

Research Journal of Pharmaceutical, Biological and Chemical Sciences

Positive Stress and Its Impact on Performance.

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at throwing light on the positive stress also called 'Eustress' and its impact on one's performance level. Researches have shown that a certain amount of stress is needed for an increased performance. Eustress fills us with thrill and excitement whenever we are confronted by a demanding situation. As eustress improves our concentration and makes us more enthusiastic to perform the work. Hence positive stress is essential for bringing zeal to the life; it is healthy, useful and beneficial. When stress becomes too much in a given situation it becomes harmful for us because we are unable to cope up with the situation. This is actually referred to as 'stress' and it is negative stress (distress). Thus at one level stress may deter the performance. There are three aspects of stress-physical, mental and psychological. In all the three types both positive and negative effects are noted. We must possess the knowledge in finding out the signs and warning symptoms of stress. It is also necessary to learn the stress management steps and to follow them to counter stress.

Keywords: positive stress, negative stress, performance.

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INTRODUCTION

All of us have experienced stress in our life. The word 'stress' implies a feeling of painful experience in any given situation. This feeling of discomfort and uneasiness varies person to person and situation to situation. Researches have proved that there are two types of stress, eustress and distress [1]. Eustress is the good stress that motivates us to perform well and to work with interest. This stress can be a motivator and it provides an incentive to get the job done. The good stress is what everyone enjoys it while performing the work. Everyone needs a little bit of stress in their life in order to continue to be happy, motivated, challenged and productive.

When the good stress or eustress is too much to bear or cope with and no longer tolerable and manageable it is identified as distress, a negative stress. When tension builds up there is no longer any fun in the challenge; there seems to be no relief. This is the stress most of us are familiar with and in this situation we feel not only stressful but also demotivated.

Eustress improves the confident level of people but at the same time it never makes them overwhelmed. It also instills in them a feeling that the goal is not too far away and out of reach but it is still slightly difficult for them to handle. This feeling is responsible for the focused action. As the goal is visible and can be reachable, it fosters challenge and motivation to realize the goal. The responsibility and duty conscience in fulfilling the task is doubly increased. The outcome is the quality performance in the scheduled time.

Objectives

- Eustress motivates one towards improving their skill in performance.
- Eustress fosters challenges in one's life and enables them face the challenges boldly.
- Eustress helps one increase their positive attitude and in turn achieve their goals with confident.
- Eustress enables one to improve their level of performance.

Definitions of Eustress

Stress is defined as a feeling of emotional or physical tension when faced with difficult situation. People experience different situation as stressful. Stress differs from person to person and from situation to situation. This means, a particular situation which is stressful to a person may not be necessarily stressful to another person. Stress is nothing but the emotional, physiological and psychological effects caused by mental pressure affecting the person internally as well as externally.

Eustress is a term coined by Hans Selye, an endocrinologist who decreased fined it as ' the positive cognitive response to stress that is healthy, and gives one a feeling of fulfilment or other positive feelings' [1]. According to Hans Selye, the word ' eustress' consists of two parts. The prefix 'eu' derives from the Greek word meaning either ' well ' or ' good '. Hence eustress literally means " good stress " .

Eustress was originally explored by Richard Lazarus in his stress model. He proved that " it is the positive cognitive response to stress that is healthy, or gives one a feeling of fulfilment or other positive feelings " [2]. Eustress is also defined as one which is 'indicated by hope and active engagement' [3], and ' it has a significantly positive correlation with life satisfaction and hope' [4]. It is a common phenomenon that the active engagement in the job or work with interest yields the job satisfaction thereby promoting quality work or performance.

Eustress and Motivation

According to positive psychologists, eustress is described as a moment when one is completely absorbed into an enjoyable activity with no awareness of surroundings [5]. Dr. Hans Selye coined the word eustress to a positive and desirable stress and also proved that it helps to motivate and inspire one's life. When an individual finds a situation to be stressful, then it is labelled as distress and if it motivates a person and makes him experience a feeling of ' flow 'then it is to be identified as eustress. Meeting or engaging in a challenge, physical exercises like running, biking etc, playing sports, watching a thriller movie are some of the

examples of common eustress which increase the motivation of the person who is engaged in these activities. This increased motivation helps him to manage and handle the stressful situation.

Eustress and Challenge

The theories or psychological inputs prove that eustress is a positive aid to promote performance. It is a common phenomenon that people seek stress to make life more excited and more thrilling. The thrill and excitement one experiences depends on the capacity of the people to handle the stressful situation. This makes them to ensure a positive and optimistic mindset in which they remain calm and peaceful in stressful situation. In other words it fosters challenges to be handled with a strong will power and optimistic outlook.

Eustress and Positive Attitude

Eustress is related to positive attitude. Persons with positive attitude perceive stress as eustress and they have a positive mindset to handle the situation well. They are filled with zeal and enthusiasm because they are confronted by a demanding situation. Eustress fills them with a lot of energy which in turn enables them actively engaged with their performance. For example, a student's concentration and learning ability increases at the time of approaching examination. Thus positive attitude makes them optimistic whereas negative attitude makes them pessimistic. Eustress enhances positive attitude and positive attitude of a person can improve his ability to overcome the situation and instills in him confidence to handle the demand.

Eustress and Performance

Researches show that eustress is an extremely a productive state in which an individual experiences their prime performance [6]. Researches have proved that some amount of stress is healthy, useful and beneficial. This stress helps us not only to perform well in our duty but also to keep our health and well-being fit. As the level of stress increases, the level of performance also increases. This is possible because there is an enhancement of positive thoughts; both physical and mental techniques are boosted to handle the stress easily and comfortably. At the same time it is noted that the relationship between the increased stress level and the increased performance is not a continuous one. At one level the stress cannot be handled comfortably and it becomes a stress.

It has been proved that when stress exceeds certain limit or certain point, it proves to be harmful to the individual. According to Selye, this persistent stress is known as 'distress' which leads to anxiety, withdrawal and depressive behaviour [7]. Both eustress and distress can equally tax the body but the body cannot physically discern between them. According to Fevre et al, ' the differentiation between the eustress and distress depends on one's perception of the stress [8]. So it is obvious that eustress is responsible for one to be fully absorbed in the work or the activity with a lot of happiness and energy to experience peak performance.

CONCLUSION

Eustress motivates a person and makes him interested in the work. As there is a lot thrill it enables him to foster challenge with hope and confidence. It also enhances his positive attitude and creates a better environment to perform better. So it is necessary to every one of us to decrease distress by means of incorporating exercises, meditation and relaxation techniques and increase our positive perceptions of handling the stress to give our optimal performance.

Stress is influenced by hereditary predisposition and expectations pf society. Hence positive mindset and high self - esteem are the most essential factors to experience eustress. People with high self – control, intrinsic motivation, persistence, optimism and interest perceive any stressful situation an enjoyable one to prove their ability to accomplish their job successfully.

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