

Detailed Analysis of the Perceived Levels of Stress

Name of the Institute: Punyashlok Ahilyadevi Holkar Solapur University

Number of Employees Tested: 293

Name of the Tool: Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen)

Date of Testing: 4th December 2019

Introduction

Stress often has a different meaning for different people, under a variety of situations. The first and the most general definition of stress was provided by Hans Selye. Selye (1936) defined Stress as, “A non-specific response of the body to any demand.” He further reviewed other definitions of stress in Stress in Health and Disease (1976). For example, according to Behavioural Sciences, Stress can be understood as ‘A perception of threat, which results in anxiety, discomfort, emotional tension and difficulty in adjustment.’

A few theories can be used to explain how stress occurs. The stress theories have also undergone certain evolutions over a period of time. One of the primary theories of stress was proposed by neuroendocrinologist Hans Selye who also defined stress as a state manifested by a syndrome which consists of all the non-specifically induced changes in the biological system (1976, p. 64). According to Selye, the non-specific stimulus leads to stereotypical patterns of response to the non-specific stressful event. This pattern was called the general adaptation syndrome which proceeds in three stages: (a) the alarm stage, is associated with the initial shock phase which is followed by a counter shock phase. This phase leads to the activation of the sympathetic nervous system and is associated with an increased discharge of adrenalin. The countershock phase is associated with initiating a primary defence process which linked with increased adrenocortical activity. Continuation of this phase leads to the second phase that is; (b) the resistance stage in which the initial responses to stress disappear, indicating a growing adaptation with the stressor. However, as the individual develops a resistance to the particular stressor, the individual develops a lower resistance to other form of stressors which leads the person to the (c) exhaustion stage, which is associated with a depletion of resources to deal with the stressors. In this stage the

symptoms of stage (a) may reappear, but the individual will not be in the capacity to deal with these stressors, which may lead to extreme fatigue.

Lazarus (1991), on the other hand regarded stress to be a relational concept, not associating it with any specific stressor or with any stereotypical response pattern, but rather viewing it as a relational concept, that is; stress is viewed as a result of the transactions between the person and the environment. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1986, p. 63), Psychological stress refers to a relationship with the environment that the person appraises as significant for his or her well-being and in which the demands tax or exceed available coping resources.

The third category of theories, that is; the resource theories of stress are not concerned with the factors that lead to stress, but the resources that will help the person persevere in the face of the stressors. Several constructs have been proposed that help the individual protect themselves from effects of the stressors such as, social support (Schwarzer and Leppin 1991), sense of coherence (Antonovsky 1979), hardiness (Kobasa 1979), self-efficacy (Bandura 1977), and optimism (Scheier and Carver 1992). The recently proposed Conservation of Resources Theory by Hobfoll et al (1989,1996) assumes that stress occurs in any of the three contexts; when there is a loss of resources, when the available resources are threatened, when people invest in the resources without any subsequent gain. They also proposed four categories of resources that is; object resources (home, clothing, access to transportation etc), condition resources (employment, personal relationships etc), personal resources (skills or self-efficacy) and energy resources (means that facilitate the attainment of other resources, for example, money, credit, or knowledge). Three assumptions were made by the theory; firstly, loss of resources is the primary cause of stress, secondly, resources work to protect and preserve the other type of resources and thirdly, in the face of stress, individuals tend to quickly deplete their resources to combat the stress.

The two central mediators in the person environment interaction, that is; cognitive appraisal and coping. There are two major forms of appraisal of the stressful events; the primary appraisal which is associated with the person's understanding of the extent to which a particular stressor is relevant to the individual and secondary appraisal which is associated with understanding the availability of coping resources to deal with the stressor. Coping on the other hand is defined by Folkman and Lazarus (1980) as the cognitive and behavioural efforts made to master, tolerate, or reduce external and internal demands and conflicts among them. Coping can be in the form of a problem focused coping and emotional focused coping.

Rationale for the Assessment

According to Economic Indian Times, 89% of Indian working Population experience stress. Work and finances lead to stress to a great extent. Experiencing stress over a period of time has several effects on the individual. Experiencing stress for a prolonged period of time may lead to muscle tension, which often translates into migraine headaches and tension- type headaches. Job stress also leads to increased muscular tension in the lower back, shoulder, neck and head. It also has an impact on the other systems within the body. Stress can also affect the individual emotionally leading to anxiety, depressive symptoms and a state of confusion. It can lead to problems in interpersonal relationships, conflicts, financial strain, along with changes in the behaviour such as social withdrawal, frustration, lack of control over emotions, among the rest.

Tool Description

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) was developed by Sheldon Cohen in 1983. It is a classic stress assessment instrument. The tool, while originally developed in 1983, remains a popular choice for helping one understand how different situations affect our feelings and our perceived stress. The questions in this scale ask about one's feelings and thoughts during the last month. The PSS scale consists of 10 items and has a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 0 to 4 where, 0 is Never, 1 is Almost Never, 2 is Sometimes, 3 is Fairly and 4 is Often.

Score Interpretation

The test scores have the following interpretation:

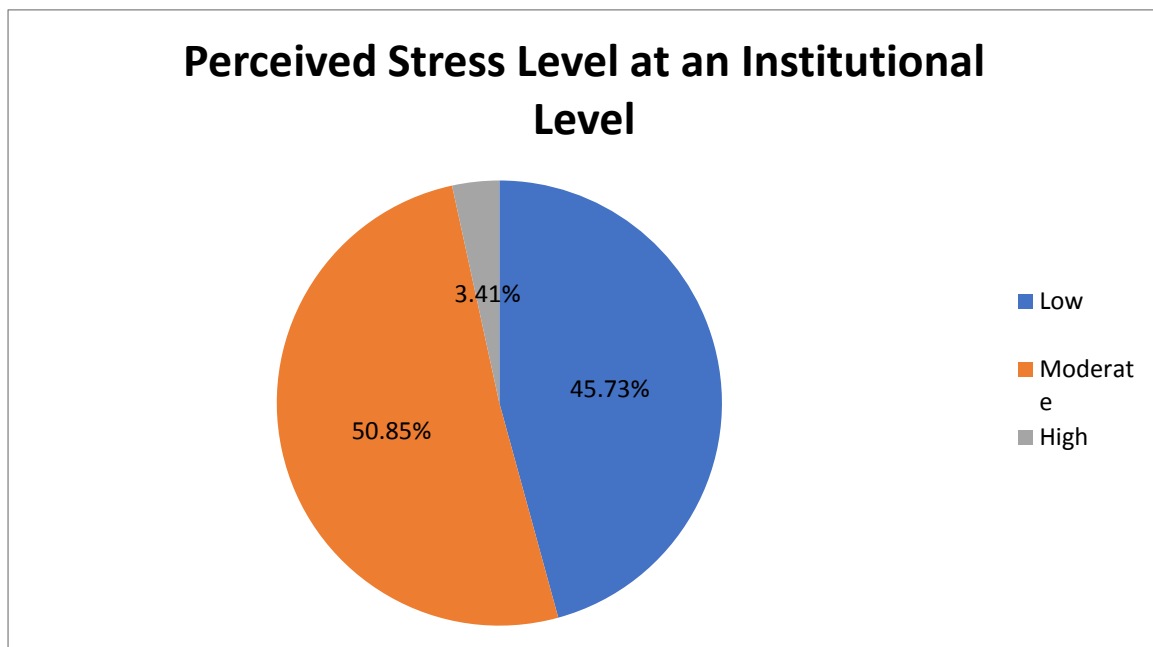
- Scores ranging from 0-13 would be considered low levels of perceived stress.
- Scores ranging from 14-26 would be considered moderate levels of perceived stress.
- Scores ranging from 27-40 would be considered high levels of perceived stress.

Reliability: PSS shows adequate internal consistency reliability of 0.78.

Validity: Convergent validity calculated for the test shows moderate correlation of $r= 0.54$. The PSS scale is validated against Impact of Event Scale (IES) (1988).

