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Effect of Job Stress on Employee Job Performance: A Case Study of a Selected Apparel Company in Sri Lanka

Prasadika HMK[1]*

[1]*Bogamuwa, Boyagane, Kurunegala*

**kalanip.herath@gmail.com*

Abstract

In recent years, there has been an increase in stress in many aspects of life, particularly in people's workplaces. Individuals face high levels of stress on a daily basis, which can have a negative impact on their performance and productivity. This study attempts to examine the impact of job stress on the job performance of machine operators in a selected apparel company in Sri Lanka which is a BOI-registered garment manufacturer. The study was a cross-sectional study conducted in a non-contrive setting and the sample size was 226. The primary data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire consisting of two sections. The questionnaire was composed of 32 questions with a five-point Likert scale. The data were analyzed using descriptive analysis, simple regression and multiple regression methods. According to the results, it was found that all the dimensions which were used to measure the job stress; stress due to work overload, stress due to the working environment, stress due to role ambiguity and stress due to salary have a significant negative impact on the job performance of the machine operators in the selected apparel company. Further, it was discovered that the job stress of machine operators at the company was at a higher level while their job performance was low. Based on the results, the researchers recommend redesigning some jobs to reduce the work overload, providing sufficient support, guidance and encouragement, building social support and maintaining a proper reward system as measures of managing employee job stress in order to improve their job performance.

Keywords: *Job Performance, Job Stress, Role Ambiguity, Work Environment, Work Overload*

1. Introduction

Over the past few years, there has been a rise in the level of stress that is caused by one's employment in all aspects of life, but especially in the workplace. The world of work and business has become increasingly subject to fast-changing forces like increased competition, the pressure of quality, innovation, and the pace of doing business (Bamba, 2016). With more and more emphasis on the quality of work and delivery speeds, many employees are working under immense amounts of stress due to the resultant dramatic increase in demands of an employee (Yunita and Saputra, 2019). Consequently, job stress has become a frequent problem across all occupations and especially it is very common in the garment industry (Islam and Stringer, 2018).

Job stress can produce adverse consequences for both the individual and the firm since it has the effect of lowering motivation levels and job performance and increasing turnover intentions (Kuvaas et al., 2016). Due to the highly volatile nature of the current business environment, having a contented workforce has increasingly become a requisite for every organization to be sustainable in the market (Yeniaras & Kaya, 2021). Thus, it is very important for the management to pay special attention to manage the job-related stress levels of employees in order to have a satisfied workforce that provides their maximum contribution for the success of the organization.

Due to the turbulent business environment in today's world, the majority of organizations are struggling to discover means and methods to guarantee that their businesses are able to accomplish their organizational goals and continue to be profitable. However, they frequently believe in the assumption that when the company and its employees are under stressful situations, it is likely that the performance of the organization would be affected (Jalagat, 2017). Therefore, the businesses are becoming increasingly concerned about the fact that job stress has evolved into a significant risk not just for the employees on an individual level but also for the organization as a whole (Khuong and Yen, 2016). Upon these facts it is evident that there is an increasing need to understand the level of the influence of job stress to achieve higher performance of employees.

The selected organization for the study is a garment manufacturer in Sri Lanka which produces men‘s and women‘s undergarments. The main customers of the company include Marks and Spencer Group PLC (M&S), Primark and Phillips-Van Heusen Corporation (PVH). There are about 550 employees in the factory and the employee categories consist of machine operators, jumpers, supervisors, helpers, executives, assistant managers and top management. The monthly production average of the factory is about 1,000,000 and the average annual turnover rate is 4.23%.

1.1. Research problem

One of the most prevalent difficulties that workers are encountering in the workplace, regardless of where they are located in the world, is the phenomenon known as stress. It has been speculated that stress has an effect on the performance and efficiency of workers (Islam and Stringer, 2018). As a result, stress has emerged as a pressing concern that businesses need to take into consideration in order to ensure that their personnel are able to carry out their duties in an efficient and effective manner. The fact of the matter is that stress can be a contributing factor to an individual's life's imbalance, which can also result in depression and conflicts such as those that occur in the job, role conflict, role ambiguity, and workload (Jalagat, 2017).

