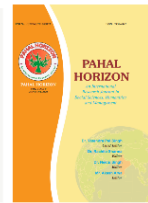




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Impact of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy on Resilience & in Reducing Stress in the Workforce

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ABSTRACT:

The productivity of an employee at the workplace can be enhanced by alleviating their stressors and building their resilience. Research has been conducted with this objective using new approaches in CBT. ACT has been proven to be effective in relieving pain in cancer patients. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy represents a significant evolution in the landscape of psychological interventions, diverging from traditional Cognitive Behavioural Therapy by prioritising psychological flexibility over direct modification of thought content, along with better self-management and compassion. A humanistic approach can allow employees to focus on building their values and goals, resulting in a more efficient ecosystem at work. Thus, ACT can find its relevance in the workforce, where these key takeaways can lead to better productivity and a better quality of life. Work stressors can emerge from an extensive workload and demanding roles. This paper explores the key takeaways of the ACT role in enhancing psychological resilience and mitigating work-related stress among employees in various sectors. It synthesises observations made on ACT interventions implemented across diverse professional settings.

Keywords: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Resilience, Stressors, Burnout, Self growth, Workplace.

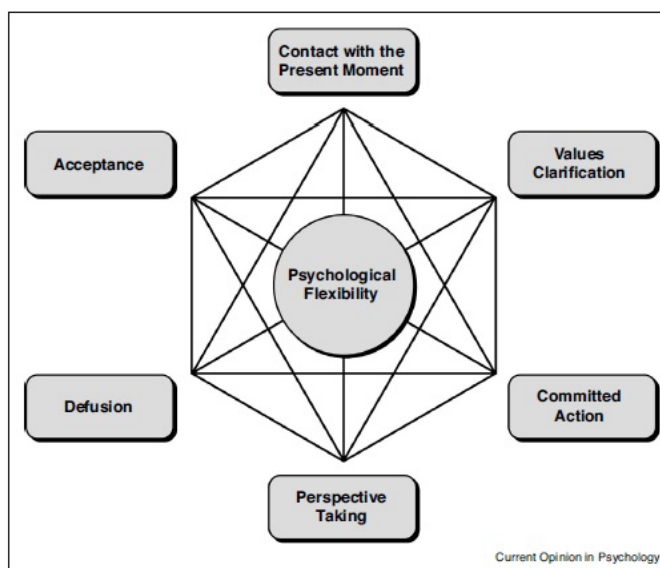
INTRODUCTION:

The workforce increasingly recognises the profound impact of psychological well-being on productivity and overall organisational success. Stress prominently affects workers in different

industries. Resilience is defined as an individual's self-assurance in handling stress and maintaining emotional stability. It is crucial in mitigating the detrimental impacts of diverse physical and mental health challenges ([Mousavi et al., 2021](#)).

Among the various psychological interventions, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy has emerged as a promising approach for mitigating stress among working professionals ([Finlay-Jones et al., 2015](#)). Fields like first responders and health care professionals experience burnout. Burnout has become one of the most essential psychosocial occupational hazards in today's society, generating significant costs for individuals and organisations (<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8834764/>). Stress and burnout have resulted in the declining performance of employees, causing hindered organisational growth and development. This resulted in employers seeking solutions to engage employees in various mental resilience-enhancing programs. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is a third-wave cognitive-behavioural therapy approach (<https://www.verywellmind.com/acceptance-commitment-therapy-gad-1393175>). Acceptance and Commitment Therapy represents a departure from traditional cognitive behavioural therapies, which primarily aim to alter the content of thoughts ([Junker et al., 2020](#)). Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, in contrast, emphasises psychological flexibility, encouraging individuals to accept their thoughts and feelings without judgment and to commit to actions aligned with their values ([Hummelen & Rokx, 2007](#)). The main components of ACT therapy include: acceptance, cognitive defusion, being present, self as context, values, and committed action. Acceptance involves recognising and allowing internal experiences, such as thoughts, emotions, and sensations, to occur without attempts to control or suppress them ([Zou et al., 2022](#)). Nowadays, employees face challenges such as market uncertainty, intense workloads, and a fast pace of change. An increase in Resilience in the workforce is increasingly crucial for the continued success of organisations operating within the modern, rapidly evolving business landscape. The ability of employees to not only withstand but also to learn and grow from challenges and uncertainties is becoming a defining characteristic of high-performing individuals and organisations ([Fu & Cao, 2021](#)).

