

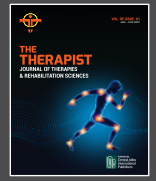


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## Case Report

### Stuttering's Effect on Job Efficacy in Five Participants

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## ABSTRACT

Stuttering also known as stammering is a speech disorder, in which the flow of speech is disrupted by involuntary repetitions and prolongations. Adults who stutter suffers with many problems at workplace due to speech disfluencies. To evaluate the effect of stuttering on job efficacy. A population both male and female between the age of 30 to 40 years were selected. Data for the stuttering patients were collected from different job places of Lahore. All these stutters were given the consent form. It confirmed their willingness to participate in interview. Interview guide was designed as per the criteria of research questions. Interview guide was evaluated and reviewed by two external members. Interviews were conducted on WhatsApp audio or video call, zoom meetings and face to face, according to the availability and willingness of participants. Interviews were recorded for further analysis. Recorded interviews were transcribed which were further coded, and subthemes were extracted. On the basis of subthemes, themes of the research were decided. Results shows that only those individuals who stutter doing their own business or running their own NGO's (Non-Governmental organizations) are satisfied with their jobs/works. Individuals doing any kind of job in a private company are not satisfied with their jobs because of stuttering. **Case Summary:** Stuttering has a negative impact on their job performance and employment. Stuttering made them lose their confidence in front of any stranger, senior or boss. People usually mock them because of stuttering. These issues lead them towards anxiety, complexity and frustration.

## INTRODUCTION

Stuttering or stammering is a communication disorder that hinders person's ability to speak fluently. When a person speaks his/or speech is usually fluent i.e. without any stops. But when a stutterer speaks it seems like something is stopping him/her from speaking [1]. That something could be neurological, developmental or psychological. Neurological stuttering is usually acquired but it can be congenital as well due to some neurological trauma i.e. traumatic brain injury [2]. Developmental stuttering occurs usually in developmental age of child when a child is leaning to speak. It is most common type of stuttering that is usually observed. Closely related to developmental stuttering is normal non-fluency [3]. Normal non-fluency is defined as typically developmental errors of speech in which a child still learning to speak if these errors persist beyond developmental age than this is diagnosed as developmental stuttering otherwise normal non-fluency

disappear on its own. Psychogenic stuttering usually results from sudden psychological trauma. i.e., death of someone very close, or something happening out of blue [4, 5]. Stuttering is characterized by four core behaviors which are repetitions, prolongations, pauses and block. In repetition patient seems to stuck on a particular sound or word. It is categorized into two types i.e. part word repetition or full word repetition for example if a patient is intending to say water, in part word repetition he would keep on repeating wa-wa-wa-water and in case of full word repetition he would say water-water-water. It seems like patient is stuck and he is unable to say next word [6]. In prolongation patient seems to stretch sounds or words unnecessarily for example "waaaaater". While pauses are determined by inappropriate and unnecessary wait or gap during speech. For example, "Give (pause) water". In block patient is stuck in such a manner that it seems that he is

willing to say something but is not able to do so. Most of the times core behaviors are accompanied by secondary behaviors that include eye blinking, facial grimacing, nasal grimacing and head jerk etc. [7]. Stuttering is assessed, diagnosed and treated by speech and language pathologist/therapist. Stuttering is categorized into mild, moderate and severe stuttering depending upon severity. Different strategies and therapies like fluency shaping or stuttering modification is used by speech and language pathologist to treat stuttering [8]. "The Impact of Stuttering on Development of Self-Identity, Relationships, and Quality of Life in Women Who Stutter" was conducted by Charn Nang, Deborah Hersh and Sau Re Lau. This qualitative study involved recruitment of 9 women who stutter (aged 35–80 years) through a support network of people who stutter in Western Australia. All the women had received some form of speech therapy for stuttering, and they came from diverse cultural backgrounds [9]. Individual, semi structured interviews were conducted, recorded, and transcribed verbatim. Data were managed with NVivo 10, and thematic analysis was used to identify recurring themes across the data. Data were coded independently by the researchers and refined through group discussion. Participants also completed the Overall Assessment of the Speaker's Experience of Stuttering. It was concluded that stuttering has a pervasive impact on all aspects of women's lives [10]. A web-based questionnaire survey of 730 adults drawn from the general public throughout Japan was conducted in study "Public attitudes toward people who stutter in the workplace: A questionnaire survey of Japanese employees". It gathered information on respondents' demographics, contact experience with people who stutter, knowledge of stuttering, and attitudes and experiences toward stuttering at work, using a Likert-type scale. To investigate the factors associated with their attitudes and experiences toward stuttering at work, respondents' demographic information and contact experience were entered into a multivariable model using ordinal logistic regression analysis. It was concluded that it depends on attitudes of fellows or colleagues that boost or drop morale of stutters [11]. This study intends to take into consideration the problems faced by adult stutters at their workplace. Many quantitative studies have been conducted, which shows the problems and issues that has been faced by adult stutters. For this study, Qualitative Interview method was selected because actual sufferings and issues can only be known by asking open ended questions. Significance of this study is, it aimed to know actual problems and effects that adult stutters face at their work due to the stuttering. It was a qualitative study that portrays a picture of effects of stuttering on job efficacy. Both male and female's stutters

