Cause and effect analysis research paper

Business, Management

Introduction

The market is very competitive today, and it is important for all organizations to ensure that their employees are motivated and determined to work together for success as they are the backbone of any company. It is not only the management of an organization that needs to be productive and well organized for a successful and smooth running, but the employees at the grass-root level also play a very important role as they are the pillars that support the production and produce the output. Therefore it is a necessity to create such an environment within the organization where the workers are safe, motivated and unstressed. [CITATION Wor06 l 1033]

It has been proved through various researches and studies that work load can cause stress for a person which may lead to severe mental and physical damage and may produce long lasting health issues. Work stress can be defined as a situation where the demand and expectation from them exceeds the personal capability of an individual also the absence of other motivating factors such as proper recognition, wages and monotony may also lead to stress that can impact personal and professional life adversely. [CITATION Sva02 l 1033]

As discussed above, the demands over and above the delivering capacity of an individual are the major reason of creating stress and hence they are classified in the following manner.

Quantitative Demands – This is related to the time pressure and the amount of work allocated. Cognitive Demands – This refers to the difficulty level of

the work which is assigned. Emotional Demands – This may include the need to be dealt with emotions such as recognition, remuneration and others more over the received in the form excessive work that cover dynamic and static load.

In this paper we will study the causes and effect of stress at workplace and post that we will move on to find out the symptoms of this problem and the groups that have maximum risk of suffering from stress. It is always better to try and prevent a problem rather than looking for a treatment, therefore we will definitely discuss the preventive measures that can reduce the risk of stress at workplace. Lastly there are few tools and techniques that have been developed in order to help the sufferers and that will be covered as well.

In today's fluctuating economy, it is very important for everyone to sustain their job and at times if the work environment lacks the required support it becomes very difficult to keep control and work under high pressure situations. There might be some other technical factors involved like " Layoffs", " Budget cuts" and " managerial pressure" however these create lot of other smaller issues that together can create an emotional and physical breakdown. There are several reasons that may result in causing stress at workplace however a few of them are most common and hazardous; an analysis of the causes is as follows.[CITATION Hel11 l 1033]

Overburden at workplace – This is one of the most common issues and persists in the most well known organizations; the major reason is that every company wants to enhance their production level while reducing costs and

therefore it is very obvious that lesser workforce will handle more responsibilities and at times this creates a regular tension for an individual resulting in stress. [CITATION Sva02 l 1033]

Social Support – There are multiple types of support functions which are required in an official environment to ensure that an employee does not feel left out and over used. The first type of support is instrumental support and is basically availed if there is an extra workload on a person and must be well managed between peers so that the total work is shared evenly and it does not become hectic. Secondly, the informative support is really needed as it helps the employees to be informed about all major decisions taken by the company and makes them feel important and safe. Similarly, Evaluative support encourages the employees to continue their good work and also gives them constructive feedback to help them develop their skills. Finally, emotional support ensures that the employees believe that the organization understands their feelings and emotions and is with them during hard times. [CITATION Sva02 l 1033]

Break from regular schedule - It happens that while the employees are paid well and the internal environment is healthy there is a monotony that enters the life of an employee due to the same pattern of life at workplace, hence it is important for the organizations to ensure that there is a change in this pattern at regular intervals to kill this monotony and make the work interesting. [CITATION Sva02 l 1033]

Effects

There are several effects that are caused due to stress and definitely they do impact the production level of any organization; the effects of stress may vary from normal mental tension to serious physical problems however at times it is difficult to find out if any effect is a result of work stress. There is more detailed study on this as we proceed to the symptoms.

Symptoms and Risk Groups

As it is discussed above that stress at workplace is a serious problem and is very capable of impacting an organization adversely hence it is very important to identify the symptoms of stress at work and taking a proper action against the same, which is in the favor of both the organization and the employee. There are few symptoms that are common and can be noticed easily, although one of the reasons at a particular time may be due to a personal problem however presence of more than one issue is an indication of stress at workplace. [CITATION Hea09 l 1033]

Exaggeration and out of proportion anxiety is the initial and most common of all the symptoms and this is the early warning signal however it is important for an individual to identify the same in himself and take preventive measures, as the other will not be able to notice this easily. The next area of concern can be the moodiness displayed by an individual and there will be a presence of sudden mood change caused by the mental imbalance. The stress may cause an employee to suddenly withdraw from a responsibility and this will be noticeable by the management and more prominently by the immediate supervisor. The next common symptom is sleeplessness which is

generally followed by susceptibility to illness. The last but the most important and harmful of all is poor emotional control; this can produce severe feelings of helplessness and dependency which may lead to serious conflicts.[CITATION Tho09 l 1033]

Who is at risk?

