A STUDY ON HUMAN RESOURCES PRACTICES ON REDUCTION OF STRESS OF WORKFORCE IN INDIAN INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract
Human Resources (HR) practice impacts on employee stress levels in one way or another. Where an organization has effective HR policies, practices and procedures, stress is much less likely to occur or, when it does occur, to cause harm. Some HR practices will serve to prevent stress by removing or reducing potential sources of stress.

Key Words: Stress, Workforce.

Introduction
HR practices are more reactive and serve to prevent the escalation of stressful situations for example, by responding to conflict situations and providing mediation or conflict resolution. Thus, HR practices that are not explicitly focused on managing stress can in fact be seen as central to the organization's stress. Conversely, much of the activity undertaken with the explicit intention of managing stress would fit within the HR portfolio. For example, individual resilience training could be part of the organization's learning and development programme; manager training for preventing/managing stress might be integrated into management development; and employee surveys, absence/retention data monitoring and many of the activities that constitute a stress risk assessment may be part of the HR team's remit. An interpersonal relationship is the nature of interaction that occurs between two or more people. People in an interpersonal relationship may interact overtly, covertly; face to face or even anonymously. Interpersonal relationships occur between people who fill each other's explicit or implicit physical or emotional needs in some way.

Review of the Literature
The subjective sensations commonly experienced in conjunction with "feeling stressed" are headaches, loss of appetite and sleeping problems. There are also behavioral ways in which stress can manifest itself like crying, smoking, excessive drinking and decreased work performance (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2005)[1].

Rapid technological and social changes have created highly stress full lifestyles. Stress can lead to physical, psychological; and behavioral difficulties. Toda, in a rapidly- evolving and diverse society, work place changes occur virtually overnight. Many employees accept tension and disregard its long term effects: those who are aware of their tension levels may not cope effectively (Walcott-Mc Quigg, 1994)[2].

Most adults spend about half of their waking lives in work related activates; therefore, work conditions significantly influence their health. When properly handled, work stress can be positive and energizing; however, overwhelming job stress can cause a staggering array of problems for individuals and organizations (Beehr and Newman, 1978; Brief et.al. 1981 Jean, 1993)[3].

Objectives of the study

a. To know the causes of stress and find out the HR Strategies to overcome the stress of workforce.
b. To offer appropriate recommendations and suggestions for effective utilization of workforce.

Corporate and HR strategy, Recruitment, Selection and Resourcing, Learning, training and development, Management and leadership, HR policy and practice are presented below on the reduction of stress of workforce.

1. Corporate and HR strategy

The overall business, management and strategic approach taken by the organization, including HR and senior managers, can have a profound effect on the degree to which the workforce experiences stress reactions. In particular, the following areas are important.

Culture, vision and values: a supportive, open culture, in which values of respect and empowerment are strong and the organization's vision is clearly identified and communicated, will reduce the likelihood of stressful situations arising for staff. By contrast, a culture that encourages blame, secrecy, silo-working and/or a lack of clarity about the organization's purpose is likely to create a stressful working environment for employees. Other cultural aspects associated with high stress levels would include workplaces with macho, long-hours or bullying working environments. Interventions to improve culture, vision and values, even if instigated for other reasons, have the potential to reduce stress.

Organizational development and change management: ensuring that the organization is being effectively developed and that change is managed in a way that ensures good communication, support and participation opportunities for staff will contribute to reducing stress levels. Conversely, poorly managed change, in which staff feel threatened, insecure and in the dark, can be highly stressful. In addition, stress risk assessment solutions may include or involve organization development activities.

Job/work design: good job design is fundamental to preventing stress. Where jobs are designed in a way that makes them challenging, without being overwhelming, they will enhance well-being and prevent stress; whereas, poorly designed jobs can lead to stress. Stress risk assessments can highlight the need for job redesign interventions and vice versa.

2. Hiring and Resourcing

Employing the right people to do the job and getting the staffing right on particular work field is vital for ensuring stress is prevented.

Recruitment, selection and assessment: one of the classic theories in the stress management literature is the person–environment fit model, which proposes that the key source of work-related stress, and ultimately ill-health, is a misfit between the individual and their work environment.

Induction and on-boarding: starting a new job can be a particularly stressful period, so activities that help the new recruit learn the ropes and settle in more easily will help reduce stress levels.

Resourcing: In workplaces where project working is the norm or following organizational change, getting the right people and enough of them working on particular projects/new teams is important to ensure not only the performance of the team, but also the well-being of those involved.

Teamwork: working in a team can be a source of support and enjoyment or a source of conflict and interpersonal problems. Clearly, the former will reduce stress/enhance well-being and the latter is likely to be stressful.

Diversity and equality: ensuring that people from diverse backgrounds are treated with respect and fairness is important for positive working relationships and well-being. Conversely, unfair or disrespectful behavior – the extreme form of which is harassment – can lead to stress-related problems.

3. Learning and Development
Developing skills, including stress management/ resilience skills, is vital to stress prevention and coping with stressful situations.

