

JOB STRESS AMONG WOMEN EMPLOYEES IN THE PRIVATE SKIN CARE COMPANY

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ABSTRACT: Stress experienced by women at the workplace affects not only their professional life, but also family life and social intercourses. The objectives of the research are to investigate the prevalence of job stress and to explore the impact of job and organization factors which associated to job stress among women employees in the frontline skin care company of Thailand. Research instruments were conducted from Karasek's job content questionnaire 1.7 (revised 1997) and Suanprung Stress Test (SPST-20) was applied to 306 respondents. The results show prevalence of female employees are under high level of stress (41.5%). Top three of stresses were income insufficiency, responsibility of job, and physiological stress. Income sufficiency has significantly related to job stress. In addition, there were significantly difference between job stress and supportive from supervisor, where low supportive from supervisor cause severe stress. Psychological job demand is the most significantly impacted job stress among women employees in the frontline skin care company, while authority decision also significantly negative impacted job stress.

Keywords: Job stress, Job control, Job demand, Social support, Women employee, Skin care

INTRODUCTION

Job stress can be defined as a worker's response to a discrepancy between job demand and their abilities [1]. Many factors can cause job stress such as over workload, poor working condition, shift work, responsibility level, poor work relationship, unclear job description, job dissatisfaction, loss of occupation development opportunities, over/under promotion, and organizational conflict or structure [2]. The decreasing ability to cope with work stress resulted to unprecedented number of problems in marital relationship, family care and social association. In addition number of mistakes and accident is a constant concern in emerging stressful workplaces that resulted to decrease in production and performance effectively [3]. The uniqueness of the job and its effect to employee that contributed to job stress. It pertains to the employer expectation in regards with the job positive result, the time duration of job and the level of difficulty, changes in time frame like night shifting and the personal feeling of employee towards his or her job. How the individual

response will have the negative impact on the well-being especially the health issue of an employee. Heart related illness, high blood pressure; gastro intestinal disorders are among the result and prevalent manifestation of the first category job condition [3]. The results of job stress are problems for treatment, physical, and mental problems. Perceiving job stress in women employees is more than men employees. The job stress depend on the women employee's personality, the type of the stressor and the resources the women use to buffer the stressor [4-6]. The working women still carry extra works, more responsibility or burdens at home, childbearing, caring elderly relatives, and work-home conflict. The study is focus on skin care business; which offers treat skin problems and provides correct advice on proper skin care. The important employee in skin care business is the frontline employee which most of employee in this work field is women. They are customer service providers who given their key role in building customer satisfaction and relationships, are immensely important in this business settings. Normally their job is often involved in problem solving with face-to-face customers. Sometime they

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directly contact with customers who may be difficult to communicate and interact with. And often dealing with many customers at the same time, under pressure from the atmospheres inside the workplaces that lack of social interaction or support, so these things cause job stress. Exploration of women's working conditions would therefore seem to be valuable. The objective of the research is to investigate the prevalence of job stress, and explore the impact of job and organization factors which associated to job stress among women employees in the frontline skin care company of Thailand. The job stress in this study was measured by the Suanprung Stress Test is a stress test instrument designed to measure stress in Thai population. This tool was developed by Suanprung Hospital, Thailand. The SPST-20 is designed to identify biological, psychological, and social components of stress [7]. The part of organization and work factors was measured by a questionnaire that modified form Karasek's job content questionnaire(JCQ) based on the demand control model. This model, considered the two factors that are prominent in producing job stress. The first factor was psychological demands (intensity and pace of the work) .The second factor was control (skills and autonomy).The complete demand control model which added social support at work were both taken into consideration [8].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was a quantitative cross-sectional survey. Study population composed 919 women employees in the frontline from 123 skin care centers of private company of Thailand including Rajdhevee Clinic, Pan Clinic and Pan Beauty Center. The researcher applied Taro Yamane sampling formula for estimating sample size. The research subjects consisted of 306 women employees of the private skin care company in Thailand who aged between 20 – 60 years old, and employ in frontline department.

