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Enhancing Stress Management Through Psychoeducation: An Intervention for Production-Line Workers

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ABSTRACT

Workers in high-demand production settings face elevated stress levels, yet evaluated psychological interventions for this group remain limited. This study examined the effectiveness of a psychoeducation based stress-management program for sorting-line employees. 10 female workers were selected based on interviews, observations, and a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) that identified workload pressure, unclear task division, and ineffective communication as key stressors. The intervention comprised three sessions covering work-stress education, coping strategies, emotion-regulation techniques, and guided Progressive Muscle Relaxation. Pre- and post-intervention data were collected using subjective stress rating scale and an observational checklist of emotion-regulation behaviors. Data analysis was conducted using Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test for knowledge scores due to non-normal distribution. Knowledge scores increased significantly from 10.50 to 15.00 (Wilcoxon, $p = 0.005$). Behavioral indicators of stress decreased from 27.90 to 20.40, with a paired t-test showing a highly significant improvement ($p < 0.001$). Brief managerial feedback also indicated better communication and reduced stress-related behaviors. The results indicate that structured psychoeducational programs can effectively enhance workers' knowledge and adaptive stress- management practices, offering a practical approach for improving occupational well-being.

Keywords: stress management; psychoeducation; emotion regulation; psychological intervention; production employees

Introduction

Work-related stress has become a critical concern in industrial and organizational psychology, particularly in production environments characterized by high workload demands, repetitive tasks, and strict performance targets. According to the transactional stress model, work stress emerges when job demands exceed an individual's perceived resources and adaptive capacity (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Recent occupational health research continues to validate this model, demonstrating that the imbalance between job demands and personal resources significantly predicts burnout, emotional exhaustion, and reduced well-being among industrial workers (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Lesener et al., 2019). In manufacturing settings, limited job control, time pressure, and physical workload place production-line workers at heightened risk of psychological strain. Recent studies further highlight that high production pressure and repetitive-task demands are strongly associated with fatigue, stress symptoms, and decreased performance among factory employees (Giorgi et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2021).

Recent empirical studies indicate that work stress among production workers is

influenced by a combination of excessive workload, role ambiguity, insufficient supervisory support, and ineffective workplace communication (Kamal & Mathur, 2022; Wang et al., 2020). Contemporary organizational research also emphasizes that unclear performance standards and limited managerial feedback significantly intensify psychological strain in high- demand production systems (Li et al., 2021; Montano et al., 2017). From a psychological perspective, individual appraisal processes and coping strategies play a central role in determining stress responses. Workers who perceive job demands as threatening and rely on avoidant coping strategies tend to experience higher emotional distress. Recent findings confirm that avoidant coping and low emotional regulation capacity predict higher stress severity and maladaptive work behaviors (Dewe et al., 2020; Park et al., 2021).

Beyond individual factors, group dynamics significantly shape how workers experience and respond to stress. Tuckman's (1965) group development model highlights that the storming phase is often marked by conflict, unclear roles, and resistance to task demands. Recent team-effectiveness research supports this perspective, showing that role conflict, poor communication, and low interpersonal trust increase psychological strain and reduce collective performance in production teams (Salas et al., 2018; Newman et al., 2020). Conversely, cohesive group interaction and clear shared goals facilitate collective coping and adaptive stress responses. Research has also demonstrated that social support within workgroups serves as a buffer against the negative psychological effects of occupational stress (Cohen & Wills, 1985). More recent meta-analyses reaffirm that workplace social support significantly mitigates burnout, emotional exhaustion, and stress-related outcomes (Mazzetti et al., 2021).

Psychological interventions aimed at reducing work stress have been widely implemented across occupational sectors. Recent systematic reviews demonstrate that stress- management interventions integrating psychoeducation, coping-skills training, and relaxation techniques significantly reduce occupational stress and improve psychological well-being (Heber et al., 2017; Richardson, 2017). However, evaluated interventions targeting manufacturing and production-line workers—particularly female workers—remain relatively limited, especially in developing-country contexts. This gap is notable given evidence suggesting that female production workers may face heightened emotional demands, limited social support, and greater vulnerability to stress in physically demanding and repetitive work environments (Lin et al., 2019).

