Stress causes and its management at the work place

-A qualitative study on the causes of stress and management mechanisms at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå

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Spring semester 2013
Bachelor thesis, 15 hp
Abstract

**Problem:** Stress at the workplace has become an increasing phenomenon due to external factors such as technological advancement, changes in the economy of a country which might lead to becoming redundant and so on. Stress can be considered as an inevitable condition at least at one point in time or another; however it can also be minimized to the extent that the productivity and health of the employee is maintained which could lead to a productive organization. Stress is also bound to occur in multinational companies where operation is global and employees have different cultural background.

**Purpose:** Our purpose for this study is to have a clear understanding of the causes of stress at a multinational company such as Volvo Trucks AB Umeå, and how Stress by the employees as well as the company’s management are managed or handled.

**Methodology:** This thesis has been made using qualitative approach, with a descriptive and exploratory case study approach. The data used are collected through conducting semi-structured interviews with 6 different employees from Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå one of whom works as a therapist at the company.

**Findings:** The causes of stress at the work place range from personal problems to work overload, physical working environment, work situation and conflicts among colleagues and managers. Many employees struggle with stress, in worst cases leading to uncertainties and severe impairments on health and performance. The main situations that generate stress are likely uncontrollable, unpredictable, and some are not known. But alternatively there are several resources available like personal awareness in coping skills. For example: time management, assertiveness, ways to higher up self-confidence and so on. Management can also utilize some resources for reducing the stress level of the employees by providing services and facilities such as health facilities at the company, giving easy and on time access to therapist and also having free time activities and entertainment. Stress is related between the employee and the employer as the performance of the employee is affected by his/her stress level which intern affects the company’s productivity. Therefore stress management is Vital for both. The most successful stress management mechanisms found was time management, sharing of feelings and leisure activities.

**Key Words:** HRM (*Human Resource Management*), Stress at the workplace, Causes of stress. Consequences of stress, stress Management, Stress at Volvo and Volvo
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank and appreciate the people who have been involved in the process of writing this thesis and made our study possible.

First, we would like to thank our supervisor Kiflemariam Hamde for his patience, efficient guidance and his valuable advices when writing this thesis.

Second, we express our warm appreciation to the employees of Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå, who made this thesis possible with giving valuable responses during the process of our research.

Finally we would like thank our families and friends who supported us during the process of writing this thesis.

Najmoddin Nekzada                        Selamawit Fisseha Tekeste
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................. 7
   1.1 General background ................................................................................................. 7
   1.2 Research problem formulation ............................................................................... 8
   1.3 Research question .................................................................................................... 10
   1.4 Research purpose ................................................................................................... 10
   1.5 The Case Company ................................................................................................. 10
   1.6 Scope and limitation of the study ............................................................................ 11
   1.7 Thesis Disposition ................................................................................................. 13

2 THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK ..................................................................................... 14
   2.1 Stress in general ...................................................................................................... 14
      2.1.1 Emotions and Stress ......................................................................................... 15
      2.1.2 Symptoms of stress ......................................................................................... 16
      2.1.3 Types of personality ......................................................................................... 17
      2.1.4 Type of stressors .............................................................................................. 17
   2.2 Causes of stress ...................................................................................................... 17
      2.2.1 Workplace factors causing stress ..................................................................... 18
      2.2.2 External Factors of stress ............................................................................... 18
      2.2.3 Stress in a specific job context .......................................................................... 19
   2.3 Consequences of stress on employees .................................................................... 20
      2.3.1 Disadvantages of stress ................................................................................... 20
   2.4 Steps towards stress management ......................................................................... 21
      2.4.1 Employees stress management ......................................................................... 22
      2.4.2 Organizational approaches to stress management ........................................... 23
   2.5 Summery of the Theories ......................................................................................... 25

3 METHODOLOGICAL CHAPTER .................................................................................. 27
   3.1 Preunderstanding .................................................................................................... 27
   3.2 Research philosophies ............................................................................................ 29
      3.2.1 Ontology ........................................................................................................... 29
      3.2.2 Epistemology ................................................................................................... 29
   3.3 Choice of subject ................................................................................................... 30
   3.4 Research design ..................................................................................................... 31
   3.5 Criticism on qualitative research .......................................................................... 31
      3.6 Data collection ...................................................................................................... 32
      3.6.1 Primary data ..................................................................................................... 33
      3.6.2 Secondary data ................................................................................................. 33
   3.7 Criticism of sources ............................................................................................... 34
   3.8 Research sample .................................................................................................... 34
   3.9 Face to face interviews .......................................................................................... 35
      3.9.1 Advantages of Face to face interview ............................................................... 36
3.9.2 Disadvantages of face to face interview ........................................ 36
3.10 Interview guide and process of interview ....................................... 36
3.11 Selection of respondents ............................................................... 37
3.12 Analysis and empirical data ......................................................... 37
3.13 Ethical consideration ................................................................. 37
4 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS ...................................................................... 39
  4.1 Previous case study ................................................................. 40
  Respondent 1 .............................................................................. 42
  Respondent 2 .............................................................................. 42
  Respondent 3 .............................................................................. 43
  Respondent 4 .............................................................................. 43
  Respondent 5 .............................................................................. 44
  Respondent 6 .............................................................................. 44
  Respondent A .............................................................................. 45
5 ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS .............................................................. 48
  5.1 Stress at the work place ............................................................. 49
  5.2 Symptoms of stress ................................................................. 50
  5.3 Emotions and stress ................................................................. 51
  5.4 Types of personality ............................................................... 52
  5.5 Types of stressors ................................................................. 52
  5.6 Consequences of stress .......................................................... 53
  5.7 Disadvantages of stress .......................................................... 53
  5.8 Steps towards stress management .......................................... 53
  5.9 Causes of stress ................................................................. 54
  5.10 Stress management .............................................................. 55
  5.11 Management’s role; Consultation facility in Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå . 56
6 CONCLUSION .................................................................................. 57
7 RECOMMENDATIONS ................................................................. 60
  7.1 Implications of the study .......................................................... 60
  7.2 Recommendation for further research ...................................... 60
  7.3 Limitation of the study ............................................................ 60
8 References ...................................................................................... 62
Appendix 1 - INTERVIEW GUIDE .................................................... 65
Appendix 2 - INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RESPONDENT A ............... 66
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1 ................................................................................................................. 14
Table 2 .................................................................................................................. 16
Table 3 .................................................................................................................. 33
Table 4 .................................................................................................................. 41
Figure 1 ............................................................................................................... 11
Figure 2 ............................................................................................................... 13
Figure 3 ............................................................................................................... 24
Figure 4 ............................................................................................................... 39
Figure 5 ............................................................................................................... 48
Definition of terms used as per our thesis

**Management mechanisms**: the way of solving a specific issue. The approach used to deal with a particular problem in our case stress.

**Management**: the higher authority whose responsibility is running the organization and as well as the employees. By management we also mean the Human resource department of Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå whose one of responsibilities involves dealing with stress.
1 Introduction

*In the introductory chapter we will introduce the overall theme of our research paper and research topic. First, we start with introducing our thesis background; afterwards the research problem formulation and the research question are presented. Further, the purpose of our research is also addressed in this part. In this section we also give an introduction to our case company and give a historical overview of their products and overall operation details, this section is concluded after a brief thesis delimitation section and thesis disposition.*

1.1 General background

Stress is changing to a common phenomenon among the employers and employees. (Michie, 2002, p. 67) Increasingly the stress level is changing rapidly among the employees due to a set of various reasons. Employees experience and feel stressed continuously and therefore the reactions of stress at the workplace are not a separate aspect. (Fairbrother, & Warn, 2003 p. 8) Stress at work is also increasing due to external factors such as technological advancement and changes in the economy of a country. Stress is also bound to occur in multinational companies where operation is global and employees have different cultural backgrounds. Besides stress that could be caused by family or personal problems, stress at work has become even a greater problem because of job restructure, globalization and more demand on the task at hand. This might lead to higher job insecurity which would make employees feel stressed and distressed. (Tennant, 2001, p. 697) Therefore the increased stress among employees motivated us to become interested, sensitive and curious regarding the importance of the subject.

Stress alone is not a medical state, rather it is the vulnerability to stress that leads to mental disorder. “A study made by Institute of Psychiatry found that people with high-stress jobs have twice the risk of developing serious depression or anxiety compared with others in less stressful occupations.” (Melchior et al., 2007, p.2) Work stress can affect employees regardless of gender, position or type of employment. If one looks around and scans the research on stress and mainly stress at workplace, one discovers that stress is settled among the workers as an inevitable factor. Stress is linked on to one’s ability to manage the recourses, environmental demands and some other unknown shortcoming to the process while doing an activity, but if it looks as a general subject then it would be evaluated as an unpredictable phenomenon.

To further understand this subject we considered Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå to be a good example as such because Volvo Trucks is also involved in the ever-changing work environment with its changing technological advancements and automated work styles rather than the manual way of getting things done, we related this aspect to stress in such a way that the more advanced and automated the products of Volvo Trucks are, the less employees it’s going to need; therefore causing work related stress in the employees due to the belief that they could be made redundant or would have to move elsewhere because of job restructure. In addition when the task at hand also increases this could lead to stress among the employees as they are forced to work over their capacity creating work overload.
Stress and its relation with the business world is that if not handled well it might lead to illness and also increase the time offs taken by employees. As a result both, the organization and employees will be affected by it. But tension in the business world is also good to some extent and can lead employees to be motivated to work hard and increase their efficiency. Stress that makes the employee under pressure to the point that the employee won’t be able to deal with the situation affects both the employee and the company in a negative way. (CIPD, 2008, p. 2) Stress has serious consequences for the performance of an organization. Some of the impacts that stress has on an organization are increased employee turnover, employee absence and reduced productivity. Stress affects organizations in terms of cost as well, for example sickness absence tends to be the most obvious and most easily calculated cost. (CIPD, 2008, p. 5). Therefore highlighting that stress would lead an organization to incur more costs as a result of stress.

Volvo group plays a dominant role in the world economy employing 115,000 employees out of which 1,300 are employed in Volvo trucks AB Umea according to (volvogroup.com). The growth and enlargement of Volvo trucks from national to international level caused Volvo Trucks to employ large number of employees with different culture and backgrounds. On the other end, the expectation of customers also increases regarding the quality of the products which Volvo Trucks come up with each time in the market. This causes an increase of workload to the operation of company and the employees have to spend more time on fulfilling the needs of the customers. Further the pressure that is put on Volvo Trucks to always become innovative in order to compete with other truck manufacturing companies increases the pressure for the employees as well, to never settle in a comfortable state but rather to always be in an environment where their work is constantly changing, innovating and enhancing. This situation requires the employees to have a training every now and then and to adapt to new softwares as well as training on machine programming. These changing situations added on top of the interrelated nature of production between the departments and different employees embodying different characteristics would cause stress in a multinational company such as Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå.

The next sections state our research problem formulation, our research question and purpose. Since our research based on a multinational company (Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå), is to understand the causes and management of stress at the work place, we therefore put our target readers as managers and people who are employed in multinational companies.

1.2 Research Problem Formulation
An individual’s health can be affected by the positive and negative stress initiated from an event. Implication of a significant incident like winning one million dollars from lottery or a successful happy engagement can cause a positive stress and negative events can have negative effects or can hurt a person’s health. Negative events such as dying of close member of family or the decline of financial situation of a person can affect a person in a negative way. (Anderson & Arnoult, 1989, p. 102)

According to Warn (1994) disruption to regular duration of sleep and a lower capacity to maintain a regular personal routine are identified as stressors in isolated community. Physical inconvenience can be related to discomfort in working conditions such as noisy environment created by engines, passengers crowdedness, intolerable high temperature, working close to
chemicals and working away from radiation of sun can cause a person to feel uncomfortable. (Fairbrother, & Warn, 2003 p. 10)

The absence of an adequate leadership can also cause conflict between the employers and employees, it also indicates as a source of stress within an organization. Typically, the activities on a board ship like organizing of teamwork is marked as a usual process and not related to stress under normal situations. Whereas working in an isolated environment can also cause discomfort among the employees. Capsule environment refers to a community which is remote from home, families and friends; this creates stress because of lack of security in one’s life where loved ones and friends are not close. (Fairbrother, & Warn, 2003 p. 10)

Topper (2007) and Campbell (2006) stated one common definition of stress and explained the aspect of stress like an occurrence of feelings out of pressure which happens to a person. (Agolla & Ongori, 2009, p. 64) In order to discuss stress in the form of emotions, we can see that emotions are related to a subjective trait of an individual's feelings or moods. Emotions create specific feelings to an individual like happiness, shame or anger. The other side of emotions is related to sentiment and temper which comes out of emotion and leads to stress. (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995, p. 99) If stress is defined as per the emotions perspective we see that there is not a definite definition for emotions available in the literatures; two reasons stated as to why there is no definite definition of emotions is that first, emotion is a broadly used term; next, emotions are described as a subjective feature of an individual’s feelings and moods. Therefore, scholars think about emotions in many different ways. The situation, period, level and consistency of an individual's sentiment are different from person to person. Typically, emotion are used in various forms such as social emotion which states the feelings of an individual like filling happy, joyous, shame, affection etc.

The major factors of stress are likely present as a lack of control over a situation or an event, uncertainty, ambiguity or a poor performance related to expectation level (Parker & Ettinger, 2007, p.350). However the Authors were curious to see if this is the case in case of any work place or if this situation varies from place to place, In addition human resource management conducts many functions or events such as festivals, campus parties, or other activities in order to reduce the stress level. Even majority of the employees are much more willing to manage their stress by finding out some solutions to deal with it in a better way. The Authors wanted to elaborate up on this by focusing on what Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå does for its employee and how it prevents stress.

The paragraphs above led us to think about what could possibly cause stress for employees at a multinational manufacturing company, could it be that the employees have to work with people with different people from diverse cultures? Or could it simply be that in a manufacturing industry work is connected and interrelated with one other? Or was it the fact that the physical environment was chaotic and noisy? Further we were also curious to know how employees in such companies could solve their personal stress but particularly their work related stress and also get an understanding of what measure are taken by the company to solve work related stress if there are any. All these questions led us to want to do more thorough research in a multinational manufacturing company namely Volvo Trucks AB Umeå and thus we decided to formulate a research question as follows:
1.3 Research Question
What are the causes of stress at the workplace and management mechanisms applied by both the employees and the management at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå?

1.4 Research Purpose
Our purpose for this study also stems from our research question which is to have a clear understanding of the causes of stress at a multinational company such as Volvo Trucks, and how stress by the employees as well as the company’s management is handled.

1.5 Case Company (Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå)
Before going on to our next chapter which is the literature review we would like to introduce our chosen company for research “Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå”. In the following paragraphs we have provided a brief description about Volvo group, its employees, products, and brands. Besides the general description given below, more detailed information about Volvo Trucks’ employees and Volvo’s stress management schemes found from secondary sources are given under the empirical findings right before the interviews are presented. Further we have also included a section for why we chose Volvo as our case company in chapter three.

Volvo is an engineering and technology company founded in 1927 that manufactures vehicles, industrial power system, and aircraft engine parts. Volvo group provides services under different fields such as Volvo trucks, marine engines, construction equipments, industrial engines and systems, Volvo buses equipments, aerospace components etc. The company had a vast growth because of its wide range of products and firm control over its production process. (Volvo group, 2011)

Volvo was founded by Assar Gabrielsson and Gustaf Larson in 1927. Their main objective was to produce safe vehicles with high quality and it manufactures trucks since 1928. Volvo produced the first truck in 1927. (Volvo group, 2013) Since then Volvo had a significant growth from the time of producing ordinary trucks to production of unique and sophisticated trucks as we can see today. Volvo has always been along with changes of technology. Volvo has a sample of its truck at the showroom produced in two different time frames in 1928 and 2013. The truck which is made in 1928 is within that times technology and today’s technology is applied to the new version of its truck. Volvo has brought major changes to the truck industry by introducing the most recent technologies and techniques to the area of truck industry. Mostly Volvo has applied the recent technologies in its engines, shape, frame, and security systems, sound protection transfer into the cab and so on.

