

STRESS MANAGEMENT OF EMPLOYEES IN PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANIES ACCORDING TO BUDDHIST PRINCIPLES

Prapatson Samapat¹, Chompoonuch Changcharoen²

¹Ph.D. Candidate in Buddhist Studies, Mahamakut Buddhist University, Thailand Email: prapatson.sam@student.mbu.ac.th

²Lecturer, Mahamakut Buddhist University, Thailand Email: chompoonuch.cha@mbu.ac.th

KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this research were to: 1) examine the stress conditions of employees in public limited companies, 2) explore relevant Buddhist principles for stress management, 3) integrate Buddhist principles into stress management practices, and 4) propose a new body of knowledge related to an integration of Buddhist principles for stress management of employees in public limited companies. This study employed a qualitative research methodology by analyzing documents and conducting in-depth interviews with 25 representatives and executives from C.P. All Public Company Limited. The data were analyzed and presented in the form of descriptive analysis. The findings reveal that employee stress arises from internal factors such as workplace relationships, managerial expectations, and performance targets, as well as external factors including the work environment, inequitable practices, and personal challenges. These stressors adversely impact both physical and mental health, thereby diminishing work performance. The Buddhist principles found to be particularly effective are Yonisomanasikara (wise consideration), which fosters critical thinking and a deep understanding of problems, and Sappurisa Dhamma (The Seven Virtues of a Good Person), which enhances moral virtues such as self-awareness, attentive listening, and fairness. The integration of these principles demonstrates significant improvements in employees' cognitive processes, problem-solving abilities, and emotional regulation. Yonisomanasikara enables employees to identify and address the root causes of stress effectively, while Sappurisa Dhamma promotes the development of virtues and interpersonal skills, contributing to greater workplace satisfaction and collaborative relationships. The study further conceptualizes the "3W Model," comprising Well-being (physical and mental health), Wisdom (analytical thinking enhanced through Yonisomanasikara), and Work-life Balance (ethical alignment and life harmony supported by Sappurisa Dhamma). The application of this model within organizations leads to the realization of a "Happy Workplace," characterized by a supportive work environment, enhanced job satisfaction, improved productivity, and strengthened interpersonal dynamics. This holistic approach underscores the potential of Buddhist principles in fostering both individual well-being and organizational success.

INTRODUCTION

The global economy has developed rapidly since the late 20th and early 21st centuries, causing significant changes and necessitating adaptation among individuals and organizations. People face increasing pressure to sustain their livelihoods, while organizations adjust their structures to meet economic demands. These shifts often lead to create stress caused by mismatched roles, excessive workloads, ineffective communication, and unfavorable work environments. Stress, influenced by factors like financial issues, health problems, and life challenges, can manifest in physical and mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and chronic diseases.

CP All Public Company Limited, operating under the “7-Eleven” trademark in Thailand, has over 14,545 branches and employs more than 150,000 people nationwide. The company's rapid growth and competitive environment place employees under considerable stress, with 76.8% reporting work-related stress due to excessive workloads and responsibilities beyond their capabilities. This stress impacts their health and productivity, contributing to conditions such as ulcers, high blood pressure, and depression, which in turn affect their families and the organization.

Buddhist teachings offer a pathway to stress management through mental training and ethical behavior, emphasizing mindfulness and rational thinking to address stress effectively. Practices such as *Sappurisa Dhamma* (The Seven Virtues of a Good Person) and *Yonisomanasikara* (wise consideration) encourage understanding the causes of stress, seeking appropriate counsel, and adapting to organizational contexts. These principles support employees in managing stress constructively, fostering happiness and efficiency in the workplace.

