

Analysis of Factors Influencing Job Stress of Academics Staff with Special Reference to Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education

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Abstract- This is a phenomenological research study within the perspectives of job stress of academic staff for which deductive approach was used to collect views of respondents. This research was designed to study different perspective of employee job stress and accordingly an attempt was made to identify and evaluate the effect on the variable relating to the factors causing job stress of academic staff with special reference to Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education. Two stage stratified sampling technique was employed to select the elementary units of the sampling frame, in which empirical evidences were obtained from the responds of Directors, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers and Assistant Lecturers in four selected (stratified randomly) Advanced Technological Institutes. At the stage of preparation of research model, the factors causing the job stress were identified with special reference to Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education through literature reviews and structured questionnaire which was administered among Directors, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers and Assistant Lecturers who are the evaluators of the service of Advanced Technological Institutes. Lickert mean was used as the score and the standard deviation was used to check the level of significance of each factor causing employee job stress with special reference to academic staff of Advanced Technological Institutes. Mean of means was used to find the strength of each independent variable i.e. organizational stressors, individual stressors, personal stressors and environmental stressors. Research finding revealed that greater proportion of factors causing job stress of academic staff of Advanced Technological Institutes depends on organizational stressors and individual stressors. Study indicates that personal stressors and environmental stressors could cause employee job stress of academic staff of Advanced Technological Institutes at moderate level or lower level

Index Terms- Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education (SLIATE), Head of the Department (HOD), Simple Random Sampling (SRS), Standard Deviation (SD)

1. Introduction

In today competitive world, organizations cannot perform well unless the employees in such organizations are committed and work effectively. It is important to have faithful employees who do their job tasks independently. Employees nowadays have to work together in teams and have to prove that they are worth being part of these organizations. They also want to be part of a successful organization which provides a good income and good opportunities for growth and development.

The word “stress” is one of the most frequently used words today. We live in a world developing fast, requiring constant adaptation. Technology is changing, so are social habits, values, social structures and people. Everybody has to cope with those changes, not only individuals, but the organizations and government as well (Thompson, 2002) some people are aware of positive values of those changes, but very few think of the negative consequences that may ensue. According to some estimates, humankind loses 100 million workdays every year due to the aftermath of stress. What matters more, 50 to 75 per cent of today’s diseases are related to stress. The European Agency for Health and Safety at Work, states that stress within organization is the second most frequent trouble and affects as many as 28 per cent of employees (Coopers, 2006)

In developing countries employees face more stress and employers do not realize the impact of job stress on employee’s involvement and commitment. One study found that about 100 million workdays do not remain workdays because of stress and approximately 50% to 75% diseases are because of stress (Iqbal, 2012) (Kahn, 1990) defined stress as an outcome of designated work that cause harm for the individual. Job stress is considered to be detrimental factor for employees (Kahn, 1990)

National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (1999) defined stress as injurious physical and emotional response that arises when workers' abilities and resources do not match the job demands and requirements. (M, 1984) Jamal also found that job stress is imbalance between job demands and employee's abilities to fulfill these demands. The employee's stress level increases with increase of imbalance between job demands and individual's ability to meet demands. (M, 1984) Jamal defined job stress as individual's response to his work environment that threats employee's physically and emotionally. Stress is a mental strain that is caused by internal or external stimulus that creates hindrance for employees in performing their duties up to mark (Khuwaja, 2002)

2. Research Problem

This applied research on job stress of academics. There is various challenges face by academics. Based on the type of the work do and based on their carrier targets, the challenges or the stressors they face can be categorized in to several groups such as (1) Interpersonal relationship with students, academics, administrative and non-academic staff, (2) Teaching (development of course content, planning on suitable teaching methods and exam setting and assessment and (3) Carrier development (MBA, PHD) and national development. In addition to duties and career targets mentioned above and that are common to all the academic staff members, there are many voluntary administrative and other types of position(HOD) in the institute and many academics give part of their working time for such positions. These challenges may put the academics under pressure and stress.