Respondents in the study were selected by the stratified random sampling. The part of organization and work factors was measured by a questionnaire that modified form Karasek's job content questionnaire (JCQ) based on the demand control model [7]. The result from test of reliability of 30 women employee who works in frontline department had Cronbach's alpha more than 0.7. The job content questionnaire 1.7 (revised 1997) included 24 items, which comprised of the job control was the sum of two sub-scales: skill discretion, measured by six items, and decision authority measured by three items. Five items measure the psychological job demands scale and

Table 1 The scores of Job Content Questionnaire

Scale (Number of items)	High	Low
Job control (9)	82-120	24-81
Skill (6)	44-60	12-43
Decision authority (3)	42-60	12-41
Job demands (7)	38-70	14-36
Psychological (5)	30-60	12-29
Physical (2)	8-10	2-7
Social support (8)	15-4	8-14
Co-worker (4)	15-20	4-14
Supervisor (4)	15-20	4-14

two items measured physical job demands. The workplace social support scale was the sum of two sub-scales: support from supervisors and four items measure support from co-workers. For each item response was recorded on a five-point Likert's scale. A median cut-off point for each scale and sub-scale were used to categorize each variable into "high" and "low" value of job and organization factors to divide each criteria into two group evaluating from sampling data and using average score as divide standard for 3 phases as low and high (Table 1).

The job stress in this study was measured by the Suanprung Stress Test (SPST-20) by Suanprung Hospital, Thailand. The SPST-20 is designed to identify biological, psychological, and social components of stress [8]. The interpretation of stress level can be classified into four levels as follow: 0 – 23 equaled mild stress; 24 – 41 equaled moderate stress, 42 – 61 equaled high stress, and more than 62 equaled sever stress. Data were summarized by frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Inferential statistics such as Chi-square test, Pearson's correlation coefficient, and multiple regression analysis were applied for analyze correlation of several factors with job stress.

RESULTS

The population of the study was female co-workers who work in the frontline skin care company (85%). They work in service duty (82%) and have clients less than 10 persons in charge of responsibility (81.7%). Most of them have number of working hour about 8.6 hours per day, and six days per week (91.2%). They aged between 21 and 30 years (42.2%). 47.1% of them are single and married (40.5%). More than half of them have knowledge about job adequate (78.4%). In term of income sufficient, 37.3% of employee have not sufficient income and in debt, income sufficient but not for saving (34.6%), while only 9.5% of employee has income sufficient and enough for saving. In bivariate analysis for find out the

Table 2 The relationship between job stress and demographics factors (n=306)

	Moderate stress	Job stress High stress	Sever stress	χ^2 (df)	P-value
Age (years)					
21 – 30	37 (28.7)	51 (39.5)	41 (31.8)	12.008 (6)	.062
31 – 40	18 (16.7)	45 (41.7)	45 (41.7)		
41 – 50	19 (31.1)	26 (42.6)	16 (26.2)		
51 – 60	3 (37.5)	5 (62.5)	-		
Knowledge about the job adequate					
Yes	63 (26.3)	96 (40)	81 (33.8)	1.186 (2)	.553
No	14 (21.2)	31 (47)	21 (31.8)		
Marital status					
Single	39 (27.1)	53 (36.8)	52 (36.1)	10.392 (8)	.239
Married	25 (20.2)	58 (46.8)	41 (33.1)		
Widowed	5 (38.5)	6 (46.2)	2 (15.4)		
Divorced	2 (16.7)	7 (58.3)	3 (25)		
Separated	6 (46.2)	3 (23.1)	4 (30.8)		
Number of working hour					
8 hours and below	50 (26.7)	83 (44.4)	54 (28.9)	4.301 (2)	.116
More than 8 hours	27 (22.7)	44 (37)	48 (40.3)		
Job responsibility					
Service	61 (24.3)	103 (41)	87 (34.7)	1.223 (2)	.542
Management	16 (29.1)	24 (43.6)	15 (27.3)		
Income sufficient					
Not sufficient and in debt	12 (10.5)	44 (38.6)	58 (50.9)	43.37 (6)	.000*
Not sufficient not in debt	17 (29.8)	20 (35.1)	20 (35.1)		
Sufficient but not for saving	33 (31.1)	53 (50)	20 (18.9)		
Sufficient and enough for saving	15 (51.7)	10 (34.5)	4 (13.8)		

*(sig < .05)

association between demographic factors and job stress by using Chi-square test, the result found that job stress has no association with individual factors such as age, knowledge, marital status, number of working hour, and job responsibility. Except for income sufficient which is found there is a associate between groups of female employee who has income sufficient and insufficient. Female employees who have income insufficient and in debt have stress under sever level (50.9%). However, female employee who has income sufficient and enough for saving has moderate stress when compare to other groups 51.7% (Table 2).