Volvo group produces several respected and leading brands, such as Volvo trucks, Mack trucks, Renault trucks, Eicher trucks, Volvo penta, SDLG construction machines, Prevost trucks, Nova buses etc. The aim of the manufacturing brands is to focus on different industry and market segments. Overall majority of the brands are fully-owned, while some of them are partly owned by companies or joint ventures. However, several brands are available at an international level, while few of them are provided as a global base for some specific regional areas. The availability of Volvo brands and its sales services reaches to more 120 markets around the world. (Volvo group, 2013)
Despite, having rapid growth in the area of production and technology, Volvo group has also had rather a good policy in increasing efficiency to the workplace. The main purpose of Volvo’s management is to focus on employees’ safety, health and well being. Volvo group has also put much effort on increasing the job securities at the workplace; promote the health and safety issues of employees. It is necessary to add up that Volvo achieved an award in 2006 because of creating a convenient and suitable workplace for its employees. (Volvo group, 2012)

As a fact we see that Volvo is a major company in the world in terms of production and employees. It is interesting to see how Volvo manages to employ so many employees who have different cultural backgrounds and still maintain work stability and stay in business. In order to understand how the company could achieve success and could provide a safety working place for employees, we refer to the theoretical framework first which provides the main causes of stress and the ways to manage it. Afterwards we do a case study on Volvo’s employees.

1.6 Scope and limitation of the study

In order to familiarize the reader regarding the scope of this research paper we have defined the limitation of the research. We have noted the scope of our study in the following texts.

The focus of this research paper is only on employees who work at Volvo trucks AB in Umeå. We had an aim to understand the causes and management of stress of employees concerning a specific company therefore it will not consider the whole group of Volvo in a national level or international level. So the scope of our study is within that company and cannot be applied to all types of organizations or workplaces.

The chosen theories are relevant and fit to our research topic and research question. In the theory part we have discussed the issues concerning stress from various dimensions like stress in the form of emotions as well as the internal and external factors of stress. We believe that the theories we have chosen are highly relevant and make broad sense to the thesis topic and research question. And in the empirical findings we conducted our research with employees who belong to several departments at Volvo trucks AB Umea. The respondents who participated in our research do not represent the whole population of the organization. Further there is not much research done regarding the employees’ stress at Volvo Trucks so we couldn’t find much previous research made by other authors regarding stress at Volvo Trucks. Though there are many researches available that focus on other fields and areas such as
marketing of products, but not much research is made to evaluate the stress of employees at Volvo trucks.

According the report of Volvo group (2013) Volvo group has employed 115,000 employees with different cultural backgrounds and occupational backgrounds. But this research paper has considered sample wise only a few number of employees working in different departments in Volvo trucks AB in Umeå. We tried to avoid from bias and selected the respondents from both genders. The respondents who participated in our research might not be able to represent the whole population of Volvo Trucks’ employees. As a general view, employees feel stressed at the workplace in almost every type of organizations. But the causes of stress vary from environment to environment and company to company.
1.7 Thesis Disposition

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

- Background
- Research formulation
- Research question
- Research purpose
- Case company
- Scope and limitation

CHAPTER 2: Theoretical framework

- Stress, symptoms of stress,
- Causes of stress at the work place
- Consequences and Disadvantages of stress for employees and for organization
- Steps towards Stress Management for individuals and organizations

Summary of the Theories on stress

CHAPTER 3: Methodological section

- Preunderstandings
- Why we chose Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå as our case company
- Research philosophies
- Choice of subject
- Research method
- Data collection
- Source criticism
- Research sample
- Interview guide and process of interview
- Ethical consideration

CHAPTER 4: Empirical findings

- Previous case study
- Company stress management
- Respondents 1 to 6

CHAPTER 5: Analysis of finding

- Stress, symptoms of stress, types of personality
- Causes of stress, steps towards stress management
- Stress management

CHAPTER 6: Conclusions

- Conclusion of Theoretical and Empirical Findings

CHAPTER 7

- Recommendations
2. Theories on Causes and Management of Stress at the workplace

In this chapter we will discuss theories that address the topics of stress. We have chosen theories that assisted us in achieving our aim which is to understand the causes and management of stress at the workplace in particular at Volvo trucks AB. To have a clear understanding of the issue we have chosen the following theories; what stresses an individual and an employee, what causes stress in the workplaces, the relationship between personal stress and job stress. What are the possible consequences and disadvantages of stress both to the employees as well as to organizations and lastly the different approaches used by both employees and organizations to manage stress are discussed. Afterwards a summary and relationship between the theories is made by using a model at the end.

We have decided to start from theories because we wanted to give an idea for the reader of what the main concepts are and why this issue is interesting. In addition, awareness to these concepts would lead the reader to have a good understanding as he/she moves along reading the chapters and have a clear flow of ideas. After this section we go on to methodology chapter to discuss how we conduct the study.

2.1 Stress in general

The term stress has been defined by many scholars. One of the definitions was given by Fletcher as a “continuous process that involves individual transacting with their environments, making appraisals of the situations they find themselves in, and endeavoring to cope with any issues that may arise (Fletcher (2006) cited Rumbold et al, 2012, p. 173)”. Stress represents a situation where a person is under pressure and does not have sufficient ability to cope with it. Stress also indicates a direct negative reaction both, for individual and organization by undermining the original of goals attainment. (table1). Despite causing problems to employee’s health and well being, stress also affects the organization’s reputation as well as its productivity. The negative aspect of stress can be noted like job dissatisfaction and employee’s unwillingness to their works, Decrease in the level of production and turnover and weakness in quality of work would be the demerits for the company.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For the individual</th>
<th>For the workplace/organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threats to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Increased absenteeism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-being/quality of life</td>
<td>and turnover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functioning/goal achievement</td>
<td>Reduced quality and quantity of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem/confidence</td>
<td>Reduced job satisfaction and moral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal development</td>
<td>Poor communication and increased conflict</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Michie 2002, p. 68)
A study made by (Michie 2002, p. 67) has stated that employees at the workplace are a victim of stress; both employees and employers were affected by this phenomenon. The causes for employees are for example illness, early retirement, burnout and being unmotivated, etc. and for the employers the thing that was stressful was losing of staffs, reducing in turnover, conflict, client dissatisfaction, economic threat and major difference between actual expectations and outcomes.

Sometimes stress is described in the framework of emotions and stress can be caused out of uncontrolled emotions. So in order to find out the interlinked points between stress and emotions we thought to discuss emotions and stress in the next section.

2.1.1 Emotions and Stress
If stress is described in the framework of emotions, it seems to be quite complicated and difficult to define due to the unavailability of a pure and exact definition about emotions. Emotions refers to a person's subjective feelings and moods, it states a complex changes in physical and psychological situation of an individual that affects thought and behavior. Therefore anxiety, depression, anger and embarrassment are the result of emotion on stress. Anxiety is known as one of the worst factors of emotions that causes many incurable problems and disorders in a person’s activity. Emotion enters an intensive power to human behavior which leads to a situation where one is not able to make better decision or perform normally. The scholars and psychologists grouped the theories of emotions into different categories: Physiological, neurological and cognitive. Physiological theory of emotion refers to the signal or response of the body. Neurological suggests the reaction of the brains in response to emotions. A cognitive theory describes the roles of thought or the brain functions in formation of emotions. (Parker & Ettinger, 2007, p. 326; Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995, p. 99)

Stress is defined as “the body’s psychological, emotional, and physiological responses to any demand that is perceived as threatening to a person’s well-being (Bloisi et al., 2007, p. 309)”. Whereas stress by Lazarus is defined as a “Process of appraising events or situations as harmful, threatening, or challenging of assessing potential responses and responding to those events. Lazarus, 1993 cited in (Bloisi et al., 2007, p. 309)”. Stress gives both positive and negative responses to our actions, because our rational evaluation and assumption of the stressors makes difference in how we react to the issue that is perceived as stressor and how we deal with it.

There is constructive and destructive stress. Constructive stress is the feeling of anxiety that makes us perform well in our daily life. Stress could also be the driving force to test ourselves and encourage ourselves to do something. Whereas the destructive stress presents undesirable effect of stress known as distress (Bloisi et al., 2007, p. 311)

Our main aim of this study is to understand the causes and management of stress at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå from both the employee’s as well as the management’s point of view. We will therefore discuss on the base of what stress is and the different indications of stress that would help us to clear the way towards finding the causes and management of stress. It will also be a good guide to help the reader to follow step by step. Thus the next section discuss about the different symptoms of stress.
2.1.2 Symptoms of stress
Some of the symptoms of stress mentioned in CIPD (2008) states that stressed people tend to increase their alcohol and smoking consumption. It can also be observed that stressed people often find it hard to have a good night sleep. Increasingly, the issues related to stress has changed to a major phenomena for both employers and employees. The symptoms of stress are explained in (Table 2) and it represents the symptoms of stress from emotional, behavioral and cognitive perspectives. The people’s behavior or more specifically the changes in employees’ behavior will demonstrate the sign of stress. Whereas the sign of stress to the people can be sensible in different ways, in the areas of feelings that lead them to a prolonged acute health problems or diseases such as anxiety, irritation, fatigue, rudeness and depression.

Feelings such as nervousness, depression, anger and boredom are looked as the emotional symptoms, these can be observed with people who feel stressed and the behavioral signs to be observable to employees who make error in performance, problems with sleep, conflict with colleagues and become less social. The cognition signs are that a stressed person would find it difficult to be able to be attentive at his task and finds it hard to memorize things as well as being passive and absent from the situation. Our body also gives signs when we are stressed, signs such as being out of breath, sweaty most of the time, heart pains, skin rashes etc. are the physical signs of stress to the body. The shortage of treatment for these given problems will lead to further difficulties to mental and physical health symptoms such as heart disease, depressions and anxiety as pointed out in (table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How you feel (emotions)</th>
<th>How you think (cognitions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anxious</td>
<td>Poor concentration and memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depressed/tired</td>
<td>Poor organization and decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry/irritable/frustrated</td>
<td>Less creative in problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apathetic/bored</td>
<td>Hypersensitive to criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have accidents/make mistakes</td>
<td>Increased absenteeism and turnover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating/sleeping problems</td>
<td>Your body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take drugs (e.g tobacco, alcohol)</td>
<td>Sweating, dizzy, nauseous, breathless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problematic social behavior (e.g. withdrawal aggression)</td>
<td>Aches and pains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequent infections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asthma, ulcers, skin complaints, cardiac problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Michie, 2002, p. 68)

Therefore this section in identifying the symptoms of stress should be the first step in understanding if an employee is stressed at the work place or not. Only then can one go to further understand the causes and letter on the proper management mechanisms of Stress. To have a logical flow of the theories we now continue with personality types and then types of stressors before we get to the core theories of this thesis which are causes of stress and management of stress.
2.1.3 Types of personality and the degree of being affected by stress
A study made by Friedman & Rosenman (1974) identified two personality patterns that they called Type A and Type B personalities. Type (A) personalities are prone to be affected by stress because of the pressure they put on themselves, these personalities are constantly trying to multitask, are aggressive and anxious. Whereas type B personalities are more relaxed and calm. Because of the hard work type A personalities put in to their jobs they are more likely to be promoted and have power over their job, but they are also the ones who are likely to be reported as having too much stress or suffer from health problems. And because of irritation and lack of patience the suffered people with such personalities rarely get to the top of organizational hierarchy. Whereas in comparing type A personalities with type B personalities, type B personalities are much better and have the ability to become top executive. As a result, an individual’s thoughts depend on how he/she perceives a situation as stressful or not. Mostly it depends on a person’s personality and the degree of stress experienced is also regulated by people’s individual characters. (Bloisi et al., 2007, p. 314)

According to Lazarus & Folkman (1984) the degree of stress experienced depends on factors such as recognition of demand that means that people must know that demand exists. When people try to fulfill their demand, in-case they don’t respond suitably, it could harm them. Second, the threatening situation must have value to the person and finally the outcome of the demand must be uncertain. (Bloisi et al, 2007, p 310)

2.1.4 Types of stressors
The following stressors below are stressors that affect an employee at the workplace.
1. Job role: - this exists when the employee is confused as to what task he/she should be doing or when the employee has overwhelming amount of work to be done with so little time. Stress could also arise as a result of ambiguity. This situation is likely to happen at any type of occupation.
2. Underutilization: - This means that the worker has insufficient work to encourage his/her motivation.
3. Responsibility for others: - This increases stress level, if employees face high responsibility for others. Those who are in charge of others at the workplace and people higher up the organizational hierarchy are often prone to more stress because of expectations from their co-workers.
4. Poor working conditions: - these conditions are also major contributors to stress, these include extreme heat, cold, noise and overcrowded.
(Bloisi et al., 2007, p.318-319)

2.2 Causes of stress
Employees experience and feel stressed due to a set of various reasons and therefore the reactions of stress at the workplace are not a separate aspect. (Fairbrother, & Warn, 2003 p. 8)
Increasingly, the stress level is changing rapidly among the employees due to a set of various reasons such as work overload, over crowdedness at the workplace, generating of loud noises by machines and arousal of conflicts among the employees and the employer due to poor or inadequate decisions.
Stress can arise because of transitions made in our personal lives. Personal issues that contribute to stress are those such as domestic problems in the house like losing loved ones, financial problems and divorce. These could be categorized as individual causes that lead to stress. On the other hand there is also stress that is caused by organizational factors these factors are those faced by the employees at the workplace. Issues such as role uncertainty; that is not being able to know exactly what we are supposed to do and what others expect from us and also having too much work at hand with little time to accomplish it can cause stress at the workplace. Further organizational factors of stress are poor working conditions where the employee is often too distracted, where there is noise, chilly or too warm temperatures and where the workplace is often filled with people running here and there. Whereas Issues that contribute to stress are lack of control, suddenness, and ambiguity; especially role ambiguity is the foremost reason of stress at work. (Parker, 1975, p.350)

Some organizational factors that can be considered as stressors mostly depend on the types of job and specification of works. These play important role regarding the issues related to stress, for instance if the job is high-stress or not. High stress jobs are the kind of jobs that require plenty of time and put the employees under the pressure of work. It is also notable that often the employees suffer from poor working situation, if the work is performed in an unpleasant environment (Bloisi et al., 2007, p. 317). In order to study in-depth the main reasons of stress or why the employees feel stressed specifically at the workplace and in Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå, we have described some main factors in the next section that often initiates stress.