Results

Out of a total of 293 employees, 134 employees, i.e. 45.73% fall under low level of perceived stress, 149 employees, i.e 50.85% fall under moderate levels of perceived stress and 10 employees, i.e 3.41% fall under high levels of perceived stress.

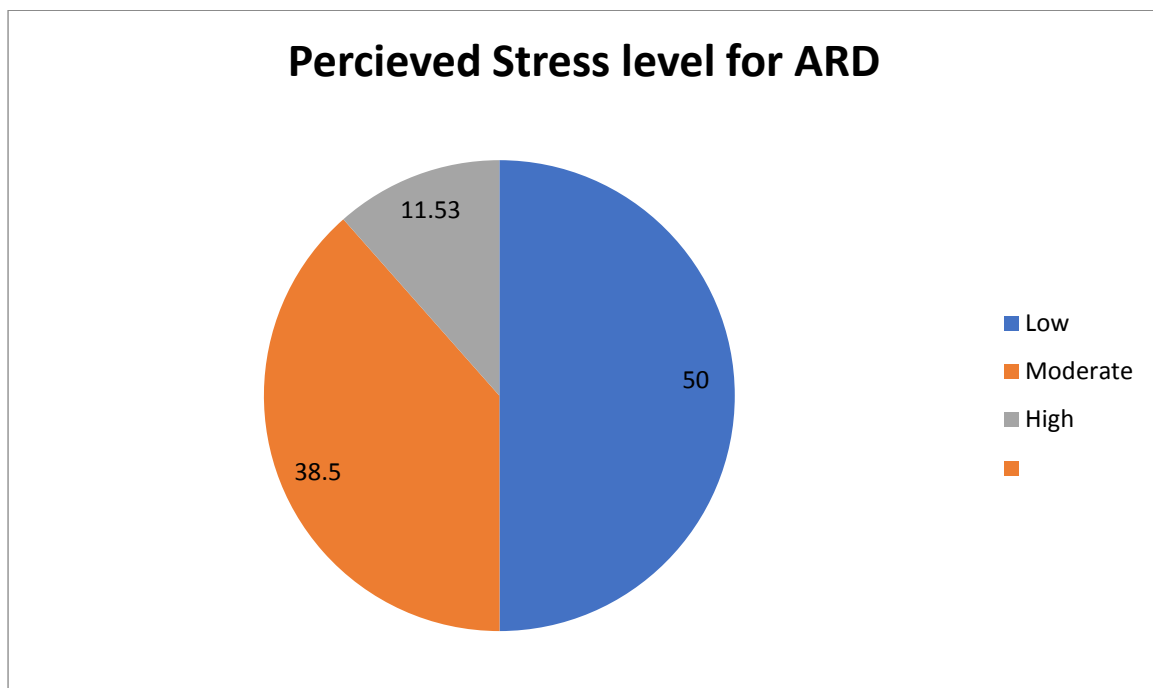


Department Level Analysis

ARD

Number of Employees: 26

This suggests that most of the employees (50 %) in the AR Department have low levels of perceived stress, 38.5% fall in moderate levels of perceived stress and 11.53% fall in high levels of perceived stress.

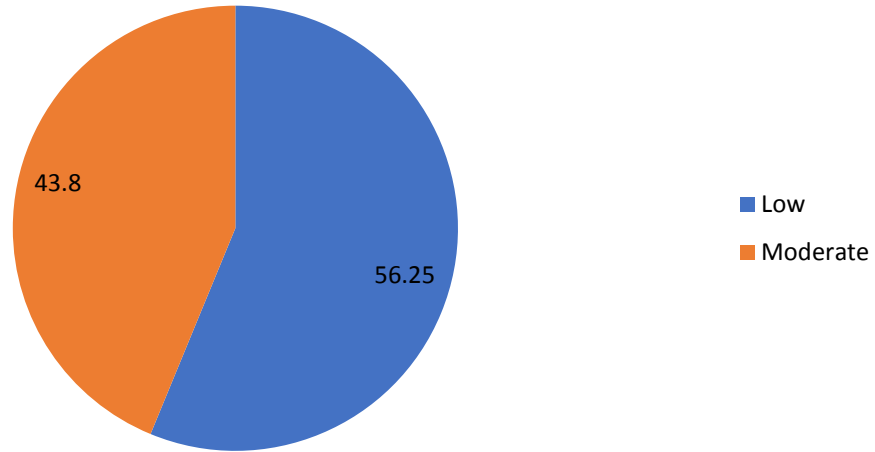


CHEMICAL

Number of employees: 16

This suggests that 56.25% fall in low levels of perceived stress and 43.8% fall in moderate levels of perceived stress.

Percieved stress levels for Chemical Department

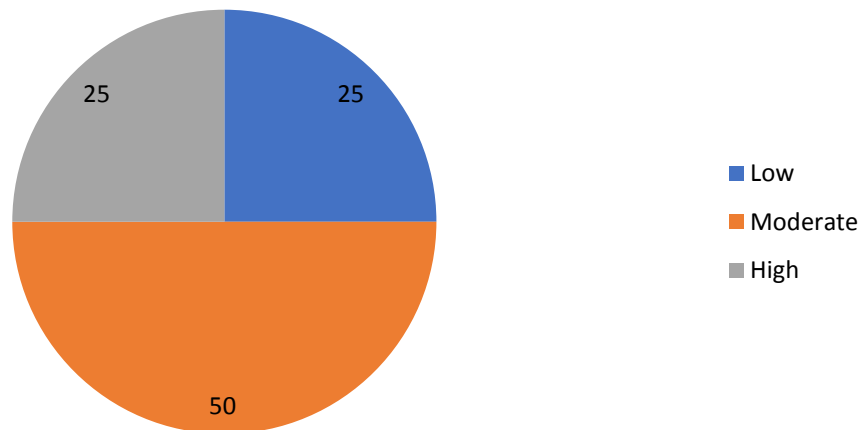


COMMERCE AND MANAGEMENT

Number of employees: 4

This suggests that 25% employees fall in low level of perceived stress, 50% fall in moderate level of perceived stress and 25% fall in high level of perceived stress.

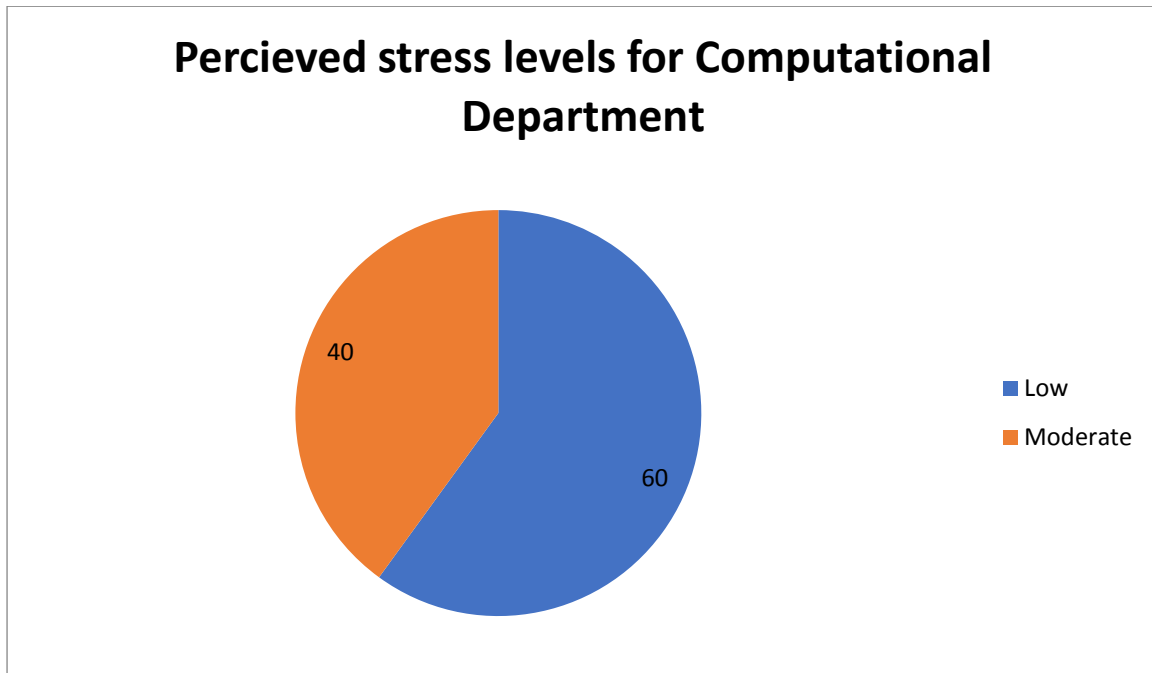
Percieved stress levels for Commerce and Management Department



COMPUTATONAL

Number of employees: 20

This suggests that 60% fall in low level of perceived stress and 40% fall in moderate level of perceived stress.

