Lack of group cohesiveness psychology essay

Teams and groups have a great impact on the behavior of employees. Good working and interactions with peers, subordinates, and superiors and crucial aspects of organizational life, helping employees achieve personal and organizational goals. When relationships are poor, they can become sources of stress.

Moreover, incivility at work and elsewhere has become a major problem. Incivility implies rudeness and disregard of others. It includes the violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. A high level of political behavior or " office politics" also may create stress for managers and employees. The nature of relationships with others may influence how employees react to other stressors.

In other words, interpersonal relationships can be either a source of stress or the social support that helps employees cope with stressors. The group can also be a potential source of stress. The group stressors can be categorized into following areas:

Lack of group cohesiveness

Starting with the historically famous hawthrone studies, it has become very clear that cohesiveness or " togetherness' is very important to employees, especially at the lower levels of organizations. If an employee is denied the opportunity for this cohesiveness because the other member of the group shut the person out, the resulting lack of cohesiveness can be very stress-producing.

Lack of social support

Employees are greatly affected by the support of one or more members of a cohesive group. By sharing their problems and joys with others, they are much better off. If this type of social support is lacking for an individual, the situation can be very stressful. There is even research indicating that the lack of social support is so stressful that it accounts for some health care costs.

Intraindividual, interpersonal and intergroup conflict.

Conflict is conceptually very closely linked to stress. Conflict is normally associated with incompatible or hostile acts between intraindividual dimensions such as personal goals or motivational needs/values, between individuals with in a group, and between groups. Conflict can hence lead to considerable stress for individuals.

In addition to the group per se, group-level dynamics may become stressors, for example a recent study found that organizational politics was a potential source of stress in the work environment.

Aggressive behavior :

A frightening category of work stressors is overly aggressive behavior in the workplace, often taking the form of violence or sexual harassment. Aggressive behavior that intentionally threatens or causes physical harm to an employee is classified as workplace violence.

Work place violence tops the security threats employee face at their organization. Homicide is second only to transportation accidents as the most common cause of workplace fatalities. A second form of overly

aggressive behavior in the workplace is sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is unwanted contact or communication of a sexual nature.

Many female employees have been object of unwanted sexual advances, propositions or discussions at work. As with workplace violence, sexual harassment is a serious problem. Management clearly has a strong responsibility to do everything in its power to prevent sexual harassment from occurring. When it does occur, it needs to be dealt with quickly and firmly.

INDIVIDUAL STRESSORS:

In a sense, the stressors discussed so far eventually get down to the individual level. There is also more research and agreement on possible situational dimensions and individual dispositions that may affect stress outcomes. For example, individual dispositions such as type a personality patterns, personal control. Learned helplessness, self efficacy and psychological hardiness may all affect the level of stress someone experiences.

Conflict between work and other roles :

A person has many roles in life (e. g., breadwinner, family member, little league coach, and/or social workers, to name a few), only one of which is typically associated with work (although some individuals may hold more than one job at a time) these roles may present conflicting demands that become sources of stress.

Furthermore, work typically meets only some of person's goals and needs. Other goals and needs may conflict with career goals, presenting an

additional source of stress. For example, employees' personal desires to spend time with their families may conflict with the extra hours they must work to advance their careers. Current demographic trends, such as the increasingly large number of dual-career couples, have brought work and family role conflicts into sharp focus.

Career development:

Major stressors related to career planning and development involves job security, promotions, transfers, and developmental opportunities. An employee can feel stress by under promotion (failure to advance as rapidly as desired0 or over promotion (promotion to a job that exceeds the individual's competencies).

The current wave of reorganization and downsizing may seriously threaten careers and cause stress. When jobs, teams, departments, or entire organizations are restructured, employees often have numerous career-related concerns: can I perform competently in the new situation? Is my new job secure? Typically, employees find these concerns stressful.

Differences between company and employee values

A further cause of stress lies in differences between company values and ethical practices, as often reflected in the organization's culture, and employee ethics and values. Substantial differences can lead to significant mental stress as an effort is made to balance the requirements of both sets of values.