2.2.1 Workplace factors causing stress
Scholars have described that a large number of features of occupational life is connected to stress. The employees who experience the reaction of stress at the workplace are not a new aspect. Spark & Cooper (1999) stated their study by conducting a sample study of 7,099 employees from 13 different companies and occupations. They reported a significant statistical assembly between workplace factor and negative symptoms of health or disorder of mental situation such as, anxiety, depression and irritation. Employees usually feel stress at their jobs due to the following reasons.
1. Work overload
2. Misuse of power
3. Inadequate decisions or leader behaviour
4. overcrowd, noise
Work and workplace is itself a stressful phenomenon and therefore various aspects are connected to stress (Defrank & Ivancevich, 1998; Spark & Cooper, 1999; Taylor et al., 1997). According to Burke (1988), Nilsson & Burke (2000) the factors related to roles in a work environment are namely existence of low level power, role indefiniteness or role dispute. They add that increasing in physical conditions at the workplace such as concurrent permanent noise, overcrowd and lack of secrecy are associated to stress. The behavior of the leader or chief can also affect the level of stress (Fairbrother, & Warn, 2003 p. 9)

2.2.2 External Factors of stress
We have discussed the causes of stress from an individual perspective as well as in the workplace. Here we focus to external factors of stress both on employees and organizations. Employees will be affected directly with external factors of stress but companies are often affected indirectly.
According to the study made by Kirkcaldy & Martin (2000) stated employees experience stress due to various reasons. Mainly stress has been associated with important issues namely environmental and economical aspects. The environmental factors are included of organizational climate as well as occupational consequences of job contentment, organizational loyalty and behavioral aspects of employees. For example, remarkable occupational environment of doctors and nurses in hospitals dealing with wound, death and dying in regular basis. (Fairbrother & Warn, 2003 p.10)

External factors beyond the control of both the employees and the organizations are based on political factors and economical factors. Economic uncertainties such as redundancy and downsizings are some of the economic consequences for a firm which affects the employees. Changes in political situation or economic disability are out of employees’ control therefore the idea of redundancy and downsizing affects employees in some way. (Bloisi et al, 2007, p, 320).

Advancement in technology is also another external factor that has contributed to productivity to a large extent. It caused a remarkable decline of demand for labor in the market which led to affect the employee’s job security. Though it is important to familiarize one’s self to new technologies, it can be considered stressful if perceived as unachievable or difficult to learn. Technological changes like computerized systems, new softwares can cause stress among workers. Besides technological changes, Politics is also an external factor of stress. In cases where there is major change in government policies or mistrust of employees to government would make the environment more stressful. (Bloisi et al, 2007, p. 309-320)

A study made by Rees (1995) and Young & Cooper (1995) stated that there are many research findings and sufficient information on this particular area. Scholars can not apply all their findings in a straightforward to all workplaces because the workplace factors are not always related to stress in various workplaces or in other words, stress factors are not always stable, consistent and similar to a group of occupations. It varies from environment to environment, work to work or situation to situation, but the relationship is variable between stress and job satisfaction on the team being surveyed. (Fairbrother, & Warn, 2003 p. 8) Next we present stress according to a specific job context to see what can cause stress and understand the roots of the problem in one definite job setting.

2.2.3 Stress in a specific job context
Royal Australian Navy conducted an internal personnel survey related to what causes stress on a seagoing ship. (Royal Australian Navy 1996).It defined that employees suffer from stress due to the following various reasons. The survey represents that 35% of the staff working on ships and 25, 9% of officer working on regular basis are stress associated with their job. They have reported a few reasons related to their stressful occupation like restricted situation of working environment and living condition on a seagoing ship. Respondents indicated their salient aspects related to their stressful work, workplace and working environment, as an uncomfortable and restricted condition due to working in an isolated society. Naval officers on the other hand are under pressure due to constraint and rigid schedule which shorten their access to regular personal routine, even disturb the sleeping time. Gilks & Buckley (1995) stated generically, 50% of officers shorten their personal duties in order to obtain time for the broken sleep.
This relates to our aim in linking the causes of stress whereas, here the causes are that the working conditions are beyond the control of the employees and affects the employee’s in a negative way (Fairbrother, & Warn, 2003 p. 10).

After reading this section the reader has grasped an idea of the possible causations of stress in personal life, at the workplace and also the external factors that are beyond the control of the employee and the organization. So now we can go on and see what possible effects, consequences and disadvantages that stress can have on employees and the organization as well.

2.3 Consequences of stress on employees

Episodic stress is defined as “a pattern of high stress followed by intervals of relief” whereas chronic stress is defined as the “stress caused by continual confrontation of stressors without relief. (Bloisi 2007 p 313)” The consequences of suffering from harmful chronic stress are divided among three categories these are physiological, psychological and behavioral consequences. Some of the signs of physiological stress are blood pressure, elevated heart rate and headaches whereas the psychological symptoms are nervousness, unhappiness and bad temperedness all these emotions can lead to lack of concentration, indecisiveness and absenteeism. If individuals can’t find solutions to their stressors they might end up feeling miserable, mad, and often refuse to believe in the fact that they are caught up in an imaginary life. The Behavioral consequences of persons exposed to chronic stress are greater alcohol consumption, disrespectful behaviors and restlessness. (Bloisi et al, 2007, p 323)

The other consequence of stress is that it can cause many diseases. There is indication that stress could be one of the causes of these diseases; Coronary heart disease, Hypertension and cancer but the extent to which one person is affected by a stress related disease also depends profoundly on what type of personality that person has i.e. if that person has Type A personality or Type B personality. (Friedman & Rosenman (1974) Also Friedman & Ulmer (1984) describe type A personalities as persons who are competitive, punctual, easily irritated and perfectionists, whereas Type B individuals are hassle-free, sympathetic and pleased with their work and these type of personalities are less exposed to stress.

Therefore a change in physiological, psychological and behavioral change could be regarded as a consequence of stress. Overall, the physiological consequences of stress are blood pressure, headaches, increased heart rate etc. whereas the physical consequences are chronic stress that causes absenteeism, indecisiveness, nervousness etc. The behavioral consequences of stress are sleeping disorders, increased drinking and smoking habits, annoyance and so on. Some of the responses to behavioral stressors are to confront the situation. There are two terms in dealing with stress which are important to take into consideration. The first one is known as (fight) that is to tackle the issue or problem and find a solution for it and the second one is called (flight) which is to walk away from the stressors. (Parker, 1975, p. 348)

2.3.1 Disadvantage of stress for employers and employees

Stress has several negative impacts to the employee occupational functions at the workplace. The negative effects include losing willingness and interest to work, reduction in effectiveness, decreased efficiency and also cause low commitment to the organization, job and colleagues. It also increases the level of rigidity and inflexibility concerned to job
performance, and creates a room for ignorance or to disrespect the rules, policies and regulations of the organization. (Fairbrother, & Warn, 2003 p. 10)

As per the management perspective the problems of stress can be analyzed into two dimensions, threats of stress on employees within organization and the direct effects of stress for the workplace/organization.

In-cases where employees do not manage their stress level or ignore to define the initial source of stress; it might cause many problems to the health. A poor achievement and undesirable situation are the major factors of stress that create many problems to health such as illness, depression, absenteeism, nervousness etc. In this situation the employees are unable to understand or enjoy life. This also proceeds to reduce the quality of life for them which lead the employees to lose their achievement aims and thus affect the functions or performance of employees to a great extent. Ambiguity or the prolonging of this situation affects the confidence and self-esteem of employees so therefore the employees lose their goals for improving their personal development and their career growth. (S, Michie, 2002, p. 67-68)

These concurrent problems or uncertainties as mentioned in the previous part will also damage the expectations and objectives of a firm as well. This might affect negatively in increasing absenteeism and turnover for the firms. It also creates a great gap between the actual expectation and the outcomes. Because the firm becomes unable to maintain a harmonious relation among the employers and the employees, it leads to reduce the job satisfaction and also creates moral problems of recruitment. As a consequence, employers face many internal and external difficulties due to a poor line of communication among employers, employees and clients. In case the management does not put some practical steps in this unreliable situation the conflicts rises and creates major problem for the organization. As research has shown, employers become unable to manipulate the expectations as a result of its poor quantity and quality of work. (S, Michie, 2002, p. 68)

Chapters 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 along with their subtopics have aimed at familiarizing the reader about stress, its causes and the effects of stress. It also addresses issues that help in achieving our aim and our purpose to understand the causes and management of stress at the workplace particularly in Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå. Overall the above mentioned chapters give an introduction of stress and answers to the question of what causes stress, it also clarifies the demerits of stress and management of stress. Afterward the following chapter will explain management schemes for both the employees and managers.

2.4 Steps towards Stress Management for employees and organizations

Productive management of stress includes three steps for both employees and organizations
1. Awareness: It helps to understand when there is decrease in performance and absenteeism.
2. determining the source: Find out what causes this distress and its consequences.
3. doing something constructive: Find solutions to existing problems

Stress could be considered as an inevitable condition at one point. It complicates the situation to maintain productivity and also disturb to have pleasant work and social life. The first step towards stress management is to identify signs that indicate stress such as anxiety, anger, annoyance etc. After these signs are recognized the next step is to find out the causes and figure out its impacts. The third and final step is to effectively deal with the stressful situation.
There are two types of coping mechanisms suggested by Folkman and Lazarus (1988) the first one is, (problem focused) here the stressors are either changed or totally removed. The second mechanism is (emotion-focused) where employees learn to adapt themselves to the situations and also deal with stress in a constructive manner. The difference lies where in problem-focused coping mechanism the stressor is directly being tackled; it is either altered or abolished. Whereas in emotion-focused it is only the people who change or learn how to adapt to the stressor in a productive manner. (Bloisi et al., 2007, p 326)

At the end the first person in control (charge) of managing stress lies on the individual and the followings are some of the strategies for coping with stress in relation to workplace.

1. Time management: Schedule tasks accordingly, controlling one’s time effectively, prioritization of tasks to be handled first. Here effectiveness and efficiency are valued.
2. seeking help: Getting assistance is advisable from management, co-workers or manager for improving the performance.
3. Emotion-focused strategies: As previously discussed if the stressors cannot be avoided learning how to adapt to it in a constructive way is relevant. Common emotion-focused strategies include exercise, companionship, relaxation and recreational activities. (Bloisi et al., 2007, p 328-331)

2.4.1 Employees stress management at the workplace

In most cases, the employees and organizational approaches are attempting to reduce the threat to health of staff associated with stress in their workplace. Individual approaches indicate several techniques in order to reduce the risk of stress associated to employee’s health for example, occupational, health, and clinical consultations, daily training, visit psychologists etc. The exact aim of these consultations and activities are helpful in assisting the employees to become aware of available resources to protect their health against unpredictable uncertainties. The existing services and resources help the employees to improve their abilities and skills against uncertain situations or change their current situations. (e.g physical, social, work). A wide range of training courses are conducted to assist the employees to improve their skills. (e.g. precise or adequate use of management, time management, communication proficiency, assertiveness, problem solving etc.). These activities lead to a higher achievement and active performance of employees against stress and coping with it. Training assists the employees to highlight the following features

- One can understand the signs of stress
- Gains flexibility in behavioral pattern, one can intervene to the stress process when it begins. Stress usually grows up gradually in a normal situation. More stress causes more problems.
- Makes aware of the situation and providing action plan for reducing the stressors.
- Develop the ways of how to react actively against stress and active coping mechanisms.
- Learn the skills of relaxation, motivation, and increasing self-confidence.

The above practices are proved helpful to overcome stress or to prevent stress from maximization. (Michie, 2002, p.69-70)
2.4.2 Organizational approaches to stress management

Managers can identify stress in the workplace by discovering work stress complications, by checking frequently the employee’s health and work fulfillment. Managers can also prevent stress by ascertaining that employees know where to turn to when they face with such problems and following up on their recovery if health issues arise. According to the study made by Leka et al. (2004, p.9) work stress influences organizations by means of having difficulty retaining employees, weakening achievement and output, employees unwillingness to perform actively and greater criticism on job performance from clients. Employees’ recruitment will be negatively affected and greater responsibility of being obligated to answer to lawful rights and accusations by stressed workers would arise; this as a result would harm the company’s appearance from those who are employed already or potential employees.

Management of many firms conducts many different activities and events as a motivational and inspirational aspect within their organizations. This might assist the employees to reduce their stress to an extent. (Fairbrother, & Warn, 2003 p. 8) Human resource management can also restructure the work provided for the employees, by concentrating on the demands, know-how, method and skills of employees and provide provision and a good control mechanism. This could be done by adjusting the work surroundings and allocating the task proportionally to all employees. Management should make sure that the employees are up-to-date and get the proper training to be able to perform their job properly and monitor their development. It should also make sure to implement flexible working hours that allow the employees to work and assist the employees to get proper guidance where and when it’s needed; this would be effective to minimize the stress. In addition to this promoting teamwork and collaboration between the employees could be used as stress reduction mechanism. Managers should also encourage their employees to take time management and decision making courses to help them enhance their confidence at work and capability of doing their work with a good manner. Management can also improve the physical environment and provide a suitable situation given the circumstances of cost and need.

Another organizational approach to stress management could be having a horizontal line of authority rather than a vertical one; this would help the employees feel comfortable and convenient to communicate with management. It is also helpful to build friendly and respectful relationship between managers and employee. When all the stress preventive measures have proved to be unsuccessful and stress has actually occurred and has caused health damages to the employee then this measurement should be taken as further explained above to provide both organizational and individual interferences like medical counseling and job restructuring etc. These activities will be implemented by these actions. But it should be discussed and agreed upon by both the employee and the employer (manager). At tertiary management stage, Management should be able to recognize workers who have problems and find it hard to solve their problems on their own and offer them assistance. Management can recognize when workers are having work troubles when the employees make mistakes than usual, have low achievement, has increased his/her alcohol consumption or there is a greater customer criticism. These can be taken into consideration when attempting to recognize work related stress among employees. (Leka et al., 2004, p.15)

Decreasing intrusions at workplace for the employees could be one of the solutions to be provided by human resource managers. Therefore minimizing the distractions at work as
much as possible would make the employee have more time to focus on work and not have to spend after work or weekends on work. It is not unusual to find distractions at work that make people stay at work after work or work on weekends as a result of not accomplishing the task due to reasons that are caused by intrusions. Intrusions at work are sudden brief pause at the job which is caused by another job request. Forms of intrusions are unannounced office visits, e-mails, phone calls and so on. Human resource management can lessen if not prevent the stress caused by intrusions at work by setting strict rules to let employee focus on task at hand. (Lin et al., 2013, p.3)

The problem of stress management is that not all stress occurred on the employees is caused by the task at the workplace. Most of the time there is a link between the sources of stress at home and at the workplace. Employers need to keep an eye on employees’ stress level regardless the cause because an employee who is stressed by personal issues might find the task stressful though the demand of the job would have been possible to perform under normal conditions. (CIPD, 2008)

**Stress process at the workplace**
The figure below represents a summary of the theories we have chosen for the topic. So all the theories mentioned above will be presented (summarized) below.

![Figure 3 Model of the stress process](image)

**Figure (3)**
Source: (Bloisi et al, 2007, p.313)
All the theories mentioned above regarding the issues of stress, its causes, consequences and management can be summarized by the model described above. The arrows in the model show relationship of the ideas with the ideas to the table it is linked to. The model gives a clear overview of the causes of stress from personal, organizational and environmental point of view. It illustrates that the likelihood of being affected by stress is as a result of personality types. This emphasizes that Type A personalities are more affected by stress. The changes that could occur in one’s life are also considered as one of the causes of stress besides the amount of personal problems faced by employees.

The organizational factors as explained before are those factors that happen in the workplace. They are related to the type of job, workplace environment and the duties to be performed by employees. The Environmental factors that cause stress are the changes that are uncontrollable such as redundancy, downsizing etc. whereas some of the technological factors are changed ways of doing the job like rapid changes to softwares, computerized systems etc. The individual moderators table describes that a situation is perceived as stressful only if it is perceived as threatening and how something is perceived also depends on the type of personality. Figure 3 states the coping strategies of both employees and organizations from problem focused and emotion focused mechanisms. as well as describing the physiological, emotional and behavioral consequences that can arise when stress is experienced.

