ABSTRACT

This research endeavoured to investigate the “Role of Future Orientation in Managing Time Stress – Health Relationship” in medical professionals. Time-stress is considered as “an externally induced urgency (exerted upon the User) to complete an assigned task within a specified or limited amount of time.” (Wallace, Anderson & Shneiderman, 1993). Time stress refers to whether time is viewed as pressure or not. If time is viewed as a pressure, people feel rushed, hurried and irritated, and that attitude towards time remains constant for a long duration, and people tend to feel time related stress (Robinson & Godbey, 1997).

Review of studies revealed why individuals feel time related stress which results poor health status. (Humphrey, 1998; Sauter & Hurrell, 1999). A sizeable number of researchers examined the impact of long working hours on managers and found that a range of stress-related symptoms, including excessive fatigue and headaches, were predominately associated with the need to manage excessive workloads and simultaneously meet unrealistic targets and deadlines (Townley, 2000). The relationship between time stress and health has also been investigated in a few studies (Rice, 1992; Pandey & Pandey, 2013).

Although, numerous studies evinced that there are number of variables that play moderating / mediating role in time stress – health relationship viz; different types of organizations, personality traits, time
management, social support, demographic and personal factors, organizational characteristics and coping strategies. However, in health sector, time stress and its adverse consequences on health in relation to future orientation and time management is still less explored issue. Against this backdrop, this study was planned to examine the role of future orientation in managing time stress – health relationship in medical professionals.

Present research is based on a 2x2x2 factorial design with two types of Hospital (Government & Private) x Job category (Doctors & Paramedical staffs) x levels of Future orientation (High & Low). A total of 240 medical professionals, age ranged 20 to 60 years, with a mean age of 42.58 years, working at different hospitals of urban region of Gorakhpur district, participated in present study. Stratified random sampling technique was used for sample selection.

A set of measuring tools were used to investigate the level of time stress, future orientation, time management and heath status of medical professionals (as reported in chapter 2). In order to assess the feeling of time stress in medical professionals “Time Stress Questionnaire” was implied. To ascertain the level of future orientation of medical professionals, “Story Writing Test” was used. Furthermore, time management strategies of professionals were determined by “Time Management Scale”. Again, “C.M.I. Health Questionnaire” was used to assess physical and psychological health status of professionals.
This study was conducted in three different phases. In first phase of the study, the investigator approached to the administrators of the identified hospitals and introduced them about the purpose of the study and took consent to collect data on professionals working at their hospitals. After getting consent, medical professionals were contacted. Firstly, they were explained about purpose of the study and were requested to participate in the research. After receiving their initial willingness, their background information were collected on the basis of Personal Data Sheet (PDS). Further, Time Stress Questionnaire, Story Writing Test, Time Management Scale and C.M.I. Health Questionnaire were introduced and they were detailed about “how to respond” on each of them. In the last phase of the study a set of measures (as mentioned earlier) was distributed to the participants and they were told to respond on each measure one by one. As they completed their responses on each and every measure, data were collected and they were thanked for participation.

Scores obtained on various measures were treated statistically in terms of correlation, step-wise multiple regression analysis and factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA). Findings of the study are reported in chapter – 3 of the thesis and presented here in nutshell.

Firstly, to identify linkage between time stress, future orientation, time management and health (physical & psychological) correlation analysis was employed. Correlation results indicate a strong positive
relationship between time stress and health (illness). It is concluded that if professionals experience higher level of time stress they also showed greater extent of physical and psychological illness. Results further revealed strong positive correlation between future orientation and time management, which indicates that time management, is an integral part of future orientation. Future orientation was found negatively related with physical and psychological illness. Correlation results further revealed negative relationship between time stress and time management. It clearly showed that all six strategies of time management (i.e. Time budgeting, Goal clarity, Prioritizing, Coordination, Check against misuse, Focusing) and overall time management were found negatively correlated with physical and psychological illness.

Correlation results simply indicate direction and magnitude of relationship between variables; however, to determine the role of predictor variables in criterion, Step wise multiple regression analysis (SMRA) was applied. Results indicated that time stress was predicted by four factors viz. time management (overall), salary, future orientation and time budgeting. Where time management (overall) and future orientation explained negatively but time budgeting and salary of professionals predicted positively.

Further, physical illness was negatively explained by time budgeting and goal clarity whereas, check against misuse predicted positively. Similarly, psychological illness was predicted by four factors
i.e. time management (overall), check against misuse, focusing and goal clarity. Where time management (overall), check against misuse and focusing explained negatively and goal clarity predicted positively. Results thus, evinced the mediating role of future orientation, time management, etc in minimizing time stress and illness in medical professionals.

