

**WORKPLACE STRESS: ASSESSING ITS INFLUENCE ON SLEEP
PATTERNS, PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH, AND COGNITIVE
PERFORMANCE AMONG CORPORATE EMPLOYEES**

Dissertation Submitted to



The IIHMR University, Jaipur

for the partial fulfilment for the award of the degree of

Master of Business Administration

(MBA) in

Hospital and Health Management

by

Jyotsna

Under the Supervision and Guidance of

Dr. Varsha Tanu

2025

INTERNSHIP REPORT

Introduction

In today's fast-evolving, performance-driven world, workplace stress has emerged as a pervasive and pressing challenge across industries. Organizations increasingly expect employees to meet tight deadlines, handle multiple responsibilities, and maintain high levels of productivity, often under conditions of limited control and high unpredictability. With the rise of constant digital connectivity, many employees now find it difficult to separate work from personal life, leading to a chronic "always-on" culture that intensifies stress levels.

Workplace stress is more than just occasional pressure; it is the ongoing experience of psychological strain that arises when job demands exceed an individual's perceived ability to cope. Prolonged exposure to such stress is linked to various negative outcomes, including mental health challenges (such as anxiety, irritability, and depression), physical health problems (such as fatigue, headaches, or cardiovascular strain), and impairments in cognitive functioning, including reduced attention, memory lapses, and slower decision-making.

Importantly, workplace stress does not exist in isolation; it often disrupts one of the most critical pillars of health: sleep. Studies have consistently shown that employees experiencing high levels of stress report poorer sleep quality, insomnia, frequent night awakenings, and daytime drowsiness. Sleep disturbances, in turn, exacerbate emotional dysregulation and reduce cognitive performance, creating a vicious cycle of stress, exhaustion, and underperformance.

While employees navigate demanding deadlines and mounting responsibilities, they often face not just emotional exhaustion but subtle, creeping effects on their cognitive abilities — effects that are frequently underestimated. Under chronic workplace stress, individuals may notice their focus slipping, decisions taking longer, or once-simple tasks suddenly feeling mentally draining. It's not just a matter of "being tired"; stress seeps into the mind's ability to prioritize, remember, and think creatively. Compounding this, disrupted sleep — whether due to late-night work emails, anxious ruminations, or restless nights — further undermines mental sharpness, creating a reinforcing loop of fatigue and underperformance. Despite growing evidence of these intertwined effects, many workplace studies have tended to focus narrowly on either stress or mental health symptoms, without fully capturing how stress and poor sleep together erode the cognitive edge employees need to succeed. This study, therefore, seeks to uncover these overlooked connections, providing insights not only into how employees feel but also how well they can think, solve problems, and perform in their professional roles.

This study aims to address this gap by holistically examining the relationships between workplace stress, sleep patterns, psychological health, and cognitive performance among employees. By using an integrated approach that draws on validated measurement tools, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how stress affects not only emotional well-being but also fundamental mental capacities essential for job performance.

Understanding these relationships is critical for organizations that aim to foster healthier, more productive workplaces. By identifying how stress disrupts sleep and cognition, this study can help inform targeted interventions, such as stress management programs, mental health support, flexible work arrangements, or wellness initiatives. Ultimately, the findings will contribute to the growing body of occupational health research and provide actionable insights for improving employee well-being and organizational success.

Objective

- To identify the most common sleep disturbances associated with workplace stress.
- To explore emotional and psychological symptoms (e.g., anxiety, irritability, burnout) experienced by stressed employees.
- To evaluate how workplace stress affects cognitive functions such as attention, memory, and decision-making.

Organization Profile: IIHMR University

- IIHMR University, located in Jaipur, Rajasthan, is a premier postgraduate research university dedicated to the improvement of health systems and public health through education, research, and training. Established in 1984 as the Indian Institute of Health Management Research, it gained university status in 2014. The institution has earned a reputation for excellence in health management education and evidence-based policy research, and it is recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC).
- IIHMR University offers specialized programs in hospital and health management, pharmaceutical management, development studies, and public health. It has collaborated with leading global institutions such as the Johns Hopkins University, and plays a critical role in capacity building for healthcare professionals across India and other low- and middle-income countries.
- **Vision:** To become a world-class higher education institution by promoting education and research for the betterment of society.
- **Mission:** IIHMR University is dedicated to the improvement in standards of health through better management of health care and related Programs. It seeks to accomplish this through management education, research, training, consultation, and institutional networking in a national and global perspective.

Services Provided by IIHMR University

1. Academic Programs

- MBA in Hospital and Health Management
- MBA in Pharmaceutical Management

- MBA in Development Management
- Master of Public Health (MPH) in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University
- Doctoral (Ph.D.) and Executive Education programs

2. **Research and Consultancy**

- Health systems and policy research
- Operational research for government and international agencies
- Program evaluation and impact assessments

3. **Training and Capacity Building**

- Short-term training programs for healthcare professionals
- Management development programs (MDPs)
- Customized training for NGOs, governments, and health agencies

4. **Policy Advocacy**

- Evidence-based policy recommendations for health sector reforms
- Technical assistance to state and national health missions

5. **International Collaborations**

- Joint programs and research with institutions like WHO, UNICEF, USAID, and universities worldwide.

Key Learnings

• **Understood the silent impact of stress** how it quietly affects not just emotions, but also sleep and brain functioning in everyday work life.

• **Realized the importance of sleep as a health pillar**, not just for rest, but for focus, emotional control, and decision-making at work.

• **Learned to connect research tools to real-life problems**, by using scales like PSQI, BJSQ, and DASS-21 in practical settings.

• **Discovered how stress isn't just personal it's organizational**, and needs structural solutions, not just individual coping.

• **Gained confidence in analyzing interdisciplinary issues**, blending psychology, health management, and workplace studies.

• **Developed a deeper respect for preventive mental health practices** in organizational design and leadership.

•**Improved critical thinking and research skills**, especially in translating academic findings into meaningful, actionable insights.