Employee stress level assessments in the garment industry are becoming increasingly important in order to improve employee efficacy (Suresh et al., 2020). The garment industry today is highly competitive and largely operates on set targets for months, days and even hours (Islam and Stringer, 2018). Similarly, the machine operators in the selected apparel company are highly target-oriented and work under great pressure due to the higher demands of their jobs.

The following two tables (Table 1.1 and Table 1.2) provide a summary of the employee turnover and production of the selected apparel company over the period from December 2021 to May 2022.

Table 1.1 - No. of New Recruitments and Resignations for the period November 2021 – May 2022

Month	Number of Recruited Employees	Number of Resigned Employees
December	**50**	**87**
January	**40**	**49**
February	**22**	**46**
March	**10**	**36**
April	**76**	**48**
May	**47**	**46**

Source: Survey Data, 2021/2022

Table 1.2 - Production of Machine Operators by working time and pieces for the period November 2021 – May 2022

Month	**Dec**	**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mar**	**Apr**	**May**
Actual SAH*	275,732	225,760	383,737	128,554	241,825	255,198
Plan Pcs*	5,956,360	5,901,560	7,266,620	3,825,482	7,899,635	7,968,422
Act Pcs	4,978,626	4,563,381	6,482,610	3,223,211	7,653,412	7,482,633
Variance	-977,734	-1,338,179	-784,010	-602,271	-246,223	-485,789

* Standard Allocated Hours * Pieces

Source: Survey Data, 2021/2022

According to the above data, it is evident that the selected company has undergone a significant drop in production over the period from November 2021 to May 2022 and the labour turnover for the particular period has increased drastically. By considering these facts, this research attempts to address the problem: Is there an impact of job stress on the job performance of machine operators in the selected apparel company .

1.2. Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to investigate if the job stress impacts the job performance of machine operators in the selected apparel company . Further, the researchers also aim to achieve the following objectives.

1. To ascertain the impact of stress due to work overload on the Job performance of machine operators in the selected apparel company .
2. To investigate the impact of stress due to the working environment on the Job performance of machine operators in the selected apparel company .
3. To identify the impact of stress due to role ambiguity on the Job performance of machine operators in the selected apparel company .
4. To find out the impact of stress due to salary on the Job performance of machine operators in the selected apparel company .

The findings of this research would be important for making strategic decisions on improving employee performance and conducting further research in the field of the same. However, since the study considers one category of employees in a single company, the generalizability of the findings is limited.

2. Literature Review

The definitions of stress have changed over many years. Stress is a psychological and physical state, the individual is not sufficient with resources to subsist with the demands he has to face within a situation (Caral & Dhara 2016). Job stress is one of the major types of stress that affects the lifestyle of people. According to Goswami (2015), job stress is the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the job requirements do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of a worker. It is a subject matter that affects employees' mental health so that they cannot serve the organization (Tan and Yip, 2018).

Job performance is viewed as an activity in which an individual can accomplish the task assigned to him/her successfully, subject to the normal constraints of reasonable utilization of the available resources (Dar et al., 2011). It is about achieving organizational objectives with the employee's skills, competency requirements, development plans, and results delivery.

Different aspects of job performance; productivity, decision-making abilities, job satisfaction, absenteeism, organizational skills, creativity, accuracy, initiative, and attention to personal appearance are affected by stress. According to the findings of Khuong and Yen, (2016) workload, role ambiguity and role conflict, working relationships, career development and working environment have been identified as the important factors that affect the job performance of employees through job stress. Similarly, the findings of Murali et al., (2017) have revealed that employee job performance is affected by time pressure, lack of motivation, role ambiguity, work overload, lack of motivation, harassment, role conflict, and reduction of resources. Accordingly, job stress can occur at the workplace due to several factors. Some of them are discussed below.

Work overload: Work overload is one of the major causes for job stress. Work overload is the condition when an employee has to accomplish tasks beyond one's capacity. In other words, it is when employees feel there is a stress on their work because the demand on their job is more than they can handle. This causes different deceases on human body when they continuously work without break, rest or meals (Khuong and Yen, 2016). The studies conducted by Koirala and Nepal (2022) found that chronic work overload contributes to employee exhaustion and negatively influences job satisfaction and overall performance.

