

research in brief

Methodological Stress Research Issue

Researchers are only beginning to systematically explore the extent of managerial and occupational stress. In reviewing stress research, there appear to be some major weaknesses. Researchers who intend to look into stress further should consider some of the following weaknesses:

1. By using the term stress too widely, researchers have contributed to conceptual and definitional confusions.
2. Most stress studies rely heavily on output of simple correlational analyses for their conclusions.
3. In stress research, there's no integrated framework or conceptual map of stress . . . there are over 40 interacting factors that might be sources of managerial stress.
4. To effectively evaluate all possible intervening variables, researchers would need to use multivariate forms of analysis, something that hasn't been done to any large extent in stress research.
5. More longitudinal data are required to provide accurate information on the nature and volatility of the stress situation.
6. Once the independent and dependent variables have been defined, the problem becomes one of measuring them.
7. Too many studies in the field of stress research use *subjective* dependent variables, such as self-reports.
8. Medical researchers in stress areas are using limited physiological measures (for example, diastolic blood pressure) without the support of either behavioral or attitudinal measures.
9. The need exists to develop measures and procedures that are as unobtrusive as possible so methods and tools don't alter phenomena to be measured.

10. Multi-stressor, multi-effect type studies are needed so we can better understand the complexities of stress situations and coping strategies.
11. It's difficult in stress research to determine what represents an adequate control group.
12. Most of the work in stress research has been done retrospectively or at a single point in time.
13. Researchers must look more closely at work attitudes.
14. The relationship between work stress and home life deserves more systematic investigation than it has received.
15. The two most important dimensions, as far as the manager in his/her work role is concerned, appear to be those of time management and social support.
16. There's little research work dealing with the stresses on female managers.

Editor's Note

For more discussion on stress research, see J. E. McGrath, ed., *Social and Psychological Factors in Stress* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970) and C. L. Cooper and J. Marshall, "Occupational Sources of Stress: A Review of Literature Relating to Coronary Heart Disease and Mental Ill Health," *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, XLIX (1976), 11-28.

Understanding Executive Stress. Cary L. Cooper and J. Marshall. New York: A Petrocelli Book, 1977.

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