The research aims to study stress management for employees in CP All Public Company Limited based on Buddhist principles. By integration of these principles, organization can develop effective strategies to reduce employee stress, enhance workplace happiness, and promote sustainable organizational growth.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the stress levels of employees in public limited companies
2. To study Buddhist principles related to managing employee stress in public limited companies
3. To integrate stress management practices for employees in public limited companies based on Buddhist principles.
4. To propose new body of knowledge about integrating employee stress management in public limited companies according Buddhist Principles

Scope of the Research

The study titled "Stress Management of Employees in Public Limited Companies according to Buddhist Principles," employed qualitative research using a fieldwork approach. The researchers have defined the scope of the study as follows:

Scope of Content

This research explores concepts, theories, and data from Buddhist scriptures, including the Tipitaka, Sutras, commentaries, books, texts, and other related documents. They serve as a foundation for studying Buddhist principles. It incorporates stress management theories and concepts, as well as a review of academic documents, journals, websites, theses, articles, and research studies that provide academic evidence related to the topic, thereby affirming the knowledge base.

The scope of integration with Buddhist principles focuses on teachings that promote rational thinking and peaceful coexistence. These principles guide living a happy life with mindfulness and aiming for success through *Sila (morality)*, *Samadhi (concentration)*, and *Panna (wisdom)*. Stress management is examined through *Sappurisa Dhamma* (The Seven Virtues of a Good Person) is the principle of virtuous individuals and moral values. *Yonisomanasikara* (wise consideration) encourages analytical thinking and problem-solving based on reason and wisdom. These principles offer a framework for analyzing and managing employee stress in public limited companies. They also aim to enhance work efficiency and contribute to the well-being of individuals within organizations, communities, and society. This study integrates Buddhist teachings to provide insights into stress management practices that foster ethical behavior and improve organizational outcomes.

Scope of Documents

1. Primary Sources referred to The Thai version of the *Tipitaka* from Mahamakut Buddhist University.
2. Secondary Sources are translated commentaries (*Atthakatha*), and sub-commentaries (*Tika and Anutika*) by Mahamakut Buddhist University. Another is Buddhist texts, such as the *Visuddhimagga* (Path of Purification). Moreover, academic materials include research papers, dissertations, theses, books, articles, also Thai and international websites.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is a qualitative study (Qualitative Research) using a field research approach (Field study). The data were obtained through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The researcher analyzed and synthesized the data systematically in accordance with the theoretical framework, addressing the issues and problems that align with the research objectives. The researcher interpreted, categorized it, and sorted the information by content, selecting the relevant data while eliminating unnecessary and irrelevant information. The findings were discussed using descriptive paragraphs, providing detailed accounts of the events and facts uncovered in the in-depth interviews.

Research Instrument

Employing a qualitative research methodology, the study analyzed documents and conducted in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, which are systematically analyzed and synthesized in alignment with the research framework, addressing the key issues and objectives.

The researchers organize, categorize, and refine the data to ensure relevance, discarding unnecessary or unrelated information. The findings are presented through descriptive paragraphs, providing detailed accounts of events and factual insights gathered during the in-depth interviews. This interpretive approach ensures the results are systematically aligned with the research's objectives and conceptual framework.

Data Collection Methods

The researchers collected data with formal approval to interview experts from the Department of Buddhist Studies, Mahamakut Buddhist University. Data collection involved: Personal interviews, note-taking, audio recording, and photographic documentation to supplement the interviews. The data collection process was carried out in three stages:

Stage 1: The researchers studied the stress levels of employees in a public limited company. A literature review of related documents, theories, and studies on stress management, as well as Buddhist principles relevant to managing employee stress, was conducted.

Stage 2: In-depth interviews were conducted with 25 individuals (19 participants for detailed interviews and 6 participants in a focus group discussion with experts).

Stage 3: All data collected was analyzed and synthesized to ensure alignment with the research objectives. Insights were compiled to present some knowledge on "Integration Stress Management of Employees in a Public Limited Company According to Buddhist Principles."

Research Data Analysis

The researchers have defined criteria for data analysis according to the type of research technique as follows:

1. **Data from documentary research** uses content analysis, presenting the information through descriptive paragraphs.
2. **Data from in-depth interviews** uses descriptive paragraph analysis. The data is organized and classified systematically. Afterward, the data is interpreted, relationships are connected, and conclusions are drawn from the gathered information. This process is carried out concurrently with data collection to allow for a deeper study of various issues. If any issues lack clarity after analysis, additional data will be collected to clarify those issues in order to answer the main research question according to the objectives of the qualitative research, aiming to find theoretical linkages and relationships.