Role ambiguity: This arises as a result of the complexity of the meaning of the job regarding his or her job. This role ambiguity results in low job performance. When the employee does not have a clear idea about how to meet the requirements of the job or task this happens (Murali et al., 2017). They do not have enough information about the requirements of their role. According to the findings of Purnomo et al. (2021) when employees do not have clarity about their roles, it leads to poor decision-making, lower engagement, and diminished organizational commitment.

Working relationships: Typically, in an organization employees have to deal with many others, especially the coworkers and supervisors. Healthy relationships with colleagues result in making the workplace more enjoyable and comfortable the workplace to do the job. Both these relationships are very important for employees to reduce the level of stress to a healthy level (Khuong & Yen 2016). Conversely, toxic relationships or conflict between coworkers can lead to emotional exhaustion and negatively impact job satisfaction and performance. In their study, Asaloei et al. (2020) assert that strong interpersonal support within teams improves communication, teamwork, and overall job productivity.

Working environment: Working environment consists of physical location as well surrounding of the workplace such as factory buildings and other societies. Noise, business, ventilation affects directly to employees. When the working environment of the organization is uncomfortable, the employee feels a pressure and their performance level goes down (Ekienabor, 2016). A comfortable and ergonomically sound workplace contributes to higher employee performance and reduces stress, as supported by the findings of Hamidi et al. (2020).

Time pressure: Time pressure is a very dominant problem in many organizations. In previous studies researchers have shown that time pressure causes costs on organizations. Because due to time pressure their rejection rate is high because of low quality. When there is a time pressure, employees are afraid of taking risks. Most of the time, they do not have enough time to think. So, their strategic thinking is gone down (Caral & Dhara 2016). According to Phillips-Wren and Adya (2020), high levels of time pressure cause employees to rush their tasks, leading to mistakes and a higher rejection rate. This pressure can also impair cognitive function, reducing employees' strategic thinking and problem-solving abilities.

Demand on the job: Matching the job requirements with the requirements of a jobholder is an essential factor. Thus, the training and essential support should be given to the employees (Vischer, 2015). The targets and time pressure are very important factors regarding the job demand. The recent researchers have revealed that employee job performance is affected by time pressure, lack of motivation, role ambiguity, work overload, lack of motivation, harassment, role conflict, reduction of resources (Murali et al. 2017). Further studies conducted by Jackson and Frame (2018) demonstrates that when job requirements exceed the skills and resources available to employees, stress increases, leading to poor performance.

There are many different sources of stress that may be attributed to one's job, and it can impact people in a variety of different ways. There is no doubt that the relationship between the welfare and health of an employee and the physio social aspect of the workplace has been well-documented (Dollar and Metzer, 1999). However, regrettably, only a limited amount of research has been undertaken on the effects of different stressors on the performance of an employee. Using the demand-control model

(Karasek, 1979), Jungwee (2007) identifies job pressure as one of the most significant sources of stress that employees experience on the job.

According to McCubbin and Figley (1983), the factor that is responsible for the disparity between the demands placed on a family and the capacity to offer mental security for the family is stress brought on by the job. Even though there is a considerable body of research that focuses on the relationship between work and family, there hasn't been a lot of emphasis paid (for example, Jacobson, 1987) that truly deals with the impact of job insecurity on both marriage and family lives (for example, Buss and Redburn, 1983; Ahmed & Ramzan, 2013). The way in which an individual perceives the relationship between these two forces is what determines whether or not they are experiencing a positive or negative stress as a result of their job. Working under stress is a relatively recent occurrence in the way that we live our lives in the modern era. This is not something that happens very often.

Yunita and Saputra (2019) stated that when employees are highly stressed their performance goes down and consequently, the organizational performance is declined due to increased labour turnover, absenteeism, work ineffectiveness and legal and financial damages. A 2016 study by Ekienabor discovered that there was an impact of job stress on employee commitment, thereby causing a decrease in the employee‘s performance. Further, Shagvaliyeva and Yazdanifard (2014) have found that when there is too much stress on employees it directly affects the quality of output and performance of employees.

