**STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AMONG GENERATION-Z
IN THE E-COMMERCE INDUSTRY**

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ABSTRACT

This research paper analyzes stress management among E-commerce employees, focusing on the challenges they face in their daily work. It explores key stress factors, personal and professional experiences, and coping mechanisms. Interviews were conducted with ten participants working in different roles within the E-commerce industry. The interview questions covered workplace stress, personal experiences, coping strategies, and professional perspectives. The study identifies specific causes of stress, including high workload, limited autonomy, and coordination challenges with internal teams and external partners. Additionally, it highlights various coping strategies used by employees to manage stress. The paper concludes with recommendations for both individuals and organizations to improve employee well-being in the E-commerce sector.

KEY WORDS: STRESS MANAGEMENT/ OCCUPATIONAL STRESS/ E-COMMERCE INDSUTRY/

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In today's world, the online industry plays an important role in our lives, and the E-commerce industry has grown rapidly, making a huge expansion in past years, leaving a strong impact on online shopping. In 2016, the global online grocery shopping (OGS) market was valued at $48 billion and experienced a 15% growth over the past year (Driediger & Bhatiasevi, 2019). Moreover, the E-commerce sector has experienced consistent growth over the years. In 2020, global retail E-commerce sales reached an impressive $4,280 billion, reflecting an annual growth rate of 22% over the previous five years. During that time E-commerce made up 18% of total global retail sales, a remarkable rise from 8.6% in 2016 (Organiściak, 2023). Recent surveys highlight there is an increasing influence of E-commerce search engines from customers as E-commerce is becoming the preferred choice for product searches from end-customers (Tsagkias et al, 2020). These E-commerce platforms such as Lazada,Shopee, and Tiktok are known for their monthly mega-sales, which play a vital role in online marketplaces. To attract end-shoppers with discount-focused offers, various marketing strategies such as commercials, promotions, advertisements, and other tactics have contributed to driving successful sales (Dulay et al, 2022). As a result, these platforms strive to provide the most affordable prices for end customers to increase their own revenue as most end customers tend to visit each platform to compare the price of the products that they want before purchasing it (Kachasumrit, 2018). On the other hand, many companies who have offline businesses have also initiated their business on an online platform (Dulay et al, 2022). This online trend continues to grow significantly which grabs people's attention and can gain more market share contribution from offline shopping such as modern trade and traditional trade stores (Tsagkias et al, 2020).

However, this convenience of the E-commerce world also leads to increase workload and overtime work, particularly for those employees in E-commerce industry, as the digital marketplace operates 24/7 especially during peak time with high demand

of customers and shortage of labor (Baccichetto et al, 2024). This creates a stressful work environment for employees in the E-commerce industry, as they must constantly monitor sales trends, manage inventory, handle end-customer inquiries, and ensure the correct promotional operations in a very fast-paced business environment. This leads to a digital transition that accelerates, and the demand for professionals with E-commerce expertise has grown significantly. The fast-paced nature of the E-commerce industry leads to frequent job changes, making transferable skills essential for career success for this industry (Kovács et Keresztes, 2022). With the E-commerce employees' perspective, pursuing greater performance without prioritizing employee well-being creates a harmful cycle. This weakens employee relationships, reduces productivity, lowers morale, and ultimately undermines overall performance (Fouché, 2015).

The research aims to focus on Generation-Z who work related to E-commerce platforms such as Shopee, Lazada, and Tiktok as the younger generation is not only more comfortable with E-commerce, but they also process website information five times faster than older generations (Muda et al.,2015). This research comes from personal experiences from working in the E-commerce industry, therefore, I would like to research sources of stress among Generation-Z working in the E-commerce industry, and to gather suggestions and recommendations on how they would like the organization to support them.

The objectives of this paper are explained in the research question below:

Research Question 1: What are the factors causing stress among Generation-Z employees in the E-commerce industry?

Research Question 2: What forms of organizational support do generation-Z employees seek to manage stress?

To address these two questions, this study uses a qualitative method, including in-depth interviews and thematic analysis, as it is essential to gather information to identify key themes and patterns directly from Generation-Z office workers who work in the E-commerce industry. The goal is to gain a deeper understanding of the various factors that influence workplace resilience in this setting.

The results of this study can help companies establish more suitable strategies to enhance workplace adaptability and stability among Generation-Z who work in the E-commerce industry. By understanding the key factors that support resilience,

businesses can design specific programs and support systems to help employees cope with challenges. This will improve both employee well-being and the company's ability to handle difficulties.

The research participants will be 10 Generation-Z employees who work in the E-commerce industry as a brand E-commerce executive – E-commerce category manager position who need to manage online sale. The data will be collected through semi-structured one-on-one interview sessions.

The findings of this research will help E-commerce companies develop effective stress management strategies for Generation-Z employees and understand their stress more deeply. By understanding the reasons behind their stress, businesses can help young professionals manage workplace stress effectively. Moreover, these insights can be useful for those who are interested in working in the E-commerce industry. Lastly, this insight is useful for creating training programs on workplace resilience, benefiting both employees and other stakeholders in the E-commerce industry

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Stress at work

Job stress can be described as any aspect of the work environment that is seen as threatening or demanding, or anything in the workplace that causes an individual to feel discomfort (Vasantha et Ross, 2014). In addition, work stress refers to a negative emotional response caused by challenging or unfavorable experiences in the workplace (Fila, 2016). Moreover, Panigrahi (2016), explained that workplace stress can be separated into two main types: internal and external causes. Internal factors arise from an individual's mindset and way of their own thinking. Even when there is no actual threat, a person may perceive a situation or individual as threatening, which can lead to stress. External factors, on the other hand, include a lot of workplace-related issues. Job insecurity is a major problem, as the fear of losing one's job can result in chronic stress and impact affect work quality. Irregular or excessive working hours may cause physiological problems, leading to stress during work. The level of work control; limited autonomy can result in disengagement and increased pressure to meet supervisors' expectations. Additionally, managerial style affects employees' stress levels, as a highly controlling leadership approach can create a tense work environment. Workload imbalance is another key factor. As an overwhelming workload with tight deadlines can cause immense pressure, while having too little work may lead employees to question their capabilities. Both situations can contribute to workplace stress and reduce overall job satisfaction (Panigrahi, 2016).

