relationship with performance being a fixed variable. The interviews also identified the symptoms and the causes of stress to managers. This primary information helped to give suggestions to identify the relationship on ways of coping with stress.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Approval was received from the ethics committee at Auckland University of Technology before commencing the research. The approval letter is in Appendix B.

The central ethical principle of a study should be of autonomy, and the participation of the respondents to be voluntary and informed (Sekaran, 2003). The confidentiality of the sample should be maintained, which is the responsibility of the researcher. There should not be any misrepresentation of the data gathered on behalf of the researcher. The self-respect of the respondents should be maintained and they should not be 'forced to respond to the survey' (Sekaran, p.260). The protection of the respondents' privacy was reserved by the researcher. All respondents and their identities were confidential; hence the researcher complied with their demand. Issues of confidentiality and the future use of the study were clearly stated to the interviewees. The researcher gave the interviewees the opportunity to decline any question they were uncomfortable to answer. There was no misinterpretation of the findings on behalf of the researcher.

3.9 Summary

This chapter discusses the design and techniques used in order to carry out the research. It examines the sampling population, the objectives of the interviews and data analysis technique of the research. A case study approach was used in this research but it is difficult to put the hypothesis to test. A total of 22 managers were interviewed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in a conversational style, to get the opinion of the interviewees. The responses acquired basically highlighted actions in a specific environment and vary from time to time. Various insights were highlighted during the research and new ideas and comments were gathered. The research discovered various new factors and suggestions that can be implemented in creating a stress free environment. Study ethics were maintained throughout the research in terms of autonomy of respondents, and there was no misinterpretation of the gathered data. All participants contributed a certain perspective in terms of their own interest about the subject and thus narrowed down the research problem for further analysis.

CHAPTER- 4

Findings and Discussions

4.1 Introduction

The research was undertaken in the five star hotels of Mumbai, in order to study the effect of job stress on the productivity of middle managers. Semi-structured interviews were the tools used to carry out the primary research. The interviews were conducted in order to get the organisation's view on job stress and to find its effects on productivity of middle managers. The findings of the interviews with the 22 managers are shown below and a trend of the answers given by them has been placed under each question. An analysis has also been given, highlighting the effects of job stress on the productivity of managers. The managers, who asked for their names to be kept confidential, have been referred to as 'one manager' or respondents.

4.2 Summary of main findings

The primary findings of the research are:

1. Type A personalities were equally stress prone as their counterparts Type B.
2. The conditions of the equipment and the overall ergonomics of the hotels were well maintained and not considered as a cause of stress.
3. The awareness level among managers regarding stress and its ill effects is increasing within the industry. Also, the costs of job stress are borne by the organisation and stress is considered as a potential hazard to employee productivity and health. Organisations are taking precautions to reduce the stress levels in the work environment.
4. The main stressors in the organisation were (a) the work environment, (b) self-imposed stress by the employees and (c) the clients.
5. Managers suffered from short-term stress delegating various jobs to staff under pressure, as the stress caused to the employees was situational.

6. The symptoms of stress reported by the respondents suggested that they experienced high levels of job stress
7. Overload led to a low job satisfaction, reduced productivity and increased absenteeism.
8. Time management and an optimistic attitude were considered as the most effective ways of dealing with stress.
9. Proper training, feedback sessions, meditation and a disciplined lifestyle can reduce an employees stress levels.

4.3 Findings: - Interview on Job Stress:

A total of 22 managers from the five star hotels of Mumbai were interviewed and their responses were as following:

To managers: to reflect the organisation's view on stress and the strategies used to prevent it. Secondly, to exemplify the impacts of job stress on the productivity of managers.

1. What type of a personality would you characterise yourself as?
 Type A – having time urgency and having a competitive drive to meet targets.
 Type B – more easy going and work steady, also having time for fun.

14 of the managers, which were interviewed, answered Type A

8 of the managers answered Type B

2. Which element in your job description tends to be uncomfortable at times (Environment, Equipment, and Technology etc.)?

The environment and ergonomics of the hotels were considered to be comfortable for 65% of the managers interviewed, although some of the managers described their work place untidy, crowded and noisy, which made it difficult for them to perform well. A disorganised work-area and incompetence shown would aggravate them, be likely

making it difficult to work. Most managers felt work systems such as policies and procedures adopted were not efficient enough to perform at par and needed strong implementation to reduce gaps.

Around 30% of the managers felt that the equipment and technology used in the hotels was easy to use and were comfortable with it. Some of the managers felt that computers tended to be uncomfortable at times and technologically advanced systems should be implemented at an early opportunity considering the size of the organisation. The day long use of the computers and sometimes not knowing how to use it efficiently was considered strenuous. Mobile phones, the Internet and games on computers distract their attention during the course of work.