Dar et al. (2011) suggested that to reduce the level of stress an organization can follow steps such as redesigning jobs, changing the organizational policies, develop support systems, shared goal and direction, teamwork, personal needs heard. Further, Dodanwala et al, (2022) proposed that proper strategies should be made and implemented regarding working hours, inter-personal relationship and supervision in order to mitigate the stress levels of employees at the workplace. And also, organizations should create a supportive environment to reduce the level of stress among employees. Participative decision making also increase the morale and motivation of employees. Health maintenance programs, supervisors training programs also helps to reduce/remove the high stress in the organization (Vijayan, 2017).

When leaders of the organization provide the proper support for the employees in return employees try to give their maximum support in productivity and quality of the work (Nawaz & Ansari 2017). Therefore, Awadh et al. (2015) suggested that flexibility of work, coaching, providing necessary training for employees, supervisor‘s support, and participation in decision making help to minimize employee stress.

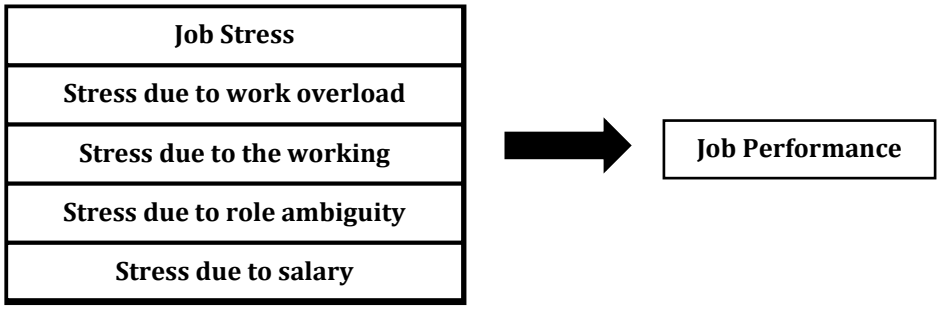
However, even though many researchers have found that job stress impacts on employee job performance (Dar et al., 2011; Khuong and Yen, 2016; Islam and Stringer, 2018) in different ways, only a few studies have been conducted in this area when it comes to the Sri Lankan garment industry.

Therefore, this research attempts to fill that empirical gap through a study conducted in a selected apparel company of Sri Lanka.

3. Methodology

The study used job stress as the independent variable and job performance as the dependent variable. Here, the job stress of machine operators in the selected apparel company was measured using four sub-dimensions namely: work overload, working environment, role ambiguity (Khuong and Yen, 2016) and salary (Awadh et al., 2015). Job performance was measured in terms of task performance and contextual performance (Kappagoda, 2018). The conceptual model used in the study is presented in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Conceptual Model of the study



Source: Constructed by author based on literature

The following hypotheses have been developed by the researchers based on the above conceptual model.

H_1: Stress due to work overload has a significant impact on the job performance of machine operators

H_2: Stress due to the working environment has a significant impact on the job performance of machine operators

H_3: Stress due to role ambiguity has a significant impact on the job performance of machine operators

H_4: Stress due to salary has a significant impact on the job performance of machine operators

H_5: Job stress has a significant impact on the job performance of machine operators.

The study was conducted using the quantitative approach. It was a cross-sectional study, and the data were collected in a non-contrived setting. The population of the study was all the machine operators working at the selected apparel company and the sampling was done using simple random sampling.

The sample size of the study was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan Table (1970). Accordingly, as the population of the study was 550, the sample size was taken as 226.

The primary data for the study were collected using a self-administered questionnaire consisting of two sections Part A and B. Part A consisted of demographic data and Part B included 20 statements (Ekienabor, 2016; Khuong and Yen, 2016; Lopes and Kachalia, 2016) for Job Stress and 12 statements for Job Performance (Beffort and Hattrup, 2003; Koopmans et al., 2014) with a five-point Likert scale (1 for Strongly Disagree- 5 for Strongly Agree). The data was analyzed using both univariate and bivariate methods and the analysis was carried out by SPSS Version 25.

4. Data Analysis and Results

4.1. Validity and reliability

The inter-item consistency and reliability of the questionnaire were examined with the Cronbach Alpha test and according to the findings, job stress and job performance have been reported 0.877 and 0.889 respectively. The results of the Cronbach's Alpha test suggested that the internal reliability of each instrument was satisfactory. The content validity of the instruments was ensured by the conceptualization and operationalization of the variables based on literature, and indirectly by the higher internal consistency denoted by Alpha coefficients. The questionnaires were distributed among 226 machine operators and all the responses were received.