Further, univariate analysis was done to assess influence of type of hospital, job category and future orientation on time stress and health status of medical professionals. Therefore, a 2x2x2 factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) with two types of hospital (Government and Private), two level of job category (Doctors and Paramedical staffs) and two level of future orientation (High and Low) was computed for time stress and health scores. ANOVA results evinced that type of hospital, job category and future orientation exerted significant impact on time stress and illness. Significant main effect of type of hospital revealed that that time stress was found greater in medical professionals working at Private hospital as compared to professionals of Government hospitals. Moreover, significant effect of job category evinced that time stress was found greater in paramedical group than those of doctors. Finally, significant impact of future orientation evinced that time stress was found far low in high future oriented (H.F.O.) group as compared to low future oriented (L.F.O.) counter parts. Moreover, significant interaction effect of type of hospital x job category on time stress evinced that paramedical
professionals working at private hospitals have shown greater time stress than those working at government hospitals. Whereas, in case of doctors, the level of time stress was found low in those doctors working at government hospitals than those working at private hospitals.

Furthermore, in order to ascertain the influence of type of hospital, job category and level of future orientation on health (physical & psychological illness), further 2x2x2 ANOVA analysis was done. This analysis evinced that health (illness) was found strongly influenced by type of hospital, job category and level of future orientation. Significant main effect of type of hospital on physical illness revealed that professionals working at private hospitals reported more physical illness as compared to their government hospital counterparts. Further, significant main effect of job category evinced that paramedical staffs were high in trap of physical illness as compared to doctors. Again, main effect of future orientation on physical illness was found to be significant which revealed that physical illness was found more in low future oriented professionals as compared to high future oriented group of professionals. Moreover, significant interaction effect of type of hospital x job category on physical illness evinced that paramedical professionals working at private hospitals have shown high level of physical illness than those working at government hospitals. Though, this difference was found at moderate level. Despite this, doctors working at government
hospitals have reported low level of illness than those working at private hospitals, however, the difference level between both groups was less.

Effect of type of hospital, job category and future orientation on psychological health was also computed. Results revealed that, effect of type of hospital on psychological illness was found significant which revealed that, professionals working at private hospitals reported greater psychological illness as compared to their government hospital counterparts. Further, job category was found to be significant which evinced that paramedical staff experience higher level of psychological illness as compared to doctors. Moreover, on psychological illness significant effect of future orientation evinced that, psychological illness was found higher in low future oriented (L.F.O.) professionals as compared to high future oriented (H.F.O.) counterparts. Therefore, on the basis of ANOVA analysis it is clear that level of time stress and illness (physical & psychological) in medical professionals were strongly influenced by type of hospital, job category and future orientation of medical professionals.

In brief, findings of this study evinced a close link between time stress, future orientation, time management and health. However, time stress - health relation was mediated by future orientation and time management strategies. Regression results evinced that future orientation, time management etc, played significant role in minimizing time stress and its consequences on health. Further, the effects of type of hospital,
job category and future orientation on time stress and illness were also identified. In other words, the role of future orientation in managing time stress – health relationship has been proved on the basis of present results.

The findings of present research have ample empirical and theoretical supports (as discussed in chapter – 4). Results have been discussed and interpreted in the context of organizational factors (i.e. type of hospital and job category), future orientation and time management. Present findings evinced that private hospital professionals scored more as compared to their government hospital counterparts on time stress and illness. This result indicates that professionals working at private hospitals expressed more illness than those of government hospital professionals. The reason behind this is that in private hospitals professional’s salary is comparatively less than government hospital professionals. Moreover, their exposure to cases is limited due to limited strength of patients. General perception holds that working in the private sector consumes longer hours and heavier workload, leading of greater stress level (Rai, 2014; Vijay & Vazirani, 2012; Violanti, 2010).

Present results also evinced the significant impact of job category on time stress and health status of medical professionals, which indicated that time stress as well as illness were found greater in paramedical group as compared to doctors. Job category is directly linked with feeling of stress. Paramedical profession is a monotonous job which appears to be
associated with low self–esteem, job satisfaction, and also have low satisfaction with life in general. A number of studies showed that boredom and monotony in job conditions that seldom change are highly repetitive. Therefore, such jobs cause stress feelings (Pandey & Srivastava, 2004; Thackray, 1981). Nevertheless, results of this study evinced that paramedical staffs who perform repetitive and less complex duties expressed more stress related to time as compared to doctors who perform more complex and challenging duties.

