



# The Relationship between Work Stress, Resilience, and Hope among employees

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## Abstract

Due to the changing nature of jobs, employees are facing work-related stress all over the world. Work stress is considered to be harmful when it is affecting performance, job dissatisfaction, motivation, and health of employees negatively. The aim of the research was to find the relationship between resilience, hope, and work stress. The data was collected from 175 employees working in Indian companies. The analysis was done through Pearson's Correlation on SPSS. From the result, it was evident that hope is negatively correlated with work stress. Resilience is negatively correlated with work stress.

**Index terms: Resilience, Hope, Work stress and Correlation.**

## Index terms:

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Work stress is a global phenomenon affecting the physical and mental health of working people. Job stress is defined by Parker and Decotiis (1983) as the feeling of an individual who deviates from the normal or preferred functioning at the workplace due to the constraints or demands or work-related important outcomes. A variety of reasons contribute to work stress such as work overload, technological advancement, job insecurity, competitive market conditions, etc. It compromises the physical and mental health of working people. (Asamoah-Appiah and Aggrey-Fynn, 2017) Stress has a significant impact not only on employees but on organizations also. Employees experiencing job stress are likely to develop problems like hypertension, cardiovascular problems, intention to quit, low productivity, and substance abuse at the workplace. Occupational stressors lead to organizational inefficiency, turnover, absenteeism, and huge medical bills for the organization

Work stress can be reduced with an appropriate coping mechanism. Resilience is the process of using the resources within an individual to adapt and *bounce back* from adverse situations (Windle, G., 2010). According to Dohrenwend (2000), resilience is one of the psychological capitals mostly identified to be associated with stress and coping. (Luthans, 2012) Development of resilience and using it in today's turbulent organizations is considered a wise investment. Resilience helps an individual to respond to the stressors at the workplace and avoid different health problems such as burnout and depression. People who are resilient always experience positive emotions such as joy, love, and hope which help them to change their way of thinking during stressful situations.

Snyder et al (1991) defined hope as a cognitive concept that involves goal-directed will "agency" and planning to achieve those goals "pathway". Based on this definition, hope is considered a motivational construct. Therefore, those who have a high level of hope can plan their pathways to reach the goal. Hope plays a significant role in effective coping and adaptation to stressful situations (Lazarus, 2003; Folkman 2010). Hope and resilience are considered the indicators of positive adjustment with regard to stress or adversity. It gives an optimistic view of life to cope with stress successfully. Hope and resilience are two main components of positive psychology that need to be implemented in the workplace. As protective factors hope and resilience act against the experiences of stress. These may help an individual to become proactive and overcome the problems at the workplace.

Therefore, the present study attempts to find out the relationship between hope, resilience, and work stress.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Mishra et al (2022) stated that work stress is mostly caused not because of work overload only but also due to lack of praise, rewards, and autonomy at the workplace. Employees need to find out the sources of the stress and choose an effective method to deal with it. Those who can manage stress can handle emotional problems and maintain mental well-being.

Shatté et al (2017) found that a high level of resilience is beneficial for workers to perceive stress despite the work environment. Resilience was found to be a protective factor for stress, burnout, and depression. They also stated that workers with high resilience showed better outcomes in the difficult work environment.

Mishra et al (2016) investigated the role of hope in job stress. This study was conducted on a sample of 255 participants from 4 large private sector life insurance companies situated in Eastern India. The researchers mentioned that a higher level of hope leads to a low level of attrition and a high level of well-being. Those who had high levels of hope can manage the stress effectively. They also suggested that managers can help the employees to improve their levels of hope through training programs. This will help to reduce the stress-related problems and it will be beneficial for the overall workforce.

Duggal et al (2016) conducted a study on neurosurgical patients. They mentioned that these patients face stress due to their diagnosis. Hope and resilience act as protective factors against the hardships caused due to adverse medical diagnoses. Hope and resilience as traits help an individual to become proactive and less vulnerable to the negative emotions and their effect on their health.

## 3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Due to the changing nature of jobs, employees are facing work-related stress all over the world. Work stress is considered to be harmful when it is affecting performance, job dissatisfaction, motivation, and health of employees negatively. Resilience is the capacity of an individual to cope with stress effectively. At work, employees who are resilient are able to handle the pressures of the job and heavy workload. As an important component of resilience, hope is a resource that helps in coping and decision-making to achieve desirable goals. To get through stressful situations, hope and resilience are important assets of an individual.

Therefore, the aim of the study is to find out the relationship between resilience, hope, and workplace stress among employees.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Operational Definitions of Variables

**Job stress:** Parker and Decotiis (1983) operationally defined job stress with the help of two dimensions:

Time stress: Staying under strong time pressure;

Anxiety: Job-related feelings of anxiety.

**Resilience:** Resilience is operationally defined as the ability to bounce back or recover from stress (Smith et al., 2008).

**Hope:** Hope is operationally defined by Snyder et al (1991) with the help of the following constructs:

- Goals are the psychological targets that drive human behaviour.
- Pathways are the plans to reach the goals.
- Agency is referred to as a perceived capacity of an individual to use the pathways for the achievement of the goal.