2.2 Relationship between stress and job demand

The Job Demand–Control model (Karasek, 1979; Karasek & Theorell,1990) is widely used as one of the most influential theories on workplace stress. It suggests that job-related stress happens from a combination of work demands and the level of

control an employee has over their tasks. The stressors have their highest negative impact when job demands are high while job control is low and when jobs in which both control and demand are high produce a productive learning and well-being including effective personal growth (Salanova et al, 2002). Fila (2016) recognized the importance of job demands and the level of control employees have over their work as key factors influencing well-being, motivation, and productivity while also helping to reduce psychological and physiological stress. He emphasized that highly demanding jobs with little control of it are the most likely to negatively impact well-being and increase stress levels. Kain et Jex (2015), also pointed out that The Job Demand–Control model (Karasek, 1979) classifies jobs into four categories based on the balance between job demands and the level of job control. According to this model, employees in "high-strain" jobs—where they confront high demands but have little control—are most likely to experience physical stress symptoms. In contrast, those in "active jobs," which involve both high demand and high control, tend to experience greater job satisfaction. This is because such roles require engagement, allowing employees to sharpen their skills, confidence in their abilities, and personal growth. Karasek (1979) also described "passive jobs," differentiated by low demands and low control, which can lead to dissatisfaction, and a decline in problem-solving abilities. The final category, "low-demand, high-control" jobs, was not explored in detail by Karasek, likely because such roles are uncommon, and it did not propose specific hypotheses about the impact on employees.
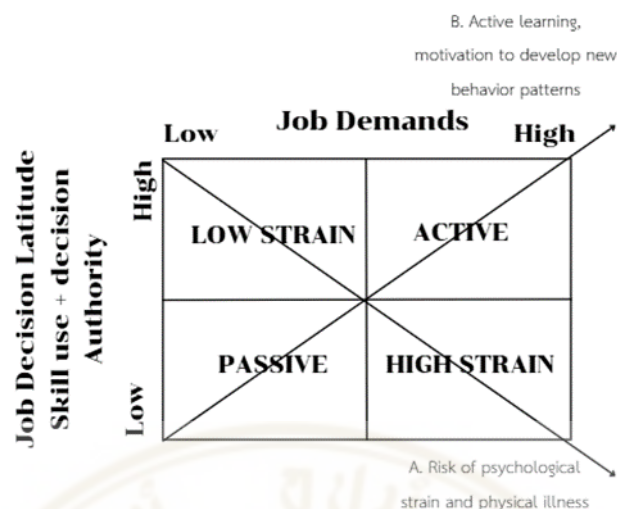
Figure 2.1 Job demand control model

Source: Karasek (1979)

2.3 Stress management at work

Stress management involves changing perspectives and learning better time management skills. To reduce stress from an unbalanced work life, delegating extra tasks or discussing workload concerns with employers to get support can be helpful. These steps could also lead to a better work-life balance, which helps reduce stress among employees (Appiah et al, 2013). Moreover, Carson et Kuipers (1998), gave a clear overview of work stress management, breaking interventions into two main types: individual and workplace. Individual interventions focus on personal skills like social skills training, problem-solving, or breathing exercises. On the other hand, workplace interventions aim to improve communication methods and enhance human resource management systems.

In addition, Sutherland et Cooper (2000), said that the foundation that helps to manage stress at work is divided into four categories. Procedural Measures – Companies try to reduce absenteeism by enforcing stricter checks. Individual Preventive Measures –These focus on helping employees maintain a healthy and safe lifestyle. This can include providing training, protective equipment, and stress management programs, as well as promoting healthy habits like quitting smoking, reducing alcohol consumption, eating well,

and exercise. Work-Related Preventive Measures – These aim to reduce workload pressures by ensuring employees aren't overwhelmed. Strategies include improving workplace safety, adjusting the physical work environment, rotating tasks, upgrading information systems, and improving overall work organization and safety management. Reintegration Measures – These help employees return to work after illness with support from managers, occupational health professionals, and medical specialists.

2.4 Challenges working in E-commerce industry

Treetipbut et Aloni (2018), pointed out that the E-commerce industry has distinct business processes that require employees to quickly adapt to changing work methods. With rapid technological advancements, job roles, expectations, and other business factors frequently change. Xue et al (2022), stated that knowledge and adaptation play a crucial role in employees in E-commerce platforms. Due to intense competition in the industry, E-commerce platforms frequently update their technology. As its' intense competition in the industry, employees need to adapt themselves to platforms that frequently update their technology. Nangoy et al (2018), mentioned the competition in the digital business sector, such as E-commerce, individual employees need creativity, innovation to have their best performance at work.

Baccichetto et al (2024), stated that when there are labor shortages in the E-commerce industry, especially during peak time, it creates major challenges that significantly impact both productivity and efficiency of the employees. As demand for the shoppers rises, the current workforce often must work extra hours to keep up with operations to run smoothly.

