HUM 120
EXPOSITORY WRITING

Project

Previous Lecture

❑ Word Order Rules

❑ Basics of Barriers to Effective Communication

❑ Division of Barriers

❑ Overcoming Barriers

Writing a Project Report

☑ Understanding and Planning

- Identify the Problem: For stating it directly within your report alongside your purpose

  - The purpose of this study was to determine the negative effects of stress on employees and the methods employers use to manage employees' stress.

- Determine the Scope of your Report: To avoid overgeneralization of your results and statistics

  - This study was limited to the perceptions of full-time business employees.

  - This study was restricted to businesses operating in the Central Texas area.

  - For the purpose of this study, stress is defined as disruptive or disquieting influences that negatively affect an individual in the workplace.

  - Data for this study were collected during the fall of 2002.

Writing a Project Report

☑ **Understanding and Planning**

- Determine the Target Audience and Need: To state all the benefits in the significance of study

  - There are three primary groups that may benefit from this study: employees, employers, educators.

  - The first group, consisting of employees in today's business organizations, may learn to identify ways that stress negatively affects their work performance. Identifying the negative effects may enable them to take necessary action to cope with stress. By sharing this knowledge, employees can act as a vehicle to help management implement appropriate stress reduction programs.

Writing a Project Report

☑ Understanding and Planning

- Use Pre-Writing for a Rough Outline: Sub-sections to be included under Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Analysis, Findings, Conclusion and Recommendation

- Move to writing stage to prepare first draft

- Introduction (providing a background leading towards the focus of the study and the resultant outcome)

  - Today, many organizations and employees are experiencing the effects of stress on work performance. The effects of stress can be either positive or negative. What is perceived as positive stress by one person may be perceived as negative stress by another, since everyone perceives situations differently.

Writing a Project Report

☑ Understanding and Planning

- **Review of related literature**

- Critical thinking on an issue

- To formulate a deeper, more profound understanding of the problem under investigation

- To develop creative solutions to the problems

- Your sources may include newspapers, periodicals, business books, directories, almanacs, statistical resources, government publications, electronic databases

- Look for author's credibility, honesty and reliability of the source, purpose of the studied material

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✓ Understanding and Planning

- Properly cite the sources to avoid plagiarism. Examples [1/3]

  - Barden (2001), a freelance writer specializing in health care and a former managing editor of Commerce and Health, stated the importance of wellness programs and gave specific examples of corporations that are successfully implementing such programs. Example 1, 2 and 3…

  - Foster (2002), a professional speaker on stress-management, surveyed midlevel managers and found stress to be a major determinant in worker productivity. According to the study, the primary areas affected by stress are employee morale, absenteeism, and decision making abilities.

  - Harrold and Wayland (2002) reported that increasing stress affects morale, productivity, organizational efficiency, absenteeism, and profitability for both individuals and the organization.

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☑ **Understanding and Planning**

- Properly cite the sources to avoid plagiarism. Examples [2/3]
  - Maurer (2002) stated that stress-induced illnesses are prevalent in the workplace today, and stress is the problem of the sufferer and the employer. Stress causes absenteeism and can lead to other problems such as drug addiction, alcoholism, depression, and poor job performance. Followed by Supporting Details...
  - Schorr (2001), a stress-management consultant, stated that stress causes problems in the workplace which negatively affect employee health and organizational productivity. Stress can lead to problems such as job dissatisfaction, alcoholism, absenteeism, physical ailments, and poor job performance. If managers know how to prevent and cope with stress, productivity can be increased.

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☑ Understanding and Planning

- Properly cite the sources to avoid plagiarism. Examples [3/3]

  - Many companies instituted stress-management programs that led to a decline in absenteeism, a decrease in sickness and accident costs, and/or an increase in job performance. Schorr reported that a stress inventory, available from a stress-management program, can assist executives and managers in assessing employee stress. The inventory can identify the sources of stress, which may include physical elements as well as other factors. Once these sources have been assessed, the program can provide the necessary skills for coping with the problems, and participants can learn that there are alternative ways of reacting to stress.

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☑ Understanding and Planning

- **Method of Inquiry**

- Theoretical description of a design which suits your needs

- Survey, interview, questionnaire and so on

- This section covers: Source of data

  - Data for this study were collected using a questionnaire developed by a group of students at Southwest Texas State University. The questionnaire was divided into three parts.

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- Part one consisted of a list of 15 work performance areas that may be negatively affected by a person's level of stress. Respondents were asked to indicate whether stress increased, decreased, or had not changed their work performance in each area. They were also asked to indicate from the list of 15 work performance areas the area that was the most negatively affected by stress and the area that was the least negatively affected by stress.

- In the second part of the questionnaire, a list of 17 programs was provided and the respondents were asked to indicate which programs their companies had implemented to manage stress.