Therefore this model helped us to summarize and briefly state what we plan to cover on our study. This model was especially relevant because it gave a highlight of what we have discussed thoroughly above the model about the cause, consequence and management of stress. Then again this model is also in line with our aim; what causes stress in the workplace and how it can be managed by employees at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå

2.5 Summary of theories on stress
To sum up the theoretical chapter and the core theories discussed in this section, stress, causes of stress and the management of stress with each core theory including subtopics such as symptoms of stress, personality types, factors of stress, workplace factors causing stress, types of stressors, consequences and disadvantages of stress on employees and organizations, employees stress management and organizational approaches to stress management were discussed.

This chapter started off by presenting what stress is and the definitions given by different scholars on this topic. In order to identify a situation as stressful some of the symptoms of stress were discussed. The aim of our research is to understand the causes and management of stress from both the employee’s and management’s perspectives of Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå. We have discussed the different causes of stress because the likelihood of being affected or the likelihood of perceiving a situation as stressful depends to a large extent on the personality of the individual. Further the disadvantages and consequences of stress for employees and the organization have been described to get to the productive management of stress.

In order to have a productive stress management mechanism one should be able to know the causes of stress and how the employees will be harmed with it and then its consequences are discussed. Therefore after looking at the consequences and workplace factors we have seen the mechanisms that are used to minimize the negative effect of stress both from employees’ perspective and human resource management.
The chosen theories are relevant for attaining our purpose, because they have been chosen to tackle the issue of stress from the beginning that is starting from definition of what stress is. Doing this, clarifies to readers from the beginning what we are going to be researching about and the reader wouldn’t have to refer to other sources to understand the concepts in our paper as they have been clearly stated and explained sufficiently. The theory of causes of stress is relevant to our study in order to understand if the causes of stress are personal or work related. This fulfills our goal to understand what causes stress among employees and management. After understanding the causes of stress, as per our aim we decided to find out how stress is managed from both the employee’s as well as management perspective.

In order to make the process clear and understandable we have covered the symptoms of stress to be watched for and possible consequences and disadvantages of stress before getting to the productive management of stress. Therefore we have elaborated what happens to the employees when stressed and what effects it has on company’s performance as well as employees’ performance. This helps to manage stress and what the company can do towards assisting the employees to minimize their stress level. Doing this has also helped us in attaining our research purpose.

We therefore believe that the theories mentioned are relevant to understand the topic of stress because it built up on the theories from definition to causes and then to the management of stress from employee’s and Management’s perspective. We therefore believe that these theories would give us an understanding of the causes of stress and how it is managed. This we believe along with the empirical data found would help us to answer our research question: What are the causes of stress at the work place and management mechanisms applied by both the employees and the management at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå?

The conclusion that can be reached from the theories in relation to our purpose is that the workplace causes of stress are work overload, poor working conditions such as overcrowded working conditions and noise. And Employee’s stress can be managed by proper time management, seeking help from HRM. Emotion focused strategies like leisure activities, companionship and exercise. Management plays an important role in evaluating and managing the stress level of employees at the workplace and should use different methods to minimize the stress such as conducting training courses to assist the employee’s skills, providing better working environment and making sure that the employees get proper guidance and consultation when it’s needed. This summary will be the pattern through which we will analyze the data.

Now that the reader has an understanding of what stress is and why we found this issue interesting we would now like to go on to the next chapter which is the method chapter which addresses how we conduct this study.
3. Methodological chapter

This chapter will introduce the methodological choices used in the thesis. Research philosophies, preunderstandings of the Authors, selection of case company and thesis topic, source criticism, data collection mechanisms, case selection, the process of data analysis, the interview guide, the selection of respondents, ethical considerations and the advantages of face to face interviews are also issues discussed in this chapter.

3.1 PREUNDERSTANDING

According to Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 414) Preunderstanding is the awareness, perception and familiarity that researchers have. We as thesis authors also need to consider how our own experiences and opinions could affect our research. The authors have further below discussed their primary and secondary pre-understandings. Our primary pre-understandings are those that are linked to our own experiences whereas the secondary pre-understandings are those that are related to the theoretical understanding that we have from different text books, scientific journals and previous courses that might be related to our research. As both of the authors of this thesis have different backgrounds we would present our pre-understandings separately.

3.1.1 Pre-understandings of Najmoddin

I am a person who is not expert in the area of stress and stress management, but as per my vision stress is an un-ignoreable aspect during each stage of life. Human beings might feel stress due to a set of various reasons during their life cycle, to highlight this people mostly feel stress during their educational period and occupational period. Since I am in the last semester of my study and will soon enter to the second phase (employment period) became much curious to know in advance scientifically the ways of controlling feelings and maintaining stress at minimum level. Where I was employed few years back had colleagues who were suffering from high level of stress that could cause their productivity at the workplace and also threat to their health. Regarding to these facts I became interested to the topic of stress. Aside this, my educational field is management and this topic fits perfect to my background. The subjects that I studied during studies had shallow touch to the concept of stress management but could help me to explore it. I also decided to use from this opportunity to increase my theoretical knowledge within stress area which would be helpful my own awareness and target readers.

As a general word I think that people between the ages of 25 to 65 have a working period of about 40 years. During length of time no professions remain free from stress. Though the people have freedom to have a strategy whether to increase or decrease their stress level. I think stress cannot be forecasted one might feel stressed at any time, but its degree may vary from environment to environment, job to job or person to person. But in terms of stress at the workplace employees usually feel stress due to a set of various reasons like inability to
manage time in a perfect way, conflict, employment safety or a combination of in job and off job stressors.

3.1.2 Pre-understandings of Selamawit
As a student who is soon about to enter the labor market I am especially interested in knowing more about stress at the work place. I wanted to research on this topic because I would like to know what to expect when entering the labor market for the first time, knowing what causes stress at the work place would help me in my future career to have a successful and stress free work life. Thus far I have not been employed in a company so I personally have not been a victim of stress at work place. Further this topic of thesis was of my interest as I intend to work more in the Human resource department and as this is the department that deals with solving and minimizing employee’s stress, this knowledge would help me to better prepare when dealing with such issues later.

My educational background is that I have been studying in Umeå University starting from August 2010 and over these years I have taken courses both within business administration as well as other courses. The theoretical pre-understanding that I have gained from my study so far as a student in the international business program consists of courses that are relevant to this study are mainly related to management namely a course called Organization and Management of the Firm. Besides this, courses such as research methodology and doing many group works have improved my academic writing skills. The theoretical knowledge I have within the field of management also includes a chapter that deals with stress. The advantage of this is that I was able to have some knowledge about the elementary conceptions of stress and stress at the work place. Therefore having this knowledge helped me to search for keywords for selection of theories that are appropriate to this study. The demerit of this preconception is that it led me to use theories mainly from the courses I had prior knowledge of. Therefore making this study limited in its scope as there could have also been other sources that deepen the study.

3.1.3 Searching for an interesting idea for our thesis: How we have come about choosing Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå as our case company and deciding on studying the causes stress at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå and the management mechanisms that are implemented.

The selection of case company is crucial and a key point to the reliability of the whole study. Therefore we decided to look for a case company that is global and have large quantity of employees and massive production. A company like Volvo group that produces large scale of products and have wide channel of export to various cities, states and countries won’t be free from stress. Therefore we thought that the employees would not be completely stress free or in other words stress in an organization this big ultimately exists. Additionally, the employees who work at large industries are usually involved with stress and its management.

Having lived in Umea for more than 2 years for both the authors and observing that Volvo cars, trucks and buses run through the town constantly, it was not that surprising for us to see so much Volvo products only in Umea as it is a Swedish multinational company. And thinking about the large amount of usage of Volvo products only in Umea led us to think that this company must employ quite a lot of people and most definitely from all parts of the
world as it operates in other parts of the world as well. Therefore witnessing the amount of Volvo Vehicles that are only in Umeå, we thought that Volvo Trucks is one of the major companies in Sweden. Thus the main arguments for our choice of Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå as our case company mainly arises from our perception that such a large company with diverse cultures and operation all over the world would not be free from stress. Besides that the willingness of the employees to participate in our study made us to seriously consider Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå as our case company and do a more thorough and deep research in that particular company. The choice of case company was also based on the degree of interest. If we see from a practical view, the proximity of the company had a lot of importance to us like easy access to company and data collection.

3.2 Research philosophies

3.2.1 Ontology
According to Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 20) Ontology discusses questions of social objects. Therefore ontology refers to the way in which a researcher identifies and views the reality that he/she perceived. There are two views on what is reality theses are objectivism and constructionism. (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 20)

Objectivism is defined as “ontological position that implies that social phenomena Confront us as external facts that are beyond our reach or influence”. (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 21) Therefore in this standpoint, the peripheral truths and an individual has no control over what creates the reality. Thus for a thought and research of this kind it is best to use quantitative methods. Where the results can either be rejected or confirmed by testing a hypothesis and used mainly for generalization. This method would imply that our study should be objective but as our aim of this research is to get a truthful answer from the interviewees we have gone with the constructionism view of ontology. Constructionism, states that social occurrences and their denotations are frequently accomplished from the insights and doings of social players (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 111). Which is why our study is based on this view as we want to see the personal opinions of the interviewees in order to see their reactions and ways of viewing our area of study. The Authors believe that it is best to conduct a qualitative research because we want to have a deeper understanding of the interpretation and awareness the interviewees have regarding our search topic Stress.

Therefore our study is based on the constructionist position because we as researchers want to have a deeper understanding of the implications that are made by observing our chosen respondents. The reality that we are looking for is from the responses of the interviewees. And we believe that this view would help us to answer our research question and help us know what the causes of stress at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå are and how the management and employees deal with it.

3.2.2 Epistemology
The epistemological approach is vital to discuss because the result of our study will be influenced by our data collection and interpretation.
Epistemology deals with what can be considered as acceptable knowledge in an area of study (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 15). The aim of this thesis is to understand the causes and management of stress at a manufacturing company such as Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå; therefore we are performing a study in which we collect information regarding stress from
employees currently working at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå. We are mostly concerned in their opinions regarding the topic of stress. And because this study is qualitative study our purpose is to have an understanding about the issue and not to generalize. Hence what we consider as acceptable knowledge is the interviewee’s responses and from this we aim to have an understanding of their point of views.

Interpretivism proposes respecting the dissimilarities among individuals and the things of the natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 17). The view the Authors have adapted as to what is knowledge is crucial for our research as it affects our explanation of our empirical findings. From the epistemological consideration our study has implemented interpretivism as we interpret the interviewee’s interpretation or viewpoints.

Another alternative to the interpretivist approach is the positivist approach. Positivism according to Bryman & Bell (2011, p. 15) is described as an epistemological position that supports the use of natural science methods rather than the study of social reality. This view entails that the researcher has his/her own objective view of reality. And only if it can be seen by the human science can it be considered as an acceptable knowledge. Because positivism studies social reality from an actual point of view it doesn’t deal with individuals, and their interpretations. (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 15)

In the positivist approach, theory is the basis for formulating a hypothesis and from this reach a generalization and this is called deduction where as on the other hand where theory is formulated from the hypothesis that is tested is called Induction (Bryman and bell 2011). And as we want to see the individual understanding of the interviewees we have disregarded this approach and used Interpretivist approach. As our aim is to understand what the causes and management of stress at the workplace in particular at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå are, we needed to interpret the interviews in a systematic manner.

3.3 Choice of subject

The choice of the subject was mainly based on the brief and basic previous knowledge acquired in the previous courses namely organization and management of the firm and the intention to develop on this specific issue (stress) considering its relevance in our present and future lives. This study focuses on a multinational company employing different people from different countries and work is interdependent between departments. We found the topic to be relevant and interesting since there is increase of firms that are functional at a global level, thus increasing international exposure thereby also raising the amount of stress.

When we got admitted to the bachelor thesis course and got the chance to research on a particular field with our own choice, we were both interested to find an exciting and motivating subject of study related to human resource management. The issues regarding stress attracted our attention, because many small/medium and large sized companies along with their employees have quite a lot of problems dealing with it. Since stress is not an ignorable phenomenon and many people are faced with it, it seemed more interesting because of the subject matter. Despite this we really did not study deeply on issues related to HRM before, so it increased our curiosity to the subject.

Employees feel stressed in one way or another due to many different reasons. Because of this salient fact we both thought to do a research regarding employees and their stress level during
their work place. Being in our last semester of our studies the knowledge that we acquired after having done this paper also provided us with information about the work environment and what could be considered as stressful to us when we join the labor market. Therefore this topic is not only relevant and interesting because of its recency, but also research on this topic gave us helpful insight on how to manage our personal and workplace stress as employees. Additionally, it provides us with the right mechanisms of tackling stress if we end up working for the human resource management team. Our research is unique in that it combined the theories that already existed and made use of them and compared them to a case study. It shows the relationship between the theories and the empirical finding that was gathered from the interviewees’ responses. These also give an insight into a real life scenario and shows if the theories can in fact be implemented or not.

The recency of the issue stress to be considered in human resource management as well as our positions at our studies, being in our final years made this issue to be an interesting and most appealing one. Because we wanted to explore the work environment that we soon are about to enter to and find out what could make us stressed and be able to prevent the damages that can occur because of stress made us even more eager to know about the topic. The knowledge that we acquired from this study did not only give us personal knowledge, but also comes in handy if we are to be employed in the HRM department of an organization. Therefore the main aim of this study is to explore causes and management of stress at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå and this is done by conducting qualitative data analysis and reviewing literatures. Our research is different from that of already done about the stress topic in that; we have combined our literature review findings and done a case study to see if the theories confirm the empirical findings that we got from studying a real life company (Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå).

3.4 Research design
According to Bryman & Bell (2011. p. 27) the process of collection and analysis of data using a qualitative approach gives significance to word as compared to quantification. Since our aim is to study and have a detailed and deeper grasping of the issues regarding stress, we selected a qualitative method for data collection and analysis of data. It is essential to note that a qualitative research strategy is helpful in understanding in-depth the objective of the study. It assists in obtaining the outcomes of the research. As a result we would be able to analyze our findings effectively through qualitative research by interpreting the stress causes, consequences and coping mechanism of employees in organizations. As opposed to quantitative research which focuses on scientific models. (Bryman & Bell, 2011.p. 386)

3.5 Criticism on Qualitative Research
The limitations with using qualitative data are that it is often subjective because of the open-ended nature of this type of study. It is also more likely to be concluded in a manner that the researcher views it. Qualitative data are also often hard to reproduce meaning that the results observed and the conclusions reached might be affected by the character, sex and stage of development of the researcher. Other disadvantages of qualitative research are that it is often difficult to generalize from the findings of qualitative data analysis because a few people interviewed could not be able to represent the whole population of employees at a company. Qualitative research also lacks transparency for example on choosing the interviewees; the respondents of the interview who were selected might be vague which can be considered as another shortcoming of qualitative data. The drawbacks of using secondary data as a whole is
that each previous research is observed in a way that is appropriate to answer a specific research question therefore choice of information are limited to respond to the problem at hand which omits other important information that could have changed the view of the reader otherwise had all the information been given in a secondary data. (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.409)

3.6 Data collection
The aim of this thesis is to understand the causes and management of stress at the workplace in particular at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå by both the employees and the organization (management). To analyze this subject we have used a qualitative approach for our data collection methods. In qualitative interviews there is the opportunity for the researcher to move off from the interview guide and ask the interviewee to clarify and also to modify the order of the questions. These qualities cannot be found in quantitative research in relation to questions and their dependability and legitimacy. (Bryman and Bell 2011. p. 467) Therefore we had decided that our data analysis is in form of words. We conducted a semi structured interview in our study. We focused on a multinational company which has a branch in Umeå (Volvo Trucks AB).

