

Summarisation of E-Commerce Workers' Workplace Stress Sources – Current Evidence Analysis and Reflections

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Abstract—Workplace stress is a significant issue that needs attention in e-commerce. This article analysed how stress is caused in e-commerce workers (employees and entrepreneurs). Findings show that sources of workplace stress include task nature, behaviour & managerial issues, communication, identity & life, and the grand society factor. Furthermore, the reasons workplace stress can be created in these pathways are tightly associated with higher expectations and requirements of the e-commerce workplace under the influence of external industrial development and more robust work challenges. Finally, this paper also introduces what could be done to relieve the concerning state of workplace stress for e-commerce workers. In general, all 3 relative parties – individuals, work groups, and society all need to make joint efforts and make a contribution by creating a beneficial industrial & occupational environment and take care of employees' mental states.

Keywords—e-commerce; workplace stress; stress source factors

I. INTRODUCTION

E-commerce has received great attention throughout the globe. On one hand, it has an impressive growth. According to statistics [1] [2], international electronic business has a consecutive rise of about 3.602 trillion during 2014 to 2021, and within the next 4 years, the increase will continue as well. On the other hand, e-commerce industry has gained great potential in the recent years. With cyber-based technology exploitation and various social support, this novel version of business trading is becoming increasingly well-known and acceptable with its high efficiency and capabilities of gaining industrial competitiveness [3] [4] [5].

However, along with the market boom, the complexity and industrial upgrade demand in e-business is also increasing, and lots of e-commerce workers (in the whole article, e-commerce workers include BOTH general employees and entrepreneurs) are experiencing hardship and feeling stressed as well. This phenomenon could lead to career dissatisfaction, well-being inadequacy and even more severe concerns such as death/illness from unbearable working load [4] [6] [7] [8]. Therefore, it is crucial to carry out solutions to relieve the concerns. Nonetheless, before companies and individuals could get started

to take actions, it is essential for them to have a sense of direction on what is the major issue and what factors can cause workplace stress in e-business. As a result, to figure out the problem more efficiently, it is demanding to dive into stress in e-commerce and the major sources, which will be discussed in this current paper.

Thus, the following contents will take a brief observation on the theoretical concepts of workplace stress, followed by a brief analysis of what are the specific sources of stress that e-commerce workers are suffering from. Then, the following part will reflect on this issue summarising the reasons of this condition. Finally, there will be recommendations on how to reduce the possible stress in e-business workers.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND – WORKPLACE STRESS AND ITS SOURCES

Workplace stress can be explained as a condition regarding to working individuals' reactive mechanisms when they face disharmony or burdens about their work environment and tasks [9] [10] [11] [12]. Inspired from abundant research [13] [6] [14] [15] [4] [16] [17] [18] [19], sources of workplace stress can be divided into 5 categories: *task nature* which is characteristics of work assignments themselves, *behaviour and managerial issues* that concerns workplace manners and other managerial problems, *communication* which discusses the work-based or interactive connections with people, *identity & life* which is about self-recognition and lifestyle situations, and *grand society* that are societal values, views and influences.

Experiences of suffering from workplace stress are quite widespread. A survey record from the American Institute of Stress [15] has already proved that more than three-fifths of interviewed employees have experienced a high state of pressure. However, common as this issue is, the hidden influences of the phenomenon cannot be simply ignored [17]. Existing research shows that impacts of work-based pressure might happen in the following areas [13] [8] [15] [10] [4]:

1) *Work efficiency*. Assignment productivity and output quality will possibly decrease in this situation, this is derived from several factors including blurry perceptions on assignment

and duties, insupportable mission burdens, and the gap between capabilities and ambitions.

2) *Mind & body health*. Stressful experiences are relative to negative mind conditions as well as physical problems. Depressions and anxieties are well-recognised psychological symptoms, while physiological issues include cardiac illnesses, sleeping problems or headaches.

3) *Relationship maintenance*. This contains interpersonal concerns with organisational (such as with co-workers) or other social relationships (such as family members, especially will occur when the workers' social roles could not be adjusted appropriately according to different scenarios).

4) *Career value*. Workplace stress will draw a decline in individuals' expectations on the career that they devote to. This issue could be regarded as an occupational value erosion, which includes workplace tiredness, desire for dismission, and normalisation in talent loss & seeking within the entire e-commerce industry.

Therefore, employees' pressure demands special attention and reflection. All runs of people must gain the capability to spot and control stress levels, which is necessary for self-retrivement and well-being [10].

III. FINDINGS FROM PAST EVIDENCE – STRESS SOURCE LANDSCAPE IN THE E-COMMERCE SECTOR

As shown in Table I, integrated from previous research [6] [7] [4] [18] [19], all 5 common factors mentioned in the theoretical background are included in e-commerce workers' possible stress sources. To start with, for *task nature*, individuals might suffer from pressure due to assignment contents, workload, or time. For those with e-commerce entrepreneurship, this issue would be more apparent and concerning. Sometimes, stress can also be created from the management of the missions. Secondly, for *behaviour & management*, daily work supervision could be an issue. Moreover, managerial strategic techniques can also be a source of occupational pressure driven from in-organisational competitions such as motivations or workplace regulations. For *communication*, there is work-based communications which individuals face supervisors, peers, junior employees, or consumers. Furthermore, interpersonal connections in and outside the occupational atmosphere is also a major contributor, some researchers even discovered that this factor is one of the most significant leading forces of workplace pressure [19] [6]. Additionally, due to the special characteristic of cyber-based working in e-commerce, the use of virtual communication accesses can also be proved as a pressure provider. For the *Identity & life* factor, it shows that some individuals might have a difficulty in balancing work and family life. Besides, social role adjustment is also able to form workplace stress. Finally, from the *grand society*, e-commerce workers might receive stress from the industrial competitions and macro environment situations.