3. As a manager, what are your views on job stress?

In general, the perception of job stress was that “job stress is quite normal and something that is unavoidable. Learn to manage it and it will work for you!” Stress is caused as every job has its own limitations, demands and quality standards. While the limitations confine the managers in a certain pattern of working, setting parameters for them, the demands of the job are ever increasing with quality standards. These factors together play an integral role in causing work place stress in every job description.

The levels of stress in the industry are high, because managers in their everyday lives have to interact not only with colleagues and subordinates, but also with guests, giving rise to various situations that need to be handled immediately, without prior planning, hence creating stress. Job stress is considered a direct result of the inability of an individual to manage time and consistency performing the job. Managers need to prioritise, delegate and effectively manage their time and meet deadlines, in order to minimise job stress.

One of the respondents from Hotel A stated, “Job stress is directly proportional to time. Prioritise your work and manage time effectively in order to reduce job stress.” Stress at

work depends and fluctuates from every individual, and it is the individual's ability to manage his job profile and time that reduces it. Another respondent from Hotel B states that, "Job stress sometimes is due to various personal reasons that an individual carries at work, leading to under performance at the workplace".

4. What stress do you face in your work environment and what generates it (organisation, clients or family)?

The interviewees gave a variety of responses, as the managers found different aspects of the work environment caused them stress. Also, the respondents felt, one, two or all of the above mentioned stressors (organisation, clients or family) caused anxiety to them.

The most prominent of the above-mentioned category of stressors, was the organisation. Meeting the expectations of the organisation, multiple deadlines and budgets caused stress. Around 75% of the managers described meeting targets was the most stressful element in their specific job profiles and sometimes handling difficult clients would aggravate it

One of the respondents from Hotel B suggested that, "Subordinates who are expecting promotions in a 'gloomy economy', budgeting and the interpersonal conflicts in colleagues, tend to cause me stress."

Self-generated stress and stress from the family was considered second in priority. Self-generated stress affected managers because of their passion to excel in the workplace. The industry is very competitive and, in order to stay ahead, managers need to perform to the best of their ability. In addition, in cases when deadlines were not met, it made them feel inferior among colleagues. The family is a source of stress, when their expectations are not met, or are neglected due to the long hours of work.

Meeting the expectations of the client and being the best problem-solver and decision-maker, although least prioritised, was regarded as a stressor by some managers. Another

important stressor that managers focused was the remuneration offered by the organisation. Operational managers seem to be very unhappy with the pay scales offered due to huge competition in the hospitality industry. Long shift hours and low pay scales slightly affected the loyalty towards the organisation, adding more stress in individuals.

5. What are the impacts of stress on employee productivity?

90% of the managers believed that a certain amount of stress was required by the employee in order to perform well or work harder to cope with it efficiently. Obviously beyond a point the productivity goes down. Overload reduces job satisfaction, which, in turn, increases the man hours used to perform a certain task. Too much stress leads to time off from work, decreasing productivity. An unhealthy employee can never perform to the best of his/her ability. Stress is considered as a menace to the organisation, as it reduced employee productivity, thereby causing the organisation to bear its cost.

A manager from Hotel C stated that “the fact that stress enhances productivity is true only for a short duration; prolonged stress will certainly decrease productivity.”

Although 80% of the managers interviewed by the researcher supported the fact that stress affects employee productivity to a drastic level, a small percentage denied it. A few managers stated that every employee reacts to pressure differently and performs differently than others. Some employees do perform at their peak under pressure and their productivity standards are stable. Another view given by a middle manager explains that an individual working on a specific task is more stressed in comparison to a team working on the same task. Thus individuals are less stressed and can sometimes perform to the peak while working in a team.

Furthermore, the employee turnover in the industry, emotional breakdowns and internal competition are all a result of stress. No stress means a person can never progress as stated by a respondent. Striving for the right balance is the key to minimise job stress and enhance productivity.

6. How important do you think is the role of the organisation in both creating as well as reducing job stress?

Around 68% of the managers believed, the organisation is responsible for creating job stress, therefore should take measures to reduce it. Job stress can be reduced if the organisation is able to recognise and accept the capabilities of the employee and accordingly delegate tasks to the individual.

The organisation can reduce job stress by having appropriate human resource practices (i.e. proper training, lectures on stress management and discussions), making clear goals and objectives in order to avoid confusion and intervene to resolve inter-departmental conflicts. Job stress can also be minimised by the organisation if it focuses on making individuals responsible, rather than being too executive and goal oriented.

One interviewee felt that it is the role of managers to identify that his/her subordinates are stressed and tackle the problem. High levels of hierarchy and lack of coordination between subordinates enhances in creating stress.

One of the respondents in Hotel C suggested that it is beneficial for the employees if the organisation puts pressure on them because it makes the employees strive harder to succeed and employees begin to inspect more aspects of a problem in order to solve it. Few managers stated that the organisation should consider promoting extra curricular activities to nullify stress.