Personality characteristics

The personality characteristics points out the complexity of, and individual differences in, personality dispositions and traits. Personality traits such as authoritarianism, rigidity, masculinity, femininity, extroversion, supportiveness, spontaneity, emotionality, tolerance for ambiguity, anxiety, and the need for achievement have been uncovered by research as being particularly relevant to individual stress. Most attention has centered on the type A personality.

Friedman and rosenman define the type a personality as " an action-emotion complex that can be observed in any person who is aggressively involved in a chronic, increscent struggle to achieve more and more in less and less time, and if required to do so, against the opposing efforts of other things or other persons." Type A 00employee's experience considerable stress. They are the ones who:

Work long, hard hours under constant deadline pressures and conditions for overload.

Often take work home at night or on weekends and are unable to relax.

Constantly compete with them, setting high standards of productivity that they seem driven to maintain.

Tend to become frustrated by the work situation, to be irritated with the work efforts of others, and to be misunderstood by supervisors.

Type B people appear more relaxed and easygoing. They accept situations and work with them rather than fight them competitively. Type B people are

especially relaxed regarding time pressures, so they are less prone to have problems associated with stress. Still, type B individuals can be highly productive workers who meet schedule expectations; they simply obtain results in a different manner.

The research on type A and type B people is still accumulating. For example, some of the type A behavior patterns, such as competitiveness and a drive for career success, appear to be consistent with society's values. At the same time, the hostility and aggression these people exhibit may make it difficult for many employees to work with them.

Some studies also suggest that there may be different forms of type a personalities. As a result, the type A's who are more expressive and less hostile may be less prone to heat disease. Other type A's apparently enjoy their success so much that they disregard the surrounding stress and do not suffer from heart attacks or other physical consequences.

Besides the debate surrounding the impact of type a personality on health is the question of the success of type A's versus type B's. It is pretty clear that type A's are typically on a " fast track" to the top.

They are more successful than type B'a. however, at the very top they do not tend to be as successful as type B's, who are not very ambitious, are more patient, and take a broader view of things. The key may be to shift form type A to type B behavior, but, of course, most type A's are unable and unwilling to make the shift and/or to cope with their type A characteristics.

Personal control

The second internal factor affecting employee stress is the amount of perceived control they have over their work and working conditions. Employees who have a substantial degree of independence, autonomy, and freedom to make decision seem to handle work pressures better. Since two employees may have the same actual control and flexibility, it is clearly their relative perception of that freedom that counts.

Managers can respond to this need for control through a variety of measures such as allowing flexible work schedules, enriching jobs, placing individuals on self-managing teams, or empowering employees by using participative leadership styles. People's feelings about their ability to control the situation are important in determining their level of stress.

In particular, if employees feel that they have little control over the work environment and over their own job, they will experience stress. Studies have shown that if employees are given a sense of control over their work environment, such as being given a chance to be involved in the decision-making process that affects them; this will reduce their work stress.

A large study by Cornell university medical researchers found that those workers who experience loss of control, especially in relatively how-level jobs, have tripled the risk of developing high blood pressure. The researchers concluded that lack of control turns stress into physical problems.

They also found that employee perceptions of the amount of control they experience at work relate to stress, which in turn affects physiological

outcomes such as blood pressure as well as psychological outcomes such as job satisfaction.

Learned helplessness:

The feeling of loss of control goes back to come of the classic research on learned helplessness conducted by Seligman. In conducting experiments on dogs who could not escape shock, he found that they eventually accepted it and did not they have learned to be helpless.

Other studies found that people, too, can learn to be helpless, which helps explain why some employees just seem to have given up and seem to accept stressors in their work environment, even when a change for the better is possible.

Most recently, Seligman and his colleagues have concentrated on people's explanations for their lack of control. Specifically, they suggest that people are most apt to experience helplessness when they perceive the cause of the lack of control:

To be related to something about their own personal characteristics (as opposed to outside, environmental forces)

As stable and enduring (rather than just temporary)

To be global and universal (cutting across many situations, rather than in joint one sphere of life)

Further study and research on the sense of control in general and learned helplessness in particular will provide much insight into stress and how to cope with it.