In addition, Kalinic et al (2016), said that shortage of skilled employees who can manage online skills for E-commerce industry is one of the challenges in developing countries including the unstable internet and communication networks, and unstable transportation for sending products. They also stated that another big challenge in E-commerce growth is logistical problems. Weak delivery systems can struggle to handle customers' high demand, especially during national holidays when they need to process and ship many orders in a limited time.

2.5 Factors that cause stress in E-commerce industry

According to Baccichetto et al (2024), workforce shortages in the E-commerce industry, especially during peak seasons, reflect major challenges that impact both employee efficiency and overall operations. They also mentioned that many working hours contribute to increased fatigue and burnout among employees. Studies show that many work hours negatively affect both physical and mental health, significantly decreasing overall productivity. In addition, Ogbeyemi (2023), explained the influence of stress on performance, a concept highly relevant to the E-commerce industry, where employees frequently confront high-pressure environments due to excessive workloads and the need to adapt to changing work processes. Moreover, he also mentioned that the E-commerce industry, where employees often manage heavy workloads and tight schedules, the impact of job fatigue on performance deserves attention.

CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Primary data collection method

Based on the literature and review of the research, chapter 2 of this paper explores various aspects of E-commerce employees and their stress. However, to validate the findings of this thematic paper, primary data is essential. Gathering responses drawn from generation-Z who work in the E-commerce industry confronting stress can provide deeper insights into emotions, perspectives, and motivations related to the research question. Therefore, qualitative research methods, particularly in-depth interviews, are considered suitable for this study.

The professional experiences of Generation-Z employees in the E-commerce industry will provide significant insights into the stress they confront and how they manage it effectively.

3.2 Interview Method

This research will employ a semi-structured interview method to collect primary data. This method of interview allows two-way-communication and will provide in-depth insights through interactive question-and-answer sessions. Additional details on the interview methodology will be provided below.

3.3 Sample Selection

For this research, 10 interviewees have been selected, all of whom were born in Generation-Z and working in the E-commerce industry that have experienced significant pressure, stress, and anxiety and confronting burnout in their jobs.

Table 3.1   Table interview list

Number	Position	Age
1	E-commerce Manager	28
2	Category Manager (E-commerce)	28
3	Online Marketing Manager	27
4	Senior Key Account Manager	27
5	Brand Platform Manager	26
6	Associate Online Key Account	26
7	E-commerce Brand Key Account	25
8	Online Trade Marketing Executive	24
9	Sale Online Executive	24
10	E-commerce Key Account Executive	23

3.4 Interview questions

To gain insights into the real-life experiences of Generation-Z working in the E-commerce industry, particularly in how they navigate work-related stress, high-pressure environments, heavy workloads, and limited company support, a set of open-ended questions has been developed for this research to encourage interviewees to share their experiences openly. The table below outlines the key questions aimed at understanding the factors contributing to workplace challenges and resilience among this Generation who work in the E-commerce industry.

Table 3.2   Interview questions

Factors to investigate	Open-ended Questions

Stressful situations at work	1. What are the positive and negative aspects of working in E-commerce industry?
	2. What are your most common stress situations in your workplace?
	3. Can you share an experience when you felt overwhelmed or stressed at work? What happened, and what specifically caused your stress?
	4. What unique stressors do E-commerce employees face?
	5. How would you rate your work:
	    Workload? (rate from 1-3)
	    1: Low/Easily manageable workload
	    2: Medium level workload
	    3: High level workload
	    Level of autonomy/freedom (rate from 1-3)
	    1: Low level of autonomy
	    2: Medium level of autonomy
	    3: High level of autonomy
	6. How do you usually handle stress at work? Could you provide some examples?

High workload among employee	7. Have you ever experienced stress due to a high workload within your role? 8. How do you balance a demanding workload with maintaining your mental well-being and adaptability? in a high-pressure E-commerce environment? 9. What challenges do you face in managing fluctuating workloads, such as Mega sale? 10. How does working in E-commerce affect your work-life balance, and what strategies do you use to cope with it?

Table 3.2 Interview questions (cont.)

Factors to investigate	Open-ended Questions
Individual support stress management strategy	11. From your personal experience, what advice would you give to others on handling work challenges and maintaining well-being for working in the E-commerce industry? 12. The ability to adapt to challenges and recover quickly from difficulties and stress from working in E-commerce industry is essential in the workplace. Would you consider yourself someone who handles challenges well? On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 = low, 10 = high), how would you rate your ability to cope with difficulties and stress?
Organizational support stress management strategy	13. What kind of support, if any, does your company provide to help employees manage heavy workloads for E-commerce employees? 14. Do you think the organization should place greater emphasis on employee well-being and stress? management in the E-commerce industry? And why? 15. How could your organization better support you in your stressful situations?

3.5 Develop probing technique:

In an interview process, probing techniques play a crucial role in detailed responses from interviewers. The process begins with open-ended questions, encouraging respondents to openly share their opinions and experiences. Probing techniques are then applied to explore their answers further, discovering deeper insights and motivations. These methods help the interviewer gain a more thorough understanding of the respondent's perspective while collecting meaningful insights. Finally, closing questions are used to clarify responses and confirm mutual understanding between the interviewer and interviewee regarding each discussed topic.

3.6 Conduct the interview

When conducting interviews, interactive face-to-face conversations are an effective way to gather information. However, some participants may prefer video interviews for convenience instead. These interviews are conducted at their respective workplaces, where they feel comfortable and can provide valuable insights. Each session lasts approximately 30 to 50 minutes, including introductions and follow-up questions.

3.7 Research Framework

This research framework utilizes the information gathered from the literature review, as well as acting as a guide for conducting the qualitative study.