An appropriate method of data collection for our research was to do semi-structured interviews, because it fits both the qualitative research method and philosophical stance. Semi-structured interviews contains a set of questions related to a particular topic that represents the contents of the interview, it makes it simple for the participant or respondent to understand in-depth the purpose. (Bryman & Bell. 2011 p.474)

This method is helpful for both the interviewer and interviewee to feel free and talk freely regarding the given topic. This strategy facilitates the researchers to define the accurate data which leads to empirical findings and is also helpful in achieving the main purpose of the study. A semi-structured interview is an interview where the researcher has a list of questions related to the topic. We have listed the questions that we wanted to be answered by the interviewees and our interview guide can be found attached in appendix 1 and appendix 2. Doing a semi-structured interview helped our research in that we were able to follow up on the responses of the interviewee’s and also add the questions that came to mind right on the spot when interviewing the respondents.
In semi-structured interview the process is compliant and highlight was given to the understanding of the matter by the interviewee. (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.467) The quality of semi-structured interviews gave us the guideline of what the employees and management of Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå perceived stress as.
### Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secondary data</th>
<th>Primary data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scientific articles</td>
<td>Volvo trucks personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web-sites</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Journals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case study</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detailed data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (3) Data Collection  
Source: (Authors)

### 3.6.1 Primary data

For our primary research data collection we have conducted an interview with Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå employees. The respondents who participated in the research were from different departments of the company. We selected the employees from both genders. Doing this primary data search gave us first hand information of how the working conditions of an organization are and how the employee’s perceive stress in the organization. How we have chosen the respondents is explained further in section 3.11.

### 3.6.2 Secondary Sources

In our thesis we have used interviews as the primary data collection methods. In order to attain the objective of our research we also referred to secondary data and case study was also done on the stress level of employees at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå. This method increased our ability to collect accurate data related to employees’ causes of stress and stress coping mechanisms.

Survey on the other hand was not used by our research because of our need to get a deeper understanding of the topic by reaching down to the last point that we wanted to know by conducting an interview. This is not applicable in case of a survey.

As for the secondary data used in this research paper we have used academic articles, books, Websites that dealt with stress at the workplace. These literatures gave us the ground for definitions of stress at the workplace, causes and consequences of stress as well as the productive stress management mechanisms. The secondary data collection was in consideration of our research aim which was to understand what causes stress in the workplace particularly at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå and how it can be managed by managers and employees.

The authors of this thesis have reviewed articles, books and information found on the net such as booklets, guides and so on for finding the theoretical background. We have used Umea University’s and also Google scholar to find the articles which were relevant to our study. We
chose theories that mainly help us answer our research question which is “What are the causes of stress at the work place and management mechanisms applied by both the employees and the management at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå?” We have also used (Bloisi et al., 2007) and as it was the first book that gave us an initial idea about the topic of stress. We have also narrowed down our search making the years of publish of the articles recent, mainly starting from 2000 except two other sources that were published in the late 90’s and one in 1975. We have used the EBSCO database to search for articles as well as Google search engine. The keywords that we used when looking for articles were stress at work place, stress, stress and human resource management Causes of stress, Consequences of stress, Stress Management and stress management in Volvo trucks. We have also used books for the methodology chapter. Our Google Search results have also redirected us to books and articles that are useful in our study. Google Scholar have Recommended some books that have been used for the theoretical chapter.

3.7 Criticism of sources
The secondary sources used for our study could be grouped in to three; these are articles books and information collected through the web. The authors have used Articles mainly for the theory chapter and books have been used for the methodological chapter.

It is essential to gather theories that are of relevance to the study as well as reliable. For reasons of quality in our study we have reviewed scientific articles and other sources that are peer reviewed. Therefore the articles are read and approved by third party making it dependable. In addition we have also made our search recent and up to date by searching for articles that were reviewed mainly starting from the millennium though some articles were published at an earlier date.

The references that are used from the Web include booklets, documents and reports. The first step to finding these sources is Google scholar and we have also reviewed the suggestions that were made available by Google. These sources (booklets, documents and reports) are issued by organizations that are renowned and recognized. We have fulfilled the ethical considerations regarding the use of secondary data in that we have not used the content of these sources in any other way other than refer it the thesis nor did we distribute them.

3.8 Research sample
To permit analytical generalizations the research sample has included six employees from Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå, one whom is a therapist of stress consultation. We have given names for the first five employees as respondent one to five and have given the responses they have given regarding their own causes of stress at work and how they dealt with it. In regards to the last respondent who is respondent 6, the authors have decided to give her two names(titles) depending on who’s stress she is talking about and whether or not she was talking about herself or her patients. Thus we have described this last respondent as respondent 6 when she is talking just about herself the same as the other five respondents and what type of stress issues she faces at work. Where as we have used Respondent A for the same employee but in this case we think of her as more than just an employee at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå but rather
a therapist who is speaking about Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå on behalf of the company and the employees, as she describes the situations the employees face and as a therapist how she gives support and helps with managing this issue.

The authors have conducted the first five interviews on the same day and after having analyzed the interviews we were still incapable of answering our research question. The main problem that we had with this sample of respondents was that they were mainly explaining what caused them stress and how they manage it from their individual perspectives, though they have also mentioned if there is anything that is done by Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå to help them in reducing the amount of stress they faced. However their responses were still not sufficient as their answers differed from one another to some extent as well. And since our major aim was to see the causes and management of stress at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå both from the employees and the management’s point of view, this meant doing further research was needed to actually be able to see if there is anything Volvo truck’s management does in terms of stress prevention. Therefore we decided to schedule a meeting with a therapist working at Volvo health clinics. After having the approval of this therapist to meet us, we came up with different set of interview questions that we were going to ask based on our theories, as our questions could not be the same as for the regular respondents. Here it’s also worth mentioning that we have had two interviews with this respondent though it was done one the same day, the first regarding her own causes and management of stress where as the second one was regarding the employee’s stress who refer to the therapist for the treatment.

Though we have used the same questions as in the others when interviewing this therapist as respondent 6, we have used another interview questions when she was interviewed as Respondent A. (these questions can be found in the Appendix 2)

We also felt that having the interview with the therapist would give more value to our research and give an insight also from the organizational point of view regarding stress besides the individual point of view.

Our aim of this research is to have an understanding of the causes of stress at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå and to also see how Stress is managed by the employees as well as the company’s management. For this reason interviewing both ordinary employees and someone working on behalf of the company’s management gave us a balanced look at how stress is caused and managed in Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå

3.9 Face-to-Face interviews
In most cases interviews are conducted in two forms. Face to face interviews and telephone interviews. But in the area of organizational research, researchers prefer face to face interviews in unstructured interviews or semi-structured interviews as compared to telephone interviews because it gives openness to speech. The interviewer can gain and understand high quantity of data that contain high quality. In-case of conducting structured interviews they use either face to face or telephone interviews. The choice of interview methods depends to the level of data complexity, type of information needed, duration of interview, number of respondents in a geographical area and the convenience of interviewer and interviewee. (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010, p. 193)
3.9.1 Advantage of face-to-face interview

The main advantage of face to face interviews is that the interviewer can ask the required questions, clarifies the questions to the respondent and prevent misunderstandings. Direct interviews can also create room for the interviewer to be more flexible, for example if the question is not understandable for the respondent the interviewer can easily rephrase it. In case the interviewee feels stressed or discomfort can be detected through his/her reactions and through body language, but not possible to know through telephone interviews. (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010, p. 193)

3.9.2 Disadvantage of face-to-face interview

The geographical limitation represents the basic disadvantage of face-to-face interviews. If a large survey with vast resources is needed to do in a national level or international level, then it would be difficult to conduct face-to-face interview due to these reasons. First the costs are high like the cost of training interviewers, and conducting of interviews to a vast geographical area. Second is the time issue and finally the third drawback is the respondents’ feelings regarding the anonymity of their responses. (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010, p. 193-194)

3.10 Interview guide and process of interview

during the first step of data collection, we thought to build our interview guide by developing a set of questions related to our research field. Mainly the questions are relevant to the research topic and cover the major part of our interview. The questions are categorized under various themes such as demographics, stress, stress causes and management. The respondents felt much comfortable and free while answering because the questions had the form of open-ended questions. This helped us understand the stress level of employees at the company and the stress coping mechanisms as well.

We will describe the interviews much in detail and in-depth in the empirical findings and analysis chapters. Overall the interviews were conducted on a face to face basis and the employees were chosen randomly for 45 minutes. All the information achieved from respondents were recorded and transcribed word by word.

The number of questions highlights the limitation because the questions asked were too few to get detailed information. The other limitation can be found regarding the booking and meeting up the employees to the industry as it needed plenty of time in meeting of the desired employees to the company. Thus due to the time frame and lack of sufficient time given from management of the company to meet the employees we decided to only choose and include the core question needed for our study.

Note: We selected a respondent from medical department and conducted an interview with her in two phases. In the first phase of interview we set the interview questions similar to the other 5 respondents and named her as respondent 6, but in the second phase, we asked her questions regarding the employees’ stress and named her respondent A. It means that she is assumed to be the employer or working on behalf of Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå, in the human resource management team in second phase of interview. We made this interview with an intention to gather more data for the purpose of our study. Therefore it was helpful to a great extent to answer our research question.
3.11 Selection of respondents
We decided to focus on choosing our respondents because it was very vital for our research to find out the stress of employees working at different departments and sections in the industry. Therefore the authors thought to see the stress level in different departments hence we chose our respondents from various areas of specialization and departments. Further we also thought to have an equal distribution of both genders. We interviewed the employees who have different occupational background such as finance, operation, human resource, customer service and medical department. We selected gender wise 3 males and 3 females to equalize the balance of gender influence on the data collected. It assisted us to have an overall look on Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå and evaluate the employees stress.

The respondent that we chose from the medical department of Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå talked in two parts, first she talked similar to other respondent and we named her as respondent 6 and secondly she talked from behalf of the Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå and named her as respondent A which the reader can later see it in the empirical chapter. We thought having this therapist in our interview would strengthen our research as she responded from a professional point of view about stress.

3.12 Analysis and the empirical data
In order to fulfill the purpose of our research and answer the research question “What are the causes of stress at the work place and management mechanisms applied by both the employees and the management at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå? We chose a specific company (Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå) and used a qualitative data collection method by conducting semi-structured interviews with the employees and a stress consultant who works at the company. We have combined our literature review findings and done a case study to see if the theories relate to the empirical findings that we got from studying a real life company (Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå).

The information obtained from the interviews will be presented separately one by one in the empirical findings and later on analyzed in the analysis section. The demographic and gender influence of respondents during the process of data collection will also be given and why the employees face the problems of stress and how they manage it will also be further described. The findings from each interview will be analyzed in relation to each theme.

There is a relationship between our research question and the purpose of the research in that our aim is to answer our research question which is, What are the causes of stress at the work place and management mechanisms applied by both the employees and the management at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå? As a result the aim of our study is best fulfilled by the data collection methods we have chosen despite the flows of the methods.

3.13 Ethical Consideration
There are several ethical issues that should be noted while collecting data. It includes several people during the research period, such as sponsor of the research, the researcher and the respondent. Ethical aspects in research paper represent the issues of how researchers should treat respondents during the process of research or how to maintain equality between the
researcher and respondent. (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 128; Sekaran & Bougie, 2010, p. 220-222)

During the first stage of the interview the respondents of our research are informed about the objective of the interview. As an ethical view the respondents’ consents were obtained before recording of interviews for the purpose of research. It is one of the main responsibilities of researcher to keep the information obtained from respondents strictly confidential and prevent from invasion to the privacy of respondents. (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010, p. 221) We conducted the research in an anonymous manner. Therefore the respondents’ identities are not disclosed in the research paper for the same reason.

To sum up; this chapter has discussed the methods chosen for performing this study. We have addressed the Epistemological and Ontological considerations and also gave reasons as to why we chose the method that we have chosen. Afterwards the next section of our paper will present our Empirical findings that we have gotten from the interviews that we conducted.
4. Empirical Findings
In this chapter the data collected through the interviews are presented. In addition to this we will also add on a general introduction about the case company and Volvo group but in this section mainly focusing on their stress causes and management. Further in this section we present the previous case study that was done concerning the stress level of employees at Volvo Trucks AB Umeå. The way the findings are structured is in such a way that each of the interviewee is presented individually. These findings will also be the basis on which we make our analysis and conclusions up on.

To further understand the causes of stress and management, we have put our focus on a multinational company that has a branch in Umeå. We have decided to study the stress issues in Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå so as to come to a better understanding of the causes, consequences and management of stress in a manufacturing multinational company. Studying the topic of stress from an actual and real company’s perspective not only elaborates the theories but also helps to get a better view of how real life work situation looks like.

Volvo is a multinational manufacturing company whose brand is shared between Volvo group and Volvo cars. It provides manufacturing services in 20 countries and sales in more than 190 markets. (Volvo group, 2011) The company runs its business in Europe, Asia, South America, and North America. Volvo truck is one of the most important groups of Volvo and it ranks among the top three producers of heavy duty trucks in the world. More than 95% of the trucks produced by Volvo are heavy weights of above sixteen tones each. The Volvo trucks sales and services are global and captured about 140 countries throughout the world. (Volvotrucks, 2013)

Global operations
Sales and employees

Net Sales 2012: SEK bn 304
Employees 31 Dec 2012: 98 717
Figure (4)
Source (Volvogroup, 2013)
The above figure represents the net sale and number of employees at Volvo group to Asia, Europe, Africa, North America and South America.

According to the report of Volvo groups “In accordance with the principles of our code of conduct, all employees have the right to a safe and healthy working environment. The conditions required for a safe and healthy work environment shall be made available to all employees in the Volvo Group.” (Volvo Group, 2011 p. 79)

The internal Volvo Group workplace safety, health and wellbeing award was initiated in 2006. The company’s’ purpose is to encourage constantly advancing security at the place of work, and promote health and safety issues. The Volvo group’s global health and wellbeing work includes medical checkups, recovery care, different health promotion programs and several employee support packages. In some cases the programs that are offered by Volvo include support for both the employee and their families but this highly depends on the social security system of the country. (Volvo Group, 2011, p. 79)

Volvo group implements a comprehensive method that enhances security at work and promotes being in a healthy state. Volvo has a policy that makes sure that the workers are given the necessary information, provision and other employees should also be provided access to information, support and other options that helps the employees minimize the well-being risks that are related with work, way of life or emotional stress. (Volvo group, 2012)

In our study we selected and added an appropriate previous case study in our paper in which the contexts are relevant for this study and also assist in fulfilling our aims to provide in-depth analysis. We thought that a combination of these two approaches would help to better understand our research question. The following case study evaluates the stress level of employees at Volvo and suits our area of research. The following case also briefly discusses the stress level at Volvo by using a Shirom Melamed burnout questionnaire. Shirom Melamed is a psychometric instruments used in measurement of stress.

4.1 Case study: stress level of employees at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå

In this section we would like to briefly introduce a previous case study concerned with the stress level of employees at Volvo Trucks AB Umeå made by Sturesson (2007). At this study the researcher’s purpose was to evaluate a stress management program for a group of 14 production employees at Volvo Trucks in Umeå. The average age of the group was 39 years, with a spread of between 29 and 53 years. The employees belonged to the working group of fourteen production engineers and their manager employed in the mounting section. The group who participated to the study gender wise was eleven men and three women. The participants used to work fulltime and had no sick leave. All of them completed the program and answered the psychometry questions.

