

Role of Motivation and Training in Managing Stress in the Technological Era



Ms. Malabika Sahoo

Abstract: Human resources are the main pillar of success for any organization. Employees are the milestone of the organization. Healthy individuals can contribute more to the growth and productivity. In the present technological era the smart moves of the organizations to handle the challenges and cope up with the advanced technology, employees feels lots of pressure and they are in the stress trap. Research shows that workplace stress is in the rising state. Employees are facing work-life balance issues and their life is affected. They are facing many health issues such as diabetics, high blood pressure, indigestion, asthma, neurological problems, insomnia, heart disease etc. Psychological and emotional issues are also rising due to stress. Not only employees but also organizations are suffering high job attrition, absenteeism, job dissatisfaction among employees, low productivity and growth. Stress is being treated as an occupational health issue. It is a concern for both the organization and employees to manage the stress for mutual benefit. The purpose of this article is to define the nature, types and structure of stress, explore the different stressors which create workplace stress, the impact of workplace stress on both employees as well organizations and role of motivation and training for stress management. The measures to be adopted by both employer and employees are highlighted in the paper. The paper was conceptualized on the base of interaction with employees of different organizations and secondary data source.

Keywords: Stress, Workplace stress, Motivation, Stress management training

I. INTRODUCTION

In the modern era, workplace stress is in rise. Organisations are incorporating all the smart moves to handle the challenges which in turn are creating lots of pressure among the employees. Changes in the cutting edge work surroundings due to technological advancement, restructuring and different redesigning process boost up the stress level of employees in the organisations [1]. Work stress is a magnificent contributor to high employee attrition rate [2], [3]. Stress has become an integral part of life in most of the working professionals. Workplace stressors result in serious health problems, reduced productivity, high turnover, frequent tardiness, and absenteeism among the employees [4], [5].

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Usually, an employee spends eight to nine hours of a day directly on work. But looking deeper they are working more than eight hours. Working for longer hours sometimes creates stressful situation not only in workplace but also in family life. In the modern high-tech scenario individuals not only have to handle work pressure but also they have to handle finance, technological understanding, anxiety, juggling in different roles, changes in circumstances, personal anxiety etc. Sometimes managing all these create lots of stress.

Extant research supported the fact that excess work stress significantly contributes to the cynical attitude and behaviour of the employees. The problem of employee absenteeism, conflict among team members and acute behavioural issues are prevalent in the workplace [6], [7], [8], [9], leading to declining individual as well as organisational growth and effectiveness. It has also tremendous impact on our physical and mental health condition.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research work is based on interviews and secondary data sources. The idea of the paper was conceptualized by doing literature review on research papers, thesis, newspapers, conference proceedings, and websites etc. Information related to workplace stress and remedial measures were also collected through interviews from professionals working in different sectors.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

- To explore the critical impact of stress in our personal and professional life.
- To explore the impact on the organisations.
- To highlight the role of training for stress management
- To address stress management techniques to be adopted by the individual and the organisation for better productivity.
- To encourage organizations to implement unique stress control mechanism in the organisation.

IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The word stress was first used by Selye, (1936) [10] and thoroughly explained about stress in his book Syndromes Caused by Role of a Variety of Injuries. As per his views, stress is a biological reaction of organisms getting affected by stimulation from the environment.

Stress is a usual reaction to a life-threatening condition. When an individual perceives any intimidation, the brain sets off an alert of fight or flight reaction. This leads to a number of internal changes in our body.



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The adrenal glands discharge the hormone called cortisol which increases glucose in the bloodstream. The heart rate becomes faster and blood pressure rises. It disturbs our body's immune systems and digestive process till the stress got passed. The stress-response process of our body can either support to achieve any target having a time limit or escape.

But after the end of the critical situation, if the secreted hormones during stressed condition fail to normalise, it can lead to chronic health issues. [11], [12]. A report by American Psychological Association in 2008 revealed that around 50% to 80% of diseases are due to stress.