4.2. Multivariate assumptions

In this research study, all key multivariate assumptions were rigorously tested and met. The assumption of multivariate normality was assessed using both the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests, with p-values greater than 0.05, indicating that the data were normally distributed. Linearity was verified through scatterplots, which demonstrated clear linear relationships between the dependent and independent variables. Homoscedasticity was confirmed using residual plots, which displayed constant variance across different levels of the independent variables. Additionally, the assumption of multicollinearity was evaluated, with Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for all independent variables falling below the acceptable threshold of 10, ensuring that no significant multicollinearity was present. Hence, all relevant multivariate assumptions were satisfactorily addressed in this study.

4.3. Descriptive data analysis

The questionnaires were distributed among 226 machine operators and all the responses were received. According to the results of the demographic factors, it has been reported that out of the total, 76% of the respondents were female and 24% were male employees. The majority of the respondents were in the age category of 18-25 while only 9% were above 45 years. 54% of the respondents were married,

43% were single and 3% of the respondents were recorded as widows. Out of the total, 69% of employees were in the permanent employee cadre and only 31% were on the temporary basis. When considering the educational levels of employees, except 5%, all the others had qualifications above GCE O/L.

The study used five monthly income categories as 10000 - 14000, 15000 - 19000, 20000 - 24000, 25000 - 29000 and above 30000 (amounts are in LKR). From the total respondents, 13% were in between 10 000 and 14 000; 53% were in between 15000 and 19 000, 19% were in between 20 000 and 24000; 7% in between 25 000 and 29 000 and 8% of respondents were above income of 30 000. Among the respondents, 62% of the workers had work experience between 1-2 years and only 9% had experience below 5 years.

The univariate analysis for job stress and job performance was carried out considering the mean and standard deviation values, skewness and kurtosis of the variables. The results of the univariate analysis are given in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Results of Descriptive Data Analysis

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Stress due to work overload	4.4317	0.2127	-0.630	-0.606
Stress due to the working environment	4.2952	0.4317	0.077	0.594
Stress due to role ambiguity	4.3371	0.109	-0.270	1.173
Stress due to salary	4.4181	0.4073	-0.833	0.073
Job stress	4.3456	0.3386	-0.763	0.575
Job Performance	1.8135	0.5664	0.641	-0.298

Source: Survey data, 2021/2022

According to Table 4.1, the mean value of stress due to work overload is between 4.2190-4.6444, stress due to the working environment is between 3.8635-4.7269, stress due to role ambiguity lies between 4.2281-4.4461 and stress due to salary is between 4.0108-4.8254. The overall job stress is reported as 4.3456 and it ranges between 4.007-4.6842 indicating higher mean values.

In contrast to that, the mean value of the job performance of the machine operators is found as 1.8135 and it lies between 1.2471 and 2.3799 indicating low values for the job performance level. The Skewness and Kurtosis coefficients depict that the recorded data are approximately normally distributed.

4.4. **Bivariate analysis**

The Simple Regression Analysis was carried out with a two-tailed test at 0.01 significance level to identify the impact of job stress on job performance of the employees in the selected apparel company. The results of the findings are summarized in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. Summary of Regression Analysis Results

Predictor	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Beta	Sig. (2 tailed)
Stress due to work overload	.970[a]	.941	.931	-.970	.000
Stress due to the working environment	.896[a]	.803	.801	-.896	.000
Stress due to role ambiguity	.918[a]	.843	.841	-.918	.000
Stress due to salary	.864[a]	.746	.743	-.864	.000
Job Stress	.934[a]	.873	.872	-.934	.000

Source: Survey data, 2021

As indicated in Table 4.2, the beta values reported by stress due to work overload, working environment, role ambiguity, salary and overall job stress are -0.970, -0.896, -0.918, -0.864 and -0.934 respectively. These values depict that there is a strong negative impact on the job performance of machine operators. According to the R Squared values of the overall job stress, 87.21% of the variance in job performance is explained by the job stress level of the machine operators in the selected apparel company.