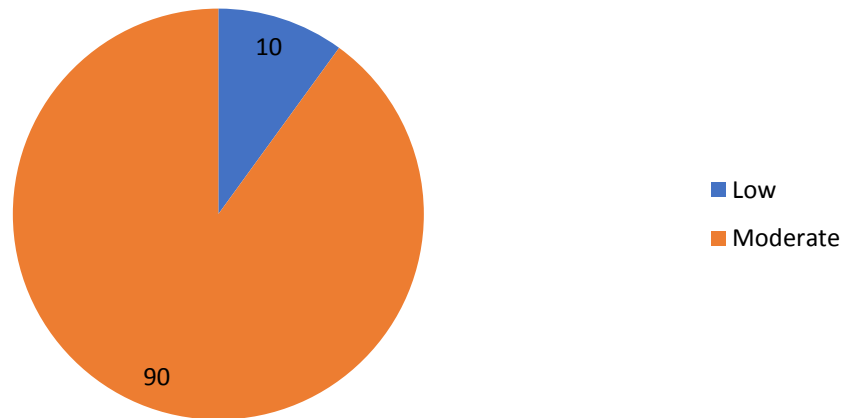


DSW

Number of employees: 10

This suggests that 10% fall in low level of perceived stress and 90% fall in moderate level of perceived stress.

Percieved stress levels for DSW Department

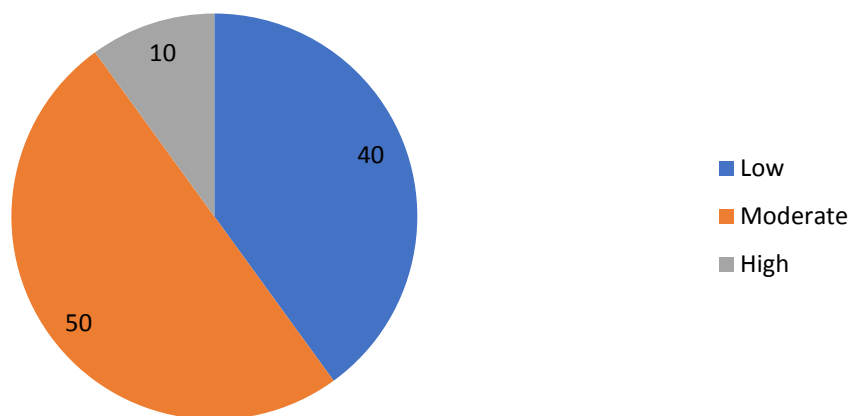


EARTH SCIENCE

Number of employees: 10

This suggests that 40% fall in low level of perceived stress, 50% fall in moderate level of perceived stress and 10% fall in high level of perceived stress.

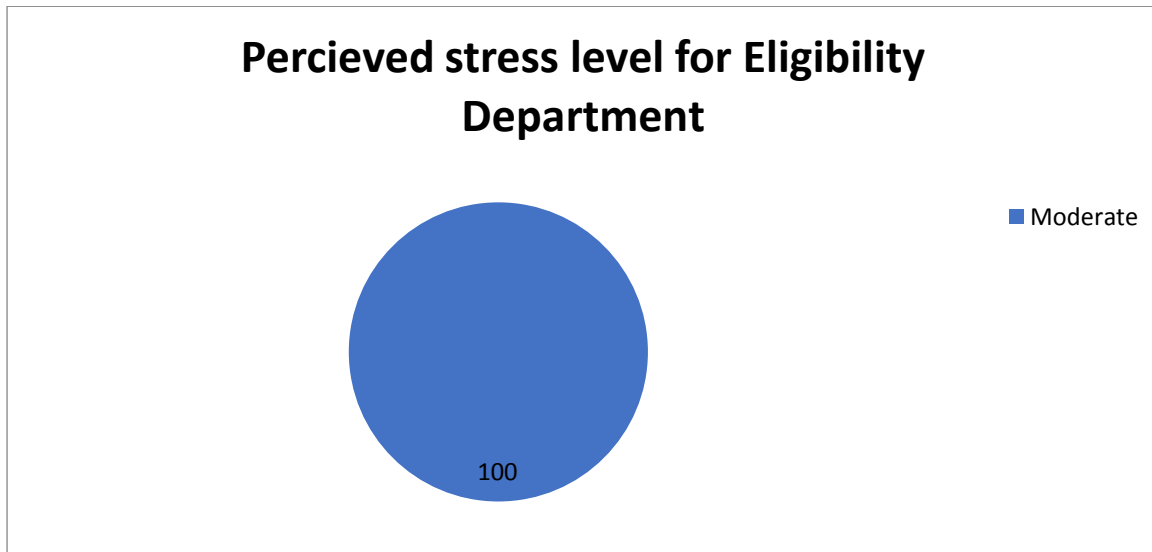
Percieved stress level for Earth Science Department



ELIGIBILITY

Number of employees: 2

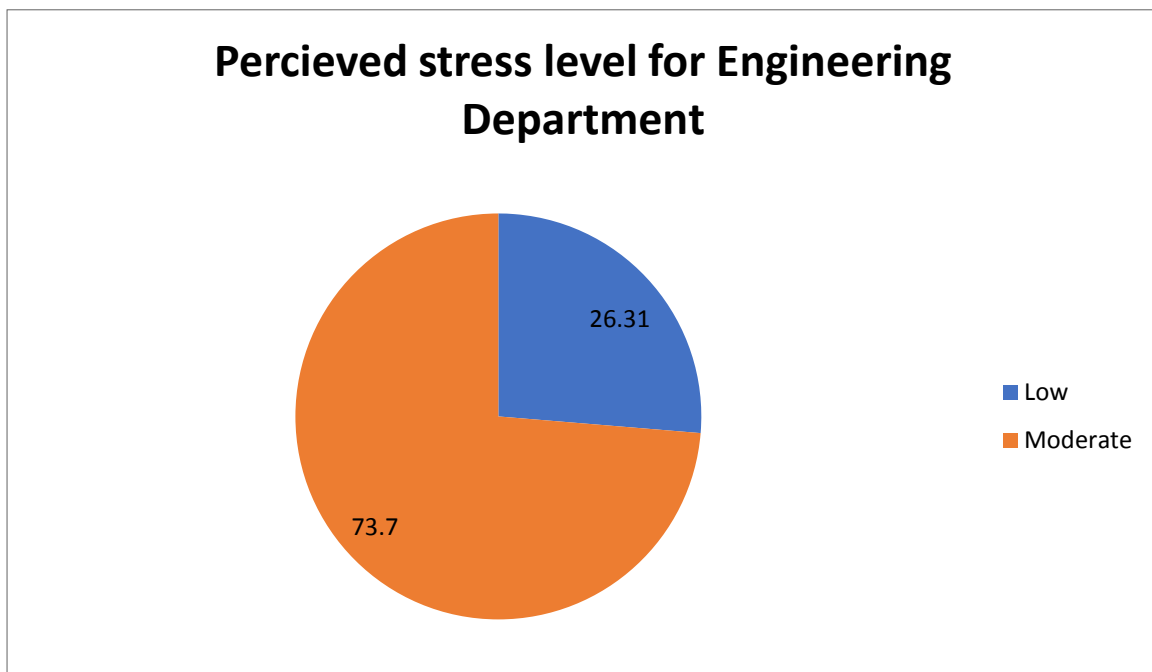
This suggests that 100% employees fall in moderate level of perceived stress.



