

A Conceptual Analysis On Job Stress And Its Impact On Employee's Performance

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Abstract

Stress is a biological term which refers to the consequences of the failure of a human or animal body to respond appropriately to emotional or physical threats to the organism, whether actual or imagined. Stress refers to the strain from the conflict between our external environment and us, leading to emotional and physical pressure. In our fast paced world, it is impossible to live without stress, whether you are a student or a working adult. There is both positive and negative stress, depending on each individual's unique perception of the tension between the two forces. Many of the organizational stressors emerge because of faulty organizational processes and practices. To a very great extent these can be controlled by creating supportive organizational climate. Supportive organizational climate depends upon managerial leadership rather than the use of power and money to control organizational behavior. Stress is not bad all the time. But it occurs during the work time it will affect our performance in work. The result of the study reveals that both the male and female employees are experiencing stress in their work place.

Keywords: Job stress, performance, strategy, motivation, and communication.

Introduction

Stress is a biological term which refers to the consequences of the failure of a human or animal body to respond appropriately to emotional or physical threats to the organism, whether actual or imagined. Stress refers to the strain from the conflict between our external environment and us, leading to emotional and physical pressure. In our fast paced world, it is impossible to live without stress, whether you are a student or a working adult. There is both positive and negative stress, depending on each individual's unique perception of the tension between the two forces.

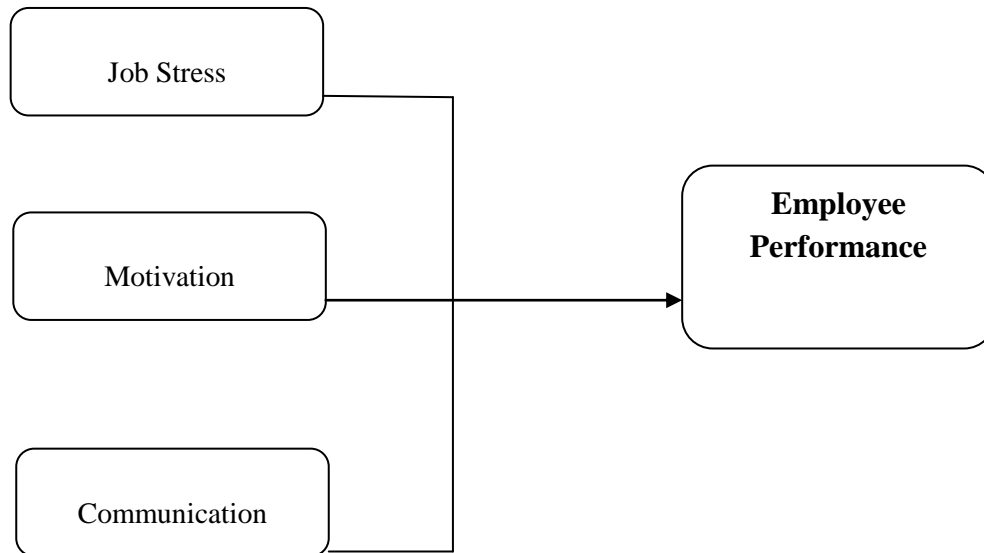
Stress at work is a relatively new phenomenon of modern lifestyles. The nature of work has gone through drastic changes over the last century and it is still changing at whirlwind speed. They have touched almost all professions, starting from an artist to a surgeon, or a commercial pilot to a sales executive. With change comes stress will appear automatically. Job stress poses a threat to physical health. Work related stress in the life of organized workers, consequently, affects the health of organizations. Job stress is a chronic disease caused by conditions in the workplace that negatively affect an individual's performance and overall well-being of his body and mind.

Job stress is negatively related to performance. In other words, higher the stress, lower the performance. Before it was believed that moderate levels of stress would energize employees and enhances their performance. But this belief is not held to be true now. The assumption valid now is that performance will be disrupted even by relatively low level of stress.

Employee Performance

Organisational performance is a sign of the capacity of a company to efficiently achieve independent goals (Venkatraman & Ramanujam, 1986). One of the elements that is assessable is the employees' performance through the level of their productivity. Several researches have been introducing various methods to evaluate organisational performance (Wong & Wong, 2007; Prajogo, 2007). This includes the quality, quantity, knowledge or creativity of individual

towards the accomplished works that are in accordance with the responsibility during a specified period- in other words, the assessment systems must have some standard parameters that can be relied upon. Below is the conceptual framework:



Factors Associated with Employee Performance

1. Job Stress

In the earlier literature, it is mentioned that job stress is produced when one cannot properly coordinate available resources and job demands with personal abilities (French, 1975). He describes that job stress is derived from a situation of job environment that poses threat to an individual. Some companies may demand achieving a certain level of work, while their employees may be unable to cope with the given tasks. It is said that the demand exceeds the capacity of an individual which simultaneously fails to satisfy the top management. Moreover, job stress has been known universally as a social problem (Mizuno et al., 2006) which has a combination of factors that disrupts the workers physically and psychologically (Lu, 1997), and affects their health care as a whole (Conway et al., 2008).

