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"An Empirical Investigation of Level of Job Stress and Potential Stressors among Operational Level Female Workers in Garment Factories in Sri Lankan Free Trade Zones"

By

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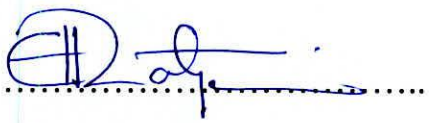
Author's Declaration

The work described in this thesis was carried out by me under the supervision of Mrs.P.D.H.D.Gunathilake and a report on this has not been submitted in whole or in part to any university or any other institution for another Degree/Diploma.



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I hereby recommended that the thesis was prepared under my supervision by **A.L.Kotuwage** (GS/MC/1887/2001)

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ABSTRACT

Stress is one of the most pervasive phenomena of our time and it affected people of all walks of life. Individuals in recent decades have experienced increasing stress in their personal and work lives, because people have multiple roles in a society that has become more complex. Women in Sri Lanka were not part of the regular workforce because of Sri Lankan culture, which viewed the role of women as being limited to household matters. However, after introducing open economy in 1977, more women sought employment in various fields including garments factories. Consequently, as working women, they become more vulnerable to stress in both the work place and home.

This research is an attempt to find out the potent work related and non- work related stressors that are prevalent among operational level female workers in garment factories of Sri Lanka's Free Trade Zones and the study analyses individual differences such as civil status, educational level and age of the workers as moderators in the job stress process.

This study empirically investigated nine independent variables, which could influence on the job stress of the operational level female workers in garment factories in free trade zones. These independent variables were the design of the job, work roles, interpersonal relationships, management styles, career concerns and environmental conditions as work related factors and home – work interface, fulfillment of physical needs and living conditions as non- work related stress factors. The moderating variables were civil status, educational level and age of the workers.

The study was conducted using a sample of 450 operational level female workers in the garment factories in Free Trade Zones (who were randomly selected out of 50740).The data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using the software SPSS version 13.0.Six garment factories in Biyagama Free Trade Zone were selected as the research site. The data analyses included the univeriate, bivariate and moderated stepwise multi regression analyses.

The findings of the results were significant, it was found that the level of stress among operational level female garment workers in Free Trade Zones were high. The results reveled that as HI , work –related stressors dominate the stress profile of the sample. In light of the findings in respect to H2 and H3, the civil status and the educational level of the workers appeared to have served as moderators in mitigating the effects of job stress, it showed married and educated workers were more stressed than their counterparts with unmarried and less educated workers. The findings in respect H4 shows, the age moderates the relationship between stress-strain but there were no any interaction effects.

The findings of the study are underlying the importance to undertake necessary stress reduction programs for operational level garment workers in Free Trade Zones.

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