ACT enhances employees' capabilities to cope with workplace stress. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy can be beneficial when stress in the workplace environment has resulted from consistent performance pressure, excessive workload, and strained interpersonal relations in an organisational setting. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy provides individuals with tools to navigate these stressors effectively by fostering a nonjudgmental awareness of their internal experiences and promoting engagement in meaningful and purposeful activities. ACT enables better emotional regulation and acceptance of the present scenarios.



The traditional ACT hexagon model.

Figure 1. The traditional ACT hexagon model depicting six core processes leading to psychological flexibility.

Source: Trauma-Focused ACT: A Practitioner's Guide to Working with Mind, Body, and Emotion Using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE:

This review provides an objective analysis of the impact of the ACT approach on resilience and stress reduction among workforce employees. The different nature of the job and crises handled by people at work each day determines burnout and lower Quality of life. Understanding of how the components of ACT therapy build resilience. This paper also highlights the effectiveness of the present mode of therapy available in the workforce.

Scope

This review paper analyses journals, review papers, and studies in different work profiles from 2018 to 2022. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy impacts employees and the stressors they face in the course of their duties and roles at work. Databases that were searched for this review paper include Google Scholar, Science Direct, and Springer.

Research Questions

- What is the rate of effectiveness of ACT therapy in different fields of work?
- Which component of ACT contributes to its overall efficacy?
- Was the platform on which therapy was rendered effective or not?

In most studies, workplace-integrated ACT was used in employee training programs to alleviate their stress in day-to-day life. ACT is a transdiagnostic approach that is malleable and scalable and can be delivered in different forms and for various targeted groups. It improves the DPT's ability to address psychological risk factors (e.g., fear, avoidance behaviours, kinesiophobia, etc across many conditions and promotes effective pain self-management([Tatta et al., 2022](#)). Burnout has been defined across fields through occupational stress, exhaustion, lack of energy, sense of inefficacy, cynicism, and low accomplishment, all of which can be addressed through ACT([Unruh et al., 2022](#)). Burnout encompasses three key dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment([Maslach et al., 2001](#)). Employees go through extensive training programmes, which can be on mobile applications and online training programs. It is integrated learning modules for the employees, and research uses informed consent of the people before they enrol in the program. There have been studies where intervention has taken the form of a group session, and individuals were psychoeducated using tools from the ACT intervention. Specific research has implemented a hybrid mode, incorporating both intervention and online modes, such as resilience training([Joyce et al., 2018](#)). Mindfulness plays a key role among ACT elements in most training programs.

ACT IN DETAIL

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy is a contemporary behaviour therapy that leverages psychological acceptance and mindfulness techniques to foster psychological flexibility. Components of ACT include Cognitive Defusion, Being Present, Self as Context, Values, and Committed Action. Psychological flexibility, a core tenet of ACT, is the ability to be fully present in the moment while taking actions that align with one's values, even in the presence of unwanted thoughts, feelings, or sensations([Mosher et al., 2021](#)). ACT helps in building Resilience in a person through acceptance and mindfulness([Lindsay & Creswell, 2016](#)). Psychological flexibility is the ability to be in the current moment, mindfully aware of thoughts and emotions, and committed to valued goals([Moran, 2015](#)). Elements in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy offer a deeper understanding of behavioral changes and personal development([Hayes et al., 2012](#)). Employers face challenges such as the loss of productivity among employees due to various stressors in their environment. Cognitive defusion is an element that internalises their understanding of emotions, behaviour, and external influences. Mindfulness as an element helps to be present, thus enabling Resilience in setbacks or failures. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy assists individuals in navigating distressing experiences with flexibility and purpose, remaining grounded in the present moment through mindfulness of thoughts, feelings, and potential actions([Dindo et al., 2017](#)). Resilience is enhanced through mindfulness by re-establishing emotion regulation([Guendelman et](#)

[al., 2017](#)). Being present and Self as Context, as practised through ACT, enables the building of Resilience in an individual. Higher psychological flexibility is enhanced by focusing on the present moment, rather than dwelling on previous events or worrying about what might happen in the future([Webb, 2023](#)). ACT improves psychological flexibility with its components. Increases Psychological flexibility ensures a lower occurrence of depression, anxiety, and other mental health concerns in an individual([Vella & Pai, 2025](#)). This multifaceted approach, often referred to as the Hexaflex model, enhances the capacity to endure distressing experiences, adapt, and sustain functionality despite adversity([Jo et al., 2024](#)). ACT interventions are effective in improving psychological flexibility, which leads to better performance and well-being, and reduces stress, burnout, and depression([Unruh et al., 2022](#)). Experiential avoidance can be reduced through a therapeutic approach.

