

Causes of occupational stress



Occupational stress can be referred to the physical pressure such as weary as well as body pain (Beehr et al., 2001) (cited in Nazim & Shahid Jan, n. d., p. 292) and mentally pressure such as weary, anxiety, depression, insomnia, incurred by oneself occupation or job (Millward, 2005) (cited in Nazim & Shahid Jan, n. d., p. 292). There are two types of stress, which are eustress and distress. Eustress, is a positive stress, can motive one to achieve oneself goals whereas distress negatively influences oneself behavior, physical and mental condition (Mcshane, Olekalns & Travaglione 2010, p. 139). In fact, there are a number of factors which cause occupational stress.

Firstly, employees usually feel pressured when there are overload work tasks to be completed by them (Swaminathan & Rajkumar, 2013, p. 86). For instance, when an employer distributes a number of difficult tasks to his or her employee to be completed within a short period of time, the employee will usually feel stressed due to the fact that completing the task within a short period of time is beyond the employee's capability. This can be related to MARS Model where Motivation, Ability, Role perception and Situational factors are considered (Mcshane, Olekalns & Travaglione 2010, p. 46-49). The employee may have the motivation and ability as well as a good role perception to perform his or her task, but due to situational factor such as limited time, he or she will feel stressed. For instance, in most of the secondary school, a teacher is responsible for teaching many subjects and the overload work task will definitely make the teacher feel stressed (*It takes two: how schools are investing in staff teaching additional subjects* 2013).

Besides, the relationship among employees or between employees and employers also contributes to occupational stress (*Causes of work-related stress* 2009). This problem commonly happens when a new employee enters into a new job or position. He or she may not be able to get used to the new environment, especially the relationship with new colleagues. New employees will usually feel ignored by his or her colleagues and this problem makes them feel depressed (*Common causes of stress at work* n. d.). Very often, new employees will also have problem in communicating with new colleagues because of incomprehension of personality to each other (Mcshane, Olekalns & Travaglione 2010, p. 345). In Model of Communication, communication barriers are the obstacles, which include perception, filtering, language and excessive information that disturb communication among people (Mcshane, Olekalns & Travaglione 2010, p. 356-358). For instance, sometimes when new colleagues make fun of a new employee such as kidding with the new employee, the new employee may convert the message received in a wrong way due to his or her perception, different language spoken, excessive information received and so on, in which the employee will think that the new colleagues are trying to insult him or her. Moreover, some employees, who do not have a good communication and relationship with their superiors or employees, are even bullied and suffer from harassment such as sexual harassment by their superior and end up feeling pressured (Tehrani 2002) (cited in Ongori & Agolla 2008, p. 124). The employees or victims are unable to communicate well or feel shy to communicate with people in a company will usually be the target of bullying by their superiors or colleagues. For example, in Nike company, there is a number of employees has suffered from insult and sexual harassment by

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their superiors (*Nike workers suffer harassment, claims report 2001*).

Consequently, these victims will end up suffering from stress or feel very pressured whenever they work in their workplace.

Job insecurity is also not an exception to be one of the main factors contributing to occupational stress and thus reducing the productivity of employees (Babatunde 2013, p. 76). In the Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the most important need of human is physiological, followed by security such as job security, socialization, esteem and self-actualization (Mcshane, Olekalns & Travaglione 2010, p. 170-171). It is, therefore, clear that job security is necessary for a person. This problem worrying about job insecurity is most commonly faced by employees who are in debts, confront financial liability and difficulties. These employees are usually worried about the problem of unemployment that may occur on them in the future as their current job is very important for them for shouldering certain liabilities or responsibilities such as raising a family. In fact, the problem of employee's dismissal commonly happens during economic recession, in which the economic is under a bad condition (Sandilands n. d.). Therefore, employees' worries about dismissal usually arise during economic recession. Due to the fact that most of the companies have insufficient revenue to cover their expenses, the companies therefore dismiss some the employees who are not productive in order to reduce their expenses (Windermere n. d.). For example, Nike has planned to dismiss about 1750 workers in order to reduce its expenses by \$225 million (Rogoway 2009). Not only that, some of the employees is also worried that their salaries will get deducted as well as being treated unfairly. For instance, the majority of the employees in United Kingdom are most

worried about the problem of their salaries reduction, followed by the problem of being unemployed and treated unfairly (Osborne 2013).

Therefore, job insecurity is truly undeniable to be one of the major factors which may lead to the occupational stress (*Unemployment ' can lead to depression' 2011*).

In actual fact, occupational stress has indeed brought advantages to employees. One of the most common advantages is that a low level of occupational stress can help to improve the working performance of an employee. When an employee has suffered from stress such as a reasonable work submission deadline, he or she will be more initiated or committed to try the very best to complete a task or come out with a well-done output. For example, after Apple company has released its new smartphone, iPhone 5S, Samsung Company then declares that it will also come out with its new smartphone product, Samsung Galaxy S5 which also has the same level of processor (*The Fierce Competition Between Samsung And Apple is Still Ongoing n. d.*). It is clearly shown that stress has actually motivated Samsung company's employees to create come out with a good way to compete with Apple Company.

Occupational stress, on the other hand, does also incur a number of negative impacts. The typical disadvantage is that occupational stress may harm oneself health condition in term of physical and mental. It is commonly known the symptoms of being overstressed are headache, insomnia, high blood pressure and so on (Hamlett n. d.). In fact, these symptoms also implies that oneself suffer the risk of health problems. If the overstressed issue persists, the employee will get sick and end up reducing his or her

productivity. Not only that, the employee will also be unable to fully concentrate on performing his or her tasks as he or she will be distracted by worries at most of the time (Hamlett n. d.). In addition, the issue of occupational stress harming employees' mental health condition is now increasing at an alarming rate. The mental illness or stress suffered will get serious if it is not cured as soon as possible and will end up causing fatal to the patient such as committing suicide (Omelas & Kleiner 2003) (cited in Ablanedos-Rosas et al. 2011, p. 555). For example, a nurse in Britain committed suicide due to the vicious slander brought by his patient (*Work Suicide* n. d .). In order to reduce stress temporarily, many people choose to smoke and end up addicted to smoking (*Smoking and Mental Health* n. d.), consequently increasing the chances of getting lung cancer (*Lung cancer risks and causes* n. d.). In other words, occupational stress has indirectly led some of the employees to the risk of getting lung cancer.

In addition, if the level of an employee's stress is too high and beyond the capabilities of the employee to control it, adverse effects such as frustration or anxiety may occur and will subsequently lead to a low productivity (Cevizci et al. 2014, p. 42). Path-goal theory comprises of four types of leadership style, which are directive, supportive, participative and achievement-oriented (Mcshane, Olekalns & Travaglione 2010, p. 464). The leader of a company should be supportive and considerate to his or her employee. ASA theory consists of 3 ways, which are attraction, selection and attrition. Attraction is that a person is attracted by the culture of a company as the culture company is his or her preferred culture. Selection is that a company selects workers which are able to adapt the culture of the

company. Attrition is that a company dismisses the workers who does not adapt to the culture of the company (Mcshane, Olekalns & Travaglione 2010, p. 555-556). ASA theory can be used to reduce or avoid stress of employees through allowing workers to choose company which are suitable to them, selecting people who can work under stress and dismissing employees who are unable to meet company's target.