

A Narrative on An Impact of Stress Management Interventions at Workplace

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ABSTRACT: *Different organizations are practicing various kinds of interventions in order to manage their employees' stress. In an organization many people work as employees and they are totally different from each other, source of stress and management of that stress could be different with each person. Previous studies have demonstrated the requirement for the stress management interventions among organizational employees. This study aims to measure the impact of stress management interventions in the workplace. This study is a narrative review which consists of similar studies of the same topic. Through relevant keyword search previously published literature were explored from different electronic databases. There are an increasing number of research studies that have assessed the impact of Stress Management Interventions previously. For the purpose of this study seven relevant research studies were identified and examined to evaluate the impact of Stress management interventions in workplace. This study proved that organizational stress management interventions are high to moderately effective for the employees. Not fully but to some extent these interventions for stress management are significant at workplace and helps employees in managing their job stress. This study concluded that management of stress is necessary and interventions regarding stress management must be there in the organizations. Also, it is required that effectiveness of these interventions must be enhanced according to the need and employers should take it more seriously.*

KEYWORDS : *Stress, Stressors, Stress Management, Stress Managements Interventions, Employees, Organization*

INTRODUCTION

The role of stressors in the organization is conceded as crucial for the development of human resource and management issues where it can have an impact on occupational stress and work-performance of the employees.

Management of job induced stress is a challenge for organizations to maintain productivity and improve physical & mental health of workforce which will indirectly cut the health

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expenditure, so there are plenty of reasons which proves that proper handling of employees' stress issues is very important.

The employees themselves trying various self-help techniques for managing their stress these might interfere with the implementation of the organizational activities. Stressors can be different to everyone. A factor might be a source of stress to an individual whereas other person is totally normal towards that factor.

This study was conducted to determine the impact of several stress management interventions in order to manage the stress of organizational employees.

Impact of occupational stress on employee performance has been assessed as an area which needs a careful attention. The extreme amount of job induced stress make employees feel not valued at all in the organization and a significant decline can be seen in their performance. This is because they can't think well and feel lazy towards work. The reasonable amount of stress can inspire employees' potential and the job performance will increase. The impact of work stress must be a significant concern for the upper level management in the organizations.

Work stress can cause reduced discipline, increased laziness and decreased overall work-performance. Occupational stress affects employee performance which ultimately affects job satisfaction.

Stress management is an approach towards problem solving for the betterment of employees' physical and mental health and enhancing their performance graph in the organization. New organizational challenges triggered new workplace stress but if find suitable tools in order to manage it, it works as positive stress i.e. eustress (Umer Asgher 2015)

ORGANIZATIONAL STRESSORS

In previous studies participants pointed out the adverse working conditions and management practices as common causes of work stress. Stress-inducing management practices included unrealistic targets to achieve, lack of support from management and peers, unfair treatment in the organization, low decision latitude, lack of appreciation from supervisor, effort-reward imbalance, conflicting roles, lack of transparency in organizational activities and poor communication between workers and the management.

Many studies demonstrated the fact that multiple factors have been implicated in stress and burnout among working professionals. Specifically, stress and burnout stem from a combination of individual risk factors and organizational stressors (Finney C 2013).

Organizational stressors includes role-conflict, overload of work, delayed promotions, and level of participation interacts with individual attributes like personality and family issues to triggers mental and physical health problems in workers (Cary L. Cooper 1976).

An imbalance between requisites of job and individuals' ability to perform created stress in them and this mismatch is also responsible for employees' job dissatisfaction. This study

suggested the redesigning of work processes without compromising the demands of a job but at the same time these demands should not work as stressors for employees (Robert A. Karasek 1979)

A mismatch between employees' efforts and the rewards receive (eg. lack of promotion, job insecurity, lack of appreciation and may more) for their potential performance (eg. high commitment) could affect adversely on employees' health, if an employee is putting extraordinary efforts to accomplish his job tasks and ultimately helping in the achievement of organizational goals, rewards too must be extraordinary for their genuine efforts, absence of it (high effort-low reward scenario) could make it worse with cardiovascular diseases like hypertension and atherogenic lipids etc. (Seigrist 1996)

The stressors at the work place range from personal problems to overload of work, physical working environment, work situation and conflicts among co-workers & supervisors. Most of the employees struggle with stress, in severe cases leading to adverse effects on their health, performance and productivity. The main events that generate stress are likely not in control, unpredictable, and some are not even known (Tekeste 2014).