Some factors highlighted in the HNDM program review report done by the HETC project, shows that lecturers are overloaded and demotivated on their work. It shows that an Assistant lecturer has to lecture for minimum 21 hours, Lecturer 19 hours and Senior Lecturer 17 hours a week. There are instances where, the Lecturer could be provided only 16 hours of lectures in his permanent Institution, to meet the norm set by the SLIATE the Lecturer is compelled to go to another ATI, spending extra time and money by his/her own to meet the requirement. There are cases where the lecturer/s willingly accepts this requirement and voluntarily does/do the job with no complaints. This service of teachers should not be under-estimated at any cost. On the other hand, as the lecturers are compelled to stick to the norm set by the SLIATE, to meet this norm all Assistant Lecturers/lecturers and senior Lecturers have to do a minimum of 05 subjects a week. This could lead to serious quality erosion in the teaching learning process because the teachers job does not confine to teaching alone, but marking assignments, student counseling and academic counseling to state a few, which go hand in hand with teaching. These activities consume a considerable number of hours of a teacher. However, the existing situation has demoralized and de-motivated the lecturers and has made the teaching a routine matter than making it a creative exercise. Amongst all these shortcomings the career prospects for lecturers as a whole seem to be minimal in the system.

It was revealed (through unconfirmed sources) at the discussions that there had been around 50% turnover among lecturers in the past few years in the system. Lectures of the SLIATE working hour per week is unbearable when compare with other higher educational institutes (senior lecturer 19 hours, Lecturer 21 hours and assistant lecturer 23 hours). Rule of working 8 hours per day, unbearable evaluation and monitoring system which reduce autonomy of lectures and increase stress levels and high labour turnover of academic staff which very badly affect its performance (syndicate minutes)

3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the research can be indicated as follows.

1. To identify factors affecting to employee job stress.
2. To examine how these factors have been influenced job stress of academics in the Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education.
3. To critically analyze factors that influence Job stress of academics in the Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education.
4. To give possible recommendations upon research analysis enabling policy makers to utilize them in future

4. Literature Review

Stress is a word derived from Latin word “Stingers” meaning to draw tight Stress (Doyle, 2003) and in the second half of the twentieth century scholars examined the consequences of stress in clinical and social psychology (Darr, 2008) and that is more than two decades the researchers consider job stress as one of the biggest concerns for organizations at individual and organizational level. (ILO, 1992)

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A number of definitions on stress are found some of them are; Job stress has been defined in different ways. (Selye H. , 1956) Was the researcher who first time gave the idea of stress in life sciences. According to him stress is pressure and force that resist employees to perform at their maximum.

. Stress is a mental strain that is caused by internal or external stimulus that creates hindrance for employees in performing their duties up to mark (Khuwaja, 2002)

Rollinson (Rollinson, 2005) defines workplace stress as conditions which inhibit employees to perform normally in workplace. The conditions are termed as stressors – the potential sources that cause stress (Rollinson, 2005).

Stress is an adoptive response to an external situation that results in physical, psychological and/or behavioral deviations for organization participants (F, 2008)

Occupational stress was defined as an adoptive response to an external situation that results in physical and/or behavioral deviation for organizational participants (F, 2008)

Medical researcher, Hans Selyer (Selye H. , 1956) first usual the term “Stress” to describe the body’s biological response mechanisms. He defined stress as “the nonspecific response of the body to any demand”. It must be understood that in order for the stress to occur, the response should be nonspecific (J.S, 1994)

Hans’s selye one of the founding fathers of stress of research. He view in 1956 was than “stress is not necessarily something bad- It all depends on how you take it. The stress of exhilarating, creative successful work is beneficial, while that of failure, humiliation or infection is detrimental”. Selye believed that the biochemical effect of stress would be experienced irrespective of whether the situation was positive or negative. (J.S, 1994)

Occupational Stress is not an objective phenomenon. It is predominately subjective in nature and involves the employee’s active interpretation of his or objective circumstances. Potential stressors are not inherently server or negative; allow for the same stressor to be experienced by some as challenge and by other as hindrance. An assessment of each facet of the stress process includes dealing with the demands, coping ability. Personality type, emotions and related behaviors, physical health, psychological well – being and social functioning (Gillespie, 2001)

Stress is the continual appraisal by the person that his or her relationship with Personalities defines as a relatively stable set of characteristics that influence and individuals behavior. (Moorhead G G. R., 2001)