4.5. **Multivariate analysis**

The multivariate regression analysis was carried out in order to investigate the simultaneous impacts of all the independent variables on the dependent variables. The results of regression the four independent variables (stress due to work overload, stress due to working environment, stress due to role ambiguity and stress due to salary) against the dependent variable (Job performance) are shown in the Table 4.3 and 4.4.

Table 4.3: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis: Model Summary Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.986[a]	.971	.970	.09763

a. Predictors: (Constant), Stress due to work overload, Stress due to the working environment, Stress due to role ambiguity, Stress due to the salary

Source: Survey data, 2021/2022

Table 4.4: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis: ANOVA

ANOVAa

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	32.415	4	8.104	850.261	.000[b]
	Residual	.953	100	.010		
	Total	33.368	104			

a. Dependent Variable: Job performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Stress due to salary, Stress due to work overload, Stress due to role ambiguity, Stress due to working environment

Source: Survey data, 2021/2022

According to Table 4.3, the multiple R is 0.986, and the R squared value indicates that 97.0% of the variation in job performance is explained by the four dimensions jointly. The F value is 850.261, which is significantly at 1% (p=0.0000). It suggests that the four sub variables have significantly explained 97% of the variation in the job performance of machine operators in the selected apparel company of Sri Lanka.

5. Discussion of the Findings

According to the data of descriptive analysis it is evident that all the mean values relating to the dimensions of job stress; stress due to work overload, stress due to the work environment, stress due to role ambiguity and stress due to salary are greater than 4.0 indicating that the machine operators in the selected apparel company are experiencing high levels of stress due to work overload, work environment, role ambiguity and salary. This denotes that the machine operators of the factory are under a high stress level at their jobs. On the other hand, since the mean value of job performance is reported between 1.2471 and 2.3799 depicting that the performance level of employees working in the selected apparel company is at a lower level.

According to Table 4.2, stress due to work overload was found to have a negative impact on job performance with the strength of b value of -.970. As indicated by the R Squared, 94.1% of the variance of stress due to work overload is explained by employee job performance. Hence it was found that machine operators in the selected apparel company were suffering from stress due to work overload

and stress due to work overload was identified as a predictor of job performance. These results support the findings of Murali et al. (2017) showing a negative impact of work overload on job performance of employees.

The second dimension of the study; stress due to the work environment indicated a b value of -0.896 showing a sting negative impact and according to the R squared value it was discovered that 80.3% of the variance of stress due to work overload is explained by employee job performance. Consequently, work environment was also found as a predictor of job stress. These findings were in line with the results of the studies conducted by Murali et al. (2017) and Khuong and Yen (2016) indicating a strong negative impact on stress due to work environment and employee job performance.

According to the results of simple regression analysis, stress due to role ambiguity was found to have a negative impact on job performance with the strength of b value of -.0.918. As indicated by the R Squared, 84.3% of the variance of stress due to role ambiguity is explained by employee job performance. Therefore, stress due to role ambiguity can be considered as a predictor of job performance. A similar finding was discovered by Goswami (2015) in his study to identify the impact of job stress job performance in the banking sector.

Discussing the level of stress due to salary of the respondents in the sample, it was found that the employees in the selected apparel company were experiencing a greater level of stress due to the insufficiency in salaries and the b value of Stress due to salary was reported as -0.864. According to the R Squared, 74.6% of the variance of stress due to salary is explained by employee job performance. Thus, it was found that salary is also a major determinant of job performance of employees in the selected company of the study. These findings were supported by the previous studies conducted by Ekienabor (2016) and Awadh et al. (2015) indicating a strong negative impact of stress due to lack of salary and the job performance of employees.

Where the overall job stress is concerned, it was found to have a negative impact on job performance with the strength of b value of -.934 and the R squared value of 87.3%. Thus, it is evident that job stress is a predictor of job performance with a high impact. Similar results were discovered by the studies conducted by Khuong and Yen (2016); Ekienabor (2016); Goswami (2015); Awadh et al. (2015); Lopes and Kachalia (2016) and Dar et al. (2011) regarding job stress and job performance in different business sectors.

Further according to the multivariate analysis, it is evident that sub-variables of the study (stress due to work overload, stress due to the work environment, stress due to role ambiguity and stress due to salary) jointly impacts the job performance of employees at in the selected apparel company to a greater deal since 97% of the variation in job performance is explained by the four dimensions jointly.