ENGINEERING

Number of employees: 38

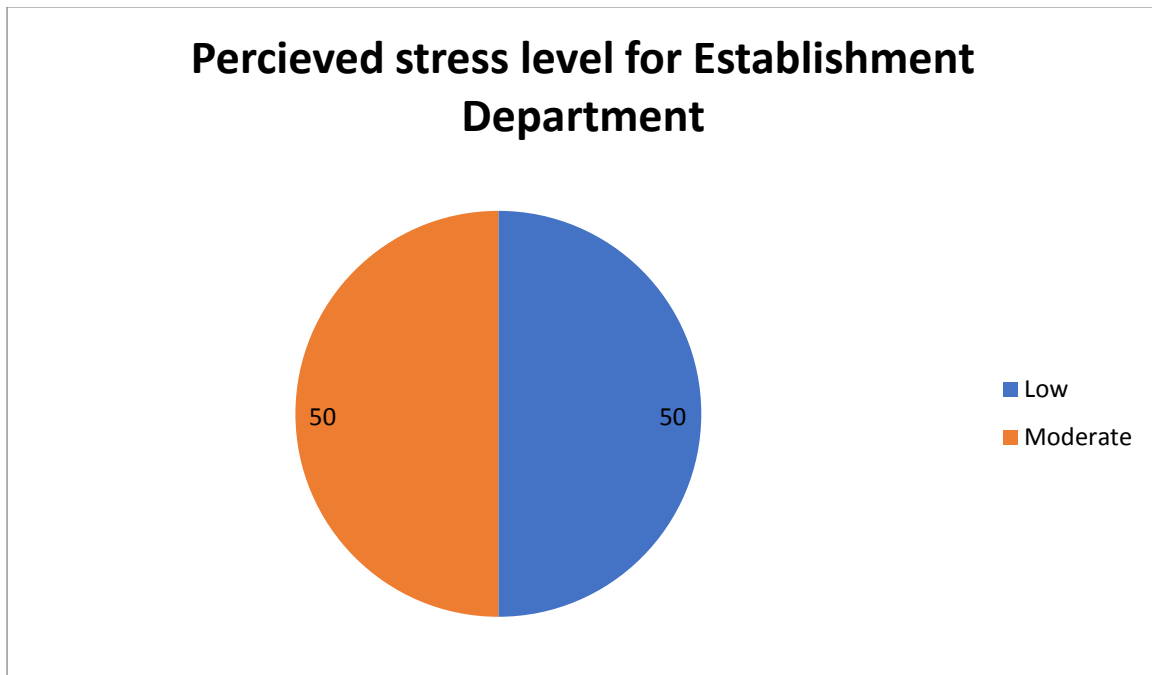
This suggests that 26.31% fall in low level of perceived stress and 73.7 fall in moderate level of perceived stress.



ESTABLISHMENT

Number of employees: 10

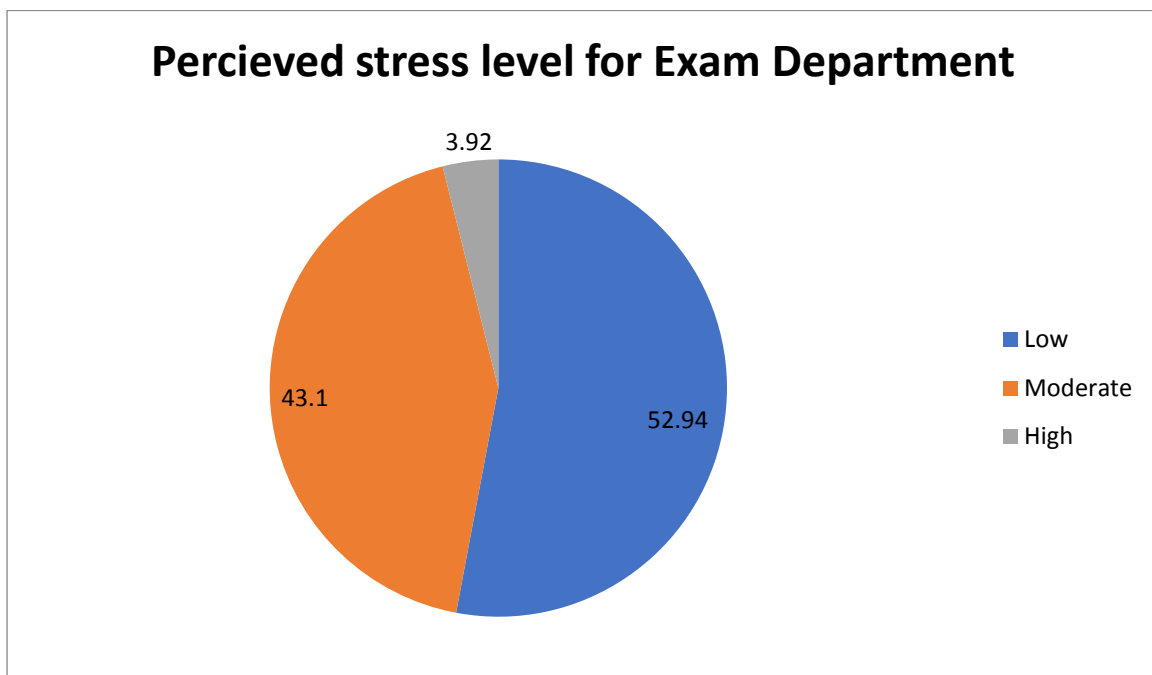
This suggests that 50% fall in low level of perceived stress and 50% fall in moderate level of perceived stress.



EXAM DEPARTMENT

Number of employees: 51

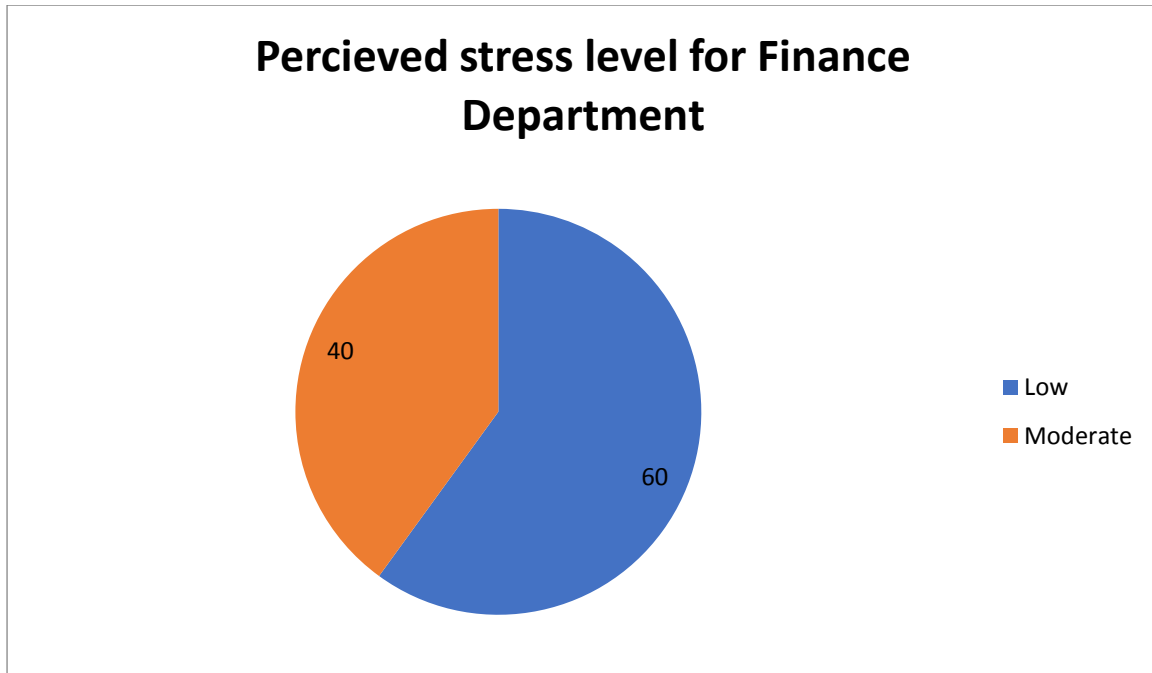
This suggests that 52.94% fall in low level of perceived stress, 43.1% fall in moderate level of perceived stress and 3.92 fall in high level of perceived stress.