### 4.2 Sample

Table No. 4.1 Age group-wise distribution of Sample

Age Groups	Frequency	Percent
25 to 40 years	118	67.4
40 to 60 years	57	32.6
Total	175	100.0

Table No. 4.2 Gender-wise distribution of Sample

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Females	77	44.0
Males	98	56.0
Total	175	100.0

**Table No. 4.3 Education-wise distribution of the Sample**

Education	Frequency	Percent
Graduate	45	25.7
Postgraduate	130	74.3
Total	175	100.0

**Table No. 4.4 Company type-wise distribution of the Sample**

Company type	Frequency	Percent
Private	111	63.4
Public	34	19.4
Government	30	17.1
Total	175	100.0

**Table No. 4.5 years of service of the Participants**

Years of service	Frequency	Percent
Below 20 years	116	66.3
Above 20 years	59	33.7
Total	175	100.0

The number of participants included in the study was of the age group 25 to 60 years old full-time employees, working in Indian companies. The sample was selected through simple random sampling. Among the participants, 118 were between 25 to 40 years and 57 respondents were between 40 to 60 years of age. 77 participants were females and 98 were males. The sample consisted of 45 graduate and 130 postgraduate participants. Among them 111 were working in the private sector, 34 were working in the public sector and 30 were working in government sector organizations. 116 participants had below 20 years of work experience and 59 participants had above 20 years of experience.

### 4.3 Tools

**Domain-Specific Hope Scale:** The scale is an 8-point rating scale with responses of 1 “Definitely false” and 8 “Definitely true”. The internal consistency of the scale showed Cronbach alpha varies from .74 to .84 for the scale (Snyder et al., 1991).

**The Brief Resilience Scale:** This is a 5-point rating scale with responses of “Strongly disagree” and “Strongly Agree”. Item numbers 2, 4 and 6 are reverse coded. Internal consistency of the scale has Cronbach alpha ranging from .80 to .91 (Smith et al., 2008).

**Parker’s Job Stress Scale:** This scale consists of 13 items with 5 points Likert Scale 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree (Parker and Decotiis, 1983). Cronbach’s alpha values ranged from 0.71 to 0.82 which indicates good internal consistency of the scale (Al-Ghamdi, 2017).

### 4.4 Procedure

Google form was constructed and sent to the participants via social networking sites. The objective of the study was explained to the participants. Research ethics were strictly followed. After collection, the data was coded in an excel sheet.

### 4.5 Statistical Analysis

Pearson’s product-moment correlation coefficient was used to find the relationship between Job stress, Resilience, and Hope.

## 5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

**Table No. 5.1 Correlation between Hope, Resilience, and Work stress (N=175)**

Variables	Resilience	Work stress
Hope	0.282**	-0.168*
Resilience	1	-0.413***

\*: Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

\*\*: Correlation is significant at 0.01 level

\*\*\*: Correlation is significant at 0.001 level

### Discussion

Correlation analysis was used to find out the relationship between Hope, Resilience, and Work stress. Results indicated that hope is positively correlated with resilience  $r=.282$ ,  $n=175$ ,  $p<.001$  and negatively correlated with work stress  $r=-.168$ ,  $p<.001$ . The results are in the line with the study conducted by Mishra et al (2016). Hope as a motivational construct helps an individual to identify and engage in various pathways to achieve goals (Snyder et al 1991). Hope as a motivational construct helps an individual to identify and engage in various pathways to achieve goals. According to Folkman (2010), a situation can be perceived as stressful by an individual when it is beyond his coping resources. Hope is a positive psychological construct that plays an important role in coping and adopting challenging situations (Lazarus, 2003; Folkman, 2010).

Resilience was found negatively correlated with work stress  $r=-.413$ ,  $p<.001$ . The results are similar to the study results of Hao et al (2015) showing a negative relationship between resilience and work stress. Resilience acts as a buffer to reduce the adverse effects of work-related stress. Those who have high resilience, are more confident and capable to react positively to stress. They also show an optimistic view while dealing with a stressful situation and they are more proficient while using resources from their surroundings. They also accept the consequences of adverse situations. This makes them deal with work stress effectively compared to individuals with low resilience.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE SCOPE

The aim of the research was to find the relationship between resilience, hope, and work stress. The data was collected from 175 employees working in Indian companies. The analysis was done through Pearson's Correlation on SPSS. From the result, it was evident that hope is negatively correlated with work stress. Resilience is negatively correlated with work stress. Hope acts as a motivational construct that helps an individual to find out and use various pathways to achieve goals. Hope is a positive psychological construct that plays an important role in coping and adopting challenging situations. Resilience acts as a buffer to reduce the adverse effects of work-related stress. Those who have high resilience, are more confident and capable to react positively to stress.

## 7. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study gives an insight to the human resource personnel to implement the strategies for the enrichment of the workplace environment. To navigate through the job stress, employees need to acquire certain skills and strategies. For this resilience is an important factor that helps them to handle the stress. In today's dynamic work environment, training on resilience will be beneficial in improving job performance and creating healthy work culture. Despite obstacles and stress, employees should believe that they are confident about their future. Hope gives that belief to the employees to choose the right direction at their workplace. Those who are hopeful can accomplish more at the workplace. A healthy work environment will strengthen the internal resources of employees. This study demonstrates the importance of resilience and hope in the workplace to facilitate employee productivity. Companies should incorporate different policies on building resilience and hope to reduce stress in the workplace.

## 8. SCOPE OF THE FUTURE RESEARCH

The research did not control the factors like socioeconomic background, personality traits, and other extraneous variables. The data collection process was performed via Google forms. There was no one-to-one communication there could also be a possibility of a lack of honest responses. A future study can be conducted to compare the work stress among employees working in the private sector and public sectors. It can also be conducted to find out work stress and gender difference. Also, personality traits with respect to hope, resilience, and work stress can be studied in the future.

## 9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am very much grateful to all the employees who have participated in the present study.

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