Therefore, based on the above results, the following conclusions can be made regarding the hypothesis of the study. The summary of the results is given in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Results of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Result
H1: Stress due to work overload has a significant impact on the job performance of machine operators	**Accepted**
H2: Stress due to the working environment has a significant impact on the job performance of machine operators	**Accepted**
H3: Stress due to role ambiguity has a significant impact on the job performance of machine operators	**Accepted**
H4: Stress due to salary has a significant impact on the job performance of machine operators	**Accepted**
H5: Job stress has a significant impact on the job performance of machine operators.	**Accepted**

The findings of this study can be further strengthened by connecting them to established theoretical frameworks discussed in the literature. The Demand-Control Model (Karasek, 1979) offers a robust explanation for the negative impact of stressors such as work overload, role ambiguity, and work environment on job performance, as observed in this study. According to the model, when employees face high job demands with limited control or resources, it leads to elevated stress levels, negatively affecting their performance. Similarly, the Person-Environment Fit Theory (Vischer, 2015) highlights that when the job demands do not align with the individual's resources or capabilities, such as insufficient salary, employees experience greater job stress, further lowering performance. These theoretical frameworks reinforce the study's findings that stress due to work overload, role ambiguity, and the work environment significantly contribute to diminished job performance, consistent with prior studies like those by Khuong and Yen (2016) and Murali et al. (2017). Moreover, the results echo the need for organizations to implement strategies to address these stressors, as suggested by Dar et al. (2011) in order to enhance job performance.

6. Conclusion and Implications of the Study

This study mainly focused on measuring if there is an impact of job stress on the job performance of machine operators in a selected apparel company in Sri Lanka. As indicated by the empirical data it has been identified that work overload, working environment, role ambiguity and salary significantly influence the job performance of the machine operators of the selected company. Thus, it can be

concluded that there is a significant negative impact of job stress on the job performance of machine operators in the selected apparel company of the study and job stress plays a vital role in determining the job performance of employees.

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations are proposed to effectively manage job stress and improve employee performance. Among them, redesigning jobs to reduce work overload is crucial in minimizing the negative impact of stress on performance. Awadh et al. (2015) highlight that job redesign can involve redistributing tasks, setting realistic deadlines, and creating more balanced workloads. This can be achieved through job rotation, task simplification, or automation of repetitive tasks, allowing employees to manage their workload more effectively. Additionally, introducing flexible work arrangements, such as staggered shifts or telecommuting options, can reduce pressure by giving employees greater control over their work schedules, thus enhancing job performance.

Providing sufficient support, guidance, and encouragement is another key recommendation. Employees who receive adequate supervision and guidance are better equipped to handle workplace stress (Murali et al., 2017). Managers should establish regular check-ins and open communication channels to offer support when employees face challenges. Moreover, offering constructive feedback and celebrating employee successes can improve morale, as recognition of effort reduces stress and increases motivation. Supervisory support also plays a critical role in addressing employee concerns promptly, providing a clear direction on how to meet job demands, which in turn, mitigates stress.

Building social support within the workplace is also essential for reducing job stress. Goswami (2015) emphasizes that social support from colleagues and supervisors can buffer the impact of stress on employees. Fostering a collaborative working environment where employees can rely on one another for assistance can alleviate feelings of isolation and overwhelm. Promoting teamwork through peer mentoring, knowledge sharing, and team-building activities can help create a culture of mutual support, thus reducing stress levels and improving job satisfaction.

Further, maintaining a proper reward system is fundamental to stress management. A fair and transparent compensation structure can mitigate financial stress, one of the major stressors in the workplace (Khuong & Yen, 2016). Besides competitive salaries, organizations should implement non-monetary rewards such as employee recognition programs, professional development opportunities, and flexible work arrangements. These rewards provide intrinsic motivation, reducing job-related stress and fostering a positive work environment. When employees feel valued and fairly rewarded for their efforts, their stress levels decrease, and job performance improves (Ekienabor, 2016).

By addressing job overload, providing adequate support, enhancing social connections, and maintaining a fair reward system, organizations can effectively reduce job stress and improve employee performance.

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