Training needs assessment and fulfillment: Ensuring that individuals have the skills to do their job, by making sure that any training needs are met through training interventions and/or on-the job development, is important for preventing and reducing stress.

Personal development: learning and development interventions that specifically target resilience/ coping skills/pressure management can be explicitly stress-focused interventions other personal development interventions, including assertiveness and interpersonal skills may not explicitly mention stress, but will also enhance the individual's ability to prevent and deal with stress.

Career development and talent management: ensuring that staff are promoted and developed in such a way as to keep them in their 'stretch' zone, but not tipping into 'strain'/overload/out of-depth, is important for stress levels. For individuals for whom their career is a key focus, perception that their career is not moving forward can be particularly stressful as it leads to frustration and may impact on self-esteem.

Coaching and mentoring programs: these may contribute to any or all of the above areas. In addition, they can prevent stress by ensuring that individuals feel supported, which can buffer the impact of stress. Having a coach or mentor can provide individuals with a mechanism for dealing with difficult, stressful situations and/or a means of obtaining specific support and advice when needed.

4. Management Development
Management and leadership development can be a way of ensuring both stress prevention and the effectiveness of local responses to stress-related problems:

Management development: there is a saying that 'stress management is just good management'. Certainly, many stress risk assessments and surveys identify poor management or lack of management skills as a key source of stress. Thus, ensuring that managers behave in ways that prevent and reduce stress is essential for stress prevention.

Training on managing stress in others: some stress management programmes include training for managers on how to identify and tackle stress-related problems. This is an important managerial role: no central HR or health and safety function can monitor all staff all the time to look out for stress-related problems; this has to be delegated out to managers, who have regular contact with the staff and

are best placed to pick up early warning signs – and ideally to tackle them before they become serious problems

Leadership: while the above two interventions focus on the role of people's immediate line manager in managing their stress level, the role of leaders is also significant for stress levels. *Firstly,* an organization's leaders (at all levels) set the culture, tone and values for the entire workforce. *Secondly,* leaders provide role models for others, in terms of management behaviors and also 'self-care' behaviors, such as not working long hours, keeping fit and being willing to seek support. *Thirdly*, leadership that provides clarity about the organization's vision and purpose and inspires the workforce can prevent stress and enhance a sense of well-being for staff. Stress risk assessments sometimes identify poor leadership as a stress risk factor.

Performance management: ensuring that performance management systems are effectively implemented by managers can prevent stress by ensuring staff has clarity about their role/objectives/ tasks and by providing support, coaching and mentoring. In addition, managing poor performance ensures that staff does not have the burden and frustration of covering the work of poorly performing colleagues; while rewarding good performance can help people feel valued and boost self-esteem.

5. Human Resources Policy
HR policies and practices will impact on employee stress in a number of ways those are
Flexible working and work–life balance: where these policies help employees deal with non-work sources of stress, such as caring responsibilities, they can be regarded as directly contributing to stress management. More generally, ensuring that individuals are achieving balance in their lives can be a way of preventing stress-related illness and helping them ensure they have the resources to deal with stressful situations.

Leave: providing compassionate leave to help Staff deal with personal crises can also be seen as contributing to stress management. More broadly, annual leave can help prevent chronic exposure to stress reactions, by ensuring that staff gets a break, to rest and relax, thereby reducing the risk of stress-related illness.

Absence and attendance management: stress management could be said to contribute to absence management in as much as it reduces the likelihood of staff taking stress-related absences. Absence management may also include interventions that target stress, such as ensuring return-to-work interviews include questions to identify any work-related causes of the absence, and rehabilitation programmes that help with recovery from stress-related illness. Absence data can also be used as part of a stress risk assessment. In addition, tackling non-genuine absences could be seen as a way of reducing stress for the team members of those who are absent, by reducing the burden and frustration of having to cover an absent colleague's work.

Grievances and disciplinary: involvement in a grievance or disciplinary procedure can be highly stressful. Thus, ensuring that these procedures are fair, open and as supportive as possible is a way of minimizing stress risk.

Pay, reward and recognition: one of the classic theories in the stress management literature is the effort–reward imbalance model. This suggests that a key source of stress is where the effort an HR policies and practices will impact on employee individual exerts in their job is not perceived to be

adequately rewarded; thus high effort, low reward is a stressful situation. Reward in this context is not purely about financial remuneration, but includes recognition and positive feedback. This means that, while they would not explicitly be regarded as part of stress management, effective reward and recognition policies will help reduce stress risks.

Conclusion

The demands of people's jobs, such as workload, working patterns and the work environment the amount of control individuals have at work or how much say they have over the way they do their work the support employees receive in the workplace, in terms of encouragement and resources, from their employer, their line manager and their colleagues how well relationships are functioning in the workplace, including prevention of bullying and harassment, managing conflict and ensuring positive relationships how clear people are about their role and whether they have conflicting roles how well change is managed and communicated in the workplace, including both large and small changes.

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