between the ages of 30 to 40 years, were selected to take part in the study. Data for the stuttering patients were collected from different job places of Lahore. All the participants were either doing private job or running their own business. All these people were given a consent form that confirmed their willingness to participate in the interviews/study. For interview, an interview guide was developed in Urdu language and reviewed by two experts. Necessary changes were made and then it was used to conduct the interview. Interviews were conducted online as it was convenient for the participants. Day and time were decided according to the availability and willingness of the participants. Interviews duration was of maximum 40 minutes and minimum of 20 minutes. Interviews were recorded for further analysis with the consent of the participants. Recorded interviews were transcribed which were further coded and sub-themes were extracted. Thematic analysis was done for the analysis of the transcription. On the basis of sub-themes, themes were developed. Keywords were translated from an English language expert.

**Table 1:** Collected Sample Information

Age Range		30-40 years
<b>Total Samples</b>		<b>5</b>
Education	Minimum	B.A.
	Maximum	MBA
Gender	Male	4
	Female	1
Work Setting	Private	5
	Public	0

Table 2 has depicted the Thematic analysis, which was done on the basis of interviews taken from adult stutters. Major themes identified were Job Satisfaction, Employment opportunities, Communication Gap, Negative Effects of Stuttering and Future perspective. On the basis of these themes, subthemes were generated. These subthemes have been drawn through the verbatim of the adult stutters, given in the column next to the keywords.

**Table 2:** Demographic Table with the response of candidates categorized on theme and subtheme

Theme	Sub-theme	Keywords	Translation
Job Satisfaction	Satisfied who are self-employed Not satisfied who works in private companies	جی ہاں میں اپنے کام سے مطمئن ہوں' مطمئن ہوں بالکل' ابھی میں مطمئن نہیں ہوں ابھی میں نے آگے بڑھنا ہے'	Yes, I am satisfied with my work. (P1, L1) Completely satisfied. (P4, L1) I am not satisfied; I have to excel more yet. (P5, L1)
Employment opportunities	.Non-availability of equal opportunities .Unequal pay packages .Effects working capabilities .Non availability of jobs according to the desire/capabilities Ratio of firing is high	بالکل نہیں بکلانے والے افراد کے لیے کوئی خصوصی مواقع فراہم نہیں کیے جاتے' جی نہیں بکلانے والے افراد کے لیے یکساں مواقع فراہم نہیں کیے جاتے کیونکہ ہم بکلانے ہیں اس لیے ہمیں پیچھے رکھا جاتا ہے۔ نہیں ویسے تو خواہش کے مطابق نہیں ہے مگر بہت بہتر ہے 'جی نہیں یہ ملازمت میری خواہش کے مطابق نہیں ہے کیونکہ میں یہ ملازمت نہیں کرنا چاہتا تھا'	.No, stuttering person is not provided with particular platforms. (P2, L4-5) .No, stuttering person are not provided with equal opportunities because we stutter, and we are stepped back. (P1, L4-6) .No, not according to the desire, however a lot better. (P3, L2) .No, this employment is not according to my desire because I didn't want to do this job. (P1, L2-3)
Negative Effects of Stuttering	.Mocking.Lack of opportunities .Increase in stress Lack of confidence	بکلاہٹ کی وجہ جب کوئی لفظ بولا نہیں جاتا تو مشکل ہوتی ہے، میری بات کو سمجھنے میں تو میں خود بھی پریشان ہو جاتی ہوں۔ بعض اوقات دوستوں میں بکلانے کی وجہ سے میں احساس کمتری کا بھی شکار ہوتا ہوں۔ بکلاہٹ کی وجہ سے بہت مشکلات کا سامنا کرنا پڑتا ہے۔	.I distressed when I am unable to communicate because of stuttering. (P5, L3-4) .Sometimes, because of stuttering I entangle in complexity. (P3, L29-30) Face a lot of difficulties because of stuttering. (P5, L11)
Future perspective	.Positive for future endeavors .In search of better job Social work for other stutters	بالکل میں بہتر جوہ کی تلاش میں ہوں، زیادہ یہ ہوتا ہے کہ لوگ ہمارا مذاق نہ اڑائیں۔ میں اپنے جیسے لوگوں کے لیے کام کرنا چھتا ہوں۔ ملازمت کے اعتبار سے اگر مجھے جوہ ملے جو کہ مشکل ہے تو میں ضرور کروں گا۔	.Yes, I am searching for a better job. People must not mock us. (P4, L18-20) .I want to work for the people like me. (P4, L34) If I find a better job, which is difficult, I would definitely do it. (P1, L29-30)