FINANCE

Number of employees: 15

This suggests that 60% fall in low level of perceived stress and 40% fall in moderate level of perceived stress.

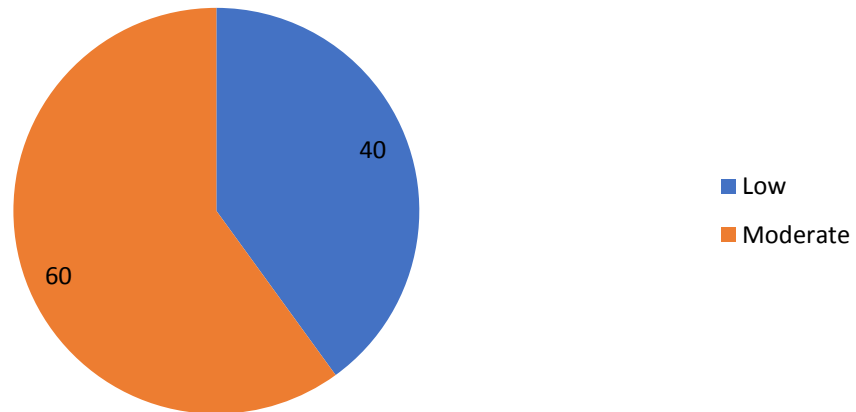


HEALTH CETRE

Number of employees: 5

This suggests that 40% fall in low level of perceived stress and 60% fall in moderate level of perceived stress.

Percieved stress level for Health Centre Department

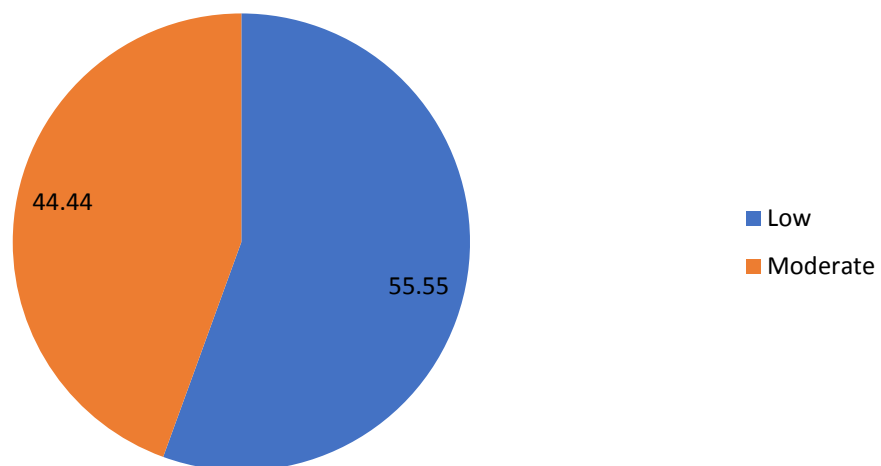


KRC

Number of employees: 9

This suggests that 55.55% fall in low level of perceived stress and 44.44 fall in moderate level of perceived stress.

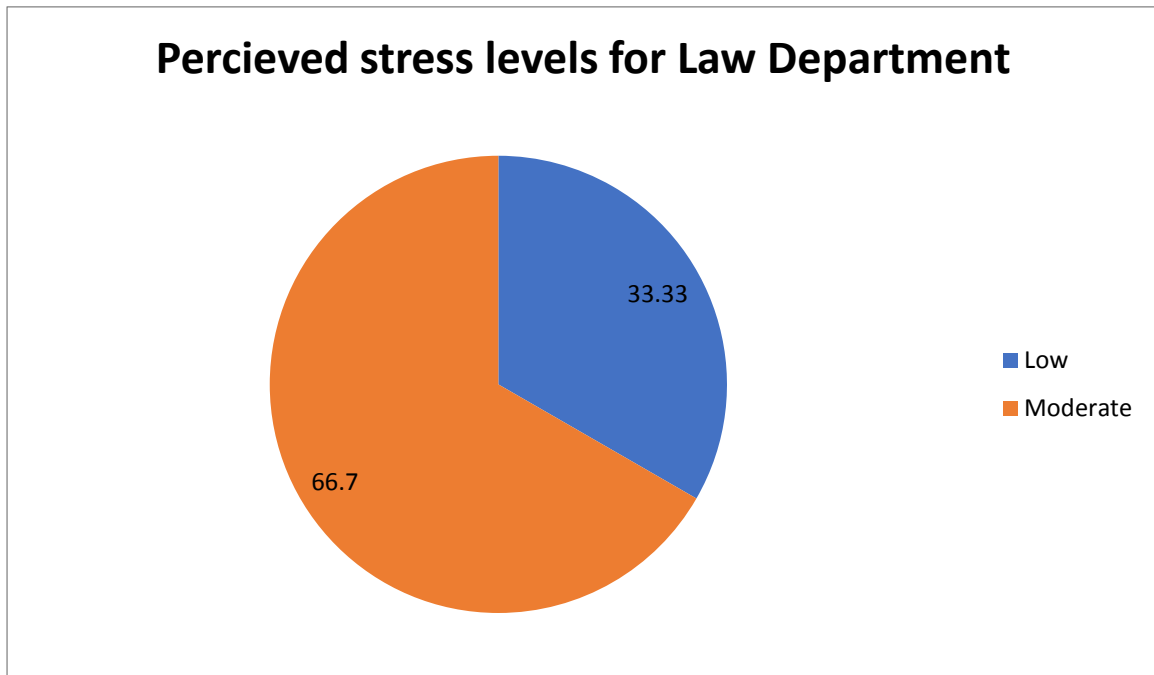
Percieved stress levels for KRC Department