This qualitative study aims to analyze the factors that cause stress experienced by employees in the E-commerce industry, and the organization's role in managing it. Additionally, it will explore the individual strategies used to cope with stress.
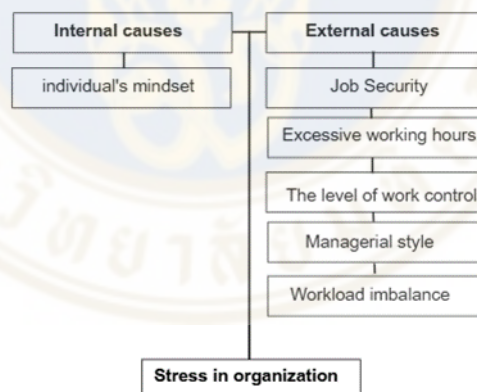
Figure 3.1 Causes of stress

Source: adapted from Panigrahi (2016)

CHAPTER IV
DATA ANALYSIS

After conducting qualitative interviews with participants, the data findings were analyzed and categorized into three main topics: Factors that cause stress, stress management, and organizational support for E-commerce employee regarding the stress management.

4.1 The factors that cause stress for E-commerce employees

The common factors that cause stress for E-commerce employees stem from both internal and external sources. Based on the interviews, all 10 interviewees mentioned excessive working hours, the level of work autonomy, and workload balance as significant stressors which related to external factors. While 8 out of 10 interviewees noted that some stress originates from their own mindset, highlighting the need for the organization to reassure employees of their well-being and the importance of their contributions.

4.1.1 Internal factors causing stress

To identify stress caused by internal factors in the E-commerce industry, several interview questions were conducted, and the detailed findings are based on their individual mindset as summarized below.

- Individual's mindset of employees

Individuals' mindset plays an important role in causing stress among E-commerce workers. 8 out of 10 interviewers rated themselves lower than 3 from 10 for the ability to cope with difficulty and stress which they stated that their negative mindset and a fear of working increases stress levels and may lead to mental illness. Interviewee 6 stated that working in E-commerce involves a fast-paced environment with high pressure, which can easily lead to anxiety among employees. The interviewee shared, "Part of

having stress is in my mind. I feel scared every night and morning whenever there is a campaign running. I cannot sleep well at all, and over time, this has caused me stress and anxiety." Similarly, Interviewee 3 mentioned that the initial stage of working in E-commerce is particularly challenging. The interviewee stating, "When I started working in the E-commerce industry, I felt overwhelmed and under a lot of pressure. I was always afraid that things would go wrong." Interviewee 5 highlighted the impact of E-commerce's rapid nature, saying, "The E-commerce world moves so fast that sometimes I even dream about my work, which leads to stress. I have even called a hotline for help." In summary, the fast-paced nature of E-commerce can lead to prolonged stress, affecting employees' mental well-being over time.

4.1.2 External factors causing stress

In order to identify the stress among E-commerce caused by external factors, several interview questions were asked, and the results are concluded in detail below.

4.1.2.1 People management challenges in E-commerce

This factor's impact on stress among E-commerce employees, according to those interviewed, is the problem of people. All interviewees mentioned that managing and dealing with people are ones of the stressful factors working in E-commerce industry as they need to coordinate with many stakeholders.

1) Internal team management challenges: The E-commerce industry requires coordination across multiple departments to ensure smooth daily operations. 7 out of 10 interviewees found internal communication challenging, often leading to stress. The E-commerce industry operates in a fast-paced environment that demands seamless coordination between various departments, such as marketing, logistics, customer service, and inventory management. For example, Interviewee 10 stated, "People in different departments often lack an understanding of E-commerce, so they don't recognize the urgency of our work. As a result, they frequently postpone lead times, even though we operate 24/7." Similarly, Interviewee 9 shared, "Internal teams prioritize modern trade and traditional trade over E-commerce, without realizing that while those channels have opening and closing hours, E-commerce operates continuously."

2) External stakeholder management challenges: Working in the E-commerce industry requires frequent coordination with external partners, such as agencies and platforms, which can sometimes lead to stress. Working with E-commerce external divided into 3 partners.

- Agency: Working in E-commerce, agency plays an important role in managing the online accounts, and it often leads to stress when communicating with them. For example, Interviewee 8 stated, "When launching a new product via E-commerce, I have to coordinate with the agency handling operations for our company. It takes a lot of effort to ensure they understand and follow the exact timelines as mostly everything goes wrong at midnight." Similarly, interviewee 1 mentioned that "Sometimes we need the agency's help in taking our stock into their warehouse during the peak time such as D.day. However, they need to manage their portfolio of profit and loss based on their monthly forecast. So that, it has been hard for us to have enough products for the customers' demands leading to unachievable target."

- Platforms: Shopee, Lazada, and TikTok are essential E-commerce platforms where brands seek visibility and revenue to maintain profitability in online sales. However, communication with these platforms often causes stress for E-commerce employees, as platform representatives control visibility and ultimately decide whether to grant exposure—often requiring payment for guaranteed visibility on their application. Interviewee 3 shared, "As an online marketing professional, launching a campaign is the most stressful part because I have to coordinate with platforms to request visibility. However, sometimes we want their support without paying any fee. Therefore, it's my duty to call them and coordinate with them about every request which causes stressful situation"

- Brands: Communicating with brands, the owner of the products, oversees their development, marketing, and positioning to ensure quality, consistency, and market success, can be stressful as most decision-making authority lies with them. Brands ultimately decide pricing and voucher strategies, leaving E-commerce employees who coordinate with brand have limited control over these crucial aspects. According to interviewee 6, "Sometimes we have to wait for the approval price from brand after negotiations for many times, and it is hard to get a conclusion within timelines". Moreover interviewee 5 stated that "We would like to get the cheapest price from brand

in E-commerce platforms. However, they are most likely to pressure others partner to subsidize for the price instead." In summary, working with internal and external stakeholders in E-commerce industry affects employees' stress level.