7. How does this organisation tackle the problem of job stress?

The organisations tackled the problem of job stress in the following ways:

- By having regular feedback sessions with employees and asking them to share their problems openly.
- They regarded proper training as an essential tool in stress reduction.
- Informal communication with employees; this will help to identify the root cause of the stress
- Giving remedies of problems and having counselling on areas of concern.
- The human resource department arranges events, i.e. group picnics, parties inter and intra departmental sports competitions etc, in order to divert the employees mind from the stress they are facing on their jobs. This helps to refresh them, by breaking the monotony of their lives.
- Vacations/leaves were considered to be a big relief.
- Having meditation classes for employees to join.
- Having a one-hour break within a 9-hour work period, also having regular 10-minute breaks in between.
- Having a Human Resources counsellor in the hotel to resolve issues or concerns by employees.

8. As part of the organisation, how do you assess your stress levels at work? And do you find your junior managers and subordinates stressed?

90% of the managers faced fluctuating stress levels and the level of stress faced by most managers depends largely on the situation they are facing on the job as well as off it. The way in which a manager handles the situation is directly proportional to them having the right and optimistic attitude. Thus the level of stress faced by the industry is in some high and in others low. It also depends on the amount of stress an individual is ready to take. One manager gave an explanation of a 'time gap'; if an individual can manage his/her

time appropriately, giving enough time to work and to the family, thereby not letting one overlap the other, the individual's stress levels can be reduced.

Stress runs throughout the organisation; like managers, their juniors and subordinates are also faced with fluctuating levels of stress. When managers are stressed, it tends to filter down the hierarchy to their subordinates. When stress levels are high among subordinates, managers try to encourage and motivate them by occasionally praising them for their work as a team or by following up on their activities on a personal basis. 'More often than not it is just a lack of communication or awareness that leads employees to imagine threats'.

9. How does a fluctuating stress level in your current job description influence your performance towards a certain task?

The best way of keeping stress under control was by having a positive state of mind and staying confident when faced with a stressful situation. In a stressful scenario, pause and move out of the situation or place, for a while. Managers felt instead of losing their temper or getting agitated with people around them, if they left the job causing them stress for the particular moment they could manage their stress and do the job more satisfactorily after some time. One of the respondents in Hotel B suggested that 'being an optimistic and not overburdening oneself, can maintain a balance between the demands of the organisation and society.'

Other ways of reducing stress in the long run were as following:

1. Sharing the problems with colleagues
2. Listening to music and television
3. Regular exercise, meditation, yoga.
4. Regular breaks while working
5. Having hobbies and reading.
6. A disciplined lifestyle, regular eating habits. Keeping consumption of coffee, smoking, and drinking alcohol to a minimum.

Stress, if not managed appropriately, does have an affect on the managers' productivity levels as it would get them agitated, angry and frustrated. Excess stress would cause physical symptoms like headaches, increased blood pressure, overtiredness and palpitation, thereby influencing their morale and performance.

10. What is your opinion on high level stress and employee turnover being directly proportional to each other?

Of all managers, half felt that there was a high positive correlation between high levels of stress and the high rate of turnover faced by the hospitality industry, while the other half thought otherwise. The first half of them felt that the high rate of turnover was due to dissatisfaction of employees. This dissatisfaction was caused by the work hours, work load, competition and the incapability of individuals to cope with the hard work and remuneration offered. A respondent from Hotel A suggested that 'stress in this industry is unavoidable; the way one deals with it is one's choice.' She also explained that working in this industry required a lot of patience and some employees have a 'work not meant for me' attitude, which made them quit their jobs. More than pay, a person tends to look for a conducive and happy work environment and if he or she does not find it, the individual tries to find it elsewhere.

The other half of the managers had a different view. They felt that high turnover was quite normal within the hospitality industry. People tend to move due to better job opportunities, in which the stress levels are almost similar. As a person grows in the job, his/her needs and aspirations also grow, thus switching jobs for personal gain is common.

11. Does the recruitment process of this organisation involve a stress assessment questionnaire?

All the hotels did not include a stress assessment questionnaire in their recruitment process. Although the managers perceived that there is a growing awareness regarding workplace stress, the need to include a stress assessment questionnaire in the recruitment process had not been felt. A stress reduction programme for the managers was considered more popular and effective technique. The managers suggested that the major stressors that influence job stress are affected by the work environment; hence an organisation should lay emphasis on developing stress reduction techniques.

12. How far does a stress assessment programme in the recruitment process help to find employees who can handle their stress better?

The inclusion of a stress assessment questionnaire during the recruitment process was regarded as an innovative idea, but the managers had different views of its benefits. Some felt that it would directly affect the turnover rate of employees in the industry and the recruit would get the true picture of the hotel industry before joining. The body language, facial expression change and confidence level could be better assessed by a stress assessment programme during the recruitment phase. 'If the personal life of a person is in turmoil and shows no sign of improving, then it is better not to take him on the job in the first place.' On the other hand, the other view was that it would not be an indicator of how an individual deals with a real life situation. According to them, it was the attitude of a person which made a difference as to the way he/she handled job stress.