FINDINGS

The Stress Conditions of Employees in Public Limited Companies

Employees' stress conditions in public companies arise from both external and internal factors, directly impacting their physical health, mental well-being, behavior, and work performance. Workplace stress often stems from high-pressure situations, such as workplace relationships, managerial expectations, and performance targets. These pressures leave employees

feeling unable to control their circumstances or cope effectively, resulting in cumulative stress affecting multiple aspects of their lives.

As for external factors, the employees found workplace environment, including the work environment, inequitable practices, and personal challenges. Tasks exceed employees' abilities, causing frustration. The employees get pressure from organizational expectations and fear of failing targets. The company policy changes job insecurity to downsize or layoff. Another topic is personal issues: namely; family conflicts, divorce, or the loss of love. Financial difficulties, such as debt, insufficient income, or poor financial planning. The employees got serious life events like relocation, career changes, or severe health issues. Another factor was internal factors. They were negative attitudes, perfectionism, or lack of problem-solving skills increase susceptibility to stress. These stressors adversely impact both physical and mental health, depression or anxiety worsen employees' ability to manage pressure, leading to chronic stress and diminished self-confidence.

A deep understanding of problems is very important for reduce stress. These stress factors are crucial for both employees and organization. By fostering a supportive work environment, problem-solving skills are promoted, and offering emotional support, companies can mitigate stress and enhance overall well-being. These measures contribute to sustainable and fulfilling work experiences for individuals and organizations alike.

Buddhist Principles for Managing Employee Stress in Public Companies

Applying Buddhist principles in stress management among employees can help alleviate stress, enhance problem-solving skills, and improve workplace efficiency in a systematic and sustainable way. Two key principles—*Yonisomanasikara* and *Sappurisa Dhamma* (Seven Virtues of a Good Person)—are particularly relevant for stress management. *Yonisomanasikara* (wise consideration) encourages rational thinking and mindfulness to understand problems deeply, plan systematically, and reduce negative emotions, leading to better focus and productivity. *Sappurisa Dhamma* emphasizes virtues like knowing causes and effects, self-awareness, moderation, time management, understanding others, and fostering teamwork. These help employees handle stress, work-life balance, and build positive relationships. By adopting these principles, employees can achieve inner calm and clarity, while organizations benefit from a healthier, more collaborative, and efficient work environment.

Integrating Buddhist Principles in Stress Management for Employees in Public Companies

Stress management in public companies can be enhanced by integrating Buddhist principles to cope stress factors. There are two stress factors: internal and external factors. The internal stress factors include self-doubt, excessive expectations, attachment to uncontrollable factors, and fear of change. The external stress factors were workplace challenges such as organizational restructuring, unclear policies, changing roles, competitive pressure, and high organizational expectations (Channuwong et al., 2023). *Yonisomanasikara* (wise consideration), encourages rational thinking and distinguishing between controllable and uncontrollable issues. Employees learn to accept inevitable changes, adapt, and focus on self-improvement, fostering positive attitudes and reduced stress. *Sappurisa Dhamma* (The Seven Virtues of a Good Person), These principals guide employees in understanding stress causes, recognizing personal limits, balancing work and life, and promoting teamwork and mutual understanding. According to

Psychological Approaches, mindfulness enhances focus on the present, reduces overthinking, and helps in calmly addressing challenges. Reframing helps view problems as opportunities for growth, increasing resilience and adaptability. Resilience training and upskilling create confidence, adapt to organizational changes, and enhance continuous skill development.