4.1.3 Aggressive Targets of the company

4.1.3.1 Sales Target: All interviewees mentioned the pressure of having to achieve monthly sales targets. Most E-commerce roles are directly tied to sales, with companies setting aggressive targets that create stress among employees. Interviewee 1 stated, "Incentives depend on the percentage of sales achieved each month, which often causes anxiety and tension among E-commerce workers." Similarly, Interviewee 10 said, "Managing all brands to reach their targets is challenging, as traffic and platform trends vary each month." Interviewee 5 also shared, "I have to manage more than 20 brands with a high monthly target for each one. Overall, I need to achieve more than 15,000,000 per month, which is an extremely stressful and challenge for me."

4.1.3.2 Target performance deadlines

Apart from the sale part, target performance also causes stress among E-commerce workers. Interviewee 3 & 8 mentioned something similar which is "I have a target performance that is beyond sale target which is the period launching campaign with a very short timeline. This causes stress as I have to manage the operational work to launch in the exact timelines and this is part of my performance bonus as well." In summary, to achieve the target monthly causes employees' pressure and stress significantly.

4.1.4 Excessive working hours

All interviewees mentioned that working in the E-commerce industry requires long hours, and they commonly experience stress from staying up late and starting work early. They all emphasized that "E-commerce operates 24/7." Interviewee 2 stated, "Working in the online industry is different from working in the offline industry. In offline businesses, there are opening and closing hours, allowing time to rest and think. But online, it runs 24 hours a day, and every single minute brings a new challenge and trend that I need to keep up with." Similarly, Interviewee 3 shared, "From my experience, there was a time I made an operational pricing mistake. A product that should have been

priced at 599 baht was mistakenly listed at 59 baht, leading to a rapid surge in purchases. That day, I had to stay up until 4 AM to fix the issue, and by 8 AM, I had to wake up to track the price and ensure it was corrected." Interviewees 4, 5, 6, 7, and 10 mentioned that "The peak sales period is during CBMO (Crazy Brand Mega Offer) from 00:00 to 02:00. Most sales contributions occur at this time, requiring real-time monitoring to ensure targets are met in alignment with customer shopping behaviors." As a result, the need to manage work beyond regular hours contributes significantly to stress among E-commerce employees which impacts their overall well-being and work-life balance.

4.1.5 E-commerce workload

Workload has become a common issue among E-commerce employees, as mentioned by every interviewee. All respondents highlighted that the workload is a major source of stress. In response to Question 5, which asked them to rate their workload, all interviewees rated it 3 out of 3, indicating a high level of workload. Interviewee 4 shared their experience of getting less than two hours of sleep per night for three consecutive days during the D.day period of 2.2 (February 2–4). They explained, "I am responsible for a very big brand during D.day, and during that time, I had to handle the entire end-to-end process, from planning the promotion grid and coordinating product inbounding to forecasting customer demand, answering inquiries, and ensuring there were no gaps in achieving hourly targets. This workload caused significant stress, and I believe other E-commerce employees face the same challenges." Similarly, Interviewees 7, 5, and 2 mentioned that their workload is not limited to peak periods but persists almost every day. Even on baseline days (when no campaigns are running), they still have to manage numerous cases, many of which arise outside working hours. They explained that they cannot postpone these tasks until the next working day because their regular hours are already occupied with essential tasks and meetings. Interviewee 1 also pointed out that most E-commerce employees in their office often complete reports outside of working hours. This is because, during their official work hours, they are busy coordinating with others, leaving them with no time for individual tasks like reporting. In summary, workload is a significant issue in the e-commerce industry, contributing to high levels of stress among employees.

4.1.6 Lack of decision-making authority (Autonomy)

8 out of 10 interviewees mentioned that they lack decision-making authority and must wait for managerial approval before taking any action which contributes to their stress. Interviewee 8 shared their experience, stating, "I handle various tasks, including managing agencies, coordinating with KOLs, setting up timelines, and selecting premium gifts for campaigns. However, everything can change in the blink of an eye because I have to wait for my manager's approval. And there are many steps ahead before the budget will get approved. This makes me feel like I am not the one who produces and decides my work. Facing these challenges, many E-commerce employees experience stress and burnout." Similarly, Interviewee 6 expressed frustration, saying, "Sometimes, I feel like I'm only responsible for the operational stage because I have to wait for brand approval for everything in the account that I am taking care of. Even though I have many initiative ideas, I cannot decide whether I can implement them or not." Interviewee 9 also highlighted the impact of limited decision-making authority, stating, "Every day, I have to wait for the company's direction on which areas to focus on. For example, as a salesperson, I constantly worry about targets and achievements. I wanted to join a program on Shopee to spike up the sale, but the decision wasn't mine to make—top management chose to invest in something else instead. This kind of situation discourages me at work and often leads to stress among E-commerce employees."

In summary, the lack of decision-making authority creates frustration, stress, and even boredom among e-commerce employees, as they feel restricted in their roles and unable to act on their own initiatives.