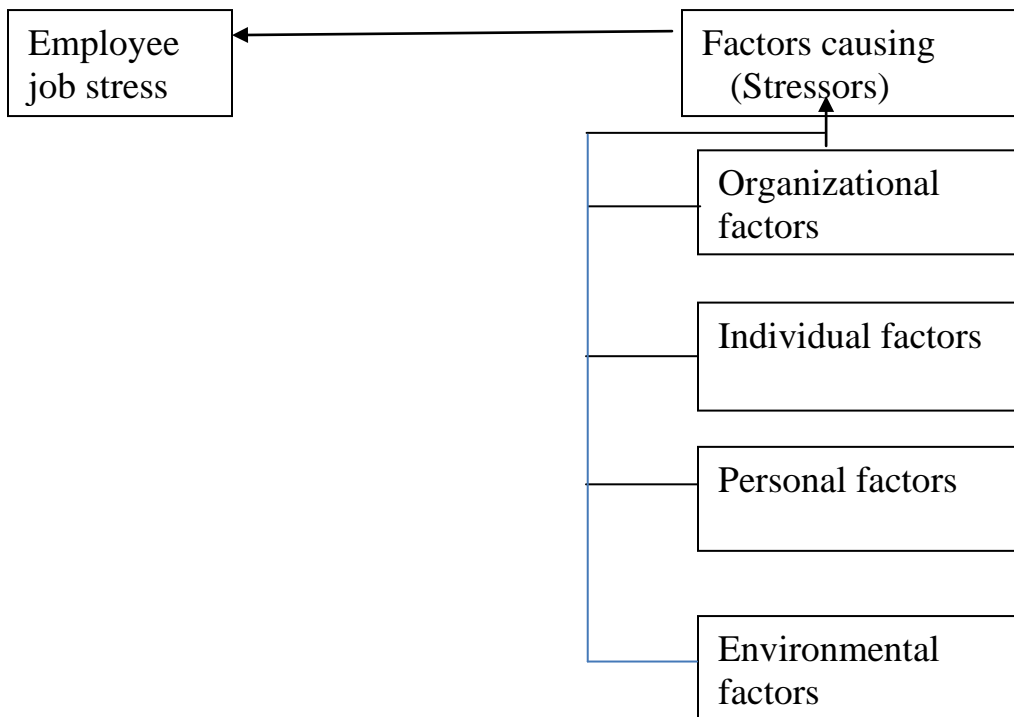
A personality trait may affect how a person will perceive and react to a situation or an event as a stressor. For example, an individual with low self-esteem. Individuals high in self-esteem typically have more confidence in their ability to meet job demands than do those with low self-esteem. Employees with high internal locus of control may take more effective action, more quickly, in coping

with a sudden emergency (stressor) than might employees with high external locus of control. Individuals high in internal locus of control are likely to believe that they can moderate the stressful situation. (Hillriegel D, 2004)

Seyle (Selye H. , 1956) pioneered the distinction between stressor and stress responses. Moreover, seyle emphasized that both positive and negative event can trigger an identical stress response that can be beneficial or harmful.

5. Conceptual Framework

Independent variable and dependent variables are used by the researcher in order to develop conceptual framework. This conceptual framework is logically developed, designed and explained. According to the primary objective of this study, to identify the factors causing job stress of academic staff with special reference to Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education, job s is selected as independent variable and organizational stressors, individual stressors, personal stressors and environmental stressors as dependent variable.



5.1 Hypothesis

Based on the above mentioned conceptual framework, below mentioned hypothesis developed by the researchers to achieve research objectives.

H0: Organizational factors more influential towards employee job stress than other three factors namely, individual, personal and environmental.

H1: Individual factors are more influential towards employee job stress than other three factors namely, organizational, personal and environmental.

H3: Personal factors are more influential towards employee job stress than other three factors namely, organizational, individual and environmental.

H4: Environmental factors are more influential towards employee job stress than other three factors namely, organizational, individual and personal.

6. Research Methodology

A questionnaire as the research tool was used to collect data as it is the best and powerful tool for acquiring data. Four stressors which were more relevant for cause in job stress of academic staff of SLIATE were selected and tested them using following number of questions.

Table 1: Composition of the Questionnaire

Stressors	No of Questions
Organizational	20
Individual	5
Personal	4
Environmental	3

In order to administer the questionnaire in connection with the present research, two populations were chosen. The population of the present study consisted of Directors, senior Lecturers, Lecturers and Assistant Lecturers. Sample frame consist with 3 No's of Directors, 15 No's of senior Lecturers and Lecturers and 34 No's of Assistant Lecturers from the 12 No's of ATI's and 6 No's of Sections in Sri Lanka. Assuming that stress factors are available more in newly established Sections than established traditional ATI's, three ATI's and two Sections were selected out of 12 No's of ATI's and 6 No's of Sections by using Stratified random sampling method as the sample of the present research. Accordingly ATI of Dehiwala, Kandy, Kurunegala and Section of Anuradhapura and Batticaloa were selected.