Resilience through ACT

The process and outcome of successfully adapting to challenging life experiences, primarily through mental, emotional, and behavioural flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands([Resilience, n.d.](#)). Resilience refers to an individual's capacity to swiftly rebound from adversity, regaining their original state after encountering challenges. Although definitions have changed over the years, the essence remains the same, focusing on positive outcomes and handling risks and setbacks. It is a positive psychology construct introduced and most worked upon in phases over time([Vella & Pai, 2025](#)). Resilience can be referred to as a motivational factor in an organisational setup. Flexibility in different aspects of an individual's life leads the focus to psychological flexibility. ACT aims to enhance psychological flexibility, thus impacting resilience. Resilience is widely affected by the environment and is primarily an attribute. ACT can work towards enabling oneself to work on this construct and relate it to one's identity.

Ways of Integrating ACT at the workplace

In most studies, workplace-integrated ACT was used in employees' training programs to alleviate their stress in day-to-day life. ACT is a transdiagnostic approach that is malleable and scalable and can be delivered in different forms and for various targeted groups. It improves the DPT's ability to address psychological risk factors (e.g., fear, avoidance behaviours, kinesiphobia, etc across many conditions and promotes effective pain self-management. ([Tatta et al., 2022](#)). Burnout has been defined across fields through occupational stress, exhaustion, lack of energy, sense of inefficacy, cynicism, and low accomplishment, all of which can be addressed through ACT([Unruh et al., 2022](#)). Burnout encompasses three key dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment([Maslach et al., 2001](#)). Employees go through extensive training programmes, which can be on mobile applications and online training programs. It is an integrated learning module for the employees, and research uses informed consent of the people before they enrol in the program. There have been studies where intervention has taken the form of a group session, and individuals were psychoeducated using tools from the

ACT intervention. Specific research has implemented a hybrid mode, incorporating both intervention and online modes, such as resilience training([Joyce et al., 2018](#)). Mindfulness plays a key role among ACT elements in most training programs. Newly joined physiotherapists have introduced the Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and mindfulness program to enhance their psychological flexibility and promote their well-being. ([Archer et al., 2024](#))An increase in psychological flexibility results in better performance and enhancement in resilience among professionals. Their job satisfaction is overall elevated.

DISCUSSION:

Research related to ACT has been conducted in healthcare staff, firefighters, physiotherapists, and a few corporate settings. However, ACT has been studied to enhance psychological flexibility in the workplace to reduce burnout and other effects of stressors. Yet, different components of ACT are focused on and studied for their impact on employees' mental health at the workplace. Self as context, defusion is not highlighted in the interventions unlit'sit's a trainer-based offline intervention. Mindfulness exercises may help increase focus and decrease rumination, a component of burnout. Thus, it is the primary tool used along with other features of ACT. Therefore, the efficacy of the ACT as a whole still needs to be looked into, as this will include all the core components of ACT. Studies in sectors like Information Technology or manufacturing can be conducted to assess the effectiveness of ACT as a whole. The effectiveness of ACT in addressing stress and mental health challenges within workplace settings is a subject of ongoing investigation, particularly through the synthesis of evidence derived from randomised controlled trials([Unruh et al., 2022](#)). The wholeness research was sometimes curbed when employees could not complete the entire program designed for the study. Some research included a follow-up process to determine the effectiveness of the study, but this process could not be completed([Deval et al., 2016](#)). The research on the efficacy of ACT varies depending on the scales used to determine effectiveness. Scales like the Work Related Acceptance Questionnaire, Motivation at Work scale, Cognitive Fusion Questionnaire, Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II, and Multidimensional Psychological Flexibility Inventory([Moran, 2015](#); [Ramaci et al., 2019](#); [Unruh et al., 2022](#)) were used in the studies.

CONCLUSION:

ACT frameworks offer a structured approach to analysing the intricate cognitive processes that underlie human behaviour, providing valuable insights into how individuals acquire, represent, and utilise knowledge across various domains. ACT is derived from the cognitive behaviour approach, which focuses on behaviour change. Research shows that psychological flexibility can improve quality of life and overall well-being([Anusuya & Gayatridevi, 2025](#)). Research studies determining the impact of therapy on the workforce have been positive, though not quantifiable in some cases. The nature of the treatment has resulted in extensive use in healthcare and patient care. It has been found to help individuals develop innovation skills in a corporate setup. Various scenarios can still be studied to understand the overall impact of ACT intervention programmes in the workplace.

This can lead to a better quality of life, increased productivity, and synergy in the work environment.

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