4.1.7 Lack of career advancement opportunities

Lack of Career Advancement Opportunities is a significant source of stress for E-commerce employees. 2 out of 10 interviewees mentioned that they had spent several years in the same position performing the same tasks, with no opportunities for career growth even though they have a remarkable for revenue achievement. Interviewee 5 stated, "I would be less stressed if the company weren't so flat. What I mean is that there should be at least some career progression. Working in this company within the E-commerce industry feels like having a heavy workload with no future, which often makes me lose enthusiasm." Similarly, Interviewee 6 shared, "I experience a lot of stress working in

the E-commerce industry, and one major reason is the lack of career advancement despite the outstanding performance. E-commerce companies hire many employees, but they often lack the structure and planning needed to promote people. It feels like we're just working day by day without any passion or motivation for growth. I even asked for a promotion, but my manager had no plans to promote me or anyone else on the team because the structure is too flat, and there are no higher positions available." In summary, the high number of employees in the E-commerce industry, combined with the absence of structured career progression, contributes to stress among workers. The lack of clear advancement opportunities leaves employees feeling stagnant and unmotivated.

4.1.8 Technological issues or system failures

Working in E-commerce requires the use of various technological systems within a company. However, 7 out of 10 interviewees expressed experiencing stress due to the lack of support from the company's technology systems, forcing employees to manage tasks manually. Interviewee 1 stated, "Most of my subordinates, including myself, suffer from the company's system that doesn't support us, which forces us to do things manually. For example, we need to forecast each item month by month, and we sell more than 3,000 SKUs through the E-commerce platform. We still don't have a system to support the forecast, so we have to do it ourselves, which takes a lot of time." Similarly, Interviewee 2 shared, "Most of the technology for price changes is still inaccurate. For instance, when we want to change a price from 299 to 259, sometimes the price doesn't change or it changes incorrectly, requiring us to recheck everything. This causes stress for E-commerce employees, as we have to manually verify everything because technology can't support us properly." Moreover, Interviewee 5 mentioned, "The company invests in many things, but the technology, which is one of the most important factors that contribute to our work, is still lacking." In summary, the lack of innovative technology in E-commerce companies creates additional workloads and causes stress for employees.

4.1.9 Job Insecurity

3 out of 10 interviewees expressed concerns not only about their workload but also about job insecurity, particularly the fear of being laid off, as they had either experienced it before or seen it happen to colleagues. Interviewee 1 stated, "Having a heavy workload is already stressful, but one constant concern in my mind is the fear of being laid off by the company." The interviewee explained that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the E-commerce industry surged in popularity, leading to a high demand for online shopping and an increase in hiring. However, as offline shopping rebounded, many E-commerce companies faced declining sales and had to lay off a large number of employees, an experience the interviewee personally went through. Similarly, Interviewee 2 shared, "Layoffs are a common source of stress among E-commerce employees, especially in companies that hire people at high salaries. More than half of my friends in the E-commerce industry have experienced layoffs. Even though I haven't gone through it myself, seeing so many people around me lose their jobs makes me anxious, wondering when it will be my turn." Moreover, Interviewee 7 recalled, "The most stressful situation I've faced was being laid off at my previous company. They initially hired me with a salary of 50% higher than my previous job, and I gladly accepted the offer. However, after just three months, they laid off almost everyone in E-commerce department, citing financial struggles in sustaining their E-commerce operations. It was difficult for me to find another job with similar pay, which led to prolonged stress and even depression." In summary, job insecurity remains a major source of stress for E-commerce employees, as past layoffs and the uncertainty of future employment create ongoing anxiety in the workplace.

4.2 Stress management among E-commerce employees

To understand how E-commerce employees manage work stress, several interview questions were conducted, and the detailed findings are summarized below.

4.2.1 Sharing with colleagues:

One common strategy mentioned by interviewees is sharing stress with colleagues who face similar challenges. Interviewee 1 stated, "Sharing with someone who faces the same challenges as you is the best way to overcome stress because they truly understand you." Interviewee 2 also shared, "I often call my colleagues from other companies in the E-commerce industry, where we also work overtime together. We share our stress with each other, and it amazingly helps reduce my stress level."

4.2.2 Relaxing activities:

Even after long days and overtime work, many E-commerce employees find time for relaxing activities to clear their minds. Interviewee 7 and Interviewee 3 both mentioned that exercise is an effective way to unwind. Interviewee 3 explained, "I usually book a late-night boxing class on Fridays to release work stress, even though I still have to complete some leftover tasks afterward. However, it feels more relaxing after the sweat." Similarly, Interviewee 6 shared, "I like reading books to clear off the stress, and after a chapter or two, I watch Netflix to relax at night." Interviewee 10 added, "Watching Korean dramas helps me reduce stress from work. It's even better to attend a Korean concert, which I enjoy. It's like releasing work stress overnight."

4.2.3 Talking to a counselor:

Some interviewees mentioned turning to professional help, such as speaking to a counselor, when facing stress. Interviewee 10 shared, "Seeing a counselor is one of the ways I choose to relieve stress. I feel like I can talk openly, and the counselor helps me process my thoughts and manage the stress better." Interviewee 5 added, "I tend to call the counselor whenever I feel stressed. They are available most of the time and surprisingly offer helpful advice. It's actually one of the companies' benefits I appreciate the most." In Summary, there are several activities that help E-commerce employees reduce

stress, such as exercising, watching movies, talking to a counselor, or sharing challenges with colleagues who face similar pressures.

4.3 Organizational support for employee stress management

Based on the interviews, all participants agreed that organizations should support employees' stress management. The key areas they emphasized include:

4.3.1 Providing mental health support

7 out of 10 interviewees highlighted the need for organizations to offer professional counseling services to help employees cope with stress. Encouraging open discussions about mental well-being would also contribute to a more supportive workplace culture. For instance, Interviewee 5 mentioned that their company collaborates with online counseling services to support employees, but most interviewees noted that their organizations lack this support.