13. Is there participation of employees in the decision making process of the company?

95% of the managers denied the involvement of employees in the decision making process but a few agreed to a certain extent. The top management makes the strategic decisions and the day-to-day operational decisions are made by the employees at all levels in the hierarchy. Feedback is taken from the employees, as they are considered as

the best judges of the changes taking place in the industry. 'Employees are encouraged to have free discussion and once a decision is taken, employees are expected to stick to it in a united manner.'

14. Does your company encourage opportunities for career development, i.e. management training programmes, computer programmes or language lessons?

The organisations were very proactive where the growth of employees was concerned and provided many opportunities for them to learn and develop. There were classes for languages for employees to join. Also there were computer courses and wine tasting seminars held regularly within the organisation. The organisation conducted a Management Trainee Programme for employees to specialise in areas for future management positions

15. Are there any in-house or external agency managed stress training programmes for the employees to join?

The hotels had their own training cell, 'The Centre of Excellence', which dealt with the essential training issues for the entire organisation. Most of the managers were unaware of any external agencies that managed stress training programmes. Employee satisfaction survey (ESS), an externally managed agency, had been reviewing employee satisfaction issues for the organisation as analysed from few respondents.

4.4 Discussions

The research has been able to synthesise various factors that were identified during the literature review and have been analysed through the primary research. The research identified job stress as a rising phenomenon in the hospitality industry in Mumbai, India. Friedman and Rosenman (1974 as cited in C. L. Cooper & Payne 1989) and Watts and Cooper (1992) categorised the personality types of people in two broad categories, namely Type A and Type B. The literature review suggested that the two personality types have a very different approach to their work and Type A personalities tend to be

more stress prone. Type A personalities are considered to have time urgency and being very competitive; whereas Type B personalities are more easy-going and work steady. According to the research conducted, 63% of respondents belonged to the former category and the rest, 37%, to the later. There was no bias to get such a result; the research was based on a simple random sampling (Sekaran, 2003).

Majority of managers were comfortable with the conditions of the equipment and the overall ergonomics of the hotels. As the equipment was properly maintained, the stress caused by working with out-dated equipment is reduced. Some of the managers found the use of computers tended to be strenuous at times. New and old technology and consumer friendly equipment was seen both as a stressor and stress reducer. As at first, the employees found themselves ill-equipped, but with training they found the new equipment and technology reduced their workload (Cooper & Payne, 1978). As most managers were quite comfortable with their conditions of the equipment and technology they worked with, it has not been regarded as a stressor.

The awareness level among managers regarding the effects of high levels of job stress is increasing. They realise its importance and are willing to take measures to manage their stress better. Job stress was viewed as being prominent in the industry. It was considered as something that employees need to manage and make it work for them. Interaction with co-workers and guests raised situations which needed to be handled without prior planning, thereby causing the managers stress. Managers repeated the fact that time was a major stressor in the workplace; effective time management reduced stress levels (Cartwright & Cooper, 1997).

Through the data collected from the managers, it is deduced that work environment was considered to cause the maximum amount of stress. The organisation had certain expectations from its employees and for these expectations to be met or surpassed, managers needed to be persistent in their work. The overall view of the interviewees was that the industry was very competitive and, in order to stay ahead, they needed to perform at the best of their capabilities. Also, the multiple deadlines, tight budgets, relationships

with colleagues, personal needs and aspirations all contributed to the level of stress faced by managers (Cooper, 1988). Secondly, self-generated stress from within them to excelling in the workplace added to the already existing work pressure. Managers had deadlines which needed to be met and in cases when these targets were not achieved, it made them feel inferior among their colleagues. There was stress caused from the family members by them calling at work, meeting their needs and expectations but to a certain extent. Finally, the demands placed on managers from their clients or guests were also considered as a stressor.

Powel and Enright (1990) suggest that a person needs to be under a certain amount of stress in order to function or perform a task successfully. Controlled levels of stress increase the arousal in the body and help the individual to perform at more efficiency. The Yerkes-Dodson law suggests that, “within certain limits, an individual’s performance actually improves with increased levels of stress. After a point, however, stress results in reduced performance” (Cooper, 1988, p. 40). Research explored this relationship between stress and performance among the managers in hotels. It was observed that stress is quite beneficial and in appropriate levels, it increases both the efficiency and productivity of managers. However, this relationship between anxiety and performance known as the Yerkes-Dodson law’ does not continue indefinitely (Arnold J. Cooper, 1998). High levels of stress cause overload, thereby reducing the efficiency, productivity and the health of managers. The managers were regarded as working at optimal levels or in the overload phase of the Yerkes-Dodson law. There was no manager who considered his/her work being boring or depressing due to under-load.