The integration of Buddhist principles and psychological practices fosters systematic and sustainable stress management. This approach strengthens mental and physical well-being, improves work attitudes, enhances happiness, and creates a positive, collaborative workplace atmosphere.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Employees' Stress Conditions in Public Companies

The stress gained by employees in public companies arises from both internal and external factors. Internal factors show relationships among colleagues, supervisors, and management. The employees work under pressure, meeting job targets, and coping with high work expectations. Moreover, external factors were workplace environment, company policies, unequal treatment, mismatched roles, and personal or family problems. Both factors negatively affect employees' performance, leading to unmet organizational goals. The workplace has caused stress (Channuwong, 2019; Seaward, 2017 & Hellriegel et al., 1998). First, with heavy workload, the employees must have high responsibilities with insufficient time to complete tasks. Also, the work environment, there were uncontrollable factors like extreme temperatures, noise, poor lighting, and communication issues. Employees faced role conflicts and ambiguities likewise unclear job responsibilities. As a result of career development issues, the employees encountered limited opportunities for advancement, uncertainty due to restructuring, Interpersonal relationships seem poor relationships with colleagues or superiors, reduced trust, hindered communication, and increased stress.

The stress has impacted on individuals. Physical effects show high blood pressure, muscle tension, breathing issues, and appetite changes. Emotional effects show fatigue, irritability, anxiety, and potential mental health disorders like depression. Cognitive effects reduced decision-making ability and increased mistakes. Behavioral effects are unhealthy habits like smoking, alcohol consumption, or substance abuse. Organizations have decreased productivity and quality of work. These were negative organizational images due to increased absenteeism, turnover, and errors.

Buddhist Principles Related to Stress Management for Employees of Public Limited Companies

The Buddhist principles related to stress management for employees of public limited companies reveal that the principles of *Yoniso Manasikara* (wise consideration) and *Sappurisa Dhamma* (the Seven Virtues of a Good Person) are effective in alleviating stress when applied in practice. *Yoniso Manasikara* refers to thinking and reflecting in a morally grounded manner, following principles of goodness and truth that have been studied or taught. It involves constructive and benevolent thoughts, such as being friendly, loving, compassionate, helpful, determined, and resilient without giving up. This can range from simple, positive thinking to more profound

analysis of causes and conditions, which requires refined wisdom. The key feature of *Yoniso Manasikara* is the development of wisdom; it serves as a bridge between mindfulness and wisdom, guiding intellectual thoughts in a proper and effective manner. This aligns with research by Thonknuch (2021) and Channuwong (2019), which suggests that *Yoniso Manasikara* enables individuals to view situations from different perspectives and understand causes and effects systematically. It fosters wisdom, enabling sound decision-making and a meaningful life, balancing work and family responsibilities for happiness. *Sappurisa Dhamma* (The Seven Virtues of a Good Person) are principles established by the Buddha to encourage ethical behavior. This benefits individuals and promotes peace and happiness within society. These qualities serve as a foundation for self-development, emphasizing mental and emotional training to cultivate good behaviors and harmonious relationships, leading to psychological well-being.

The teachings of *Sappurisa Dhamma* were delivered by the Buddha to monks, outlining methods for studying and applying the Dhamma for self-discipline and development. In a professional context, self-development is crucial as it enhances work efficiency, adaptability to changing work environments, and contributes to happiness and success. According to *Somdet Phra Ariyavongsagananana* (Supreme Patriarch), *Sappurisa Dhamma* is particularly suitable for leaders to achieve effective management.

In conclusion, the principles of *Yoniso Manasikara* and *Sappurisa Dhamma* provide a structured approach to stress management, beginning with thoughtful reflection and extending to practical implementation. These principles encourage understanding causes, adhering to responsibilities, recognizing personal capabilities, and adapting to organizational changes. They also emphasize time management, understanding societal and organizational needs, and recognizing individual differences to allocate tasks appropriately. Applying these principles can significantly support stress management for employees in public limited companies.

Integrating Buddhist Principles into Stress Management for Employees of Public Limited Companies

Stress management for employees of public limited companies through the integration of Buddhist principles highlights the importance of applying *Yoniso Manasikara* (wise consideration) and *Sappurisa Dhamma* (the Seven Virtues of a Good Person) as effective approaches. These principles enable employees to manage stress efficiently, resulting in workplace happiness, healthy organizational relationships, and sustainable success. *Yoniso Manasikara* focuses on thought training in a wise and systematic manner. It helps employees analyze problems carefully, thoroughly, and rationally by reflecting deeply on the root causes of stress and considering related factors. This principle allows employees to gain clearer insights into their problems, understand the causes of stress, and identify appropriate solutions. Reflective thinking also teaches employees to accept reality, particularly in situations beyond their control, such as inevitable organizational changes. This helps shift their perspective from resistance or worry to acceptance and adaptation, fostering self-development in alignment with current circumstances. As a result, stress is reduced and replaced with a positive attitude toward work. In addition, *Sappurisa Dhamma*—which emphasizes the development of moral character and ethical behavior—enhances stress management among employees by providing suitable guidelines for interacting with others. The principle of understanding causes and effects enables employees to recognize the roots of problems and their potential consequences, facilitating sound and appropriate decision-making. Self-