This is in line with the studies that have been conducted on the effect of job stress in terms of medical matters such as heart disease, gastroenteritis, sleep disorders and other accidents that will decrease the rate of job performance, and the increased rate of absence and job displacement (McVicar, 2003; Mitoma et al., 2008). However, it has been said that a small amount of pressure can bring about an increase in personnel's efficiency, while too much pressure results in negative mental and physical changes (Raeissi & Tavakoli, 2002). This relationship can be illustrated with an inverted-U shape (Sullivan & Baghat, 1992) showing that the absence of stress creates no motivation to one's performance.

The potential of job stress could arise from three aspects such as environment, organizational and individual (employee) factors. The possibility of stress affecting one's performance is great (Tuten & Neidermeyer, 2004). Each individual is exposed to a range of stressors both at work and in his or her personal life which ultimately affects work performance (Feddock et al., 2007).

However, the perception of job stress varies from nation to nation (Glaxer et al., 2004) including in Indonesia that may also be affected by cultural differences (Jaramillo et al., 2005). Despite the agreement of authors on the relationship of job stress and work

performance, the human resource operationalization in Islamic organizations may produce different results. The Islamic banks should implement the policies that may stay far from the excessive pressures which will generate various forms of unethical actions by the employees. Islam had formulated a managerial vision towards the concept of *shariah* compliance, thus beside the expectation to have better employees' performance, it also must have a maximized *maslahah* orientation.

2. Motivation

DeCenzo and Robbins (1996) define a motivation as the willingness or desire to do something, conditioned by the activity or the ability to satisfy some needs. The studies on employees' motivation have widely been practiced in today's enterprises across all sectors, regardless of their size. Those enterprises realized that the actions of motivating their employees are crucial in order to achieve the organizations' goals. The motivated employees relate to the manners of self satisfaction, self-fulfillment and commitment that are expected to produce better quality of work and oblige to the organizations' policies which will extensively materialize efficiencies and competitive advantage. Motivation increases the job involvement by making the work more meaningful and interesting as well as the fact that it keeps the employees more productive and improves their subsequent job performance (Kamery, 2004; Ekerman, 2006).

The employee motivation is obviously important. In fact, it is one of the most important and essential factors for the achievement of employees, and ultimately the organizational targets and goals (Berman et al., 2010). Ololube (2006) asserts that motivation to work, whether intrinsic or extrinsic are very essential in the lives of workers because they form the fundamental reason for working in life. It represents the complex forces and needs which provide the energy for an individual to perform a particular task (Shulze & Steyn, 2003). Moreover, employee motivation serves as an essential component of business operations whereby high motivation coincides with job satisfaction, a sense of pride in one's work, a lifelong commitment to organization which enhances performance and productivity (Linz et al., 2006). Likewise, for Islamic organizations, this factor is useful to examine the employees' performance, although the findings may be equivocal.

3. Communication

Communication refers to the act, contact or double interacts among the individuals in delivering information, meanings and understanding (Fisher, 1980). Several professionals have expressed mixed opinions on communication competency used as a predictor of employee success (Ryan & Sackett, 1987). The importance of communication cannot be denied for organizations as applied to their ability to influence the bottom-line- as found in growing evidence linked with work productivity (Camden & Witt, 1983; Papa & Tracy, 1987; Snyder & Morris, 1984).

With effective communication, a company is able to have good coordination among the teams or units in an organization whereby the absence of it will reflect problems in running business operations or critically cause the damage between individuals. It has been suggested that the persons who are involved in communication processes need to possess both basic skills and abilities, otherwise, the information could be missed to understand appropriately, and furthermore it depends on the facilities available in organizations and the actions of managers to see the acceptability of information in order to have an accurate deliverance. Furthermore, as one of the crucial elements, the managers have been asked to learn the feedback gained from the employees which probably affects their work motivation. This relates to the circumstances that are currently faced by the employees including the right time of delivering such information, thus, they may perform based on the messages they receive. In obtaining such a good performance, the managers must show the initiatives of developing and providing opportunities to learn new skills to their employees through the communication process.