The stress faced by the employees was considered purely situational and can be generated by any source, i.e. organisation, clients, family or self-generated. The managers’ views were that this source was purely determined by the individual and his/her capabilities to cope with it (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Powel and Enright (1990) suggest that short term stress is the immediate reaction of the body to a stressor; it is when a person goes under pressure due to a situation. Anxiety caused to a person due the adrenaline rush in the body during a difficult situation or a meeting is related to short-term stress. The

managers' complaints of headaches, increased blood pressure and palpitations as their symptoms of stress are all symptoms of short-term stress. As managers considered their stress to be situational and their symptoms being such, it was deduced that they suffer from short-term stress.

The psychological symptoms of excessive stress shown by the managers were anger, agitation and frustration, while the physical symptoms were headaches, increased blood pressure, fatigue and palpitations. The behavioural symptom was their inability to rest in a stressful situation (Sutherland & Cooper, 1990).

Buck (1972) suggests that high stress levels leads to reduced job satisfaction, thereby diminishing morale and productivity. Overload made employees fall sick and unable to perform, thereby reducing their productivity. Managers found their juniors and subordinates suffering from fluctuating stress levels, as stress tends to filter down the hierarchy of the organisation. Stress was considered as a menace to the organisation as it reduced employee productivity, thereby causing the organisation to bear its costs. The organisation can reduce stress levels of the employees by having well defined job positions and roles, good equipment and infrastructure for employees to work with. It was identified that proper training and lectures on stress management can minimise job stress. Training plays an important role in making the employees aware of stress and its ill effects (Sutherland & Cooper, 1990). The human resource department of a company can help in reducing employee stress levels by constantly interacting with them and drawing out the major stressor through informal communication, feedback and discussions. Apart from proper training, recreational activities were considered to be a useful step that organisations can take to reduce work related stress. Having informal gatherings, group debates, inter and intra departmental competitions help to break the monotony of work and employees are able to interact with each other without any tension on their minds.

The techniques adopted by the organisations to reduce the stress levels of employees were by having regular feedback sessions, lectures, meditation and yoga classes' workshops, adequate staffing, training of employees, counselling, regular breaks between

work hours and arranging events. A self-help technique used by managers to minimise their stress levels was to have an optimistic attitude and stay confident in a stressful scenario. Other techniques used to reduce long-term stress were regular exercise, meditation, yoga, reading and a disciplined lifestyle.

There was a difference in opinion on the issue of high levels of stress being responsible for the rate of turnover of employees in the hospitality industry. Very few managers felt that there was a high positive correlation between the two. They felt individuals were unable to cope with the pressure, work system, remuneration and were dissatisfied with their jobs; hence they quit work. The other half of the managers felt that switching jobs for a better opportunity was common and had no correlation with the stress levels of the job.

The inclusion of a stress assessment questionnaire or an interview in the recruitment process, which would establish an employee's ability to manage stress, was considered as an innovative idea. The organisations did not have such a programme and were uncertain of its benefits. Some managers felt that this would not be a true indicator of the abilities of an individual to handle a real life situation, while others felt that a stress assessment programme could be very beneficial for the organisation and reduce the turnover faced by the industry. Overall, the managers were more favourable of having a stress reduction program, as the major stressors that influence job stress are propagated by a work environment. Stress management programmes were viewed as an effective means of making the employees aware of the various stress reduction techniques (Farmer, Monahan & Hekeler, 1984).

Employees were involved in the decision making process of the company to an extent to which the decisions directly involved and affected them. It was a hierarchical structure as the top management made strategic decisions concerning the organisation and the day-to-day operational decisions were made by the employees at all levels, as they were considered to be the best judges of the changes taking place in the industry.

The organisations were very proactive in encouraging their employees in career development opportunities. Organisations provided the employees with computer classes, wine tasting courses and language classes, although the overall idea was that these tasting were provided for the employees for them grow in the hospitality industry. The programmes were financed by the organisation if they were linked to the company's benefit.

4.5 Limitations of the research

The research interviews were carried out on-site; within three five star hotels of Mumbai. These hotels were used because the interviewer had previous work experience within these hotels and was able to get access to the managers of the different departments of the hotel. The limitation of the research was its restriction to only middle managers of five star hotels in Mumbai, India, as the managers at executive level were unwilling to participate in the research due to busy schedules and time constraints.

The research was confined to 'immediate processing' of the situation, at which the interviewees were present (Hockey, 1983). The managers were interviewed only once, so the stress faced by them at that point may have been more prominent.

The interviews took place during day shifts, so only the managers in that shift were interviewed. The research therefore did not reflect the stress faced by the employees in other shifts. The study did not encompass the individual differences of the respondents that might have acted as the moderators of their experience of stress. The individual differences include the variables, like sex, age, length of service in the organisation and their experience in the industry, which could have strengthened or weakened the potential effects of the stressors.

As the number of managers that were willing to give the interviews was 22, a complete analysis of the Yerkes-Dodson Law (Cooper, 1988) could not be made. It was assumed for the rest of the population that they faced the same amount of stress in their workplace. Also, the personality types described by Friedman and Rosenman (1974, as cited in

Cooper & Payne, 1990, p.19), responded in a similar way to the questions in the interview, a concrete difference the type of personalities could not be deduced.