- Part three was designed to collect demographic data for a respondent profile, including full-time employee classification and age group.

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- A copy of such questionnaire to be provided in Appendix section

- **Selection of Sample**

- Description of population

- Sampling Technique

  - The respondents involved in this survey were employees working in companies located in Central Texas. A nonprobability, convenience sampling technique was used to collect primary data. Each member of the research team was responsible for distributing three questionnaires to members of the sample.

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- **Statistical Methods**

  - Simple statistical techniques were used to tabulate the results of this study. The primary data were analyzed using a percent of response. To compute the percent of response, the number of responses to each choice was divided by the total number of respondents who answered the question. Followed by additional details.

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➤ **Limitations of the Study**

➤ Paving the way for further research

- This study may be limited through the use of a questionnaire as a data collection instrument. Because questionnaires must generally be brief, areas that may have been affected by stress may not have been included in the questionnaire.

- Also, all programs that may be available to employees for managing stress may not have been included in the study. The study may also be limited by the use of a nonprobability, convenience sampling method. The sample of business employees for the study was chosen for convenience and may not be representative of the total population of business employees.

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☑ **Understanding and Planning**

- **Results and Discussions**

- Textual explanation accompanied with Tables, Figures and Diagrams

- **Demographic Profile**

  - All returned responses from the sample were considered full-time employees by their employers. The respondents were also asked to indicate their age group; all age ranges were represented in the results, as shown in Figure 1.
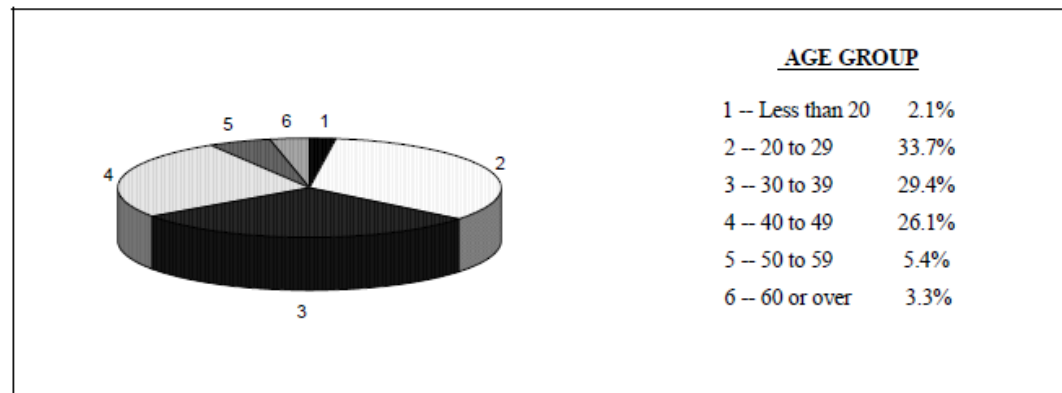

AGE GROUP	
1 -- Less than 20	2.1%
2 -- 20 to 29	33.7%
3 -- 30 to 39	29.4%
4 -- 40 to 49	26.1%
5 -- 50 to 59	5.4%
6 -- 60 or over	3.3%

Figure 1: Age Distribution of Respondents

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- **Areas of Job Performance Affected by Stress**

    - Only respondents who indicated stress negatively affected an area were considered in these findings. Of the 15 areas listed, four areas were identified as having a response rate of more than 50.0%. These areas were as follows: job satisfaction/morale (73.9%), courtesy (65.2%), accuracy (52.7%), and creativity (51.6%). Similarly, Schorr (2001) stated that a significant number of employees' creativity is negatively affected by stress. Also, Harrold and Wayland (2002) agreed that morale is strongly affected by stress.
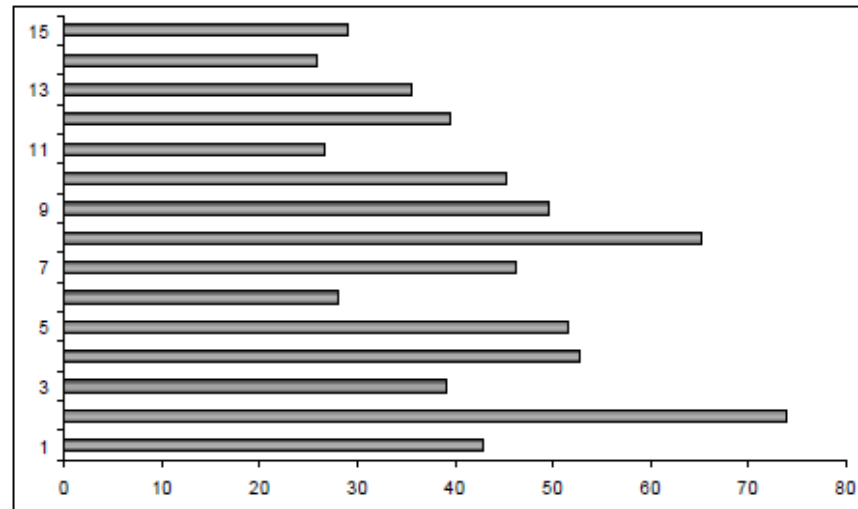
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✓☑ Understanding and Planning