Psychoeducation represents an evidence-based intervention that combines psychological knowledge with practical skill development to enhance stress awareness, coping strategies, and emotional regulation. Recent workplace intervention studies report that psychoeducation significantly improves coping flexibility, emotional regulation, and resilience among employees in high-demand occupations (Hirschle et al., 2019; Carvalho et al., 2021). When integrated with relaxation techniques such as Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR), psychoeducational interventions may further reduce physiological tension and stress- related symptoms. Contemporary clinical and occupational trials continue to confirm the effectiveness of PMR in reducing somatic stress and fatigue symptoms among industrial workers (Toussaint et al., 2021).

Preliminary assessments conducted among sorting-area employees at PT SS, based on

semi-structured interviews with production management, HR personnel, supervisors, and workers, combined with field observations, revealed substantial indicators of work-related stress. Employees' work orientation was predominantly focused on production quantity, while quality standards and adherence to standard operating procedures (SOPs) were frequently overlooked. Workers were often required to operate two to three machines simultaneously, indicating excessive workload demands. In addition, assessment data indicated that nearly 80% of employees reported experiencing significant physical fatigue due to prolonged standing, repetitive movements, and high production targets. This condition was further exacerbated by limited supervisory guidance and an imbalanced reward–punishment system, contributing to feelings of fear, confusion, and decreased work motivation. Weak team communication and limited social support also intensified individual psychological pressure. Behavioral observations identified maladaptive coping responses, including social withdrawal, extended break times, and unexcused absenteeism, suggesting limited stress- management capacity.

From a cognitive perspective, employees demonstrated limited understanding of work objectives and procedural standards. Although some workers recognized that deviations from SOPs could compromise product quality, they frequently prioritized speed to meet production targets. This discrepancy between knowledge and practice reflects weakened self-regulation and decision-making strategies, increasing vulnerability to work stress when job demands exceed perceived capacity. Emotionally, employees exhibited signs of emotional exhaustion, fear, anxiety, and reduced self-confidence when working under pressure, with several expressing feelings of being overwhelmed and intentions to resign. Behaviorally, maladaptive coping patterns were observed, including noncompliance with SOPs, withdrawal from team interaction, prolonged rest periods, and absenteeism. Unequal workload distribution between senior and junior workers also generated interpersonal tension affecting team cohesion. Overall, the integrated assessment findings indicate low stress-management capacity shaped by the interaction of internal and external psychosocial risk factors. Accordingly, this study aims to examine the implementation process and outcomes of a psychoeducation-based stress management program for sorting-line employees at PT SS. Specifically, the study seeks to enhance workers' understanding of work-related stress, promote adaptive coping strategies, and improve emotion-regulation abilities through guided relaxation practice. By addressing an underexplored population within occupational stress research, this study contributes to the development of applied psychological interventions in manufacturing settings and provides practical insights for organizations seeking to support employee well-being in high-demand production environments.

Methods

This study employed a quasi-experimental pre–post intervention design using a mixed-method approach. Quantitative data were collected to examine changes in participants' knowledge and stress-related behaviors before and after the intervention, while qualitative data were used to capture participants' experiences and observed behavioral changes throughout the program. This design enabled a comprehensive understanding of both intervention outcomes and the psychological processes underlying the stress-management program (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The participants consisted of ten female employees

working in the sorting area of PT SS, a manufacturing company operating under high production demands. Convenience sampling was applied based on participants' relevance to the research objectives and their availability during the intervention period (Patton, 2015). All participants had work tenure ranging from one to five years and were engaged in repetitive production tasks with strict performance targets. Preliminary assessments indicated elevated work stress associated with workload pressure, unclear task division, and organizational factors.

Data collection utilized both qualitative and quantitative instruments. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore participants' subjective experiences of work stress, perceived stressors, coping strategies, and perceptions of organizational support. Non-participant observations were carried out to examine work rhythms, task distribution, interaction patterns, and emotional expressions in the workplace. An observational checklist was used to document indicators of stress-related behaviors and emotion-regulation practices. In addition, a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) was conducted to identify gaps between job demands and workers' psychological resources, which served as the basis for tailoring the psychoeducational content to participants' specific needs (Goldstein & Ford, 2002). A knowledge assessment was administered before and after the intervention to measure participants' understanding of work stress and stress-management strategies. To quantitatively evaluate changes in work stress levels, a pre- and post-test instrument was administered using a work-stress scale developed by Luthans (2006) and later adapted by Pravitasari (2023). The instrument employed a Likert-scale format consisting of nine items measuring three core indicators of occupational stress: physiological, psychological, and behavioral responses. Each item was rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, with an average reliability coefficient of 0.80, indicating that the instrument was sufficiently reliable and appropriate for assessing employees' stress levels within the organizational context. The development and adaptation of the instrument were grounded in occupational stress theory, ensuring content relevance to the psychosocial work conditions experienced by production employees.