4.3.2 Wellness expense support

All participants said that receiving annual financial allowance, or "pocket money," from their company would be beneficial. This small support could help cover personal wellness expenses, such as spa treatments or fitness activities. Providing this financial support would not only ease employees' out-of-pocket costs but also enhance overall job satisfaction.

4.3.3 Implementing hybrid work arrangements

Every interviewee agreed that due to the demanding nature of E-commerce work, companies should offer hybrid work options or the flexibility to work from home. They emphasized that a hybrid work model would improve work-life balance, boost productivity, and increase overall employee satisfaction. A hybrid work model in E-commerce allows flexibility while maintaining efficiency. Tasks like data analysis, campaign planning, and reporting can be done from home, while in-office work is needed for managing inventory, and handling urgent decisions.

4.4.4 Enhancing job autonomy and security

Several interviewees stressed the importance of monthly open discussions with their managers. These sessions would allow managers to reassure employees about job stability, and address concerns. Additionally, they suggested that employees should be given more autonomy in decision-making, with managerial guidance, to reduce stress and enhance their sense of control over their work. In summary, employees believe that organizations should prioritize stress management by offering online mental health support, financial allowances, hybrid work flexibility, and opportunities for job security and autonomy. These measures would contribute to a healthier and more engaged workforce.
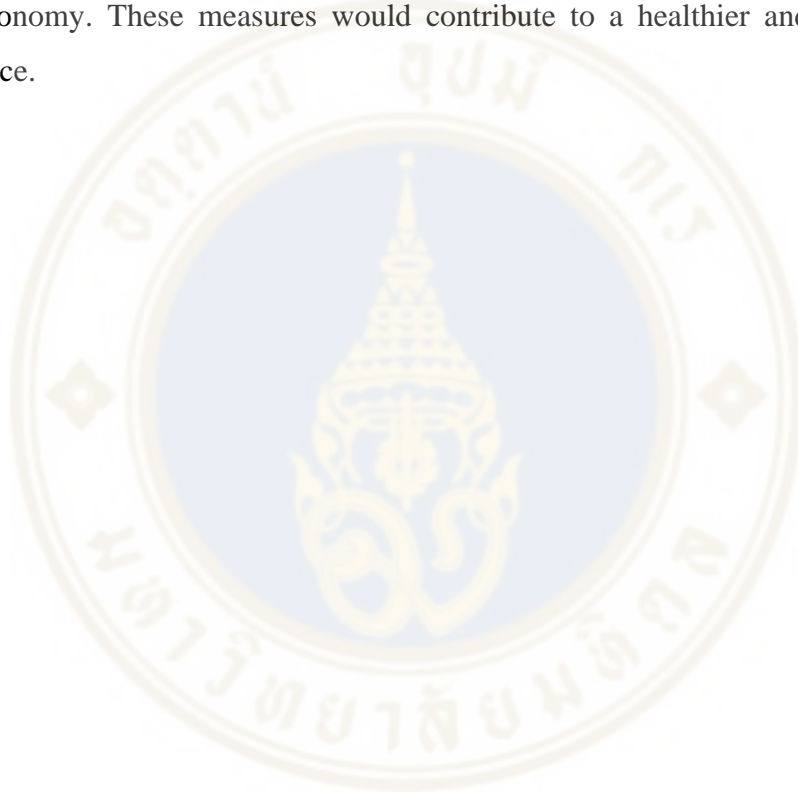
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

In this paper, the research questions focus on the stress among E-commerce employees, and individual strategies, recommendations for the company to reduce the stress level. These inquiries are addressed through interviews with 10 interviewees who have been working in the online industry. As a result, I have organized and summarized the primary points as follows:
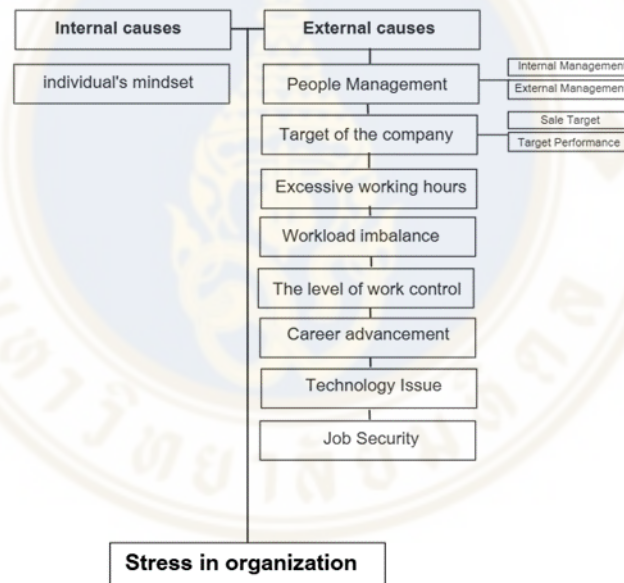
Figure 5.1 Summary of the research

The findings indicate that stress among E-commerce employees arises from a wide range of factors. Employees generally agree that both internal and external factors contribute to workplace stress. Internally, interviewees highlighted that the fast-paced nature of E-commerce often makes employees feel overwhelmed and anxious, which affects their mindset toward work. Externally, those working in the E-commerce industry identified several stressors, including interactions with both internal and

external teams, company targets such as sales and performance goals, excessive working hours, workload imbalances, the level of work control, career development and advancement opportunities, technical issues, and job security. These are the primary factors contributing to workplace stress among E-commerce employees today.