The summary in the Table 3 represents range, average mean score (\pm SD) and the interpreting of result by using Chi-square test. In term of job control factors (range = 64 – 114, \bar{X} = 88.1 \pm 9.3), majority of respondents have high level of skill discretion, range from 32 – 60, \bar{X} = 46.2 \pm 4.9, while they also have high level of decision authority, range from 28 – 60, \bar{X} = 41.8 \pm 6.7. When determine job demand factors (range = 31 – 65, \bar{X} = 50 \pm 6), most of respondents have high level of psychological, range from 23 – 56, \bar{X} = 42.3 \pm 5.5. However, majority of female employee has low

level of physical, range from 2 – 10, \bar{X} = 7.7 \pm 1.5. Moreover, there is high level of overall social support (range = 8 – 40, \bar{X} = 30.6 \pm 4.9), most of respondents has high level of co-worker, range from 4 – 20, \bar{X} = 15.3 \pm 2.3. In addition, majority of female employee has high level toward supervisor, range from 4 – 20, \bar{X} = 15.4 \pm 3.3.

The SPST-20 was using to measure level of stress. Prevalence of stress among female employees in the frontline skin care company in the study was high stress (41.5%, \bar{X} = 53.9). In addition, top five of stress that they concerned was income insufficiency, responsibility of job, and physiological stress. They have strongest opinion toward income insufficient (\bar{X} = 3.31), and followed by muscle tension or pain (\bar{X} = 3.26), cannot reach the job target (\bar{X} = 3.25), tension headaches (\bar{X} = 3.23), and back pain (\bar{X} = 3.19), respectively.

The relationship between job stress and individual factors were explained by Chi-square test. Source of stress level is determine from interpretation of SPST-20, which is including mild stress, moderate stress, high stress, and severe stress, while attribute from job and organization is segmented into group of low and high level of job and organization factors (Table 3). The result shows

Table 3 The relationship between job stress level and job & organization factors (n=306)

Job and organization factors	Job stress			χ^2 (df)	P-value
	High stress	Moderate stress	Severe stress		
Job control					
<i>Skill</i>					
- Low	21 (26.9)	30 (38.5)	27 (34.6)	.414 (2)	.813
- High	56 (24.6)	97 (42.5)	75 (32.9)		
<i>Decision authority</i>					
- Low	35 (20.3)	75 (43.6)	62 (36)	4.903 (2)	.086
- High	42 (31.3)	52 (38.8)	40 (29.9)		
Job demands					
<i>Psychological</i>					
- Low	2 (50)	1 (25)	1 (25)	1.344 (2)	.511
- High	75 (24.8)	126 (41.7)	101 (33.4)		
<i>Physical</i>					
- Low	31 (27.9)	41 (36.9)	39 (35.1)	1.574 (2)	.455
- High	46 (23.6)	86 (44.1)	63 (32.3)		
Social support					
<i>Co-worker</i>					
- Low	20 (20.6)	38 (39.2)	39 (40.2)	3.364 (2)	.186
- High	57 (27.3)	89 (42.6)	63 (30.1)		
<i>Supervisor</i>					
- Low	18 (20)	31 (34.4)	41 (45.6)	8.595 (2)	.014*
- High	59 (27.3)	96 (44.4)	61 (28.2)		
Prevalence of Job stress	77 (25.2)	127 (41.5)	102 (33.3)		

*(sig < .05)

Table 4 Analysis of multiple regressions among job stress and job and organization factors

	Beta	t	p-value
(Constant)	2.450	4.230	.000
Skill discretion	.211	1.830	.068
Authority decision	-.200	-2.378	.018
Psychological	.243	2.447	.015
Physical	.064	.955	.340
Co-worker	-.168	-1.853	.065
Supervisor	-.085	-1.362	.174

R = .285, R² = .081, Adjust R² = .063, F = 4.415*(sig < .05)

skill discretion, decision authority, psychological demand, physical demand and supportive from co-worker not significantly associated when determined by job stresses. However, there were significantly associated between job stress and supportive from supervisor, where low supportive from supervisor cause severe stress (45.6%). This can imply workers who are lack of supportive from supervisor will have high stress level.