Further, significant effect of future orientation on time stress and health indicates that levels of time stress and illness were found far high in low future oriented (L.F.O.) group as compared to high future oriented (H.F.O.) counter parts. Health behaviour has been found to be associated with different personality characteristics (Donovan et.al., 1991; Glendinning et.al., 1995; Pulkkinen, 1983). According to Donovan et al. (1991) the relationship between personality and behaviour is “consistent and systematic”. High level of time stress and poor health status in L.F.O. group is quite possible because they were found unaware, ignorant and did not pay attention towards information having future utility, planning and effort to improve health status. There are many young people whose lifestyle includes health-damaging behaviours, such as smoking and drinking. Therefore, it is important to understand how person`s health behaviour is connected to their future orientation. Shukla (2010) reported that teachers having high future oriented outlook showed
less work related stress and less illness as compared to low future oriented teachers. Many other researchers have focused the importance to future oriented thinking in stress and its management (Shukla, 2010; Agarwal & Tiwari, 1988; Pandey & Singh, 2004). These findings can also be theoretically interpreted in the light of some theoretical models i.e. Nurmi’s model of future orientation (1991), Ribbon model of time perspective (Katsumata, 1995) and Gjesme`s theory of situational and dispositional future time orientation (F.T.O., 1983).

Findings of this research have certain implications:

- This research evinced that time stress was found to be positively related with illness. High time stress (pressure) and more illness in medical professionals are quite damaging and can adversely affect their efficiency to confront with stressful situations, demanding multiple roles and expectations. Thus, medical organization should be made aware of such consequences. Despite this, medical professionals should be provided proper opportunity favorable work environment and facilities to reduce time stress and its consequences on health.

- Findings of this study reported that medical professionals differed on time stress and illness in accordance with their dispositional characteristics of future orientation. High future oriented professionals tended to pay more attention towards the message which included future planning, vision and foresight as compared
to low future oriented professionals. Apart from this, future orientation contributed significantly in minimizing time stress and lessening health problems in medical professionals. Thus, future orientation should be inculcated in L.F.O. group to cope with stressful episodes and enhance health behavior.

- Time management was also identified a strong buffer in time stress – illness link. Time management has contributed inversely in this link. Therefore, medical professionals should understand and implement the techniques and principles of time management, which would be beneficial to cope with stress related to time.

- Findings of this study suggest a strong positive relation between future orientation and time management. Therefore, medical professionals should be made aware of time management strategies like; time budgeting, goal clarity, prioritizing, coordination, check against misuse and focusing which may be helpful in developing future oriented outlook.

- Results further evinced that, private hospital professionals reported high level of time stress as well as physical and psychological illness as compared to government hospital professionals. Therefore, authorities of private hospitals should pay attention to create stress free work environment through favorable work setting, less time pressure, maximizing better opportunity of interpersonal relationship with superiors and co – workers and
improving the quality of work place, by providing innovations and stimulation in job, coordination between their work and working hours and better opportunity of personal growth and/or promotion, which would minimize stress and enhance health status of medical professionals.

- Another important finding of the study is that stress and illness were found higher in paramedical staffs than doctors. Thus, it is suggested that doctors can work as motivator to paramedical group and teach them how to exercise time management strategies and to develop high future oriented outlook in managing time related stress.

- Since, lots of job demands in limited time, time pressure and work culture in medical organization are very much challenging and risky therefore, high feeling of stress related to time is very natural. Therefore, it is essential to provide a platform for the medical professionals to share their problems with higher authority, frankly and openly which will be one of the outlets of releasing stress.

Though this research was carried out with an objective to investigate several unexplored issues and the results have provided strong base in the field of psychological researches. However, on the basis of findings of this research many questions are still unanswered and provide base for future researches:
• This study is correlational in nature. Correlations between time stress, future orientation, time management and health (illness) were computed and linkages were established. Yet, direct causal explanation could not be made between these variables. The correlational analysis employed in the present study limits the scope of interpretation of results to determine causal relationship among variables. However, stepwise multiple regression analysis (SMRA) has been done to determine the contributing roles of future orientation and time management in time stress – health relationship. Moreover, ANOVA analysis was done to determine causative role of future orientation, type of hospital and job category in time stress and illness. Despite this, other fine analyses should be done in further researches.

• Findings of present study as well as several other researches denote that contextual and demographic variables play significant role in time stress – health relationship. Therefore, certain contextual factors (viz; organizational structure, work environment, job tenure) and demographic factors should be included in further study and their significance on time stress – health relationship should be determined.

• The level of time stress, future orientation, time management and health can also be compared between medical professionals of diverse setting and work culture.
• Family factors can also serve as sources of stress due to role conflict, home – work interface, hazards in family structure, poor family environment and poor interpersonal relationship. Thus, time stress and illness (health) in medical professionals should be studied in relation to different family structure, lifestyle and work environment.

• The role of future orientation and time management in time stress – health relationship was measured and quantitative analysis (univariate and multivariate) was done. Despite this, appropriate qualitative analysis should also be done to get more comprehensive explanation of findings of the present piece of research.