As research was carried out in the hotels in which the interviewer had previous experience in specific departments, there might have been a bias in the responses of the interviewees. The responses on behalf of the interviewees on their perception of the organisation, job stress, work hours and productivity could only be assumed to be true by the researcher. However, the interviewer assured the managers that their responses would be kept confidential and the study was purely for an academic purpose.

Another major limitation was due to the time constraint of the research since it was a completion module of post graduate study. Because of the time constraint, relation to completion of post graduate study through the limiting depth of exploration and discussion possible, an in-depth investigation on other aspects of stress could not be investigated.

CHAPTER – 5

Conclusions and Recommendations for Further Research

5.1 Conclusion

The international hospitality industry has been growing consistently in this dynamic market and various factors have been supporting it to gain a competitive advantage. Organisational stress is considered as a growing phenomenon and the awareness among the managers of its ill effects is increasing. The impacts of stress are not necessarily negative; it is also regarded to be very essential in the workplace. Inadequate stress makes an individual bored and propagates lack of interest in the work. High levels of stress also lead to employee ill-health and the productivity of the individuals suffers due to it. Fluctuating levels of stress decreases productivity, lowers employee morale, increases absenteeism due to sickness and increases labour turnover; the costs of which are borne by the organisation. The organisation needs to maintain optimal levels of stress in the workplace for the employees to perform at the peak of their capabilities.

In context of the managers, it was deduced by comparing the secondary data to the data collected through the interviews that the managers are suffering from high levels of stress at their workplace. Their symptoms of mental and physical ill-health suggested that the managers suffered from short-term stress. Such symptoms, if present throughout the managers of the organisation, may have detrimental effects on the performance of the organisation as a whole due to the fact that, when managers are stressed, it tends to filter down the hierarchy to their subordinates.

There was significant awareness among managers about ill effects of stress on their health and their work. The managers were very willing to take measure in order to minimise stress and take the appropriate steps to manage it better. This enthusiasm showed by the managers to change and learn techniques to reduce the stress levels in the workplace should be harnessed by the organisation, which evidently would lead the work environment to be more relaxed and will increase the productivity of the employees, thus being more profitable for the organisation in the long run.

A stress assessment questionnaire or interview in the recruitment process of the company will allow those employees to be selected for the job, which could cope better with the stress levels of the industry, hence decreasing the turnover rate of employees in the organisation., although the research suggested that a stress management programme for the managers would be more beneficial, as the major stressors that influence job stress are propagated by the work environment. Conducting awareness programmes on stress and its ill effects for employees is a prominent method to manage the stress levels in the work environment.

There are many stress management techniques described in the literature review which can be adopted by the managers and the organisation in order to optimise the levels of stress faced by the employees. The analysis identified certain effective and practical stress reduction techniques that can be used by the organisations to reduce the levels of job stress faced by managers.

The managers should be given proper job descriptions and a focused profile outline of their responsibilities, so that they can get a clearer understanding of what is expected of them and aid them to be more organised. This will ensure that they complete their work without much pressure and get adequate time for themselves as well. By ensuring that proper job rotation is carried out, the repetitiveness of work carried out in the workplace can be reduced considerably.

Good management, adequate and skilled manpower, proper division of work and the delegation of authority will help reduce job stress, enabling not only individuals but teams to come out stronger. Giving employees information about the business, investing in new and improved technology, as well as setting up goals for the employees and having incentive schemes should increase commitment, motivation and enhance productivity.

The organisation is responsible for creating job stress hence it should take appropriate measures in order to optimise the levels of stress faced by the employees. Job stress can be reduced if the organisation is able to recognise and accept the capabilities of the managers and accordingly delegate tasks to them. Through proper training, development and feedback sessions the managers will be able to enhance their skills and would also help them to cope better with the changes in their work environment.

Recreational activities, inter and intra departmental competitions, group outings, giving regular breaks to employees between work hours, discussions, counselling, meditation and stress management workshops are some of the steps the organisation can adopt to reduce the levels of stress faced by the employees. Sport centres for employees at all levels in the hierarchy would allow them to interact with each other on a personal basis.

Self-help techniques in terms of regular exercise, meditation, yoga, taking walks, reading and a disciplined lifestyle can be used managers to reduce stress. The more a person looks upon a job as creating stress, the more over burdened he/she would feel, hence by keeping a positive attitude and being organised a person can manage stress better. Goal planning gives a person a sense of purpose and a direction to move towards. Time management has been identified as the most effective way of reducing stress as it allows managers to organise themselves and give adequate time to their work and family.

Progression in their careers is of utmost important to most managers (Cooper & Payne, 1990). The thought of reaching a career ceiling tends to be very frustrating for managers, as it brings about a fear of redundancy and obsolesce in them. The opportunity to develop their career gives them a feeling of job security and sustains their needs and aspirations. Career development opportunities, including those which are not directly linked to the hospitality industry, should be encouraged by the organisation; this will develop and enhance the skills of the employees and make them more confident to handle difficult situations in the work environment.