There are two types of stress such as acute and chronic.

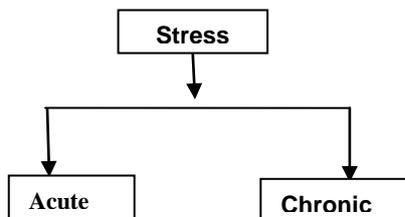


Figure 1: Types of Stress

The immediate reaction of our body to a fresh challenge, incident or demand is termed as acute stress. It triggers fight-or-flight response of our body. Some instances of acute stress are getting rid of a car accident, conflicting argument with someone etc. When the stress continues for a longer period of time it becomes chronic. Critical work environments, unsuccessful marriage [13] are some of the examples of chronic stress. It can cause serious health issues such as cardiovascular issues, cancer, lung disease, bone problems etc.

The three basic stages of stress are alarm, resistance, and exhaustion. In alarm stage, disturbance related to mental, emotional or physical leads to immediate reaction by our body to either fight or flight with the stressor. The stress hormones cortisol and adrenaline are pumped into the bloodstream. In resistance stage, our body attempts to make a balance and to handle the situation either by resisting or adapting. In the stage of exhaustion, the body stops responding after experiencing stress for long days. The body is prone to severe health issues at this stage [11]. Stress symptoms can be mental, physical, Emotional and behavioural.

V. WORKPLACE STRESS

Workplace stress is described as a state where stimuli in the workplace create pressure among the employees both physically and mentally [14]. Workplace stress is very risky as it affects employee's physical and mental health. It leads to severe health and other issues such as cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, headache, worry, sleeplessness, fatigue, smoking habits, increasing alcohol consumption, and drug abuse[15],[7]. Love & Irani, (2007)[16] also opined that signs of workplace stress causes job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, high job attrition, and put mental pressure on the employees. In a study it is found that 37% to 48% workers in the organisation take short-term disability leave because of depression due to workplace stress.

It is not surprising that workplace stress greatly influences the behaviour of employees apart from physical, mental and spiritual health [17]. Many behavioural problems such as aggressive communication, conflict with others, excess alcohol intake, smoking, misbehaviour with others are due to

stress in the workplace [18], [19]. It has been argued that 72% of the employees experienced verbal abuse and 35% suffered from violent behaviours because of stress [20]. The negative behavioural aspect of employees results in weak interpersonal relationship, affects the quality of life, causes high job attrition, absenteeism and injury in the workplace[21], [14]. Hence Stress impacts negatively the employees in the organisation [22].

VI. CAUSES OF WORKPLACE STRESS

It is essential to trigger the aspect which enhances stress in the workplace. Extant literature highlights many factors which creates workplace stress. Broadly the causes of work stress can be segregated to individual, environmental, organizational [23]. The significant factors causing workplace stress are extensively studied by different researchers such as [24], [25], [20], [26], [27], [22], [28]. Some of the important factors from the literatures from organisations are cited below.

