

Workplace Stress and Employee Retention

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Abstract

Employee retention has become a major challenge in labor-intensive manufacturing industries where workforce stability directly influences productivity and operational sustainability. Workplace stress significantly affects employee morale, productivity, organizational commitment, and turnover intention. The present study examines the impact of workplace stress on employee retention in the pickle manufacturing industry. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design using both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from 51 employees through structured questionnaires and analyzed using percentage analysis and correlation analysis. The findings reveal that excessive workload, production pressure, extended working hours, and poor work-life balance are the primary causes of workplace stress. The study concludes that organizations must adopt employee-centered HR practices, stress management initiatives, and employee welfare measures to improve retention and organizational sustainability.

Keywords

Workplace Stress, Employee Retention, Employee Turnover, Food Processing Industry, Organizational Commitment, Workload Pressure

1. Introduction

In the present competitive business environment, organizations increasingly recognize employees as valuable assets whose performance contributes directly to organizational success. Employee retention has become an important concern because high turnover disrupts productivity, increases recruitment costs, and affects organizational stability. Among the various factors influencing employee retention, workplace stress has emerged as one of the most critical organizational challenges.

Workplace stress refers to the physical, emotional, and psychological strain experienced when job demands exceed employees' ability to cope effectively. Labor-intensive industries often expose employees to repetitive work, production deadlines, workload pressure, and extended working hours, which negatively affect employee well-being and commitment.

The pickle manufacturing industry forms an important segment of the food processing sector and depends heavily on skilled labor to maintain operational efficiency and product quality. Employees working in such industries frequently experience occupational stress caused by workload

imbalance, target pressure, and physically demanding working conditions. This study examines the relationship between workplace stress and employee retention in the pickle manufacturing industry.

2. Literature Review

Das and Baruah (2013) identified that employee retention is influenced by job satisfaction, compensation, organizational culture, and work environment. The study emphasized that stressful working conditions increase turnover intentions among employees.

Weberg (2010) found that supportive leadership significantly reduces employee stress and improves organizational commitment. Employees who receive organizational support are more likely to remain loyal to the organization. Huang, Van der Veen, and Song (2018) observed that occupational stress strongly influences turnover intention among employees. Organizations implementing stress management practices experience better retention levels. Meintjes (2019) concluded that workload pressure, poor working conditions, and role ambiguity are major contributors to employee turnover in manufacturing industries.

Although previous studies have examined workplace stress in corporate sectors, limited research has focused on small-scale labor-intensive food processing industries. The present study attempts to bridge this research gap.

3. Objectives of the Study

- To identify the major causes of workplace stress among employees.
- To examine the relationship between workplace stress and employee retention.
- To analyze the impact of workplace stress on employee commitment and productivity.
- To provide recommendations for improving employee retention.

4. Hypothesis of the Study

1. There is no significant relationship between workplace stress and employee retention.
2. There is no significant relationship between workplace stress and absenteeism, employee productivity, and turnover intention.

5. Research Methodology

The study follows a descriptive and analytical research design. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires from 51 employees working in production and operational departments. Secondary data were obtained from journals, books, company records, and industry reports. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis and correlation analysis were used for data interpretation.

6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Stress Factor	Employees Agreeing (%)
Production Pressure	72.6
Long Working Hours	68.7
Job Anxiety	64.7
Heavy Workload	62.8
Poor Work-Life Balance	49.0

The analysis indicates that production pressure, long working hours, and excessive workload are the primary contributors to workplace stress among employees.

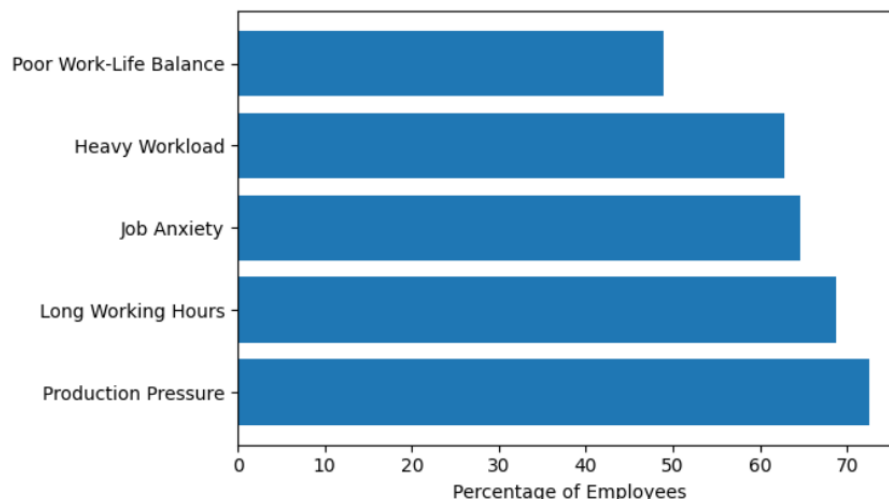


Figure 1: Major Workplace Stress Factors

7. Correlation Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance	Interpretation
Workplace Stress vs Employee Retention	-0.72	$p < 0.05$	Strong Negative Correlation