Figure 2: Negative Effects of Stress on Work Performance

1	42.8%	Productivity	9	49.5%	Cooperation
2	73.9%	Job Satisfaction/Morale	10	45.2%	Initiative
3	39.1%	Decision Making Abilities	11	26.6%	Reliability
4	52.7%	Accuracy	12	39.4%	Alertness
5	51.6%	Creativity	13	35.5%	Perseverance
6	28.0%	Attention to Appearance	14	25.8%	Tardiness
7	46.3%	Organizational Skills	15	28.3%	Absenteeism
8	65.2%	Courtesy			

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- **Programs to Manage Stress**

  - Insurance received the highest number of responses (72.0%), whereas, therapy received the lowest (2.1%). Playing classical music and creating a comfortable work environment were found by Foster (2002) to be low cost stress reduction programs. Although these are inexpensive programs to implement, a relatively small response rate was given for piped music (17.2%) and ergonomically correct furniture (17.0%). Maurer (2002) stated that it is necessary for companies to design programs that enable employees to assess stressful situations and develop a rational mode of behavior. In contrast to Maurer's research, only 17.0% of the respondents indicated that Employee Empowerment Programs are being offered by their employer.

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Table 1: Programs Offered by Employers to Manage Stress.

TYPE OF PROGRAM	RESPONSES
Insurance	72%
Breaks	69.2%
Educational Assistance/Reimbursement	51.0%
Access for Disabled	42.6%
Alternate Schedule	34.0%
Employee Assistance Programs	34.0%
Wellness Programs	34.0%
Flextime	29.8%
Stress Management Seminars	29.8%
Training Programs	29.8%
Piped Music	17.2%
Assigned Parking	17.0%
Employee Empowerment Programs	17.0%
Ergonomically Correct Furniture	17.0%
Financial Counseling	8.5%
On-Site/Assistance with Child Care	4.3%

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☑ Understanding and Planning

➤ • **Conclusion**

➤ • Logical deductions

➤ • Summary of findings

➤ • Highlighting significant elements

- On the basis of the findings, several conclusions concerning the effects of stress on Central Texas business employees can be drawn. The findings of this study indicated stress does negatively affect the work performance of employees.

- Job satisfaction and productivity were indicated as two areas most affected by work-related stress. Therefore, stress cannot be considered just an individual issue because reduced job satisfaction and lower productivity has a direct effect on the company as a whole.

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- From this study, it can be concluded that employers have realized the importance of managing stress in the workplace because of the wide variety of programs now offered to manage stress.

- Of all the programs offered by employers, insurance is the most frequently offered means for managing stress. Because insurance acts as a security net for employees and is offered the most, it can be inferred that employers contend that insurance is the most effective means for managing stress.

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☑ Understanding and Planning

- **Recommendations**

- Brief, clear, concise

- Implementation, applicability, suitability of findings

- Suggestion of topics for further research

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Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions in this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Employers should offer various stress reduction programs to help employees manage stress because stress is prevalent in the workplace.

2. Employers should conduct a survey of the programs they already offer to discover which programs are the most effective for managing their employees' stress.

3. Employees should share their ideas for managing stress with their employers in order to help their employers implement appropriate stress reduction programs.

4. Educators should incorporate into their business curriculum discussions of stress in the workplace and ways to manage stress.

5. Additional research should be done. First, other areas negatively affected by stress should be studied to determine if stress affects other aspects of an employee's life. In addition, other factors should be examined to learn what the personal and work-related causes and symptoms of stress are for an individual.

Writing a Project Report

☑ Understanding and Planning

- Revise, edit and proofread using the learned techniques

- Re-write the final draft

- Write the executive summary of the whole draft at the end of your drafting stage

- Cover your purpose, methods, findings, conclusion and recommendation in a single paragraph

- Prepare your work cited page following the guidelines of a particular referencing style

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- Design the preliminary section which includes

    o Title page

    o Table of contents (providing page numbers for all the sections, tables and figures)

    o Include the executive summary

- Include the supplementary section in the form of

    o Work cited page

    o Appendix (questionnaire copy, interview questions)

References

- Wright State University. (n.d.), The Effects Of Stress On Business Employees And Programs Offered By Employers To Manage Employee Stress. Retrieved from www.wright.edu/~david.wilson/eng3000/samplereport.pdf

Conclusions

- Write a Project Report

- Sections of Project Report