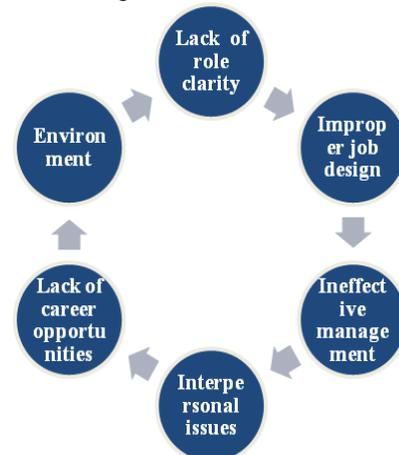


Figure 2: Causes of Work place Stress

1. Lack of Role Clarity – Role ambiguity and role conflict are found to be two important contributors for workplace stress. Role ambiguity arises when there is a lack of clarity in the role to be played by the employees in the job. And these two factors create mental tension among the employees leading to decline in job satisfaction.
2. Inappropriate Job Design – Excess work load, lack of rest break, extensive working hour, hectic and routine assignment creates stress which causes lack of balance among the employees.
3. Ineffective Management Style – Improper communication, centralised decision making process and lack of family-friendly policies, lack of motivational scheme , improper reward system by the management puts the employees in stress trap .
4. Interpersonal Relationships – Interpersonal conflict, pressure from family members, colleagues and boss cause mental pressure among employees.
5. Lack Growth opportunity for Career – Individuals experience severe stress when they feel lack of opportunity for development and growth, a stagnant job without promotion and salary hike.
6. Inappropriate Environment – Improper physical work condition acts as a stressor for the employees.

Factors of workplace stress collected through interviews with employees from different organisations are given below.

- Ego among members
- Misunderstanding due to communication gap
- Lack of time management
- Over expectation from family and organisation
- Juggling in different roles/role conflict
- Workload /pressure
- Lack of reward for their work
- Conflict between employees and boss, colleague and juniors
- Change in job responsibilities
- Shift duty and lack of job satisfaction
- Assigned work not matching to interest
- Lack of respect

VII. MANAGEMENT OF WORKPLACE STRESS

Human resources are the assets of the organisations. Happy employees can enhance organisational wellness and growth. The productivity of the organisations depend on the employees mental and physical wellness [6], [27]. When the employees experience work-related stress, organizations will also encounter lots of problems such as growth and productivity issue, leave, compensation issue etc.[6],[7], [32]. Hence the organisations must be empathetic and should be employee friendly to help the employees for leading stress-free, healthy and joyful life. The focus should be on creating and enabling a spiritual work atmosphere which will help the employee to work happily. Spiritualism is one of the important solutions for managing workplace stress [29], [30], [31].

The following strategies can be adopted by the organisations for effective workplace stress management:

- Conducting different stress management training programmes
- Creating and adopting spiritual practice.
- Role clarity for all the employees
- Effective job design and job enrichment
- Adopting decentralized decision-making process
- Flexible work hour
- Work from home facilities
- Creating supporting work atmosphere
- Implementing employee morale programme
- Implementing motivational Scheme

VIII. ROLE OF MOTIVATION AND TRAINING FOR STRESS MANAGEMENT

Motivation acts an important role for stress management. Employees should also take the initiative by themselves to manage stress. Researcher in this area argued that stress management techniques involve the initiative taken by both individual and the organisation [27]. Hence employees must motivate themselves for adopting varied stress management strategies to make their life healthier and happy. Organization also need conduct training sessions for creating awareness among the employees. The following stress management techniques will help the individual to lead a stress-free life:

- Taking care of food habits, taking meal in time, drinking sufficient water, eating the right meal
- Regular practice of exercise

- Adapting spiritual practice such as mindful meditation, yoga, and nonattachment [25],
- Having positive look towards events and life
- Effective management of thoughts
- Adopting different therapy such as acupuncture, massage, colour, water, music for stress relaxation
- Having attitude of gratitude
- Adopting personal relaxation techniques
- Proper time management and work-life balance
- Delegation of work at home and workplace etc.

IX. CONCLUSIONS

In the current scenario workplace stress is a major concern for both employer and employee. It has been estimated that in a year organisation suffers from loss of 6.5 million working days [33] due to stress in the workplace. Also, many physical and mental diseases among the employees are due to stress. It depends on the persons' reaction and the strategies they are adopting to cope up with workplace stress. Spiritualism has a greater role in helping both the individual and organisation to manage stress. They must be proactive in implementing employee-friendly policies, creating conducive work environment and stress management techniques. Equally the employees also must be conscious in adopting different stress management strategies such as spiritual practice, yoga, meditation, music therapy etc. to lead a healthy life. Energetic contribution of both the employers and the employees can help in preventing and managing the workplace stress which in turn will enhance individual as well as organisational productivity.

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