awareness encourages employees to assess their capabilities and limitations honestly, allowing them to make necessary improvements. The principle of moderation helps employees maintain a healthy balance between work and rest, avoiding overexertion and focusing on their physical and mental well-being. Furthermore, *Sappurisa Dhamma* promotes which enhances moral virtues such as self-awareness, attentive listening, and fairness. The integration of these principles demonstrates significant improvements in employees' cognitive processes, problem-solving abilities, and emotional regulation to acknowledge the diversity among colleagues, foster collaboration, and create a positive working environment. Reducing conflicts and maintaining good interpersonal relationships promote harmony, mutual understanding, and collaborative relationships of adapting to change. For executives or organizational leaders, it is crucial to play a significant role in supporting and promoting employees' stress management. By applying *Yoniso Manasikara* for systematic problem-solving and incorporating *Sappurisa Dhamma* as an ethical foundation for team management, leaders can create a supportive work atmosphere. Providing opportunities for employees to develop themselves and fostering mutual understanding helps employees feel secure, motivated, and ready to work efficiently. Integrating Buddhist principles into stress management not only enables employees to address stress systematically but also enhances their critical thinking, acceptance of reality, and creative problem-solving skills. *Yoniso Manasikara* facilitates deep, rational, and correct thinking, while *Sappurisa Dhamma* encourages appropriate conduct, work and life balance, and improved interpersonal relationships. That's why these principles ultimately lead to a happier workplace, job satisfaction, and the organization's stable and sustainable success.

New Body of Knowledge

Research findings on "Managing Employee Stress in Public Companies through Buddhist Principles" The study explores how *Yoniso Manasikara* (wise consideration) and the Seven Sappurisa Dhamma (the Seven Virtues of a Good Person) enhance self-awareness, understanding of colleagues, the company, and society. These principles enable employees to adapt and work effectively, reducing conflicts and stress while fostering a positive work environment. By nurturing self-understanding and psychological management, employees can achieve greater happiness and efficiency in the workplace. The findings can be summarized into four key aspects:

1. Acceptance of Reality

Acceptance of organizational realities is vital in stress management. It focuses on developing thoughtful, mindful, and rational thinking to deeply analyze problems. Accepting reality means employees recognize and adapt to their work environment, leadership styles, colleague relationships, and inevitable organizational changes. However, acceptance does not mean surrender or ignoring issues; it is about adjusting one's attitude and perspective to align with the situation. Refusing to accept reality can intensify long-term stress and affect performance. As for Core Principle, *Yoniso Manasikara* encourages mindful reasoning and thoughtful analysis to understand the root causes and various factors of a situation. Employees who accept reality reduce emotional resistance and manage stress effectively, allowing them to focus on constructive problem-solving rather than lingering on uncontrollable circumstances.

2. Mental and Physical Health Development

Improving both mental and physical health is crucial for employee well-being and work effectiveness. The Seven *Sappurisa Dhamma* offer practical guidelines to reduce stress, balance work-life, and stabilize mental health: *Dhammannuta* (Understanding principles and duties): Employees must grasp their roles, analyze tasks rationally, and address stress with clarity to identify solutions without unnecessary anxiety. *Atthannuta* (Understanding goals): Employees should set realistic, clear, and achievable work goals aligned with their abilities, reducing uncertainty and boosting motivation. *Attannuta* (Self-awareness): Recognizing one's abilities, strengths, and limitations helps employees avoid over-expectation, manage stress, and focus on self-improvement. *Mattannur* (Knowing moderation): Maintaining balance and avoiding overwork protects physical and mental health, ensuring sustainable productivity. *Kalamata* (Time awareness): Effective time management for work, rest, and personal development reduces stress caused by tight schedules. *Parisanna* (Understanding the community): Building teamwork and respecting diverse opinions reduce conflicts and improve workplace harmony. *Puggalannuta* (Understanding individuals): Employees who appreciate and adapt to the personalities of colleagues can foster better relationships and reduce interpersonal stress. For the outcome, integrating these principles allows employees to manage stress, improve psychological resilience, and create a healthier work environment.