Perception:

Perception is a process whereby a person selects and organizes environmental information into a concept of reality. Employee perceptions of a situation can influence how (or whether) they experience stress.

For example, two employees have their hob duties substantially changed-a situation likely to be stressful for many people. The first employee view the new duties as an opportunity to learn new competencies and thinks that the change is a vote of confidence from management in her ability to be flexible and take on new challenges.

In contrast, the second employee perceives the same situation to be extremely threatening and concludes that management is unhappy with his performance.

Past experience:

A person may perceive a situation as more or less stressful. Depending on how familiar that person is with the situation and his prior experience with the particular stressors involved. Past practice or training may allow some employees to deal calmly and competently with stressors that would greatly intimidate less experienced or inadequately trained employees.

The relationship between experience and stress is based on reinforcement. Positive reinforcement or previous success in a similar situation can reduce

the level of stress that a person experiences under certain circumstances; punishment or past failure under similar conditions can increase stress under the same circumstances.

The evidence indicates that experience on the job tends to be negatively related to work stress. The two explanations have been offered. First is the idea of selective withdrawal. Voluntary turnover is more probably among people who experience more stress.

Therefore, people who remain with the organization longer are those with more stress-resistant traits or those who are more resistant to the stress characteristics of their organization. Second, people eventually develop coping mechanisms to deal with stress.

Social support:

The presence or absence of other people influences how individuals in the workplace experience stress and respond to stressors. The presence of coworker may increase an individual's confidence, allowing that person to cope more effectively with stress.

For example, working alongside someone who performs confidently competently in a stressful situation may help an employee behave similarly. Conversely, the presence of fellow workers may irritate some people or make them anxious, reducing their ability to cope with stress.

Locus of control:

Those with internal locus of control believe they control their own destiny. Those with external locus believe their lives are controlled by outside forces.

Evidence indicates that internals perceive their jobs are less stressful than do externals.

When internals and externals confront a similar stressful situation, the internals are likely to believe that they can have a significant effect on the results. They, therefore, act to take control of events. In contrast, externals are more likely to be passive

Self efficacy:

Self efficacy has also been found to influence stress outcomes. Self efficacy refers to an individual's belief that he or she is capable of performing a task. Evidence indicates that individuals with strong self efficacy reacted less negatively to the strain created by long work hours and work overload that did those with low levels of self efficacy. That is, confidence in one's own abilities appears to decrease stress.

As with an internal locus of control strong efficacy confirms the power of self beliefs in moderating the effect of high strain situation. There is increasing evidence that people's self-perception of their capacity to be effective and bring about change may be an important disposition in the ability to withstand stress.

For example, those with high self-efficacy have a relatively low level of physiological arousal (for example, they have less adrenaline in the bloodstream). Yet those under stress tend to have high physiological arousal. Thus, those with high self-efficacy tend to remain clamer when faced with a stressful situation.

Over arousal can impair our ability to solve compels stress-related problems by elevating out motivation well beyond optimal levels and distracting us from task at hand. So people with higher self-efficacy expectations have biological as well as psychological reasons for remaining calmer.

Personality:

Some people's personality includes a high degree of hostility and anger. These people are chronically suspicious and mistrustful of others. Evidence indicates that this hostility significantly increases a person's stress and risk for heart diseases.

More specifically, people who are quick to anger maintain a persistently hostile outlook, and project a cynical mistrust of others are more likely to experience stress in situation.

Psychological hardiness:

Everyone has observed individual differences of people faced with stressors. Some people seem to go to pieces at the slightest provocations, while others seem unflappable in the face of extremely stressful situations. Those able to cope stressfully with extreme stressors seem to have a " hardiness" disposition.

Personality traits that seem to counter the effects of stress are known collectively as hardy personality. As a personality type, hardiness is defined as a " cluster of characteristics that includes feeling a sense of commitment, responding to each diffulty as representing a challenge and an opportunity, and perceiving that one has control over one's own life". The hardy personality is characterized by:

A sense of positive involvement with others in social situation;

A tendency to attribute one's own behavior to internal causes

A tendency to perceive or welcome significant changes in life with interest, curiosity, and optimism.