Random number table was used to select the sample .Due to the level of homogeneity, only 16% was chosen from the directors and 40% was from the Senior Lecturers and Lecturers and 32% was chosen from the Assistant lecturers . Data was collected by passing 02 stages. At first 10 questionnaires' were collected out of total of 100 and checked the reliability of the questionnaire. For testing the internal consistency of the questionnaire the Cronbatch's coefficient alpha was used. The results of Cronbatch's alpha test are shown in the table 1. All the alpha values are well above the rule of thumb of .7 for a reliable scale, which suggests that the internal reliability of each instrument and sub instrument is satisfactory.

Table 2: Cronbatch's Alpha Coefficients

Sample	Length of the sampling frame	Reliability for the whole	Reliability for the Organizational Stressors	Reliability for the Individual Stressors	Reliability for the Personal stressors	Reliability for the Environmental Stressors
Stage one	10	0.823	0.632	0.743	0.892	0.893
Stage two	63	0.821	0.641	0.734	0.850	0.827

Cronbatch's alpha if item deleted coefficients proved that there was no opportunity to further improve the reliability of the measure since Cronbatch's alpha if item deleted coefficients of the items were less than the Cronbatch's alpha coefficients of the measure.

7. Analysis and discussion

7.1 Method of data analysis

Lickert mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (SD) was calculated for each factor (Standard deviation is the measure of variance) as per statistical criterion, larger the stranded deviation value higher the variance (dispersion) therefore relevant factor becomes insignificant (not important). On the other hand smaller the standard deviation value, larger the influence, therefore factor becomes significant (important) and also the given factor is treated as ‘variable’ which affect to change the dependent variable (y variable). Accordingly all indicators (factors) have been tabulated in a row-column order. Specimen is given below.) (Wickramasinghe, 2012)

Table 3: Method of Data Analysis

Factor	Mean	SD	Status	Variable effect
Leader	1.8	0.012	Significant	Variable which effect highly positive
Group	0.0	10.00	Insignificant	Not a variable
MIS	1.0	0.1234	Significant	Variable in effect

7.2 Method of data interpretation

Given factor (indicator) can be influenced either “+” or “-” if mean is -9 it is interpreted as the influence of the factor is negative (-). In the other word stress of academic staff has not been caused by level of recognition. Standard Deviation indicates whether x is significant or insignificant. If in any case $SD > 1$ it is interpreted as “not a variable in influent” otherwise factor (indicator) becomes non influential variable. (Wickramasinghe, 2012)

Table 4: Criteria of Interpretation

Mean score	SD Value	Interpretation	Decision
Closer to zero	Zero	Not significant at all	Not a variable effect
Closer to zero	Low	Insignificant	Not a variable
Closer to zero	High	Significant	Variable in effect at lower level
Closer to one	Zero	Highly significant	Variable in effect
Closer to one	Low	Significant	Variable in effect Encouraging factor
Closer to one	High	Insignificant	Variable in effect Essential factor
Closer to two	Zero	Highly significant	Variable in effect of high level of Encouraging factor

Closer to two	Low	Significant	Variable in effect Essential factor
Closer to two	High	Insignificant	Variable in effect

The table given in the above indicates the method of criteria which was used to choose the decision. The relevant mean value and corresponding SD value where the given factor is a variable in effect or otherwise. Views of Directors and Academic Staff were obtained by means of questionnaire. (Questionnaire is shown in the Annexure 3) and those views were measured. Accordingly variability of each factor was identified.