LAW

Number of employees: 6

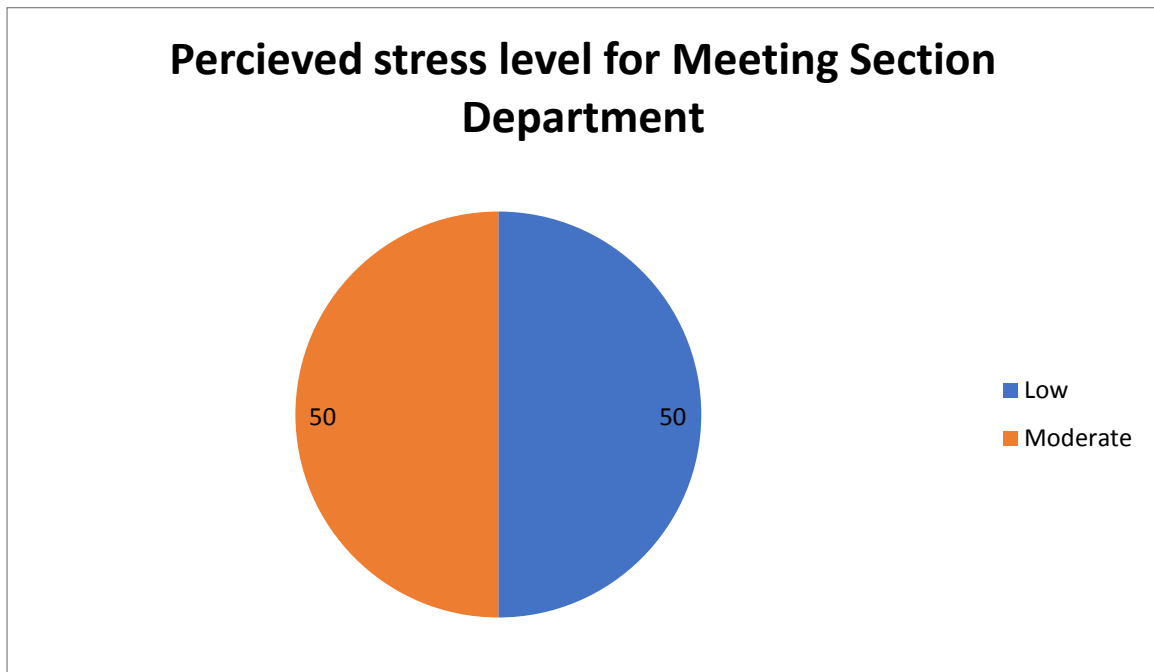
This suggest that 33.33% fall in low level of perceived stress and 66.7 fall in moderate level of perceived stress.



MEETING SECTION

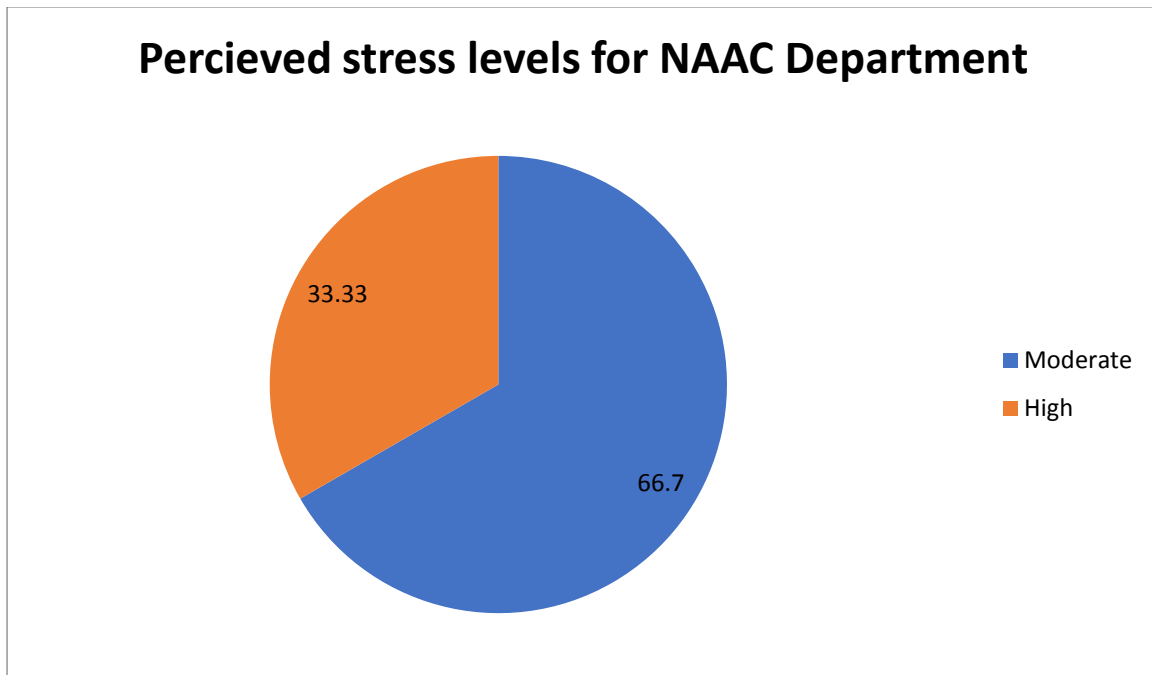
Number of employees: 4

This suggests that 50% fall in low and 50% fall in moderate level of perceived stress.



Number of employees: 3

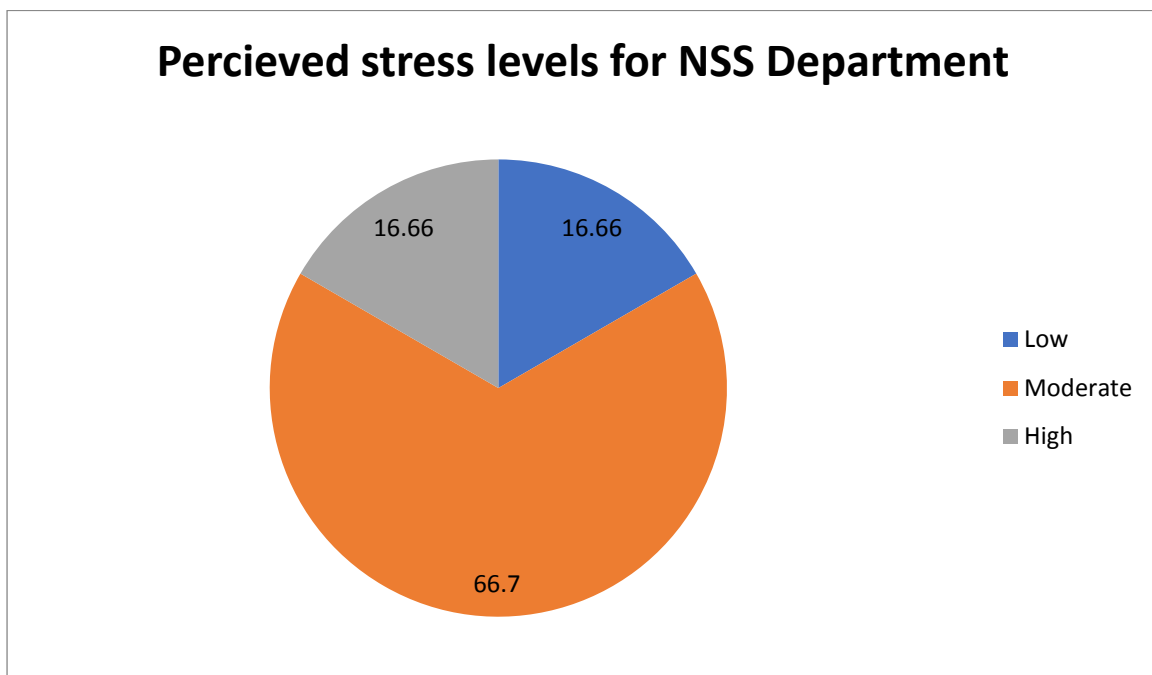
This suggests that 66.7% fall in moderate level of perceived stress and 33.33% fall in high level of perceived stress.