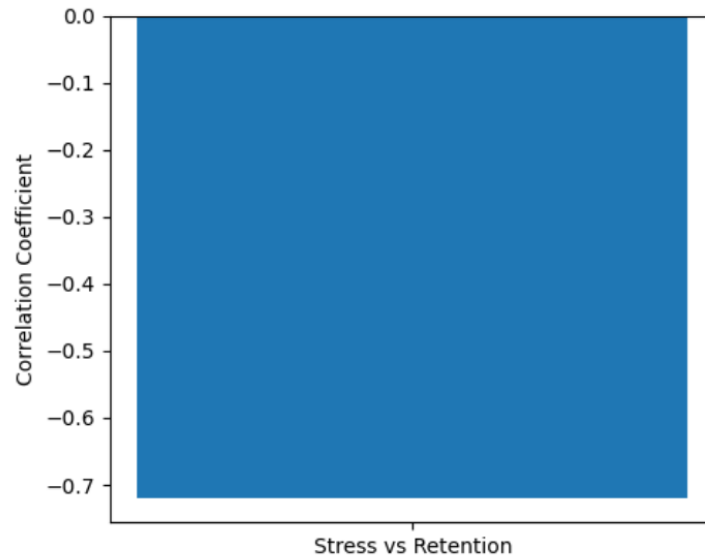


Figure 2: Correlation between Workplace Stress and Employee Retention

The correlation coefficient value of -0.72 indicates a strong negative relationship between workplace stress and employee retention. The findings confirm that increased stress levels significantly reduce employee commitment and increase turnover intentions. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

8. Analysis of Workplace Stress on Employee Commitment and Productivity

The study findings reveal that workplace stress significantly affects employee commitment and productivity in the pickle manufacturing industry. A majority of employees reported experiencing stress due to excessive workload, long working hours, production targets, and job-related anxiety. Nearly 72.6% of respondents agreed that workplace pressure arising from production demands adversely affects their work performance and commitment levels. Employees exposed to continuous stress demonstrated lower motivation, reduced concentration, and declining enthusiasm toward their responsibilities. The study further identified

that employees facing prolonged workplace stress tend to experience emotional exhaustion and dissatisfaction, which directly reduces organizational commitment. Statistical analysis also revealed that higher stress levels are associated with absenteeism, reduced productivity, and increased turnover intentions.

The findings clearly demonstrate that workplace stress not only affects employee well-being but also weakens operational efficiency and workforce stability.

9. Discussion

The findings reveal that workplace stress significantly influences employee retention in labor-intensive manufacturing industries. Employees exposed to excessive workload, production pressure, and prolonged working hours experience lower job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

The study findings are consistent with earlier research that identified occupational stress as a major determinant of turnover intention. Poor work-life balance and job anxiety further intensify

employee dissatisfaction and reduce employee productivity.

The absence of structured HR systems and employee welfare practices in small-scale industries contributes to increased workplace stress. Organizations failing to address employee well-being may experience higher attrition, reduced productivity, and operational instability.

10. Recommendations for Improving Employee Retention

- Organizations should introduce stress management and employee wellness programs.
- Balanced workload distribution and flexible work arrangements should be implemented.
- Employee welfare initiatives and recognition programs should be strengthened.
- Structured HR policies for grievance handling and employee communication should be developed.
- Management should encourage supportive supervisor–employee relationships.
- Training and skill development programs should be conducted regularly.

The recommendations suggest that employee retention can be improved significantly by reducing workplace stress and creating a supportive organizational culture. Organizations investing in employee well-being and welfare are more likely to achieve higher productivity and workforce stability.

11. Managerial Implications

The study provides important managerial implications for labor-intensive manufacturing industries. Organizations should prioritize employee well-being through supportive HR practices, stress management initiatives, and employee welfare programs. Creating a healthy work environment can improve employee morale, commitment, productivity, and retention.

12. Conclusion

The study concludes that workplace stress has a statistically significant impact on employee retention in the pickle manufacturing industry. Excessive workload, production pressure, extended working hours, and poor work-life balance are major

contributors to workplace stress. The statistical findings confirm a strong negative relationship between workplace stress and employee retention.

Organizations operating in labor-intensive industries must focus on employee-centered HR practices, supportive workplace culture, and stress reduction strategies to improve employee satisfaction and organizational sustainability. Reducing workplace stress not only enhances workforce stability but also contributes to long-term productivity and growth.

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