This study revealed job itself as a major cause of stress for most of the employees but stress at the workplace is not only caused by overload of work and time pressure but also by lack of rewards and appreciation, especially absence of the autonomy to do their work as they like to do (P. Kalpana 2018).

THE IMPACT OF STRESS MANAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS

Klink et al. (2001) found stress management interventions are effective in their study regarding the determination of the effectiveness of stress-reducing interventions. This study revealed that Cognitive-behavioral interventions are more effective than the other types (relaxation techniques, multimodal programs & organization-focused interventions) of intervention techniques (van der Klink JJ 2001).

A Study from Lacerda (2018) was an effort to evaluate the effectiveness of stress reduction program called PROGRESS, tended to cater the specific needs of workers in a business context and to determine its efficacy upon non-severe psychiatric symptoms, stress, anxiety, depression, processing time/speed and mindfulness. Author found that Mindfulness program adapted to fit within the reality of business time constraints, was effective at developing itself in more than one group stress reduction, depression, anxiety, not so severe psychiatric symptoms, speed of processing and also the improvement of attention skills, showing sustained improvement even after 8-weeks follow-up (Shirley S. Lacerda 2018).

Kamaldeep Bhui et al. (2016) conducted qualitative interviews of employees working in public, private and non-governmental organizations and found that organizational stress management interventions were perceived as effective by employees if they improved management styles, and included some physical exercises, taking breaks and ensuring proper time for planning job assignments. He also added that personal stress management interventions or

self-help stress interventions used outside of work are important in prevention of stress (Bhui K 2016).

A study by Iremeka (2021) was an effort to measure the effect of a group REBT (Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy) on stress management among skilled construction workers in Nigeria, reported that group REBT significantly effective in reduction of stress. REBT stress management manual aims to direct the participants through many REBT prescribed exercises designed for reducing stress by deliberate thought change and belief system adjustment over the period of 8 weeks. (Iremeka, et al. 2021).

There are several resources available like individual's personal awareness in stress coping skills like time management, assertiveness, maintenance of enhanced self-confidence and many more personality attributes. Management should also intervene with available resources for reducing the stress levels of the employees by providing help regarding health facilities at the organization itself, facilitating simple and quick access to therapist and also having leisure activities for free time and entertainment. Stress is related between the employee and the employer as the performance level of the employee is affected by his/her stress which intern affects the organization's productivity. Therefore management of stress is needed for both. The most widely practiced stress management interventions found is time management, sharing of thoughts and leisure activities etc. (Tekeste 2014).

Tina Bui (2021) conducted a study to survey employees across four worksites participating in a workshop to analyze the levels of their stress & productivity. For the purpose of this assessment, author used Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) to measure the stress and Health & Work Questionnaire (HWQ) to measure productivity levels of the employees. Author reported that the scores from PSS and the HWQ of the 186 participants appeared to be inversely correlated; higher stress level were associated significantly with lower level of productivity (Bui T 2021). At last this study recommended that establishment of effective stress management interventions at the workplace by employer should be there in order to cut the stress levels of employees for better and enhanced productivity.

P. Kalpana (2018) assessed the stress level of employees at workplace and their satisfaction towards the management practices and job induced stress by conducting a survey study on 100 employees working in Axles India Limited & found that the majority of the respondents are suffering from very high level of job stress. The study reported that job itself is a major cause of stress among most of the respondents and they prefer personal coping strategies to deal with their stress such as spending time with family & friends, following a healthy diet etc. At last author recommended that management of the organization should always monitor the stress issues of their employees (P. Kalpana 2018).