The concept that has gained importance in today's organisations is empowerment, which suggests that by involving people to participate in the decision making process of the

company makes them motivated; hence increasing the job satisfaction and performance of the employees (C. L. Cooper & Payne, 1978; Riley, 1991). Employee involvement in decision-making process of the company is crucial, as it makes them feel a part of the organisation and strive harder to make it better (Lashley, 2001). Moreover, empowerment frequently involves developing responsibility down through the organisational hierarchy to those individuals who have the relevant understanding to make the best decision (Kinlaw, 1995). Hence it assists in the team formulation between the members of staff, supervisors and the management, thereby leading to effective communication and information sharing within the organisation.

5.2 Recommendations by the Researcher

The research analysed a direct relationship between stress and the level of performance in any individual in the hospitality industry. The research also compared literature stated by various authors and practical situations and deduced various factors that were not managed accordingly. Managers were highly stressed in their job profiles and various factors were identified during the course of study. The research was conducted in Mumbai, India and thus various cultural, situational and competitive factors could have also been the cause of stress. The researcher suggested a few recommendations to manage and reduce stress for managers:

- Stress is a perception and not a compulsory feature in any individual's life. Stress needs to be managed optimistically and positively in any scenario and managers should filter it down to subordinates for a positive sense of feeling in them.
- Managers need to focus on the concept of 'Rational Thinking' to convert negative stress into positive emotion. Managers need to be precise with their judgments, thus eliminating the factor of being threatened by any particular situation.
- Time Management should be practised by managers in their personal as well as professional life in order to decrease the element of stress.
- Managers should consider building an 'Action Plan' of things that need to be done individually and for the team. These would include elements that need to be

performed, controlled and thus eliminating causes of stress. The Action Plan should also include factors relating to Environment, Health etc. to minimise the cause of stress.

- Motivational and Career coaching should be considered by organisation for managers on a regular basis. Managers should undergo counselling in order to identify the level of stress faced. A small amount of inspiration and motivation would nullify the cause of stress formation and increasing loyalty towards the organisation.

Reducing workplace stress is largely a matter of common sense and good management practice, and simply requires employers and employees to work together for the common good. Both share a joint responsibility for reducing stress which, when this is successful, can help employees to enjoy their work more and businesses to thrive as a result. Finally organisations need to work towards the creation of a healthy work culture: a culture where ways of working have become so ingrained that the need for management standards would no longer exist. In simple words, effective stress management is the key towards a stress free work environment.

5.3 Recommendations for further research

Hockey (1983) suggests that 'immediate processing' is inadequate in measuring the dynamic effects of stress on an individual. Further research could measure the individual stress levels in the changing circumstances of the work environment and also in seasonal variations. Therefore, the reliability of the individual responses on his/her perception of the current situation would be invalid.

A more detailed study on the effects of stress and its ill effects on the individual and the organisation would be interesting. This would reflect the costs borne by the organisation due to stress related illnesses, consequently making an appropriate cost benefit analysis of the stress reduction measures that an organisation can undertake.

Research into the effectiveness of the coping strategies which individuals adopt would be useful in identifying solutions for those suffering from abnormally high levels of stress. In addition, an Employee Assessment Program and a study in the most feasible stress reduction techniques would be helpful in identifying an appropriate method to reduce stress in the workplace.

A more extensive study on hospitality organisations that have already established a “best practice” in terms of reducing stress in employees and currently function a standard operating procedure. Organisations identifying this factor as their own and not depending on the employee remedying the situation would be an important topic in this area of study.

The research was undertaken to in order to investigate the job stress faced by the middle managers in the five star hotels of Mumbai, India. A further study in different regions or countries could be undertaken in order to compare the different scenarios and techniques used elsewhere. In addition, research could be undertaken to identify the stress levels faced by employees in different ‘star categorised hotels’. A study of the stress levels faced by employees in different levels of the hierarchy in the organisation would be interesting.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Script

To managers: To reflect the organisations view on stress and the strategies used to prevent it

1. What type of a personality would you characterise yourself as?
Type A – having time urgency and having a competitive drive to meet targets.
Type B – more easy going and work steady, also having time for fun.
2. Which element in your job schedule or description tends to be uncomfortable at times?
3. As a manager what are your views on stress in your current job description?
4. What stress do you face in your work environment and what generates (organisation, clients or family) it?
5. What are the impacts of stress on employee productivity or performance?
6. How important do you think the role of the organisation is in both creating as well as reducing job stress?
7. How does this organisation tackle the problem of job stress?
8. As part of the organisation how do you assess your stress levels at work? And do you find your junior managers and subordinates stressed?
9. How does a fluctuating stress level in your current job description influence your performance towards a certain task?