7.3 Data Analysis

7.3.1 Analysis: The Degree to Which Organizational Stressors Have Caused Job Stress of Academic Staff

Table 5: Level of variable effect and the level of significance of each indicator in connection with organizational stressors

Indicator	Mean value	Standard deviation value	Interpretation
Degree to which organizational structure has caused job stress	1.22	1.165	Variable high effect. Highly influential and highly significant
Degree to which organizational design has caused job stress	0.76	1.078	Variable effect at moderate level. Moderately influential and significant
Degree to which lapses on administrative policies and Practices have caused job stress	1.48	0.504	Variable in high effect, Highly influential and extremely significant.
Degree to which lapses on organizational procedures have caused job stress	1.29	0.676	Variable in high effect, Highly influential and extremely significant.
Degree to which lapses on availability of organizational standards have caused job stress	1.32	0.647	Variable in high effect, Highly influential and extremely significant.
Degree to which job changes have caused job	0.25	0.957	Variable effect at lower level. Lower influential and significant at lower level

stress			
Degree to which that development and changers have caused job stress	0.14	1.226	Variable effect at lower level. Lower influential and significant at lower level
Degree to which that job role have caused job stress	-0.1	1.54	Variable in effect negatively. Negative lower influential and significant
Degree to which that organizational working conditions have caused job stress	1.31	0.536	Variable in high effect, Highly influential and significant.
Degree to which that reliability of upward information have caused job stress	0.9	0.789	Variable effect moderate level. Moderately influential and highly significant
Degree to which that reliability of downward information have caused job stress	1	0.768	Variable in high effect, Highly influential and significant.
Degree to which that conceptual ability have caused job stress	1.12	1.016	Variable effect at high level. Highly influential and highly significant.
Degree to which that of technical ability have caused job stress	1.09	0.74	Variable effect at high level. Highly influential and highly significant.
Degree to which that HRM ability have caused job stress	1.16	1.148	Variable effect at high level. Highly influential and highly significant.
Degree to which that the level of responsibility have caused job stress	0.62	1.014	Variable effect at moderate level. moderately influential and significant
Degree to which that the level of recognition have caused job stress	0.78	1.015	Variable effect at moderate level. moderately influential and significant

Degree to which that the group level dynamics have caused job stress	-0.03	0.868	Variable effect negatively. Negative lower influential and significant.
Degree to which that group related culture have caused job stress	0.29	0.894	Variable effect at lower level. Lower influential and significant at lower level.
Degrees to which that group structure conditions have caused job stress.	0.55	0.953	Variable effect at moderate level. moderately influential and significant.
Degree to which that group conflict have caused job stress	0.66	1.113	Variable effect at moderate level. moderately influential and significant

With reference to the above table number 4.33, it was found that effect of the factors of organizational structure, lapses on administrative policies, lapses on organizational procedures, lapses on organizational standards , organizational working condition, reliability of downward information, conceptual ability of managers, technical ability of managers and HRM ability of managers were high. Accordingly it was found that the factors were highly influential. There SD values are closer to zero. Therefore, the factors are significant. Variable effect of organizational design, reliability of upward information, level of responsibility, level of recognition, group structure and group conflict were at a moderate level. Accordingly it was found that factor was moderately influential. Variable effect of job changes, development and changers and group culture were at very lower level. Accordingly they were reported at a very low influential level. But they were significant. Effect of job role and group level dynamics are negative at a very low level. It shows extremely low influence and also factor is insignificant. However there was no effect of. Also the factor was not a variable effect. It shows no influence at all but significant.

7.3.2 Analysis: The Degree to Which Individual Stressors Have Caused Job Stress of Academic Staff

Table 6: Level of variable effect and the level of significance of each indicator in connection with individual stressors

Indicator	Mean value	Standard deviation value	Level of significance
Degree to which personality has caused job stress	1.01	0.992	Variable effect at high level. Highly influential and highly significant
Degree to which attitudes and values has caused job stress.	1.3	0.776	Variable effect at high level. Highly influential and highly significant.

Degree to which perception has caused job stress	0.64	1.269	Variable effect at moderate level. moderately influential and significant
Degree to which job experience have caused job stress	0.52	1.352	Variable effect at moderate level. moderately influential and significant
Degree to which skills and abilities have caused job stress	1.29	0.857	Variable effect at high level. Highly influential and highly significant.

With reference to the above table number 4.34, it was found that effect of the factors of personality, attitudes and values, and skills and abilities were high. Accordingly it was found that the factors were highly influential. There SD values are closer to zero. Therefore, the factors are significant. Variable effect of perception and job experience were at a moderate level. Accordingly it was found that factor was moderately influential.