It is definitely not right to say that stress can only happen at a lower level of an organization's governance, as it is very much possible that even the top leaders of an organization are facing great stress which may be due to the market or may be a commitment made to the customer. Therefore it is difficult to identify and segregate the group which will have a higher probability of facing stress, but definitely there are few investigations that can tell us about this and may help to take the right action at the right time. In order to identify the groups that have a risk of being stressed a survey or a one-on-one conversation can really help where the questions may be asked as given below.[CITATION Tho09 l 1033]

Three positive and three negative aspect of their job.

Do they have friends at the work place who support?

Do they feel like coming to work and are interested in taking more responsibilities?

Workplace Stress: A preventive approach

It is always good to take precautions so that a mishap does not take place rather than finding solutions to the problem that appears with time. Even though workplace stress is coming up as a really difficult problem to tackle, it

is easily preventable by taking small initiatives at both organizational and individual level. The solution is very simple and easy to follow and the goal is just to ensure that the work is done by choice and not by pressure.
[CITATION Hou10 l 1033]

Preventing Stress: The employee perspective

Management of the psychological and physical well-being is extremely important and this is only possible with good peer support. It is a logical fact that support is a mutual relationship and therefore an individual must try to support the others at work so that he may expect the same in return.
[CITATION Wor06 l 1033]

In order to ensure that the work load does not become a problem, it is advised to manage the time well; a balanced schedule that includes time for work, family and social activities will really help to reduce pressure. One must not over commit as that can cause a last minute completion or delays', causing stress and it is also equally important to take breaks at regular intervals. [CITATION Wor06 l 1033]

Task management is also another important factor and this involves prioritization of the tasks so that important work gets completed first and long projects must be broken into small steps to ensure focus. It makes sense at the same time to ensure that all the responsibilities are delegated in such a manner that the pressure does not develop on a specific person alone.[CITATION Cha09 l 1033]

A good diet will always help to keep the body energetic and healthy hence it is important to take meals in a timely manner and do not skip them at any cost, also the meals must be high in protein and fiber but low in cholesterol to ensure mental alertness. Alcohol can help to relax the body however the intake must be regulated and should be in small quantities, on the other hand caffeine must be avoided as far as possible as it increases anxiety. Exercising is always helpful in maintaining good mental and physical fitness. Lastly, taking enough sleep would really help to reduce the pressure of work and provide comfort to the body.[CITATION Tho09 l 1033]

The workplace must be taken as a positive aspect of life and the work must be enjoyed, a little bit of humor will always add a nice break from work pressure, moreover emotions should be controlled as far as possible and all problems must be resolved through conversations as far as possible. All the above measures if taken seriously will definitely lead to a stress free environment.[CITATION Hel11 l 1033]

Preventing Stress: The organizational perspective

It is very clear by now that it is in good faith of the organizations to keep stress away from their work environment as that will not only help to improve the production level but will also enhance the product quality. The management is very close to the employees and the work load ratio, which makes it more easy for them to understand the kind of pressure faced by the employees, hence they must follow the below mentioned practices to ensure that they also put equal effort to reduce the stress at workplace.[CITATION Hea09 l 1033]

The management must follow integrity when dealing with promotions and appraisals, the information flow must be clear and unbiased. The deadlines created for a work to be completed must have regular follow-ups and reasonable expectations, there should be support available to assist as and when possible, the management must be approachable and should not have communication barriers. [CITATION Hea09 l 1033]

There are few responsibilities that the management has to strictly follow and that is development of action plans, encouragement to team participation, conflict management, uses HR team effectively, respects employee feedback and inputs, takes interest in a team member's life outside work. All the above activities will really help to take away pressure from the employees and will make them feel " at home" and relaxed in the organization thus reducing stress.[CITATION Cha09 l 1033][CITATION Hel11 l 1033]

Stress management: Techniques

In order to manage the stress at work place there are a lot of activities that can help to reduce the stress level, and the best part is that all these activities are not very difficult to implement. Recreational activities, like indoor games really help to take of pressure and enhance the bonding between employees, similarly music parlors are also a good source of relaxation to the employees while they are on a break. Some organizations have Gym built inside the premises to provide recreational and health benefits together. We can see that all the above initiatives are not very difficult to implement however a creative approach can really help to reduce

the stress levels even when the employees are under a lot of work pressure.[
CITATION Hou10 l 1033]

Conclusion

Work pressure and stress has emerged as common area of concern in today's world however the most important thing to remember here is that most of the issues arise because of lack of emotional support within the workplace. The key factor is to understand human feelings beyond the relation of an employee and an employer, not only this, mutual understanding and the approach to proactively help the peers can also really help.

There are also certain life style changes that we have discussed and can help to reduce the stress, these are not related to the work environment or the workplace but are scientifically proven ways to maintain a healthy life style so that at least from the health point of view there would be no concerns.

Lastly, considering that there is a lot of concern displayed about the workplace stress, there are a lot of government and non-government groups coming forward to handle this situation as not tackling this issue can have serious consequences and as time passes by, the competition and market trends will introduce more and more stress therefore it is important for the organizations to come forward and take steps to ensure that the employees working for them are not mentally and physically stressed.

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