A high degree of hardiness reduces the negative effects of stressful events. Hardiness seems to reduce stress by altering the way people perceive stressors. The concept of the hardy personality provides a useful insight into the role of individual differences in reaction to environmental stressors.

An individual having a low level of hardiness perceives many events as stressful; an individual having a high level of hardiness perceives fewer events as stressful. A person with high level of hardiness isn't overwhelmed by challenging or difficult situation.

Rather, faced with a stressor, the hardy personality copes or responds constructively by trying to find a solution-to control or influence events. This behavioral response typically reduces stress reactions, lowers blood pressure, and reduces the probability of illness.

Frustration:

Another cause of stress is frustration. It is a result of motivation (drive0 being blocked to prevent one from reaching a desired goal. It is a felling of insecurity and dissatisfaction arising from unresolved problems or unsatisfied needs and wants. The mind, either consciously or subconsciously, generally attempts to cause behavior designed to help the frustrated person adjust to

an unresolved situation, a type of behavior termed an adjustive reaction of defense mechanism.

Some adjustive reactions are positively directed while others may be negative. Some frustrations may result in mild adjustive ` reactions; other reactions may be extreme and emotional. The intensity of a particular adjustment generally depends on two factors: the type of frustration activity and the previous experience of the frustrated person. Psychologists have developed a variety of terms to describe the numerous types of adjustive reactions to frustration.

Symptoms of stress:

Stress affects different people in different ways, and everyone has a different method of dealing with it.
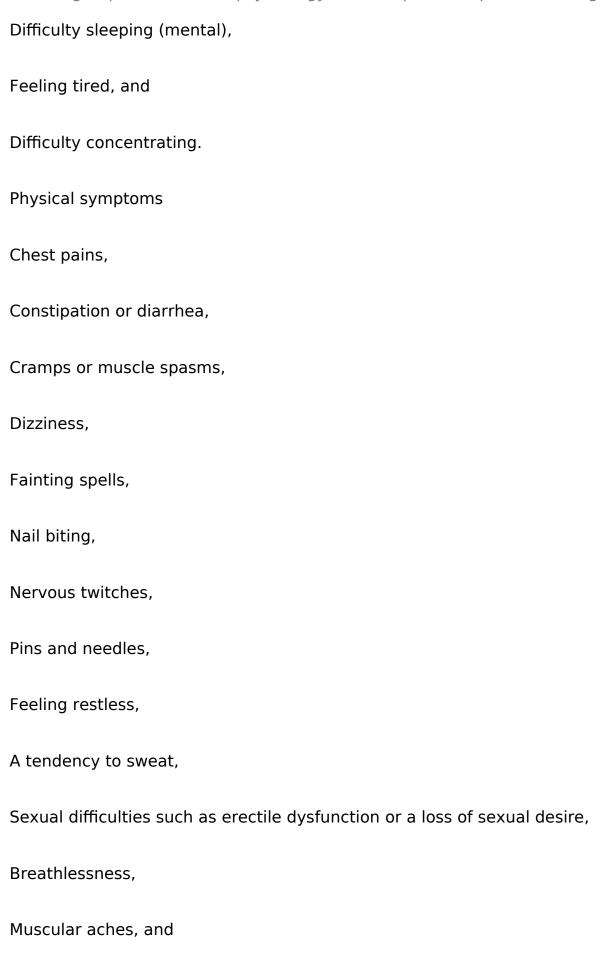
Psychological symptoms

Anger,

Depression,

Anxiety,

Changes in behavior,

Food cravings,

Lack of appetite,

Frequent crying,

Difficulty sleeping (mental),

Feeling tired, and

Difficulty concentrating.

Physical symptoms

Chest pains,

Constipation or diarrhea,

Cramps or muscle spasms,

Dizziness,

Fainting spells,

Nail biting,

Nervous twitches,

Pins and needles,

Feeling restless,

A tendency to sweat,

Sexual difficulties such as erectile dysfunction or a loss of sexual desire,

Breathlessness,

Muscular aches, and

Difficulty sleeping (physical).