NSS

Number of employees: 6

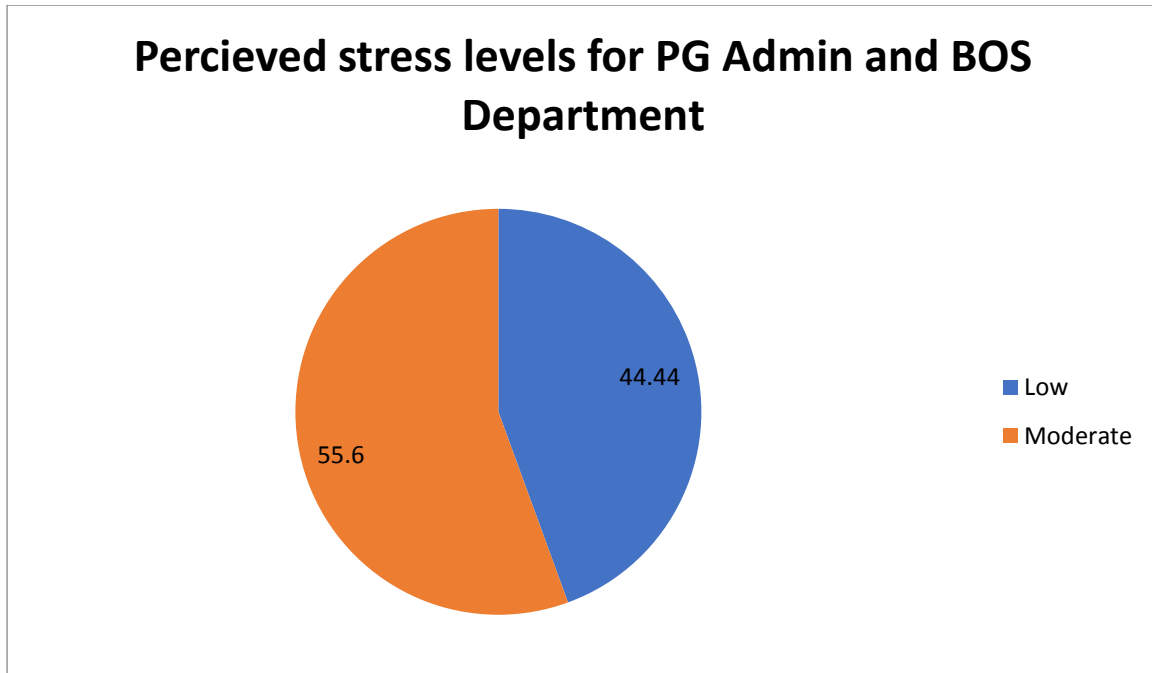
This suggests that 16.66% fall in low level of perceived stress, 66.7% fall in moderate level of perceived stress and 16.66% fall in high level of perceived stress.



PG ADMIN AND BOS

Number of employees: 9

This suggests that 44.44% fall in low level of perceived stress and 55.6% fall in moderate level of perceived stress.

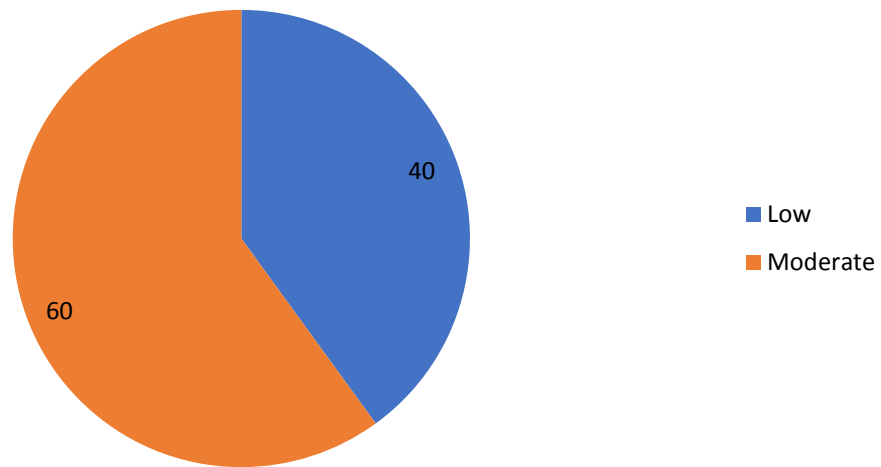


PHYSICS

Number of employees: 5

This suggests that 40% fall in low level of perceived stress and 60% fall in moderate level of perceived stress.

Percieved stress level for Physics Department

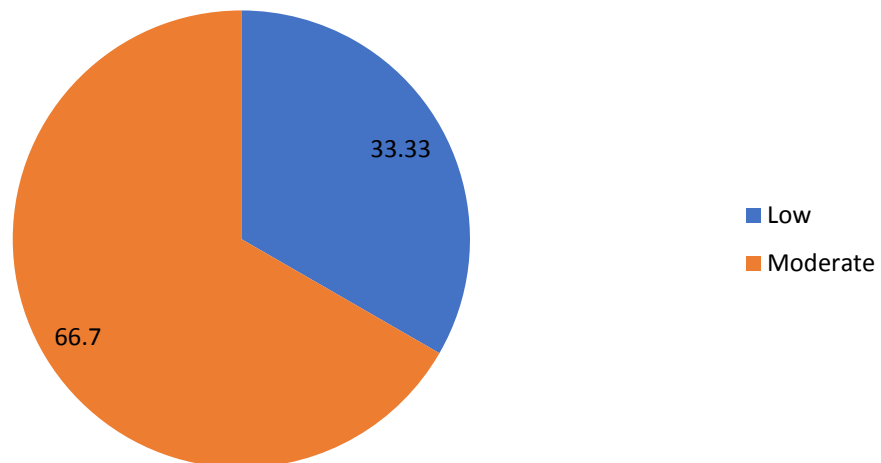


REGISTRAR OFFICE

Number of employees: 6

This suggests that 33.33% fall in low level of perceived stress and 66.7% fall in moderate level of perceived stress.

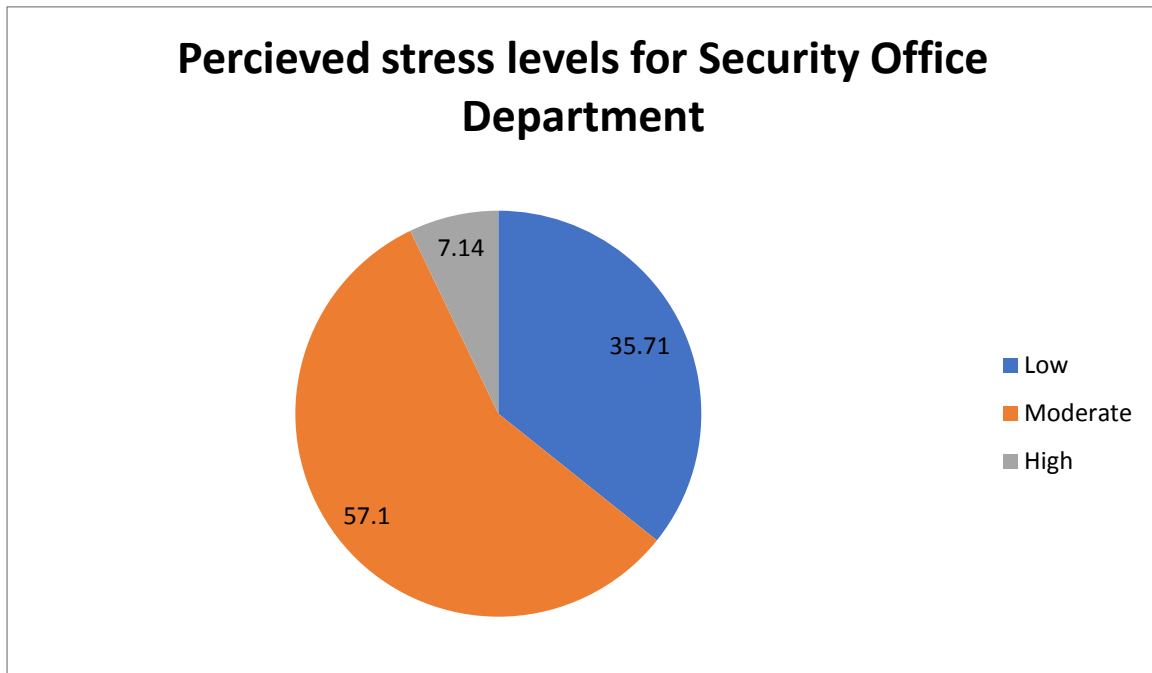
Percieved stress levels for Registrar Office