3. Adjustment of Organizational Structure

Adjusting organizational structures is key to enhancing efficiency and adapting to internal and external changes. However, poorly executed restructuring can cause stress among employees. Applying *Yoniso Manasikara* ensures that the process is rational, systematic, and stress-mitigating. Analyzing the current state: people use tools like SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) to identify problems and inefficiencies in existing structures. Setting clear goals: Clearly define restructuring objectives (e.g., improving efficiency, cost reduction, or streamlining processes) to provide clarity and direction, reducing confusion and stress. Encouraging participation includes employees at all levels in the decision-making process to foster acceptance and cooperation during the change. Continuous evaluation assesses and refines changes regularly using mindful analysis to identify successes and areas for improvement, ensuring a smooth transition. A thoughtful, inclusive approach to organizational adjustment reduces resistance and stress, while enhancing adaptability and efficiency.

4. Work-Life Balance for Employees

Balancing work and personal life is essential for reducing stress and enhancing overall employee well-being. Work-life balance helps employees recharge physically and mentally, which directly impacts job satisfaction, productivity, and happiness. The key components are Rest and Recreation. The employees should have adequate time for rest and personal activities (e.g., exercise, family time, hobbies). They replenish energy, reduce burnout, and foster emotional well-being. Employers should have flexible work policies. They offer flexible work hours or remote work options that help employees manage time effectively. This factor can reduce stress from long hours and tight schedules. Additionally, a supportive work environment in organizations prioritizes

work-life balance through policies, recreational activities, and stress-management training to create a positive workplace culture.

Employees must be healthy and recognize the importance of mental and physical health as fundamental to work efficiency and personal fulfillment. Promoting work-life balance builds a happier, healthier workforce that is motivated, engaged, and productive while reducing the risk of burnout and turnover. In conclusion, applying *Yoniso Manasikara* and *Sappurisa Dhamma* in workplace settings foster mindfulness, self-awareness, and rational decision-making. Employees can manage stress effectively, strengthen interpersonal dynamics, and adapt to organizational changes with resilience. By addressing acceptance of reality, mental and physical well-being, structural adjustments, and work-life balance, organizations can create supportive environments which contribute to greater workplace satisfaction and collaborative relationships.

Stress Management Model

The research titled “Stress Management of Employees in Public Limited Companies according Buddhist Principles” has led to the development of a new knowledge model. This model serves as a framework for stress management and supportive work environment, contributing to a “Happy Workplace”, which embodies happiness, balance, and sustainability. This model is called the 3W Model, as shown below



Figure 1: Stress Management Model of Employees in Public Limited Companies

From research, studies, and consultations with experts, integrating stress management for employees using Buddhist principles is identified as a key process that directly affects work efficiency and organizational happiness. This is referred to as the 3W Model, which consists of:

W = Well-being refers to Physical and Mental Well-being
W = Wisdom refers to analytical Thinking Enhancement
W = Work-life Balance refers to Ethical Alignment and Life Harmony

The 3W Model helps manage stress arising from both internal and external factors in the workplace by fostering well-being, mindset adjustment, and work-life balance. Internal factors include issues like excessive work pressure, lack of problem-solving skills, and mental insecurity. These can be managed by promoting Well-being—achieving complete physical and mental health. When employees experience good physical health through measures like an appropriate work environment or sufficient rest, they are better equipped with energy to face challenges effectively. Moreover, mental well-being can be supported through mindfulness practices, spaces to release stress, and environments that encourage open communication, allowing employees to share problems. These approaches help alleviate deep-seated mental concerns caused by internal factors.

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