10. What is your opinion on high stress levels and employee turnover being directly proportional to each other?
11. Does the recruitment process of this organisation involve a stress assessment questionnaire?
12. How far does a stress assessment programme in the recruitment process help to find employees who can handle their stress better?
13. Is there participation of employees in the decision making process of the company?
14. Does your company encourage opportunities for career development i.e. management training programmes, computer programmes or language lessons?
15. Are there any in-house or external agency managed, stress training programmes for the employees to join?

Appendix B: Ethics Approval Letter



MEMORANDUM

To: Robert Steele
From: **Charles Grinter** Ethics Coordinator
Date: 8 August 2006
Subject: Ethics Application Number 06/131 **Techniques used to manage stress and its impact on middle management's performance in the hospitality industry in India:**

Dear Robert

Thank you for providing written evidence as requested. I am pleased to advise that it satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEK) at their meeting on 21 June 2006 and that, acting for the Executive Secretary of AUTEK I have approved your ethics application. This delegated approval is made in accordance with section 5.3.2.3 of AUTEK's *Applying for Ethics Approval: Guidelines and Procedures* and is subject to endorsement at AUTEK's meeting on 14 August 2006. Your ethics application is approved for a period of three years until 8 August 2009. I advise that as part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit to AUTEK the following:

- A brief annual progress report indicating compliance with the ethical approval given using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/ethics>, including a request for extension of the approval if the project will not be completed by the above expiry date;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/ethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 8 August 2009 or on completion of the project, whichever comes sooner;

You are reminded that, as applicant, you are responsible for ensuring that any research undertaken under this approval is carried out within the parameters approved for your application. Any change to the research outside the parameters of this approval must be submitted to AUTEK for approval before that change is implemented.

Please note that AUTECH grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to make the arrangements necessary to obtain this. Also, should your research be undertaken within a jurisdiction outside New Zealand, you will need to make the arrangements necessary to meet the legal and ethical requirements that apply within that jurisdiction? To enable us to provide you with efficient service, we ask that you use the application number and study title in all written and verbal correspondence with us. Should you have any further enquiries regarding this matter, you are welcome to contact me by email at charles.grinter@aut.ac.nz or by telephone on 921 9999 at extension 8860.

On behalf of the Committee and myself, I wish you success with your research and look forward to reading about it in your reports.

Yours sincerely

Charles Grinter

Ethics Coordinator

On behalf of Madeline Banda, **Executive Secretary, AUTECH**

Cc: Samit Ajgaonkar samit007@yahoo.com



Appendix-C: Application Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Title of Project: Techniques used to manage stress and its impact on middle managements' Performance in the hospitality industry in India:

Taj Group of Hotels, Mumbai, India.

Project Supervisor: Mr. Robert Steele

Researcher: Mr. Samit Ajgaonkar

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project (Information Sheet dated 25th May 2006.)
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that the interview will be transcribed.
- I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a copy of the report : tick one: Yes No

Participant signature:

Participant name:

Participant Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....
.....
.....
.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 14th August 2006 AUTEK Reference number: 06/131.

Appendix-D: Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet



Date Information Sheet Produced:
25th May 2006

Project Title

**The techniques used to manage Stress and their Impact on Middle Managements' Performance in the hospitality industry in India.
Taj Group of Hotels, Mumbai, India.**

Invitation

Dear participants, on behalf of this research I would like to invite you to participate and spare some of your valuable time in providing practical suggestions and recommendations supporting the study. The Research is purely on voluntary basis and no individual is obliged to be a part of the study.

What is the purpose of this research?

The research is an academic requirement for a Masters of International Hospitality Management at the Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand. The study intends to analyse techniques used to manage stress and the affect it causes on performance in middle managers in hospitality.

How are people chosen to be asked to be part of this research?

All participants are selected to fit the criteria of middle management or middle managers in five star hotels.

What happens in this research?

The research initially studied views by various authors and their published articles on stress. Interviews will be conducted with participants to know views on managing stress. The research will compare views given by participants and literature to direct a practical conclusion.

What are the discomforts and risks?

The research is purely an academic requirement. All participants uncomfortable responding to questions posed in the interview will have the right to withdraw from the research.

How will my privacy be protected?

All participants' privacy will be protected. All responses by participants will be addressed numerically in the research. All participants' identity will remain confidential.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There are no specific costs in participating in the research. Each participant could assist in sparing 20 minutes of his/her time for the conversation style interview.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

All participants need to sign a consent form, which states they have no objection about the stated facts and the reasons for the research. Consent form will assist in implying all the opinions put forward by participants in the research to conclude recommendations.

All participants will have the right to verify their interviews scripts once conducted. Participants will hold the right to alter their views from the script if they are unsatisfied with the interpretation done by the researcher.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Participants who wish receive the final copy of the research will be sent one.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor. Robert Steele, robert.steele@aut.ac.nz

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, Madeline Banda, madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz , 921 9999 ext 8044.

Who do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details:

Samit Ajgaonkar, samajg99@aut.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Robert Steele, robert.steele@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 14th August 2006, AUTEK Reference number 06/131.