The intervention consisted of a structured psychoeducation-based stress-management program delivered in two sessions, each lasting approximately 90–120 minutes. The program aimed to enhance stress awareness, adaptive coping strategies, and emotion-regulation skills. The intervention process included an introduction and learning contract to establish a psychologically safe learning environment, psychoeducation on work stress based on the transactional stress model (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and organizational stress framework (Cooper & Marshall, 2013), and training on adaptive coping and emotion regulation drawing on the frameworks proposed by Folkman and Moskowitz (2004) and Gross (2015). Participants were also guided through Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) exercises following Jacobson's technique (1938/1977) to reduce physiological tension. Group discussions and reflective activities were incorporated to encourage experience sharing, insight development, and social support, followed by session closure and recommendations for applying stress-management strategies in daily work routines.

Quantitative data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize pre- and post-intervention scores. Normality tests were conducted to

determine appropriate statistical procedures. Changes in knowledge scores were analyzed using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test due to non-normal data distribution and small sample size (n = 10). Behavioral stress indicators that met normality assumptions were analyzed using paired sample t-tests to examine pre–post differences. Qualitative data obtained from interviews and observations were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), involving initial coding, identification of recurring patterns, and theme development related to stress sources, coping processes, emotion regulation, and perceived changes following the intervention. To ensure validity and reliability, data triangulation was applied by integrating interview data, observational findings, and quantitative measures. Methodological transparency was maintained through detailed documentation of the intervention procedures and analytical processes. Peer debriefing with organizational stakeholders was also conducted to corroborate observed behavioral changes. All participants provided informed consent prior to participation, and confidentiality was assured throughout the study.

Results

The results of this study are based on quantitative pre–post intervention data and supported by qualitative observations. Descriptive statistics and assumption testing were conducted prior to hypothesis testing. Normality tests indicated that knowledge scores were not normally distributed ($p < 0.05$), whereas behavioral stress scores met normality assumptions ($p > 0.05$), thereby determining the use of non-parametric and parametric analyses, respectively. Analysis of stress-management knowledge revealed a notable improvement following the psychoeducation-based intervention. The mean knowledge score increased from 10.50 at pre-test to 15.00 at post-test, representing a mean difference of 4.50 points (Table 1). The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test demonstrated a statistically significant difference between pre- and post-intervention knowledge scores ($Z = -2.803$, $p = 0.005$), indicating that participants' understanding of work-related stress and stress-management strategies improved significantly after the intervention (Table 2).

Table 1. Knowledge Score

	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-Test	8	13	10.50	1.716
Post-Test	15	15	15.00	.000

Table 2. The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test

	Post-Pre Test
Z	-2.831[b]
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.005

Changes were also observed in stress-related behavioral indicators. Descriptive results showed a decrease in the mean behavioral stress score from 27.90 at pre-test to 20.40 at post- test (Table 3), reflecting a reduction of 7.50 points. A paired sample t-test confirmed that this difference was highly statistically significant, Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) 0.000 (Table 4). This finding suggests that participants demonstrated more adaptive stress-management

behaviors following the intervention. Qualitative observations and semi-structured interviews provided additional support for the quantitative findings. Post-intervention observations indicated improved emotional regulation, more effective interpersonal communication, and increased openness in expressing work-related concerns. Feedback from production management further reported observable behavioral changes, including improved teamwork and reduced stress-related absenteeism. Together, these findings indicate that the psychoeducational intervention was associated with positive changes in both knowledge and stress-related behaviors among sorting-line employees.

Table 3. Behavioral Stress Score

	Mean	**Std. Deviation**
Pre-Test	27.90	2.424
Post-Test	20.40	3.565

Table 4. Paired Sample Test

	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Post-Pre Test	.000

Discussions

The present study examined the outcomes of a psychoeducation-based stress-management intervention for sorting-line employees in a high-demand production setting. The findings demonstrate that the intervention was effective in improving participants' knowledge of work-related stress and reducing stress-related behavioral indicators. These results support the growing body of evidence suggesting that structured psychoeducational interventions can enhance employees' psychological resources and adaptive coping capacities in demanding work environments. The significant increase in stress-management knowledge following the intervention aligns with the transactional stress model proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), which emphasizes the role of cognitive appraisal in shaping stress responses.