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The research for the project is objected at identifying the stressors existing in the banking sector. This purpose is extended to identifying the different stressors faced by the employees of public sector banks and private sector banks.

The focus was basically on the employees of state bank of India (a leading public sector bank) and ICICI (one of the leading private sector bank). Various stressors are identified and comparison between the stress levels existing in the employees of these banks is done on various significant grounds.

A sample size of 46 respondents is selected that includes 23 respondents of both the banks. The questionnaires projected various questions concerning the individual, group, and organizational stressors. The respondents were asked to tick the appropriate option (yes, no or not applicable for all except 2 questions).

The responses, expressed in terms of yes, no or not applicable are analyzed in terms of their repercussion on stress generating capacity. A " yes" answer to a statement could not necessarily mean positive answer. The statements were so formed that a " yes" could indicate a negative answer as well. Same is the case for " no". Each " no" does not mean something negative.

Considering this and since the purpose is to understand the level of stress each question is marked 1 (one) on the negative answer give and 0 (zero) on

every positive reply, irrespective of whether it is yes or no. the interpretation of the scores is done on the following basis:

Questions are divided on the basis of three stressors:

Individual level: there are 18 questions to understand the impact of this stressor. Negatively answering one statement can give 1 point and in all these statement can yield a maximum score of 18 points.

Group level: there are 6 questions to understand the impact of this stressor. Negatively answering one statement can give 3 and in all these statement can yield a maximum score of 18 points.

Organizational level: there are 18 questions to understand the impact of this stressor. Negatively answering one statement can give 1 point and in all these statements can yield a maximum score of 18 points.

Analyzing these stressors independently, the following is base:

Less than 4: This score presents that the respondents are not prone to stress and are not likely to have and suffer from a stress related illness.

4 to 8: This score presents that the respondents are prone to stress and likely to suffer from the negative effects of stress. They may possibly be open to stress related illnesses.

More than 8: This score presents that the respondents are very prone to the negative effects of stress and may be open to stress related illness. They must not delay in doing something about it and seek professional stress management counseling and consult medical doctor.

After analyzing these stressors independently, they are summed up to find the total stress faced by an employee. The following base is taken:

Less than 10: This score presents that the respondents are not prone to stress and are not likely to have and suffer from a stress- related illness.

10 to 20: This score presents that the respondent are prone to stress and are likely to suffer from the negative effects of stress. They may possibly be open to stress related illnesses.

More than 20: This score presents that the respondents are very prone to the negative effects of stress and may be open to stress related illness.

They must not delay in doing something about it and seek professional stress management counseling and consult medical doctor.

The comparative study of the stressors affecting the employees of both the banks- SBI and ICICI is done keeping the above base in focus. The comparison is presented through pie charts. Various dimensions affecting the stress level and the personal characteristics of the respondents are presented and compared to understand to organizational environment and culture.

FINDING

From the data presentation and interpretation of various level of stressors presented above, as analyzed from the information collected from various respondents, the following findings can be chalked out:

Comparative analysis:

While comparing the stress level of female employees of both the banks, it is clear that female respondents of icici feel extreme stress, while female respondents of SBI are easy going and feel stressed. Of all the stressors, 26% of the female employees of ICICI feel extremely stressed by the organizational stressors. One of the reasons for this lies in the fact that the female employees of SBI have been with the bank for many years; hence they have developed the coping mechanisms to deal with the organizational stressors.

While comparing the stress levels of the employees of SBI with the stress levels of the male employees of ICICI, it is found that 44% of the male employees of SBI face extreme stress and 16% of male employees of ICICI face extreme stress.

While comparing the male versus female employee stress levels of ICICI, it is Evident, that female employee suffers more stress as compared to male employees. 26% of female employees suffer from extreme stress.

While comparing the male versus female stress levels at SBI, it is found that male employees (approximately 44% of male employees feel extreme stress) of SBI feel more stress as compared to female employees (only 29% of female employees feel extreme stress). One of the reasons worth mentioning is that in SBI; most of the key positions are occupied by male employees. Hence female employees are in charge of such positions that do not cause much stress.