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to identify the experience and problems faced by the people who stutter. The problems and experiences were analyzed through the approach of Thematic Analysis. In this study it has been found that only the individuals who stutter doing their own business or running their own NGOs (Non-governmental organizations) are satisfied with their jobs/work. Individuals doing any kind of job in a private company are not satisfied with their jobs because of stuttering as one of my participants said, "جی نہیں یہ ملازمت میری خواہش کے مطابق نہیں ہے۔" Stuttering and its impact on the job opportunities and promotion is a global issue. A survey was conducted on 232 people, age 18 years or older, indicates that 70% people who stutter do not get promotion. Over 33% people think, stuttering effects their job performance and 20% have actually not promoted due to stuttering [12]. These kinds of problems directly lead a person to dissatisfaction towards their jobs. Based on the information gathered, people with stuttering issues are not provided with equal opportunities or any other particular platform where they could exhibit their capabilities [13]. As per the responses, all of the people who stuttering faces communication gap either in front of their boss or any other

stranger. According to a study, employment which do not require high communication skills have enabled stuttering people to keep up pace with the world but for the works which require communication skills leave a great impact on the performance, confidence, and the life, especially on the job satisfaction, of the people who stutter [14]. People who experience communication gap due to stuttering are unable to attain a good designation in more prestigious professions or companies [15]. In this study it has been established that people who stutter, experience communication gap as one of my participants said, "مجھے اپنے پاس اور کسی بھی نے بندے سے بات کرنے میں کمیونیکیشن گیپ کا سامنا کرنا پڑتا ہے رات کو سوچنا پڑتا ہے کہ میں نے کیا بات کرنی ہے اور کیسے کرے گی۔" It is not difficult to find people. who stutter, with negative impact on their employment or on their entire career [16]. In this study it was observed that people with stuttering issues have a great impact on their employment. People with this kind of issue sometimes practice what they have to say to their boss in the morning, which is very disturbing and putting them in complexity. It puts them in a distressed situation when they are unable to communicate because of stuttering, which leads them rather to stay quiet or makes them lose their confidence as one of my

بکلاپٹ کی وجہ جب کوئی لفظ بولا نہیں جاتا تو، " participants stated, "مشکل ہوتی ہے، میری بات کو سمجھنے میں تو میں خود بھی پریشان ہو جاتی ہوں۔"

بعض اوقات دوستوں میں بکلانے کی وجہ سے میں احساس کمتری کا بھی شکار ہوں۔ "People mock them because of stuttering. According to Yarzebinski study there are two reasons for unequal opportunities for the people who stutter: (i) The negative attitude of the normal people towards disabled people or the mocking of disabled by non-disabled. (ii) The negative attitude of the disabled people developed for them. This study further states that stuttering people can experience worst situations like rejections, anxiety, penalty, or even withdrawal which lead them towards frustration. People who stutter, either underemployed because of the negative attitude of the society or their own attitude for themselves [17]. It has been well stated in research that non-disabled people have negative view for the people who stutter. In a literature review it has been found that this negative attitude is present in a huge variety of people, including school administrations, college students, teachers, business owners and even speech-language pathologists [18]. Even nurses have deemed physicians who stutter, to be more tense, afraid, less mature, intelligent, and nervous than the physicians who do not stutter [19]. One of the enormous survey states that employers hold a less positive attitude towards the people who stutter. According to Çağlayan and Özdemir study approximately 30 % people believe that stuttering interferes with their job efficiency or promotion. 40% believe that stuttering interacts with their promotional possibilities and 44% think they must look for the employment which require little speaking [20]. This study also revealed that most people are looking for a better job where they could get equal opportunities to excel better in life.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is concluded that adult stutters were not satisfied with their jobs. Stuttering has a negative impact on their job performance and employment. Stuttering has made them lose their confidence in front of strangers, seniors and boss. They were suffering with workplace bullying too. These and other work-related issues has lead them towards anxiety and frustration. Only few self-employed adult stutters reported to be satisfied with their work, because they have their own businesses.

## Authors Contribution

Conceptualization: HN

Methodology: SR, MZ

Formal analysis: SY

Writing-review and editing: FE, SN

All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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