Stress level in the group was measured with a psychometric instrument, called Shirom Melamed burnout questionnaire. The measure was related to different dimensions of burnout expressed in subgroups burnout, apathy, tension, mental fatigue etc. The measurement is done before the program start and end of the program, and five months later. The group was subjected to a stress management program with eight cognitively oriented group sessions with different themes and relaxation exercises for each term. Then 1-3 follow-up meetings to
identify stressors are identified and then develop an action plan. A health profile with maximal exercise was before the program and at follow-up five months later.

To evaluate the performance stress levels was measured in the group with a psychometric instrument, Shirom Melamed Burnout questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 22 questions (graded 1-7) that measure different symptom of chronic fatigue syndrome. The measurement was performed before program start and end of the program, and five months later as mentioned above.

The treatment included in the stress management program was partly nine group sessions with behavioral medicine cognitively oriented conversation and relaxation as well as a health profile of a standardized program. The health profile included a fitness test and a review of health habits such as exercise, diet, smoking and alcohol.

The results of the evaluation at a 5-month follow-up showed an increased physical activity and decreased symptoms of such pain and sleep problems in the group. The improvement in exercise capacity and the reduction of symptoms may further suggest that the stress level in the group decreased. The symptoms such as pain and sleep problems are often stress-related. The improvement in exercise capacity may further improve the ability to cope with stress.

Results from the study that we may see a slight to moderate reduction in stress levels after the program's end are consistent with other studies that have evaluated stress management groups with cognitive behavioral medicine approach in which the treatment was relatively short.

Now that we have looked at a study made on stress management program at Volvo trucks AB Umeå, we would now like to move to our own study that we performed by conducting an interview with six employees from our case company.

**Demographics of the respondents**
The following figure represents the demographic of respondents who participated in our research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Department at Volvo Trucks</th>
<th>Working duration</th>
<th>Working hours per week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee 1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Operation</td>
<td>Below 5 years</td>
<td>40 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee 2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Over 10 years</td>
<td>40 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee 3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Operation</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Over 40 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee 4</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Customer service</td>
<td>Below 2 years</td>
<td>Below 40 hours</td>
</tr>
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<td>Interviewee 5</td>
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<td>HR</td>
<td>Over 10 years</td>
<td>40 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewee 6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>8 years</td>
<td>40 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (4)
Source: (Authors)
The interview questions formulated for the interviewees one to six and also for the stress therapist are in relation to our research question and in consideration of our aim of the study. To provide some guidelines of the questions we have attached our interview questions in appendix 1 and 2 of our thesis. Theories on our research are also used in such a way that, we have linked every question to the theories that we have used. Theories on causes of stress are related to questions 10 and 11 (Appendix 1) whereas Causes are discussed in questions 5 & 6 (Appendix 2). Symptoms of stress are dealt with questions 7 & 8 (Appendix 2) whereas consequences of stress are dealt with question 8 & 9(Appendix 1). Questions 12-14 relate to the theories on Management of stress (Appendix 1). Whilst in (Appendix 2) questions 9-11 relate to theories on organizational stress management.

Below we transcribed the information that was collected from the interviewees who were employed at Volvo Trucks Umea and we end up this section with transcribing the interview with a physician who is responsible for treating and giving advices for the patients that have stress problems at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå. This particular interview was also very vital for us in that we were able to gather plenty of information about the patients who refer to the medical department. We transcribed the physician speeches below the other respondents under the name of respondent A when she spoke about her patients. Where as we used Respondent 6 for the same respondent when she was talking about her own stress issues and looking at herself just as a normal employee at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå

Respondent 1 claims that stress somehow happens due to various reasons at life but concerned to workplace, he has never faced a serious stress during his professional life to give up a job. He also stated that during his employment he has sometimes felt stress during the working hours but it has never affected his productivity. He mentioned that the main factor of stress at the workplace is caused by frequent noises that can be generated by machines. But it is not at a high degree to be a threat for health or influence to the effectiveness of his activities. He claims that he never felt stress caused by physical problems, family reasons or financial problems.

Respondent 1 attempts to cope with stress by focusing on the positive, managing his time better, and sharing his feelings with close friends and relatives. According to the word of respondent 1 Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå has a policy in providing safe and healthy working conditions for employees and a successful strategy for building harmonious relations among the employers and employees. These result to have consent employees around the world. Lastly he believes that providing of vacations as a form of stress minimizing strategy is a helpful mechanism in decreasing the stress level.

Respondent 2 believes that stress can arise during the working periods in some ways. She claims that mainly stress rises at times when there are a lot of works to do under a limited period of time. As a stressful aspect sometimes it happens to do parallel work, for instance failure to do some documents from previous works needs to be reviewed and at the same time there are a set of new works do. It can be a source of stress because there is too much stuff to do and physical environment becomes crowded. She said that it has never happened to higher extent during her working performance to lose her focus or concentration or threat her health. Conversely, it helped her much to improve her productivity to the work, for example manages her time effectively and efficiently for each piece of task. She was the only respondent that
said stress to a certain extent improved her productivity for both professional life and personal life. It assists her to handle a large quantity of task under a specific period of time.

Regarding the cope and managing of stress respondent 2 said that she uses efficient technique to perform the job in a well manner and also reduce the stress level. As an internal activity she pointed out to the time management as an effective aspect in rendering the task efficiently and also minimizing the stress level during the working hours. But as an external activity she believes that visiting friends, going to picnics or parties, drinking coffee or tea with each others, communicating and sharing ideas among them are the killer of stress. She mentioned that Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå assist the employees to have a close access to services provided by company to work freely and comfortable.

Respondent 3 expressed his feelings regarding stress and claimed that stress is a common phenomenon during the working period. He claimed that stress cannot be ignored at all, stress as a phenomenon will be with an individual during each stage of life. He stated that he feel stress in two different ways, working perspective and daily activity perspective. For instance, sometimes he prefers to work more than forty hours per week and that is abnormal because it becomes much complicated to handle large quantity of stuff and may increase stress level. It also in some way disturbs the sleeping normal hours and daily activity routine so it can be the source of stress. Since he works at the operation section he said that frequent noises generated by machines during the working hours cause annoyance. Although protecting ear devices are available at the workplace but he said I am not used to use it properly.

Respondent 3 has experienced many different ways, methods and used from different procedures during the working hours, as getting information from colleagues and friends sometimes referring to the psychological doctor for consulting who is made available by the management of the company. He said when I face with doing a large quantity of works either in my professional life or personal life I do my best effort to manage time efficiently and effectively. He added that he experienced this strategy at various occupations and it leads to have a positive result in reducing the stress level and create prosperous working hours. At the end he mentioned that management is an effective supporter in reducing the employees stress level such as giving two months vocation in a year is a helpful way to relieve the stress level.

Respondent 4 claims that stress is a phenomenon which happens in all situations in life but concerning occupational activity she did not feel that much stressed. She claims that she has always worked at a stressful situation and is almost used to it. But she does sometimes feel stressed when there is a large quantity of stuff to do and it becomes more stressful to handle many things under a given period of time, for instance when the company receives the orders and have to deliver on time, simultaneously if it happens some dysfunction with the working of the robots it can be said initial source of stress. She said in case of happening a 10 minutes delay to the function of a group of robots it will lead to shorten 20 Cabs in production line.

Regarding the managing and coping with stress respondent 4 said that she uses from an efficient strategy and consider time management as an essential criterion for maintaining the stress level to a minimum point. She said that she really feel free and comfortable when manage the time in an efficient manner. For example during the working hours she sequences the works, prioritize the activities one to ten and arrange them separately one by one. Incase
of occurrence of some uncertain situation she stated that she looks only looks to the positive 
sides and share feelings with close friends, colleagues, family members, or relatives. At a 
final stage she mentioned that management has a great focus on stress and performs its 
responsibilities honestly for bringing down the stress level of employees to its minimum. 
They provide many services and facilities for the assisting of employees and reducing their 
stress level such as indoor psychological doctors, medical sections, and paying of salary 
incase of employee absence due to sickness or treatment reasons. As a final word she said 
offering of vacation and holidays are really helpful in managing and reducing the stress level.

Respondent 5 says that stress can be found at each stage of life due to instability or uncertain 
situation of physical condition, work situation, family reasons and financial problems. But 
concerning to workplace he said that he hasn’t felt stress because he has experienced many 
ways to maintain the stress level low. He claimed that he manages the time properly for both 
occupational activities and personal routines. For example he said that he plans for working 
hours in advance.

Respondent 5 thinks that both creating of stress and treatment of stress mostly depends to a 
person. He added that he always review his actions and then manage his activities concerns 
the arousal of stress. He stated the ways that he manages or maintains the stress to a lower 
level said that there is a three step easy method available to relieve stress or end the tension 
from whole life. It can be happened by a regular use of control alt delete functions. He control 
his actions and his behavior during the whole working hours in case of facing with some 
problems he looks for alternatives and solutions and finally he defines the sources which 
makes him stress and delete it. As a final speech he said that one of the main duties of Volvo 
Trucks AB, Umeå is protecting the health of employees. Therefore in comparison to other 
vehicle manufacturing industries Volvo Trucks has the most consent employees and low level 
of stress.

Respondent 6 expressed her feelings regarding stress and said that stress is half natural and 
half self generating phenomenon during the human life cycle. The natural stress can be found 
because of natural events which are not predictable such as pass away of close friends, family 
members, incurable illnesses, and other natural disasters but the self generating stress can be 
defined and managed. But a combination of both ways will be a great threat to health and life 
of a person. But regarding to stress at the workplace she claimed that she doesn't feel stress so 
often because of having a good strategy to the issues related to stress and work. She also has 
experienced many ways of how to manage stress. In case she feels stress; she said that it can 
be a combination of other sources of stress may be personal problems or family. As employed 
personnel of Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå she said that her stress level is not much as compared 
to other people outside the company. She meant that the stress level at Volvo Trucks AB, 
Umeå is normal and it is not to a high extent to leave job.

Respondent 6 discussed many key issues with confidence regarding the facts related to 
managing of her stress level. Since her job is giving consultation to other employees feeling 
stress, this gives her the opportunity to experience sufficient ways of how to cope with it. She 
claimed that she does not often feel stress at the workplace. Because she is always serious 
with stressors and manage them in advance in order to feel free and comfortable at the 
workplace. For example, manage her time in a proper order, increase her self esteem, reduce 
her weakness by doing some trainings, and as a final word she pointed out to relaxation and
rest as an efficient method of reducing stress. She mentioned that the management as a form of stress reducer has provided some services and facilities for the employee like establishing of health medical center, providing of stress consultation center, availability of employees to psychologist. As a form of stress reducer the existences of free time facilities like football/basketball/volleyball playgrounds, floor ball, snooker, billiard etc. Responded 6 said that the facilities and services assist the employees to relieve their stress to a great extent.

In order to meet the outcome of the research paper and increase the reliability of data collection process, we decided to interview the employees at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå in two phases. We did the First phase in which we interviewed the first five respondents and then we did phase two of the interviewing in which we interviewed Respondent 6 also known as Respondent A (We have described why we have given her two names in the respondent selection section of chapter 3 And this was to have a distinction between her response when she was referring to herself and when she was referring to her patient’s stress issues.) We did the phase 1 by conducting direct interviews with the employees who have different occupational backgrounds, at phase 2 we did a half an hour interview with a stress practitioner who works at the Volvo health center and who the employees meet when they have stress problem. We thought to evaluate the stress causes and management of employees through the eyes of a physician as well, would develop our views and strengthen our research by letting us have an outlook of the different perspectives that the normal employees and the stress practitioner could have. We therefore now present the Stress practitioners’ interview according to the name Respondent A.

Respondent (A) said that an overall large sample of research regarding the employees’ stress level at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå has not been done yet, therefore there is no statistics available to understand the exact level of stress at the company. But she claimed that the stress level of employees at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå is normal. Mostly the employees who feel stress refer to the company health center. The patients who come and visit the medical center for their treatment reach number wise to only 1 or 2 patients in two weeks. The employees who have stress at a high scale will be taken under serious treatment. So respondent (A) believes that the stress level of employees at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå is not at a higher degree as compare to the stress level of people outside the company.

Respondent (A) expressed the facts regarding the stress level of employees at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå under three categories. Under category 1 she claimed that a number of employees feel stress due to a set various reasons outside the organization, for example, family problems because of having limited time to fulfill the wife, son and daughter expectations, prolong illness, or other social or environmental problems. If they behave carelessly or ignore accessibility to solution of problems this would lead to stress.

Under category 2 she said that a number of employees feel stress at the workplace because of various reasons and depends to the types of work or types of activity at each department. As a general phenomenon respondent (A) states that stress can be created at the workplace because of the following various reasons, for example sometimes the employees face with the problems of lack of time and are not able to manage a large quantity of work under a limited period of time, the generating of frequent noises by machines can be a cause, disturbance by mobiles, unsafe employment etc. She said that a prolong habit of using tobacco, alcohol, and their regular use will also lead to feel stress.
Respondent (A) described the combination of workplace stressor and family problems as a form of stress generator under category 3. She said sometimes it may happen that employees feel stress because of having stress from two sources work and family, for example separation from wife or husband and simultaneously have an unsafe employment can be said a creator of stress. It may also create conflict at workplace and at home. The combination of both sources usually decreases the self esteem and has negative effect to mindfulness. Delay in finding solutions for the problems will drag the person toward the ditch of stress.

Regarding the diagnosis and measurement of stress respondent (A) explained that she uses from psychometric instrument (Shirom Melamed burnout questionnaire). The instrument is able to measure the issues related to stress at different dimensions of burnout such as apathy, tension, mental fatigue etc. Respondent (A) said that she also figure out the symptoms of stress as per the patient’s complaints concerning stress, for example problems in sleeping habits, lumbago, insomnia, chronic headache, lose in concentration, memory weakness, fatigue, unwilling to eat, drink, talk or work. Respondent (A) mentioned that employees who diagnosed with having stress, will be provided serious medication or other necessary consultation. The issues regarding the precaution of stress, managing stress, medication all will be discussed in details in the next part.

Respondent (A) explained that she uses different ways for the treatment of patients who suffer from stress. She has classified the patients in 3 groups. Group 1 is consisting of those patients who are at the primary stage of stress or stress at a low level. Respondent (A) said that such types of patients who are the primary stage of stress partly come to the company health center, partly go to other hospitals for consultation and medication and partly refer to manage their stress themselves. Groups 1 are the patients who are not so seriously stressed. She said that she listens to these patients talking about their activities inside and outside the industry, and then she asks a few questions in order to find out the initial sources of their stress level. At last she figure out the problems and provide them necessary recommendations to manage their work and avoid from stressor activities. Employees who come to the medical center for consultation or having stress at a very low level are the most successful employees in managing their stress.

Group 2 are the patients who have stress at a medium level, but they are still able to maintain their productivity at the workplace. Respondent (A) said that stress at this level is sometimes good for types of occupation which does not involve much with mental activity. It increases the efficiency and effectiveness of the work. However employees who have stress at a medium level usually don’t feel that much free and comfortable. They will face some sort of illness in a long run. Respondent (A) mentioned that she recommends some types of mental sedation pills, sleeping tablets if necessary plus good advice.

Group 3 are consisting of those patients who have advanced stress level. Employees having stress at high level are not able to concentrate much at their occupational and routine activities. They are not able maintain their productivity at the workplace and home. Patients who are in group 3 always suffer from chronic pain to back, head, and other part of the body, cannot focus and cannot sleep. Respondent (A) said that she doesn't have patients who have advanced level of stress at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå. Meanwhile if she would have faced such type of patients, she would have taken serious caution and medication. As a final word
respondent (A) said that an efficient way to reduce the stress level is giving rest for the patients for a couple of weeks plus other advices and recommendations.