7.3.3 Analysis: The Degree to Which Personal Stressors Have Caused Job Stress of Academic Staff

Table 6: Level of variable effect and the level of significance of each indicator in connection with environmental stress

Indicator	Mean value	Standard deviation value	Variable effect
Degree to which family has caused job stress	0.16	1.357	Variable effect at lower level. Lower influential and significant at lower level
Degree to which financial condition has caused job stress	0.76	1.276	Variable effect at moderate level. moderately influential and significant
Degree to which residential and community have caused job stress	0.48	1.17	Variable effect at lower level. Lower influential and significant at lower level
Degree to which sex and civil states have caused job stress	-0.1	1.155	Variable effect negatively. Negative lower influential and significant

With reference to the above table number 4.35, it was found that effect of the factor of financial condition was moderate level. Accordingly it was found that factor was moderately influential. Variable effect of family and residential and community condition were at very lower level. Accordingly they were reported at a very low influential level. But they were significant. It was found that there was no variable effect in relation to the factor of sex and civil states. Therefore, it was not an influential factor but that factor was significant.

7.3.4 Analysis: The Degree to Which Environmental Stressors Have Caused Job Stress of Academic Staff

Table 7: Level of variable effect and the level of significance of each indicator in connection with environmental stressors

Indicator	Mean value	Standard deviation value	Level of significance
Degree to which political changes has caused job stress	-0.06	1.08	Variable effect negatively. Negative lower influential and significant
Degree to which Technical changers has caused job stress	0.13	1.16	Variable effect at lower level. Lower influential and significant at lower level
Degree to which economic changers have caused job stress	0.46	1.19	Variable effect at lower level. Lower influential and significant at lower level

With reference to the above table number 4.36, it was found that variable effect of technical changers and economical changers were at very lower level. Accordingly they were reported at a very low influential level. But they were significant. It was found that there was no variable effect in relation to the factor of political changers. Therefore, it was not an influential factor but that factor was significant.

8. Conclusion, Limitations & Recommendations

8.1 Conclusion

Research evidence revealed that effect of organizational stressors and individual stressors toward the job stress of academic staff are high and effect of personal stressors and environmental stressors are relatively moderate. In addition to that research evidence revealed that the effect of indicators of organizational structure, lapses on administrative policies, lapses on organizational procedures, lapses on organizational standards, organizational working condition, reliability of downward information, conceptual ability of managers, technical ability of managers and HRM ability of managers are highly affected and influential factors for causing job stress of academic staff. Out of these factors administrative policies and practices are high and more influential towards the job stress of academic staff.

8.2 Limitations

Theory was confined to employee job stress in the organization, in which only four factors namely organizational factors individual factors, personal factors and environmental factors were only considered in accordance with the theory by Fred Luthans (F, 2008) Research was designed to study implications relating to job stress of academic staff in the SLIATE

Further views were obtained from Directors, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers and Assistant Lecturers so as to critically evaluate their views about job stress of academic staff so that recommendations will be directly related to the academic staff of the SLIATE but perhaps finding would be indirectly related and benefited to the similar other organizations in Sri Lanka or elsewhere.

8.3 Recommendations

Following recommendations can be made to create stress free organizational environment for academic staff of SLIATE

1. Relevant authorities should review the existing structure and then determining what type of environment the SLIATE face now and in the future and then design the organizational structure accordingly.
2. In order to minimize or eradicate lapses on administrative policies, a proper implementation system on administrative policies should be introduced and continued.
3. To eradicate lapses in organizational procedures proper set of organizational procedures should be introduced and process by reviewing present set of organizational procedures
4. Establishing standards and adhering to them in higher educational institutes can reduced the level of stress of academic staff

Following recommendations can be made to create stress free organizational environment.

1. Administration should take necessary action to help officers to deal with stressful situations such as avoid the stressor, alter the stressor, adopt the stressor and accept the stressor.
2. Administration should train all employees
3. Administration should look forward to an uplifting of ethical standard in business over the next

Following recommendations are made by the researcher to avoid the personal stressors.

1. Conduct programmes to reduce stress and conflict through work-family initiatives
2. Should conduct family workshops and consultations related to marriage, single parent, working parents.
3. Conduct stress management workshop, relaxation seminars, and other kind of support.
4. Improve opportunities in which family members can join with SLIATE environment.
Ex: Annual Get –together, Annual Trips

Following recommendation can be made to create stress free environment for academic staff.

1. Should practice equitable performance appraisal and reward system.
2. Expand opportunities to officers to involve with current changing environment.
3. Should actively promote the training and development of members.

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