SECURITY OFFICE

Number of employees: 14

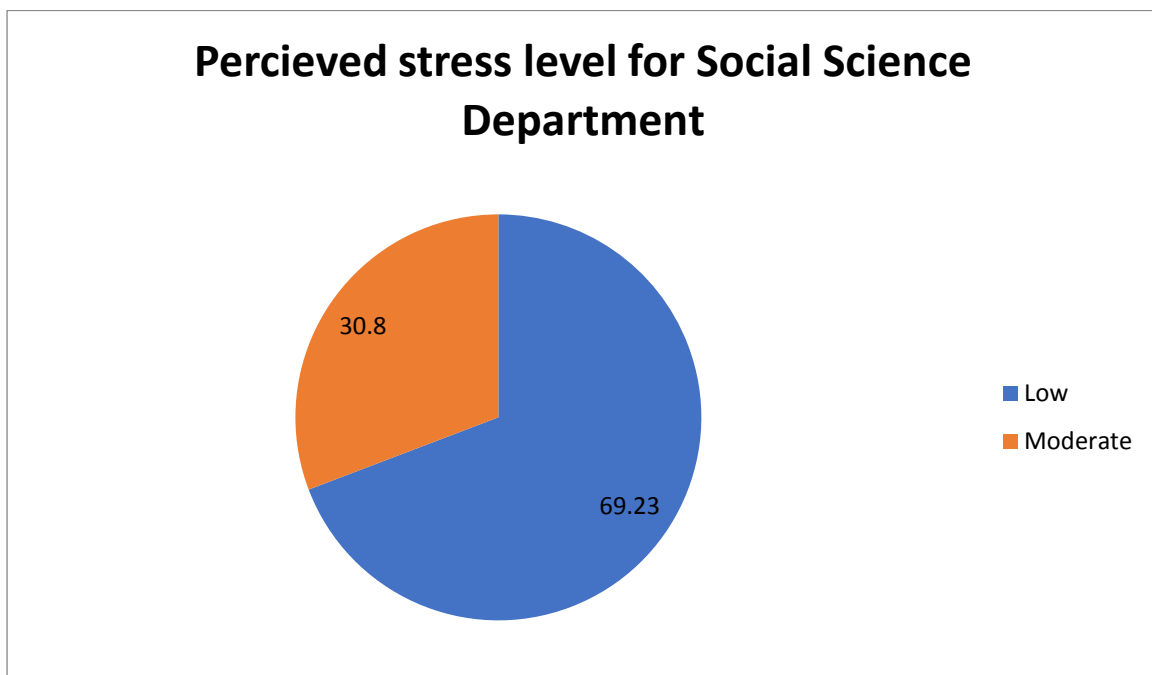
This suggests that 35.71% fall in low level of perceived stress, 57.1 fall in moderate level of perceived stress and 7.14 fall in high level of perceived stress.



SOCIAL SCIENCE

Number of employees: 13

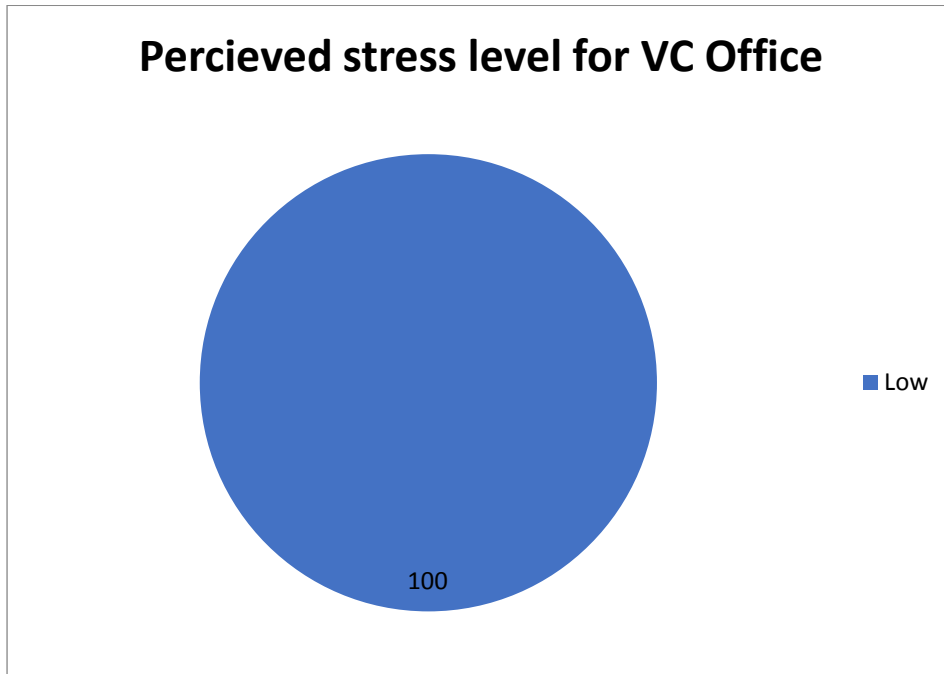
This suggests that 69.23% fall in low level of perceived stress and 30.8 fall in moderate level of perceived stress.



VC OFFICE

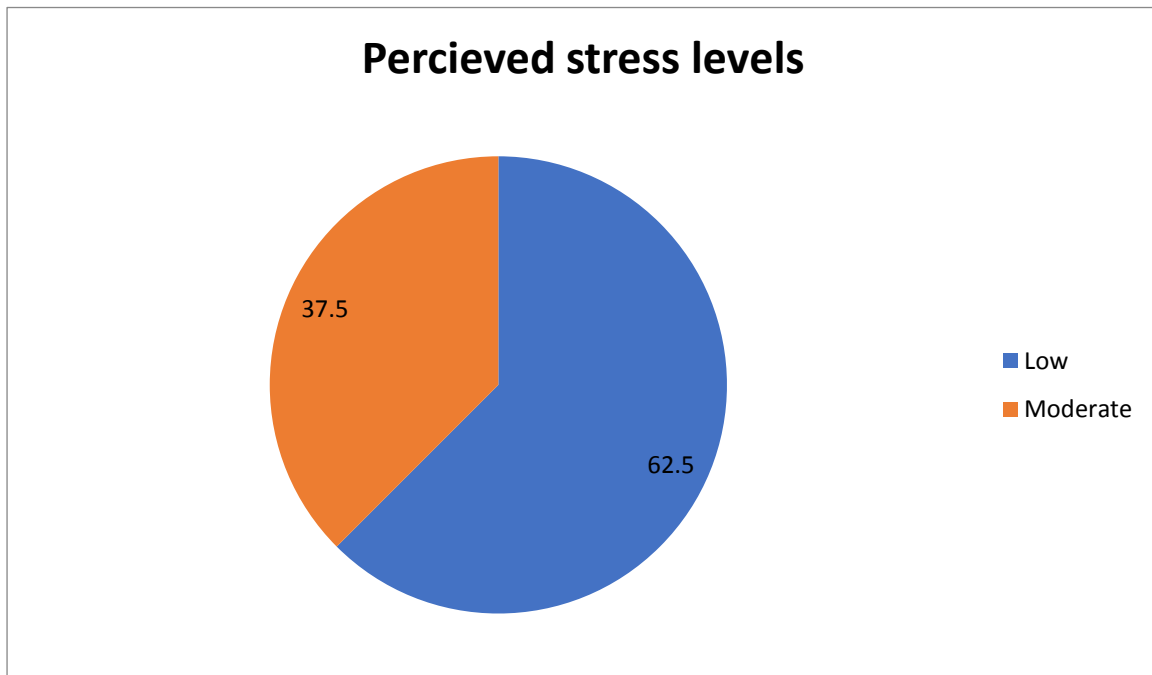
Number of employees: 3

This suggests that 100% employees fall in low level of perceived stress.



In addition to the employees identified in the above departments, there were 8 who weren't classified in any of the above departments. However, the analysis of their perceived levels of stress is as follows:

62.5% fall in low level of perceived stress and 37.5% fall in moderate level of perceived stress.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Stress Management
2. Maintaining a stress diary
3. Relaxation Techniques
4. Indulging in Physical activity for 45 minutes
5. Individual Counselling