Respondent (A) discussed a few words regarding the management action to the issues related to stress at the company. She claimed that the industry have provided many services and facilities for employees as a form of stress reducer program. Respondent (A) also said that one of the core focuses of Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå is to safeguard the health of its employees. Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå has proved its policy by providing different facilities like availability of sufficient health services at the company, easy and on time access to psychologist, therapist etc.

Respondent (A) added Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå has established a lot of free time and entertainment facilities in order to assist the employees to relieve their stress, such as floor ball/football/volleyball playgrounds, photography, snooker, billiard etc.
5 Analysis of findings

In this chapter we aim to analyze the response from our empirical findings against the chosen theoretical framework. Here, we will refer back to the theories. We start with the analysis and discussion of the data and how it is related to the different theories used in chapter two of our thesis. We presented the analysis according to different themes that we have taken from the theoretical chapter and based on that we have analyzed our empirical findings. The themes are put in italics for ease of reading.

The analysis was conducted by coding the interviews and categorization of the Figure 5 which shows how the interview questions are linked to the research questions and our theoretical framework. Classifications of the interview questions are formulated to answer the research question. The analysis follows the sequential order of the concepts used in this paper and the relation with the empirical findings. Afterwards the analysis of the similarities and the differences between the findings and the theories are used. This analysis is made in consideration of the model that summarizes all the theoretical concepts used.

Before analyzing the findings and comparing the previous sections of the empirical parts and theories, we found it helpful to structure a table and to conclude the whole contents and information we got from interviews in-order to make it easy for the reader to understand the core parts then simply precede with further analysis. The first column of the table represents our six respondents who answered our interview questions. As the table indicates the second column includes all the questions that are answered by the interviewees and in the same way the third column demonstrates the answers that we received from each respondent and split the answers in a way in column 1 and 3 to enable the reader to find the specific response from each participant. Finally the last column represents the connection between the questions and theoretical framework. for instance the first and second questions asked from each individual are related to stress and causes of stress. Research question: What are the causes of stress at the workplace and how management and employees manage it at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå?

**Figure 5 Brief presentation of interview questions in relation to theories**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Interview questions</th>
<th>Answers</th>
<th>Theoretical framework</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Noises, Telephone calls</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Work load, overcrowded</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stress and causes of stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lack of time, family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Time, conflict</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Combination of all source</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>work load and family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How do you cope with stress? Or how do you manage it?</td>
<td>Manage time better, focus on positive, share feelings</td>
<td>Stress management</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Focus on time, visit friend</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Manage stressors in advance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Share feeling with friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Uses from Alt + Ctrl= delete functions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Physical training, increase self-esteem, manage work</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Does stress affect your productivity at the workplace?</th>
<th>If not high work normal stress at a medium level increase her productivity Works normal but disturb personal routines Decrease productivity if feel high level of stress Stress at low level increase productivity Negative effects both at workplace and routine</th>
<th>Consequences of stress</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Does the management perform some activities in order to reduce the stress level of employees?</th>
<th>Provide facilities at work, vocation is helpful. Provide in-door activities. Free time activities. Medical facilities + holiday Simple access to Psychologist and therapist Entertainment and sport facilities.</th>
<th>Management role</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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</table>

**5.1 Stress at the workplace**

Overall the employees who participated in our research feel stress in some way, because of the pressure from the environment, workload, time left to manage or some other internal and external factors. (Michie, 2002, p. 67) But generally the level of stress at the workplace differs due to the nature of work and employees’ behavior. They all agreed that stress at the workplace is an unavoidable phenomenon. We had respondents from different departments. Therefore the numbers of obtained responses regarding how they feel stress were stated to some degree of contradiction. For example, respondent 1 claimed that stress is a predictable phenomenon in the human life that one can not totally get-rid of. He said that stress can happen due to various reasons but regarding stress at the workplace he also stated that he
doesn't feel much stress. Since his occupational background expects to work with machines, he mentioned that he sometimes feels stress because of noises generated by machines or unexpected telephone calls which Lin et al., (2013, p.3) explains as intrusions. The opinion of respondent 3 matches with the idea of respondent 1 to some extent because they are approximately from similar occupational background. But in contrast respondent 3 also discussed off-job issues concerning stress.

As Parker and Ettinger (2007, p. 350) stated that an individual feels stress due to various factors but the major factor of stress can be the lack of control over a situation and poor performance that does not meet the expected outcomes. In comparison to other respondents respondent 4 says that she doesn't stress at the workplace because she has always worked at stressfull situations. Surprisingly respondent 5 was the only respondents who have not felt stress at the workplace at all. But he confessed that he has experienced stress getting from other sources such as family reasons or financial problems. Mainly respondent 5 discussed the external aspects of stress. Respondent 6 almost has similar idea with respondent 5 but with some contrast. She said that she rarely feel stress at the workplace and in case she feels stress then it can be a combination of off-job and in-job aspects, while respondent 2 complains regarding the unmanageable workload under a limited period of time. She says that the nature of her work expects to manage a large quantity of activities, sometimes it becomes more stressful especially at the time when too little time is left, while respondent 2 believes that stress is not always bad. Stress to some extent helps her to increase her productivity at the workplace.

Respondent (A) is the only respondent whose idea matches with the opinion of respondent 2. But in addition to that the employees face with the lack of time in some certain activities. Respondent (A) speaking on behalf of Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå discussed other main sources of stress that majority of the employees face with, for example unsafe employment. A number of employees suffer from this aspect and finally it leads to threaten their health or feel stress. She also mentioned that a wrong leadership can also influence to the confidence and self-esteem of employees. If it repeats frequently then it creates negative aspects.

Stress can come out with either of these main factors, physical, work, family, financial. Sometimes a person can be influenced by stress initiated from one source, say for example financial problems. But a combination of two (financial+family) may lead to create stress. Simultaneous conflict at the workplace and at home is a serious factor that will also lead to feel stress. Habit to drugs, alcohol, nicotine and its use to higher quantity will also threaten the health and finally leads to stress.

All the respondents who participated in our research briefly discussed what stress them in what situation or in what way. We agree with them but there are some other factors that are left out, this could be due to the nature of their work or also due to the industry they are working in. We believe that stress can be felt or experienced when either of these mechanisms (emotions and cognition) doesn't work properly. (Michie, 2002, p. 68)

5.2 Symptoms of stress

The symptoms of stress on a person are described from three different angles such as emotional, behavioral and cognitive. Stress from an emotional perspective can be observable through ones anxiousness and frustrations. While the behavioral sense of stress focuses on how one behaves with the society, family and friends. It also considers the state of an
individual regarding doing his routine works. In the same way, the last one is cognitions and refers to the thinking of a person whether it is normal or changed. And it can be measured through mental performance of an individual such as the state of one’s memory in the before the event and after the event. It also considers the action of an individual in terms of decision making and problem solving. (Michie, 2002, p. 68) Accordingly, the information we obtained from the respondents regarding the symptoms of stress is stated below.

Respondent A described her understanding regarding the symptoms of stress of Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå employees who refer to her with having problems in their health. She claimed that she understand the symptoms of stress through checkup and by asking of a few questions from patients such as by asking, can you sleep eight hours at night in normal way? Do you use drugs or alcohols? Do you have problem in daily activities? And so forth. She also added that she understands the symptom of stress on a patient in different ways. For instance she looks whether there are any changes that occurred in the feeling of the patient such as tiredness, frustration and one can get angry soon for no reason. In the same way she continued her speech and said that she considers the patients behavior and his or her background regarding use of drugs, tobacco and alcohols. She also mentioned that some change occurs to the way of how he or she thinks, for example becomes lazy to take decision on a specific task, can not concentrate to the work therefore it decreases his/her ability to create something or find the solutions for the problems when facing with some certain problems. Lastly, she added that some misbalances on the patients’ body make her sure regarding the existence of stress on her patients. For instance, one feels pain and aches all over his body, sweating, becomes breathless, complains with having skin problems and so forth.

According to CIPD (2008) the symptoms of stress are mentioned as increasing alcohol intake or smoke excessively and interference with sleep. The symptoms of stress identified by the practitioner who works at the Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå health center as per the patient’s complaints concerning stress were problems also in sleeping habits, insomnia, chronic headache, loss of concentration, memory weakness, fatigue, unwilling to eat, drink, talk or work. Most of these symptoms are visible to the naked eye whether it is happening to us or the people around us therefore these signs should not be ignored in a person and us as authors of this thesis and perhaps future HR department employees, have gained an enormous knowledge in helping ourselves as well as others if the need arises in identifying the symptoms and providing solutions to the problems of stress.

5.3 Emotions and stress

According to Parker & Ettinger (2007, p. 326) & Ashforth & Humphrey (1995, p. 99) emotion is the subjective feeling and mood of an individual. Emotion has a direct linkage with the mental and behavioral action of individuals. A person’s way of thought and behavior will be different if a change occurs on his or her physical and psychological situation. In relation to emotion respondent A said the existence of anxiety and depression is common problem among the employees. She added that anxiety is a serious problem which threatens the health of employees if not treated. It affects the employee’s activity and performance, employees who are affected with high anxiety and depression can not perform their activities normally, and
they get angry soon. In this way, it leads to low-performance and gradually creates conflict among the employer and employees. So she believed that emotion is a phenomenon if motivated then it increase the performance and satisfaction of employees or if ignored, becomes problematic for employees health and also leads to shorten the expected performance by them. At the end respondent A said that she takes serious medication treatment for the patients who are depressed.

5.4 Types of personality
Friedman & Rosenman (1974) stated that people are differentiated by types of personality and each type of personality varies the degree of being affected to stress. It is mentioned that the employees who have type A personality perform better with doing several tasks simultaneously. But later becomes anxious and suffer from high level of stress. Whereas type B personality is more relaxed and calm. It is more about professionalism, they attempt to perceive the stressful situation and then regulate their activities. This is why they have high performance with low level of stress. With regards to types of personality respondent A did not say anything obvious, but she mentioned that the degree of stress differs among people. Employees who work more in a relaxed way and schedule every single task in advance are not affected by stress highly as compared to those who are not able to determine themselves and try to multitask by doing several piece of work in rush.

5.5 Types of stressors
As our aim was mainly concerning the causes of stress at the work place particularly in Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå, the interviewees have not mentioned much of the external factors that can cause them stress. However a few respondents have addressed this. For example respondent 2 mentioned that family related problems such as not being able to have enough time for both family activities and perform well on the task was according to this respondent an external factor of stress, In addition to this she also mentioned social and environmental factors. Bloisi et al (2007, p.318-319) categorized stressors under four main parts such as job role, underutilization, poor performance and responsibility for others as the main stressors. But in relation to stressors with the interviewees, each respondent had different thoughts and opinions concerning of how they are stressed. Respondent 6 talked generally about how she feels stress. She said that natural issues such as losing of a close member of family or having incurable diseases are the main stressors in life. But sometimes it happens to have stressed both job and family, and then it becomes more dangerous. Whereas, respondent 2 mentioned high level of work at a short period of time as stressor and stress creators at the work place. In the same way, respondent 5 talked about personal problems, family breakage and financial problems as the main stressors.
The stressor that was dominant at Volvo trucks AB Umeå was, poor working conditions: that is extreme heat, noise and sometimes over crowdedness. From a manufacturing company point of view the stress level among the employees is mainly due to a set of various reasons such as work overload, over crowdedness at the workplace, and generating of loud noises by machines. This situation is salient here because of the nature of the working situation and the type of job performed by the employee. Role ambiguity in a manufacturing company was not found to be the number one stressor at the work place but rather at Volvo trucks AB Umeå,
organizational factors of stress were found to be poor working conditions where the employee is often too distracted and where there is noise.

5.6 Consequences of stress
Some of the consequences of stress mentioned by the interviewees were lack of proper sleep for example as mentioned by respondent 3, whereas respondent (A) mentioned that patients who have stress at a medium level as she has grouped them in group 2 would most likely not feel free and be comfortable in situations therefore creating bad consequences of stress. Unlike the other respondents, respondent 2 didn’t think stress has caused her negative consequences as she mentioned that stress had not let her to lose her focus and lower her performance, or cause her any health issues, rather it lead her to even be more productive. So the consequence of stress for this respondent was to make her more motivated and productive. Therefore not all respondents have the same opinions that stress has only bad consequences for employees.

5.7 Disadvantages of stress
Some of the disadvantages of stress as mentioned by respondent A, mainly when she faced employees at an advanced level of stress were that patients at group 3 that is those with advanced stress would not be able to concentrate much at occupational and routine activities, and they would also be exposed to chronic pain to back, head, and other part of the body. In addition stress at an advanced level can lead to lack of focus and sleep.

5.8 Steps towards stress management
From the perspectives of respondent 2, she believes that the first way to avoid stress is to learn time management skills and also by sharing feelings with relatives and friends. Whereas according to respondent 4 times management is one step towards stress management; that is by prioritizing the tasks at hand by giving them orders and arranging work one by one can be one way towards stress management.

According to respondent 5, reviewing one’s own actions that lead to stress then managing activities step by step would be one way towards stress management. Respondent 5 also states that he can use three steps towards stress management that by using “control, Alt, Delete” functions as he named them. The first is by controlling his actions and behaviors. Then the second step is where he searches for alternative courses of actions and lastly removes the stressors. Respondent 6 believes that stress can be relieved by first of all increasing self awareness and developing self esteem and this could be achieved by doing trainings to reduce weaknesses. Whilst From respondent A’s perspective she manages the stress of her patients depending on their level of stress as she groups them between one and three. Those in group one are assisted by her as she first asks them their feelings and situations and she figures out what their stressor could be and then by providing them with recommendations. Therefore respondent A uses different Steps for different patients based on the group the individual belongs to. Besides the interviews even from the (Volvo Group report of 2011, p. 79) we can understand that Volvo is not passive in its prevention of stress rather, it promotes medical
checkups, recovery care, different health promotion programs. And according to the reports of Volvo, the health support even extends to families of the employee’s in some cases. Besides this Volvo also has a policy that makes sure that the workers are given the necessary information, provision regarding the availability of the health programs given by Volvo group.

From the responses of Respondent A we can see that she implements the Steps towards Stress Management for employees and organizations. Productive management of stress includes three steps for both employees and organizations that is 1, Awareness: identify signs that indicate stress such as anxiety, anger, annoyance etc. And respondent A does this by asking and observing the signs that the patients are showing. Some of the suggestions that Respondent A gives is also in line with what Bloisi et al., (2007, p 328-331) mentions in his book, in that she encourages time management, seeking help and also emotion- focused strategies in which she recommends that the employees develop their self esteem to be able to adapt to changing work situations. She also promotes learning the skills of relaxation, motivation, and increasing self-confidence as mentioned in Michie (2002, p.69-70)

5.9 Causes of Stress
Some of the causes of stress are instability or uncertain situation of physical condition, work situation and lack of control. (Parker, 1975, p.350) Where this is common in high-stress jobs they are also some of the issues that the employee’s at Volvo trucks AB Umeå thought were the reasons for their stress. Noise that was generated by machines was the main cause of respondent 1; this could be due to the fact that he works in operation department. Therefore his daily work life is based in situations that are chaotic and noisy that he has adjusted himself to be as productive regardless of the sounds made by the machines.

For respondent 2 the main source of stress was work load as one of the Workplace factors causing stress and the other reason of stress for this interviewee was crowed environment. Unlike respondent 1 noise was not her source of stress and this could be because of her department as she works in finance department. But as respondent one she too has never felt so stressed that she cannot focus on the task at hand and decreases her productivity or cause her health problems for that matter. Respondent 2 was actually the only respondent to say that stress was good for her and that it boosts her productivity and made her use her time wisely.