According to multivariate analysis, six variables of job and organization was adopt in the multiple regression model (Table 4). The result found psychological factors is the most significantly impacted job stress among women employees in the frontline skin care company, which is significantly positive toward job stress of women employees (p-value = .015, β = .243). Authority decision also ranked as second mostly impacted toward job stress

also has significantly negative impacted job stress (p-value = .018, β = -.200). However, skill discretion (p-value = .068, β = -.211), physical (p-value = .340, β = -.064), co-worker (p-value = .065, β = -.168), and supervisor (p-value = .174, β = -.085) has no significantly impact toward job stress of women employees in the frontline skin care company.

DISCUSSION

The overall result explains income insufficient, social supported from colleague or supervisor, psychological job demand, and decision authority of job control is significantly affected stress of woman employee at 0.05 significant level. Woman employee in this study have type of stressor such as overload working but their income cannot cover their living cost and physiological stress such as muscle pain and tension headache. According to

the National Statistical Office, 90.99% of women employee is complaint from low payment and welfare [9]. The result may affect from their job responsibility of female employee in the study, who has role to make customer satisfied individually, also involved in giving a problem solution to customer directly, and their working hours is quite high and rapidity.

Female employees in the study who have income insufficient and debt will have level of stress higher than female employees who have sufficient income without debt. Income or wage affects level of satisfaction and stress level, employees who have sufficient income will have better performance and productivity [10]. Due to uncertainly of economic and political instability, it will affects living cost which is increasing apparently. Debt is the result from uncontrollable expense, which is directly affect to stress level of employee. Low income employees will have more chance to develop higher stress than employees who had sufficient income because of the high cost of living and daily expense is not suitable with their income.

Social supports are also factor which is influences job stress. From the result, there were significantly associated between job stress and supportive from supervisor, where low supportive from supervisor cause stress. Low social support from supervisor at workplace is associate with fatigue or stress [11]. In addition, supportive from supervisor have negative relationship with job stress among women employees in the frontline skin care company. Social support received from colleagues or supervisors have significantly negative associated with job stress [12]. Support from subordinate or supervisor such as giving assistance in completing a task or sharing information and resource, or emotional concerned such as giving reassurance can reduce stress level and make them has productivity on working [13]. Ignorance from supervisor such as lack of recognition and attention in term of guidance on performance and comments can lead employee to depress and generate their stress level. Friendly and helpful supervisor may make employee had feeling free to contact with them and give their opportunity to ask, which can make them develop stress level slower than supervisor who is strict and create the gap between them.

The psychological demand such as work overload or pressure from works such as working fast and repetitively, working hard, and time limited of working has significantly impacted job stress. According to the result of stress

measurement by using The SPST-20, employee concerned that cannot reach the job target is one of the of top most stress they perceived. Hard working and work overload is linking to the stress which can occur to be disease [14]. Physiological stress such as muscle tension, back pain, unilateral headache can happen when employee has under strain stress or fatigue. When employee had overloaded job and is under stress condition, their behavior may change such as less concentration on working, which is directly affect to their productivity [15, 16]. Stress from rapidity work and hard working can occur when they has limited time to meet their objective or goal or tired from physical response such as fatigue.

In addition, authority decision also has significantly negative impacted job stress. Freedom to complete a task, authority to take job responsibility, and handle the task by themselves has positively influence workers satisfied with their job, which is can affect less in their stress [16]. Worker who has freedom choice to choose tasks is likely to perceive their job as being meaningful [16]. Working without decision authority affects employee limited to improve their skill and ability.

The researcher might recommend in term of policy which benefits employee health can improve productivity.

1. Social support; the organization develops the social support by interpersonal and communication skills training to both management and front line employees and recognition of performance and regular feedback.

2. Authority decision; The organization redesign to enrich jobs with more authority decision by give employees as much control over their jobs as possible or give employees opportunities to lead projects and input into decision-making

This study identified income insufficiency, responsibility of job, and physiological stress as the most prevalent stress found in women employees who work in frontline skin care company. In addition, income sufficiency has significantly associated to job stress level. Finally, the association between job & organization factors and job stress indicated that psychological job demand is the most influence level of job stress in female co-workers, while authority decision is negatively influence job stress in female employee.

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