The strategy to manage stress among E-commerce employees includes several approaches. First, they share their experiences with colleagues, as they believe that others in the E-commerce industry face similar challenges. Second, they engage in relaxing activities to clear their minds. Third, some employees seek support from a counselor, as it provides an opportunity to openly discuss their concerns and relieve stress.

Employees have stated that they would greatly appreciate organizational support for stress management, such as providing online mental health resources, offering wellness expense support, implementing hybrid work arrangements, and enhancing job autonomy and security.

Through the comparison of qualitative research and literature review, it is clearly seen that many of the factors discovered through both methods similarities.

According to the Job Demand–Control model (Karasek, 1979; Karasek & Theorell,1990) job-related stress arises from the balance between work demands and the level of control an employee has over their tasks. Its negative impact is most significant when job demands are high, but employees have little control over their work. In comparison with the interviews, interviewees also highlighted these similar concerns. Most of them experience a high workload of E-commerce industry while giving them a little chance to have autonomy over their work causing a stressful situation and burn out from their job. However, this is just one of the factors that they are confronting. There are still many more factors as mentioned in the 5.1 framework.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the research, stress among employees is a prevalent challenge for in the fast-paced E-commerce industry. To address these issues, this study proposes recommendations that integrate Sutherland and Cooper (2000) with individual strategies identified in Chapter four. These recommendations aim to help employees able to deal with stress and able to manage stress easier and to work effectively.

1. Allow Hybrid work mode - According to the interviewees that suggested after working overtime, organizations should offer a hybrid work mode to support employee well-being. So that they do not need to wake up so early to meet the traffic in the morning after the long night of workload. E-commerce workers need to work on the D.day 3-4 nights a month and they need to monitor the peak time of sale during late night which causes fatigue among them. Therefore, adopting and allowing the hybrid work mode for E-commerce employees can help reduce their stress significantly. Like Sutherland and Cooper (2000) mentioned the stress management for the first factor which is Procedural Measures – Companies aim to reduce absenteeism by enforcing stricter checks. This factor is related to the allowance of working from home and forcing the employees to come to the office. This is one of the important aspects that help E-commerce employees manage their stress.

2. Wellness additional allowance support - All participants from the interviewees stated that receiving additional "pocket money" from their company would be beneficial. The interviewees mentioned that this support could help cover personal wellness expenses to reduce the level of stress such as spa treatments, or fitness activities. This financial support would allow employees to invest in their well-being, helping them manage stress more effectively. By covering expenses for wellness activities, companies can promote a better work-life balance, enhance employee satisfaction, and improve overall productivity. Similarly to what Sutherland and Cooper (2000) have mentioned for the second factor of Individual Preventive Measures – this aspect of stress management focus on promoting a healthy and safe lifestyle through training, protective equipment, and stress management programs. The organization should offer some financial services so that the employees can freely choose the activity they would like to do to relax themselves from work.

3. Innovation and System Training – as most of the interviewees highlighted similar concerns, particularly technological issues and system failures that frequently occur in the fast-paced E-commerce industry. These challenges can interrupt their daily operations, delay order processing, and increase employee frustration. Without proper training and efficient systems, employees may struggle to adapt to new technologies in a fast pace of E-commerce, leading to decreased productivity and higher stress levels which is also related to the fourth factors of Sutherland and Cooper (2000) for Work-

Related Preventive Measures – This factor focuses on updating computer systems and technology, and improving how work is organized and managed safely. Regular updates on new technologies and thorough system training can help employees adapt more easily, make fewer mistakes, and work more efficiently.

4. Providing mental health support- According to the research of Sutherland and Cooper (2000), Reintegration Measures- this factor helps employees transition back to work after an illness, with support from managers or occupational health specialists. As the interviewees mentioned, that emphasizes the importance of providing professional counseling services to support employees in managing stress. Promoting open conversations about mental health would also foster a more supportive workplace environment. Moreover, they all would like an organization to adopt this service. Providing professional counseling services would give employees a safe space to discuss their stress and mental health, helping them cope better with work-related pressures. By adopting this service, the organizations can improve overall employee well-being, leading to higher job satisfaction, reduced burnout rate, and increased productivity among the employees

5. Monthly one-on-one session with managers - A monthly one-on- one session with managers would provide E-commerce employees with a dedicated opportunity to discuss stress related to workload and people management, both internal and external. These sessions would allow employees to receive guidance on handling stakeholders and stressors while also giving managers a chance to offer support, track progress, and provide constructive feedback. Additionally, managers can use this time to discuss career development, set clear growth paths, and address any concerns, fostering a supportive and growth-oriented work environment.

Topic cover

- Career Development Path
- Target Achievement Progress
- Workload Management and Support Requirements (Team Expansion)
- Company Situation (Stability and Job Security)

From a real experience from working in E-commerce, this would definitely help reduce employees' stress levels.

6. Strengthening external and internal stakeholder - To make a smoother collaboration and reduce stress among E-commerce workers, strengthening relationships

with both internal and external stakeholders is essential. For internal teams, organizing team-building activities, such as a company sports day, can help employees connect with colleagues across departments. This promotes better communication and teamwork, making daily operations more efficient. For external stakeholders, holding monthly business review meetings followed by casual dinners or gatherings will offer opportunities to discuss challenges and opportunities in an informal setting. This approach encourages open dialogue, strengthens partnerships, and enhances collaboration, ultimately benefiting the overall workflow.

5.3 The Limitations of this study

The limitation of this study is the small sample size, which does not clarify the participants' years of work experience and relies solely on qualitative methods. Therefore, the results may not provide solutions for all E-commerce workers and should only be considered as partial examples of stress factors in the E-commerce industry.

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