Respondent 3 who is working in the operations department states that he is also affected by noise and that it is the main source of his stress. Even though noise at his department is unavoidable, Volvo trucks AB Umeå attempts to reduce the stress that can be caused as a result of this by providing head phones, respondent 3 still claimed that he is still not used to it to the extent where it doesn’t affect him anymore.

Respondent 4’s response towards stress was different from others in that she said she feels stressed at work very rarely and her reasoning was that her experience and her exposure to stressful situations made her handle it well and not stress about it and if she ever feels stressed she said that it is mainly because of work overload and sudden situations such as dysfunctionality of machines as one problem in one section also leads to problems in other sections and the interrelation of the machines. Respondent 5 just as respondent 4 is also not stressed very often at the work place due to his prior experience with situations that are
stressful and learning how to maintain them. Respondent 6 speaking on behalf of her patients as respondent (A) also said that the employees that come to her are mostly stressed as a result of work over load, noise and too much consumption of alcohol and tobacco were the main causes of her patient’s stress besides the causes that are of personal or family related. In addition to these conflict is also another source of stress according to Respondent (A)

The fact that increasingly, the stress level is changing rapidly among the employees due to a set of various reasons such as work overload, over crowdedness at the workplace, generating of loud noises by machines Could be backed up by the employee’s response in which some said noise was actually the main source of their stress as well as crowded working situations also made it difficult for them to focus on one thing at a time. For both respondents one and three the issue of voice was salient in causing stress for them.

Some of the causes of stress that are mentioned by Fairbrother, & Warn (2003 p. 9) can be linked with the responses given by the employees as those working in the operation area said that noise is one of the main causes of their stress. Besides noise, the interviewees also mentioned that having too much work at hand and crowded physical environment (Intrusions at work) made them feel stressed.

**5.10 Stress management**

Respondent one’s main stress management mechanism is time management; besides time management he also shares his feelings with friends and family as opposed to respondent 3 who shares her emotions with a professional at Volvo trucks AB Umeå. Whereas respondent 2 also uses time management as stress reducing scheme in the work place, outside her work place she too also socializes with friends and shares her ideas among her peers. Respondent 1, 2 and 3, use time management to reduce their stress. It seems that for most of the respondents time management is the main and most important stress management mechanism as respondent 4 also implements it and it has proven to give her positive results as well. Besides time management she also shares her feeling with her friends, family and colleagues. Respondent 5 also asserts the power of time management towards stress minimization both for his personal as well as occupational life.

As it is her job to give consultation to the other employee’s in Volvo trucks AB Umeå. Respondent 6 says that she doesn’t feel stressed too often as she knows how to prevent it before it even happened. She also prevents it by managing her time well like other respondent’s and also doing activities that boost up her confidence and self esteem. Most (4/6) of the employees that have been interviewed mentioned that time management is the most common and effective stress management mechanism.

Respondents 1,2,3,4 confirmed that time management as also mentioned as one of stress management mechanisms by Bloisi et al., (2007, p 328-331) are crucial to stress minimization and management. In addition one of the employees uses flight mechanism instead of flight mechanism that is to deal with his stress by tracking what stresses him and looking for alternatives and solutions and finally deleting his stressor after defining the sources stress.

From most of the respondents of the interviews it is evident that time management is the most crucial form of stress management. Majority of them expressed their opinions regarding
sharing of feelings with close friends and families, make them to have a sense of support system and relieve their stress.

5.11 Management's role: consultation facility in Volvo trucks AB Umeå

Respondent 1 said that the management of Volvo trucks AB Umeå attempt to reduce stress by giving vacations is effective. Respondent 2 also said that the management of Volvo trucks AB Umeå attempts to make their employees feel free and relaxed towards reaching out for help they provide. Despite the availability of help that is provided by Volvo trucks AB Umeå, only respondent 3 admitted to get help by consulting with the psychological doctor that was available by Volvo trucks AB Umeå’s management.

Respondents 3 and 4 also agree with Respondent 1 by saying that Volvo trucks AB Umeå giving two months vacation in a year is also helpful in minimizing stress. Respondent 4 appreciated the effort that was made by Volvo’s management to minimize their employee’s stress level she also mentioned some of the activities that was done by management as providing psychological doctors, medical sections, and paying of salary in case of employee absence due to sickness or treatment reasons.

Respondent 5 also said that in comparison with other vehicle manufacturing companies, Volvo truck has lower level of stress among its employee’s. Respondent 6 also agrees with this saying that the stress level in Volvo trucks is not much compared with other company’s employees. Respondent A works to manage stress, she asserts that Volvo’s management has provided its employees with facilities such as medical center, consultation center and leisure activities. She says that these facilities help to relieve the stress level among workers to a great extent.

From the interviews it was evident that the employees were assisted to become aware of the available resources to protect their health. The fact that respondent (A) said that at Volvo trucks AB Umeå she hasn’t had patients who have advanced level of stress shows Volvo trucks AB Umeå employers’ loyalty towards bringing their employee’s health first. Volvo trucks also have good stress prevention mechanism. Respondent (A) will provide serious medication or other necessary consultation asserts that Volvo’s employees will get the right treatment when needed.

Though not all the concepts mentioned in our theory chapter of our paper regarding what management can do to prevent stress is not implemented by the management at Volvo, some of the activities that are actually done by Volvo to solve the problem of stress include providing services and facilities such as health facilities at the company, giving easy and on time access to therapist and also having free time and entertainment.

The analysis section Clarified the whole idea of the study also combined the theories we used with the information we collected from the respondents. Human beings might suffer from stress due to various reasons but there are also many ways available to get rid of it. So in order to understand the result of our study refers to the next chapter.
6. Concluding Remarks

This chapter presents the conclusions of our research by encompassing a summary of the most important results from the whole thesis. The conclusions made are linked to our analysis and are also in line with our research aim which is to have a clear understanding of what causes stress at a multinational company such as Volvo Trucks AB Umeå and how Stress by the employees as well as the company’s management are managed or handled.

Based on the combination of our empirical study done at Volvo Trucks AB Umeå and our literature review we have reached the following conclusions. Our empirical data is reliable to the extent that it helped us in attaining our aim which was to find the causes and management of stress by both the employees and managers at Volvo Trucks AB Umeå. Our research by considering Volvo Trucks AB Umeå personnel made it even clearer to what the causes of stress are in an actual company and how the employee as well as management deals with them. This gave us a clear guidance towards answering our research question. The theoretical framework assisted us to understand what causes stress and how it can be managed. Where as the empirical findings allowed us to see this from Volvo Trucks AB Umeå employees’ perspectives and the analysis created a link between the theories and the empirical findings and summarized what the causes and management mechanisms of stress at a manufacturing multinational company such as Volvo Trucks AB Umeå are.

6.1 Conclusions

Our research using qualitative methods to understand the causes of stress at the workplace particularly at Volvo Trucks AB Umeå and also observe the management mechanisms applied by both the employees and the management at Volvo Trucks AB, Umeå can be concluded by our findings and analysis of our results are summarized as follows.

After conducting this research we can conclude that regardless of the employees’ job level, position or belongings of department, employees at Volvo trucks AB Umeå do feel stressed like other companies’ employees do. Employees feel stress because of various factors, mainly on job and off job reasons. But not all the reasons are directly linked to the issues that create stress at the workplace. We think that the stress level among employees at Volvo trucks AB Umeå is normal and it is not more than the stress that people feel outside the organization. With regards to theories and information collected from the respondents during interviews, we come up with three main conclusions.

Conclusion 1: causes of stress

We wanted to see the main causes of stress at Volvo Trucks AB Umeå. So we found several reasons why employees feel stressed at the workplace, the reasons mainly were inability to manage time, work overload and noise as the main stressors at the workplace. But it is necessary to say that noise is subjective only to our study as we did our case study on a manufacturing company and the conclusion that noise is the main causes of stress in the workplace might not be valid beyond an industry that is of manufacturing. Work overload is also another main stressor because it puts the employee under pressure to perform too many tasks under limited time.

As Volvo Trucks AB Umeå is a manufacturing company we were able to conclude that in a manufacturing multinational company where the physical environment can be chaotic and noisy, this situation can be the cause of stress. The conclusion that can be reached from the
Theories in relation to our purpose is that the workplace causes of stress are work overload, poor working conditions such as overcrowded working conditions and noise. From our analysis we are also able to conclude that the environmental factors of stress are not salient in a multinational manufacturing company such as Volvo Trucks AB Umeå where the employees were focused on the internal factors of stress rather than the external. Stress factors are not always stable, consistent and similar to a group of occupations. It varies from environment to environment, work to work or situation to situation.

**Conclusion 2: Steps towards stress management**

We also add to our findings regarding the employees stress coping styles and steps that employees at Volvo Trucks AB Umeå seek out to their close relatives, friends and families for support and consultation. Sharing of feelings and emotions contribute to relieve stress also provide them to enjoy from their professional life and personal life. Being able to share feelings with peers and families gives different perspective about the proper way to tackle a problem besides having a sense of companionship leads to comfortable workplace. Employees mostly use these tactics during the periods in which they feel stress. However stress reduction depends on how the employees manage their time effectively and also how the managers make the workplace stress free. We also conclude that stress is highly self-controllable and those employees have the ability to control their feelings and manage their stress and for the rest they can refer to the facilities that they are provided by the management. Lastly we would like to conclude that sharing values concerning ambition level is vital in order to experience a reduced stress level. In some instances the employees stress level will be affected if they do not know anything about their fellows or close colleagues who works in a team. It makes them to be afraid if their ambition level doesn’t match. Therefore it is vital to as much as possible to get to know each other’s better and share values and ambition level; this will thus affect the stress level and can help in stress reduction.

**Conclusion 3: Management of stress**

Lastly we add to this conclusion our findings regarding the stress management of Volvo Trucks AB Umeå. We see that Volvo Trucks AB Umeå has provided a safe workplace for the employees. It obtained an international award because of having a safe workplace. Volvo trucks AB Umeå has provided medical health center for the treatment of employees stress. Employees have freedom to meet the therapist and psychologist as a reason of improving their self-esteem and assertiveness. Volvo trucks AB Umeå has also made free time activities and various sport facilities for the employees. We think that it is an effective way to support its employees in reducing their stress level.

We have also found out from the employees opinion who contributed to this study that stress at the workplace is manageable but a combination of both family and work stressors are highly negative. What we found from the employees open-ended questions is that sometimes stress at a certain extent affects positively to their work performance. It makes the employees to focus on time management and provide them to render their on job and off job activities adequately.

Employee’s stress can be managed by proper time management, seeking help from Human Resource Management. Emotion focused strategies like leisure activities, companionship and exercise can also be used to relieve stress. Management of a company also plays an important
role in evaluating and managing the stress level of employees at the workplace and should use different methods to minimize the stress such as conducting training courses to assist the employee’s skills, providing better working environment and making sure that the employees get proper guidance and consultation when it’s needed.

To some up; while many employees struggle with stress, in worst cases it leads to uncertainties and severe impairments on their health and performance. The main situations that generate stress are likely uncontrollable, unpredictable, and are not known. But alternatively there are several resources available like personal awareness in coping skills. For example: time management, assertiveness, ways to higher up self-confidence and so on. Management can also utilize some resources for reducing the stress level of the employees by investing in training programs, work infrastructure, improving the efficiencies in management and employment practices and also trying some other ways which is profitable in organizing the work.
7 Recommendations regarding stress management
We recommend time management as the first and foremost stress management mechanism both from our personal lives and based on this research. We have found it to be the best way to maintain our stress level to a minimum, therefore time management is vital not only in the workplace but at school and also in our daily individual lives. We also recommend that sharing our idea and problems helps to provide solutions so therefore this also helps in minimizing stress. Therefore sharing stressful situations with others, sharing of feelings and emotions as much as possible contributes to relieve stress and make an employee better of both at his work and in his personal life. By sharing of ideas we as individuals could get help or advice towards the issue that we found stressful. If necessary it also helps to a great extent to consult these issues with professionals and get the proper remedy before the situation get out of hand and leads to health problems. We also recommend other companies to provide medical and consultation facilities as well to have a system of workplace where the employee should feel free towards approaching the help centers. This not only helps the employees but also increases the value and perception of the company by showing the value it gives for its employees.

7.1 Implications of the study

The contribution that this study emphasizes is at two areas of concepts; that is the causes of stress at the workplace and its management. So from our findings we think that stress should be taken into consideration more often by both management and workers. Since this study focuses on the combination of two concepts therefore employers and employees at a multinational manufacturing company would be our target readers.

7.2 Recommendations for further research
We come upon some ideas during the research. The recommendations for future studies that we suggest are. First the research should be done on a bigger sample to cover the whole departments. It assist the researchers to generalize findings efficiently and also helps to come up with better results. We also think that it would be better to consider large number of employees for the future research. It is necessary to have a research and provide data in relation the stress level of employees. This might help the management to understand the sources and causes of stress. Sufficient volume of data improves their actions in reducing the level stress at the organization.

7.3 Limitations of the study
The research has been done on a very limited number of respondents under a limited period of time. Though, we tried to do our best to have respondents from different area of specialization. Our research did not include all the representatives from all departments and sections of Volvo Trucks AB Umeå. However, the collected data from interviewees gave strength to our paper and we could explore the topic of stress in relation to our research purpose.

Additionally, we decided to conclude a large sample study to be made by previous researchers related to our subject. Therefore, we searched and tried to find other research paper to have a focus concerning employees’ stress on that particular organization, but unfortunately we could find enough studies to be made related to the evaluation of stress and management of
stress at Volvo Trucks AB Umeå, except the one that was quite interesting and we added to our paper. The author of that particular research paper performed it in a good manner with consideration of a large and reasonable sample of study. So we think that is an advantage for the strength and credibility of our thesis work. In spite of this, we did find many previous research papers done on Volvo trucks, but mostly those researches were done related to other themes which made us to avoid using them in our study. As a last word we want to add that the availability of some inconsistent study like the use of insufficient data related to the purpose of the research and exclusion of essential information and also use of limited number of reference to the study reduced our reliance to rely on the every types of study published through different web-sites. Regarding to the fact, it limits our sight to the use every second hand data that we cannot trust upon.
References


Personal Communication


Appendix 1

Interview questions are represented here in 3 categories

Demographic questions

1) Are you male or female?
2) How old are you?
3) Are you an employee at Volvo?
4) How long have you been working?
5) In which department do you work?

Questions related to stress

6) How many hours per week do you work?
7) Have you ever felt stress during your work?
8) Does stress affect your productivity at the workplace?
9) Have you ever give up a job because of having stress?
10) What is the main source of your stress?
11) What makes you feel stress?

Questions related to management of stress

12) How do you cope up with stress?
13) Does management conduct some programs/activities in order to decrease your stress?
14) If yes, what do you think? Is it helpful or not?
Appendix 2
Interview guide for Respondent A (Physician at Volvo Trucks AB Umeå)

Questions related to stress
1) Do the employees have stress at Volvo trucks AB Umeå?
2) How do you evaluate the employees’ stress level at volvo trucks AB Umeå?
3) Do the large number of employees feel stress?
4) How many patients visit you who have stress problem?

Questions related to causes of stress at Volvo Trucks AB Umeå
5) What are the main reasons of stress at Volvo Trucks AB Umeå?
6) Do the employees feel stress as a result of job or other personal issues?
7) How many patients visit you who have stress problem?

Questions related to Symptoms of stress
8) How do you identify the employees who feel stress?
9) What are the symptoms of stress?

Questions related to management of stress
10) How do you help the employees who feel stress?
11) What is the process of stress of treatment to get rid of stress?
12) What are your recommendations for the employees not to feel stress?