By increasing participants' understanding of stress processes and coping strategies, the psychoeducational program may have facilitated more adaptive appraisals of workplace demands. Similar findings have been reported in previous studies indicating that enhanced stress literacy contributes to greater perceived control and reduced psychological strain among employees (Meier & Semmer, 2018; Donovan & Kleiner, 2022). These results suggest that psychoeducation serves as an effective mechanism for modifying cognitive interpretations of stressors in production-line contexts.

The reduction in stress-related behavioral scores further indicates that the intervention influenced not only cognitive outcomes but also observable behavioral responses. The inclusion of Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) may have played a critical role in reducing physiological arousal associated with work stress. Consistent with Jacobson's relaxation framework (1938/1977), PMR facilitates muscular and autonomic relaxation, which has been shown to decrease stress symptoms in occupational populations (Varvogli &

Darviri, 2011; Manzoni et al., 2015). The present findings support previous evidence that relaxation-based techniques can effectively complement psychoeducational content by targeting both psychological and physiological components of stress. From an emotion-regulation perspective, the observed behavioral improvements are consistent with Gross's (2015) emotion-regulation model, which posits that training in regulation strategies can influence both antecedent-focused and response-focused processes. Participants' improved ability to manage emotional reactions during work tasks suggests enhanced regulatory capacity, potentially enabling more adaptive coping responses under pressure. This finding is in line with research demonstrating that interventions focusing on emotion regulation are associated with reduced emotional exhaustion and improved well-being in high-stress occupations (Hülsheger et al., 2013). Qualitative observations and managerial feedback provided additional insight into the mechanisms underlying the observed changes. Improvements in communication, openness, and teamwork indicate that the intervention may have positively influenced group dynamics. These findings are consistent with the buffering hypothesis, which suggests that social support can mitigate the negative psychological effects of stress (Cohen & Wills, 1985). In production settings, where work is highly interdependent, improved interpersonal interaction and social cohesion may serve as important protective factors against stress. Prior research has similarly shown that supportive team environments are associated with lower stress levels and better psychological outcomes among workers (Halbesleben, 2006; Costa & Anderson, 2011).

Despite the positive findings, several limitations should be acknowledged. The small sample size limits the generalizability of the results, although this is consistent with the exploratory and applied nature of intervention-based research. Additionally, the absence of a control group restricts causal inference, and the lack of long-term follow-up data prevents conclusions regarding the sustainability of intervention effects. Previous studies have suggested that booster sessions or organizational-level interventions may be necessary to maintain stress-reduction outcomes over time (Ruotsalainen et al., 2015). Furthermore, while the intervention targeted individual-level psychological resources, broader organizational factors such as workload distribution and supervisory practices were not directly addressed.

Nevertheless, this study contributes to the limited empirical literature on psychoeducation- based interventions for manufacturing and production-line workers, particularly female employees in developing-country contexts. The findings highlight the practical value of brief, structured psychoeducational programs as feasible and cost-effective approaches to improving occupational well-being. Integrating such interventions with organizational support systems may further enhance their impact and sustainability.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that a structured psychoeducation-based stress-management program can effectively enhance stress-related knowledge and reduce maladaptive stress behaviors among sorting-line employees in a high-demand production environment. The findings indicate that psychoeducation, when combined with emotion-regulation training and Progressive Muscle Relaxation, contributes to improved cognitive understanding of work stress as well as more adaptive behavioral responses in the workplace. Beyond

individual outcomes, the intervention also showed potential benefits at the group and organizational levels, as reflected in improved communication, teamwork, and reduced stress-related behaviors observed by management. These results highlight the practical value of brief, targeted psychological interventions as feasible strategies for supporting employee well-being in manufacturing settings, particularly among female production workers who may face heightened occupational stress.

Despite its contributions, the study is limited by a small sample size, the absence of a control group, and the lack of long-term follow-up. Future research is encouraged to employ longitudinal designs, larger and more diverse samples, and integrated organizational interventions to examine the sustainability and broader impact of psychoeducation-based stress-management programs. Overall, this study provides empirical support for the application of psychoeducational interventions as an accessible and effective approach to promoting occupational well-being in high-demand industrial contexts.

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