The Employees can follow some Strategies to overcome Stress for better Performance

Organizational Coping Strategies

Organizational coping strategies are more of proactive nature, that is, they attempt at removing existing potential stressors and prevent the onset of stress of individual job holders. Following are organizational coping techniques and efforts:

i. Supportive organizational climate

Many of the organizational stressors emerge because of faulty organizational processes and practices. To a very great extent these can be controlled by creating supportive organizational climate. Supportive organizational climate depends upon managerial leadership rather than the use of power and money to control organizational behavior. The focus is primarily on participation and involvement of employee's indecision making process. Such a climate develops belongingness among people which helps them to reduce their stress.

ii. Job Enrichment

A major source of stress is the monotonous and disinteresting jobs being performed by employees in the organization. The jobs can be enriched. Improving content factors such as responsibility, recognition, opportunity for achievement and advancement, or improving core job characteristics, such skill variety, task identity task significance, autonomy, and feedback may lead to motivation, feeling sense of responsibility, and utilizing maximum capability at the work such a phenomenon helps in reducing stress.

iii. Organizational Role clarity

People experience stress when they are not clear about what they are expected to do in the organization. This may happen because either there is ambiguity in the role or there is role conflict. Such a situation can be overcome by defining role more clearly. Role analysis technique helps both managers and employees to analyze what the job entails and what the expectations are. Breaking down the job to its various components clarifies the role of the job incumbent for the entire system. This helps to eliminate imposing unrealistic expectations on the individual. Role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload can be minimized, consequently leading to reduced stress.

iv. Career planning and counseling

Career planning and counseling help the employees to obtain professional advice regarding career paths that would help them to achieve personal goals. It also makes them aware of what additional qualifications, training and skills they should acquire for career advancement.

v. Stress control workshops and employee assistant programmes

The organization can hold periodical workshops for control and reduction of stress. Such workshops may help individuals to learn the dynamics of stress and methods of overcoming their personal and family problems. This arrangement may include managing personal finance, dealing with family problems, dealing with health problems, and dealing with other kind of personal and family stresses.

vi. Flex time

Allowing workers to start or end the workday earlier or later can reduce work/life stress, especially for working parents. Flex time can also reduce the stress of commuting in rush hour traffic.

vi. Job sharing

This allows at least two people trained to perform each job, enabling each employee to have time off without losing productivity.

Individual Coping Strategies

Stress may cause within organizational context and outside. Therefore coping strategies may be adopted by individuals to come out of their stress and to balance their life and work. Following are the major individuals stress coping strategies.

1. Physical exercise

Physical exercise is a good strategy to get body fit and to overcome stress. Physical exercise of different types such as walking, jogging, swimming, playing etc., are good methods of overcoming stress. The role of yoga a scientific techniques of physical exercise to keep body fit and to overcome stress has been recognized in most part of the world. Physical exercise helps people to cope- up with stress.

2. Relaxation

Impact of stress can be overcome by relaxation. The relaxation can be simple one or some specific techniques of relaxation such as biofeedback and meditation. In biofeedback the individual learns the internal rhythms of a particular body process through electronic signals. In biofeedback the person can learn to control body process. Meditation helps to rest the body physically and emotionally.

Transcendental meditation is one of the more popular practices of meditation. In this practice the mediator tries to meditate for two periods of fifteen to twenty minutes a day concentrating on the repetition of some mantra. Any meditation essentially involves a relatively quiet environment, a comfortable position, a repetitive mental stimulus and a passive attitude. Meditation has been recognized as a powerful technique for reducing stress. Whether a person takes easy one or specific relaxation technique the intent is to eliminate immediately stressful situation or manage a prolonged stressful situation more effectively.

3. Work – Home Transition

Work home transaction is also like a relaxation technique. In this technique, a person may attend to less pressure inducing type or routine work during the last 30 or 60 minutes of work time. For instance during the last hour of work the person can view the day's activities, list the priorities of the activities that need to be attended to the next day. Thus he can finish his days work and come back in relaxed manner.

4. Cognitive Therapy

Because of increasing stress, special cognitive therapy techniques have been developed by psychologists. In these techniques lectures and interactive discussion sessions are arranged to help participants to; (I) recognize events at work and what cognitions they elicit; (II) become aware of the effects of such cognitions on their physiological and emotional responses; (III) systematically evaluate the objective consequences of events at work and (IV) replace self defeating cognitions that unnecessarily arouse strain.

5. Networking

Networking is the formation of close associations with trusted, empathetic co-workers and colleagues who are good listeners and confidence builders. Such persons provide mental support to get the person through stressful situation.

Conclusion

Stress is very common in day to day life. Now a day's it's become our part of life. We can overcome stress but we cannot avoid stress. Stress is not bad all the time. But it occurs during the work time it will affect our performance in work. The result of the study reveals that both the male and female employees are experiencing stress in their work place. Irrespective of the age majority of the employees agree that the job stress is affecting their job performance.

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