Another study by Ismail (2015) confirmed that physiological and psychological stresses worked as a significant predictor of job performance. In the purview of this study, management has designed challenging jobs for employees in order to sustain and achievement of organizational predetermined goals. The results of the study reported the levels of physiological stress,

psychological stress, and job performance as high from majority of the respondents. This situation describes that the ability of employees to suitably manage, regulate and control both type of stresses physiological and psychological in executing job may lead to an improved performance at their work. This study provided some guidelines to management in order to manage the employees' stress at workplace: one, management should conduct stress management workshops and encourage the employees to attend these for creating awareness and enhancing competencies in recognizing, utilizing and managing stress. Two, management should allow employees' participation in obtaining input in job redesigning that take into account potentials of stress. Three, organizational management may want to introduce a system of internal coaching by senior employees or internal mentoring by veterans to guide junior and inexperienced employees in proper planning and successful execution of job (Ismail 2015).

DISCUSSION

Klink (2011) found that stress management interventions are very helpful in reducing employees' stress at workplace but also mentioned in his study that cognitive stress interventions are more effective than the other types of interventions to manage stress. Lacerda (2018) attempted to evaluate the efficacy of program named PROGRESS and found it effective for stress reduction. Bhui (2016) reported in his study that stress management interventions could be more useful for employees' stress reduction if management improve their management style, ensure rest breaks, include some physical exercises and provide sufficient time for planning the tasks. Ismail (2015) revealed through his study both type of stress physical and mental are an important predictor of job performance. He claimed that challenging tasks and high commitment towards organizational goals leads to enhanced performance levels. But these challenges should not be unrealistic but achievable and motivate employees to do better than their previous performance level. P. Kalpana (2018) assessed the stress levels of employees working in Axles India Limited found them highly stressed and major cause of that stress was the job itself. Stress management interventions from higher authority was not so effective, hence, employees prefer self-coping techniques to manage their stress and this includes having balanced diet, following healthy lifestyle, spending quality time with friends and family and so on. Tekeste (2014) said that stress management is crucial for both management and employees because in the long run if this stress of employees' left untreated it might cost organizational productivity. He agreed that individuals' personality characteristics also played an important role in stress management like positive approach, patience, flexibility, time management, self-confidence and many more. On the management's part he said they should intervene with some good facilities to manage stress such as timely access to therapist, health schemes, fun-filled activities for free time and entertainment of employees to re-energize them. Tina Bui (2021) tried to find out the interrelationship between stress levels and productivity and found that high level of stress associated with low level of productivity.

CONCLUSION

On a concluding note, it can be said that so much has been done regarding stress management interventions but still there is a lot left undone regarding the same. Organizations are doing their best to overcome the issue of job induced stress in employees but stress is inevitable to any occupation, its prevalence is everywhere. Previous research studies discovered plenty of ways to make stress management interventions effective, so, the present study suggest that both management and employee should together try to minimize the effects of stress, it could not be managed by any one of them alone so far. The management should introduce effective interventions for stress management and regularly upgrade these techniques for stress-coping. On the account of an employee, they should not dependent on management's stress coping interventions, they should try to deal with it on their own and try to develop more stress-coping skills such as patience, resilience, assertiveness, commitment towards work and so on.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

Previous research studies demonstrated various stress management interventions in order to cope with workplace stress effectively. Present study does not consist of any specific technique of stress management like mindfulness, REBT or muscle relaxation and many more. It only depicts the impact of stress management interventions in organizations and includes various types of stress management interventions. Future direction for other researches is that they can assess the effectiveness of particular type of stress intervention technique practicing in organizations. And also, organizations are consist of many people as employees who have different choice, preferences and issues in their life, one should offer them different techniques for their stress management, let them choose and practice that particular technique for stress coping and then analyze the results and effectiveness of stress management intervention.

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