TABLE I. WORKPLACE STRESS SOURCES IN E-COMMERCE

Stressor Name	Containing Elements
Task nature	1. Assignment content/capacity/time 2. Task management

Behaviour & management	1. Daily work supervision 2. Motivation 3. Workplace regulations
Communication	1. Work-based contacts 2. Interpersonal connections 3. Virtual communication style
Identity & life	1. Work-family life contradictions 2. Social role adjustment
Grand society	1. Industrial competition 2. Macro environment

IV. THE WHY AND WHAT – REFLECTIONS AND INSPIRATIONS

As analysed from the section above, workplace stress source of e-commerce workers concludes a wide range. In this section, this section would then illustrate why this condition happens on e-commerce workers, and how can the issues be resolved.

A. The Why – Reflections of Reasons

Inspired from the previous studies, it is discovered that the road to every source of workplace stress in e-commerce workers could be integrated into a story line including both external and internal factors.

To begin with, within the society, there are several external factors which drive industrial growing speed and increases the demands of its use. For instance, there is support from social policies and Internet technology advancements. Besides, online shopping demand also increases due to various reasons. For example, there are technical improvements, popularisation in web and electronic device use (such as smartphones), and special needs in current societal incidents such as the pandemic-based stay-at-home policies. With all these factors, e-commerce not only experienced a rise in sales and social expectations, but also has become a career access for some job seekers for better work opportunities. Therefore, more individuals are appealed and decide to join this industry. However, along with this phenomenon, industrial competition might become more aggressive as well. The increasing number of competitors drives the industry reality to adjust their required demands to a higher level for brand survival and industrial excellence. Until this stage, the stress source of *grand society* issues might occur. Then, to satisfy the consumer and market competition, e-commerce organisations will have to gain their competitiveness by continue thinking, improving and making appropriate creations, this would probably stimulate the *behaviour & managerial* stress source for individuals with the duty of supervision and general project design (including essential steps such as strategy decisions and resource management), as this stage would be influential in establishing working guidelines [4] [20].

Then, when the work assignments are finally decided and distributed, the actual task that e-commerce workers will confront might be quite demanding due to the increasing industrial expectations and requirements. In this period, workplace stress may occur in many fields – *task nature* stress could occur from larger assignment workloads within limited time, *communication* stress will be created through inside the interpersonal issues with co-workers and clients, and *behaviour & managerial* stress might appear from work management and control. To complete the required mission, they might have to spend extra time, which could lead to unhealthy lifestyles. In this

stage, *identity & life* stress may occur [6] [7] [4] [18] [19]. Until this stage, all categories of workplace stress sources have showed their signals.

B. The What – Inspirations of What Could be Done

As mentioned in previous sections, negative influence might occur under pressure. Therefore, it is necessary to understand how to free from pressure. This demands all groups of people to contribute.

For e-commerce workers themselves, they should first understand that they cannot hide from the problems. Facing the current hardship can be frustrating, but if the concerns are set aside, the impacts could still become a strong burden and make significant harm. Therefore, the best approach is to make attempts to learn how to confront and release stress for their own well-being. There are a number of approachable means. For instance, they could carry out various methods to calm them down such as activities involving mindfulness or body stretches. Other helpful accesses include self-preparing with essential knowledge or capabilities, playing sports, and mental attitude adjustments [6] [18] [19] [21].

For e-commerce companies, it is necessary to pay attention to the importance of a positive working atmosphere and a feeling of being valued for their workers. To achieve this, company managers may enhance employees' welfare levels, improve the occupational assessment and motivation/promotion systems to create a better organisational competition structure, and keep an eye on employees' mental well-being and health [18] [19].

Eventually, for society, it is needed to strengthen the awareness of e-commerce workers' job-based well-being. As a result, enhancing regulations and encouraging attention to workplace health care issues are valid methods to improve the situations [8] [18] [19].

V. CONCLUSIONS

To recap, with the effort of the external heated competition within the industry and the increased burden in the final work capacity, e-commerce workers' pressure can be sorted from occupational factors (task nature, behaviour & managerial issues, communication), work-life concerns (identity & life), and the grand society reasons. To face the issues, e-commerce workers, their organisations, and the entire occupational environment all must raise their awareness, which is extremely important for ensuring the sense of fulfillment and satisfaction for more e-commerce workers.

Then, the findings in this article may help the e-commerce industry to understand "what has happened about stress, the reasons, and the strategies". However, the discovery in this paper still has some limitations. Although the findings could be insightful, this is still an analysis of past research and newly collected data is not adequately sufficient. As a result, the findings at the current state are still not timely enough to create a panorama of the real-time issues for the current state. Therefore, for future research, the analysis will be enriched more if this issue could be improved through devoting more into carrying out research by collecting newest primary data through surveys. In this way, the current circumstances of how people in e-commerce experience work-based stress and how they feel

about this will be accessible and make the findings timelier and more accurate.

To finish, it will be very beneficial if the awareness of e-commerce working individuals' pressure control and relieve can be truly ignited. For the working individuals, they could look for the true "inner peace" and become healthier. For e-business cooperations, they could finally create a positive working environment and atmosphere. For the macro business society, a more harmonious and healthy industrial market structure could be eventually established for better development.

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