Stress level of SBI is high as compared to icici, since 39% of total respondents of SBI face extreme stress and only 17% of the total respondents of ICICI face extreme stress.

The analysis presented a surprising result. The stress level of the employees working in public sector bank i. e., SBI is higher than the stress level of employees working in the private sector bank i. e., ICICI.

I would now like to present the findings that indicate this difference.

First, I am presenting the reasons that are responsible for high stress among employees of SBI:

First of all, irrespective of their hierarchical positions, there is little autonomy provided to the employees. All employees are required to consult their concerned manager for taking decisions. Moreover, the managers themselves do not have ultimate authority. They are also required to consult regional managers to take certain decision.

Secondly, there exists bureaucracy in public sector banks. There are very long procedures framed for conduct of any activity. Any task that can be otherwise conducted easily requires long procedures to be followed for accomplishing it. This leads to wastage of time and resources. Much of employees' energy is diverted towards these activities that actually require less attention.

The decision making process of the bank is very long. It takes much time to take decisions. The permissions of top management are required to be taken before finalizing a decision and implementing it. These certainly prove to

restrict quick decision making, and hence leads to delay in activities and stress.

The restrictions posed by the rules and regulations of the banks are also one of the essential factors causing stress. Employees feel suppressed and pressurized owning to these. Many employees of SBI are currently finding themselves fixed amidst bank's rules and regulations and their desire of freedom of working.

Most of the employees working in SBI have reached the maintenance stage of their career development. Owing to this, they face much mid-career crises. These employees are currently suffering the Mid Career Crises. To add to this, of late, there were many technological changes implemented in bank. No doubt, the employees were provided adequate training regarding the use of the technology and software, there still exists some level of dissatisfaction among employees concerning the technological area.

The employees of SBI feel that there is partiality existing in the treatment of employees in the bank. They perceive that the managers do have hard corner for few employees. This perception of employees affects their ability to accept any decision taken by manager.

There is lack of motivation among the employees of SBI. There are no incentives provided to improve their performance. There is only one incentive given (in terms of bonus) at the time of Diwali. Lack of incentives proves to be a demotivating factor. As it is, the income received by the employees of SBI or for that matter any public sector bank is lower than what is earned by employees in private sector. The manager of icici, despite

of less experience as compared to manager of SBI, enjoys a pay package of rs. 8, 00, 000 to rs. 9, 00, 000 On other hand, manager of SBI, with more experience receives a pay package of around rs. 4, 00, 000 to rs. 5, 00, 000.

Many respondents (especially branch managers) feel that there is no proper grievance handling system. Though all employees of bank (working under the branch managers) are satisfied with assistance and support of manager for addressing and solving their grievance, there is not much support provided by top management to branch managers to consider and solve their grievances.

Many branch managers have agreed to the fact that their personal goals are not in line with organizational goals. This demotivates the employees to work willingly and productively. It imposes a compulsion on employees to accept, a Learned Helplessness, (a feeling that they cannot do much) which leads to stress.

Recently, various sister concern banks of SBI were merged with SBI (SBS merged with SBI). Many employees of SBS who now work as employees of SBI feel that they are step children of SBI. There is lack of a feeling of belongingness and togetherness. They feel insecure and restricted in the new working environment.

Few of the respondents felt stressful because of over-direction provided to them by their branch managers. They felt that their work is constantly watched and scrutinized more that necessary. They feel interfered and mistrusted. This is the cause of their stress.

There exists a constant fear of punitive action among the employees of SBI. They are criticized severely for their mistakes. This makes them feel over cautious in performing any task and restricts their creativity and learning.

Many branch managers feel that their branch members i. e., employees of his or her branch are not adequately trained to deal with customers. They feel that they require training of professional etiquettes, and for managing customers. Due to lack of patience and empathy shown by the employees to the customers, managers are required to interfere in small matters that at the end can result in havoc if not addressed properly. When managers spend more time in clearing these petty issues, they are unable to give required time to their actual work. Sometimes, this, also leads to work overlapping since managers are required to multi-task for sometimes