

Stress: A Major Hurdle for Organisational Growth

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Abstract

Corporate organizations have always had profit as their sole objective. A prerequisite for profit is getting maximum results at the least cost of resources. The most profitable companies are the ones which do this best. It is not surprising then that in the middle of conflicting priorities, the human resource is largely taken for granted. In fact, in most organizations, the role of the human resource development manager is more of a compensation administrator, 'body'-buyer and arbiter in case of conflict. This paper is a modest attempt on stress influences on the working of organizations and its management possibilities.

Keywords: Stress, Emotional Effects.

1. Introduction

Stress is the “wear and tear” our bodies experience as we adjust to our environment; it has physical and emotional effects on us and can create positive feelings. As a positive influence, stress can help compel us to action; it can result in awareness and an exciting new perspective. As a negative influence, it can result in distrust, rejection, anger, and depression, which in turn, can lead to health problems like headaches, upset stomach, rashes, insomnia, ulcers, high blood pressure, heart attack and stroke.

Claude Bernard (1865/1961) observed that life's maintenance relies heavily on keeping our internal environment stable despite an ever-changing external world. Cannon (1929) referred to this stability as “homeostasis.” Selye (1956) introduced the concept of “stress” to describe the impact of anything that poses a serious threat to homeostasis. The actual or perceived challenge faced by an organism is termed a “stressor,” while the organism's reaction to the stressor is known as the “stress response.” Although these stress responses developed as beneficial mechanisms, Selye noted that excessive and prolonged stress responses could result in tissue damage and illness.

Humans and other animals elicit coping responses based on the assessment of perceived threat (Lazarus & Folkman 1984). Instead of producing isolated response changes, our central nervous system (CNS) typically produces integrated coping responses (Hilton 1975). Therefore, mammals tend to exhibit increased autonomic and hormonal activities that maximize the possibilities for muscular exertion when an immediate fight-or-flight response seems possible (Cannon 1929, Hess 1957). In contrast, mammals may exhibit a vigilance response during aversive situations when an active coping response is unavailable. This response entails arousal of the sympathetic nervous system (SNS), active inhibition of movement, and shunting of blood away from the periphery (Adams et al. 1968). “Situational stereotypy” refers to the degree to which different circumstances elicit distinct patterns of biologic response.

The rapidly increasing speed of business and the expectation of more, better and faster results in the necessity of constant changes. Business and organisational aspects must be regularly

adapted and improved in order to face growing competition. Rapid technological developments, which involve the processing of large amounts of information and work reorganisations, cause significant stress at work.

Stress has become one of the main causes of disability and inability to work in recent years. The latest crises faced by the financial sector, the consequences of which spread throughout the global economy, exposed the crucial problem of excessive stress at the workplace. This difficult period was characterised by an increased number of acquisitions, with the expectation that people would accept new working conditions, often unfavourable for them, and would work more efficiently than before. This need for rapid and dramatic change had not been experienced before and meant that institutions within the financial sector were nearing, or in some cases, had even surpassed, the point of change saturation, everyone felt the impact regardless of whether they were in managerial or specialist positions. Moreover, most of the changes financial companies faced were imposed and unwanted, and as a result caused uncertainty about the future among their employees. Experience of this period has shown the extent to which businesses in pursuit of profit, neglected the human aspect of the business, despite it being people who form the basis of enterprise development and the economy of the country. In order to maintain business sustainability and growth, financial aspects are crucial, but to attain them, good quality leadership and healthy, well-motivated employees ready to give their best in the long run are indispensable. Stress that employees struggle with became excessive and started to cause problems that became more and more noticeable to employers.

Stress causes Health Issues

Heart Disease

Researchers have long hypothesized that people with type A personalities who are stressed out are more likely to experience high blood pressure and heart issues. I'm not exactly sure why. In addition to causing the release of triglycerides and cholesterol into the bloodstream, stress can directly raise blood flow and heart rate. Additionally, stress may be linked to other issues, such as a higher risk of obesity or smoking, which may subsequently raise heart risks. Physicians are aware that acute emotional stress can set off major cardiac issues, such as heart attacks. Acute stress should be avoided by those with chronic heart issues, and they should learn effective coping mechanisms for life's inevitable stresses.

Anxiety and Depression

It should come as no surprise that higher rates of anxiety and depression are linked to chronic stress. According to a review of recent research, those who experienced work-related stress, such as hard work with little compensation, were 80% more likely to experience depression in the coming years than those who did not.

Stress Phases and Signs

The stages that the body goes through in reaction to a threat were first described by Selye (1946). According to the general adaptation syndrome model, the body goes through three phases. The alarm reaction is the initial phase. The body gets ready for a possible crisis. The heart beats more quickly, blood vessels widen, blood pressure increases, digestion slows, and breathing deepens and quickens. To provide the most energy possible for fight or flight, all body systems cooperate. Resistance is the second stage. The body develops a tolerance to the effects of stress if it persists. Though the body's adaptive energies are being used as a shield against the stressor, the body becomes habituated to its effects. Exhaustion is the third stage. The symptoms of the alarm reaction return when the body's adaptive energies are exhausted,

and the stress shows up as a disease like ulcers, heart problems, and hypertension. When the stressor is removed, the symptom will go away in the first or second stages.

Major causes of Stress

Different situations and circumstances in our personal lives and in jobs reduce stress. Conditions that tend to cause stress are called stressors. The sources of stress or factors related to stress can be broadly divided into four parts –

Organizational Causes

Individual Causes

Group Causes

Extra organizational Causes

Organizational causes

Rethinking Companies

Changing operations

Encountering New Work Cultures

Reaching the Limits

Occupational Demand

Role Conflict

Role Ambiguity

Work Overload and Work Under load

Responsibility for Other

Changes in Working Conditions

Lack of Involvement in Excisions

Individual causes

Life and career Changes

Personality Type

Career Development

Cultural Differences

Coping with Daily life

Group causes

Lack of Group Cohesiveness

Lack of social Support

Conflict

Extra organizational Causes

Increasing Urbanization

Ageing Population

Changing Gender Role

Managing Stress – Useful Tactics

Individual Level: Some individual strategies, such as physical exercises, relaxation, and meditation can shield the person from the negative impact of stress. A person can use relaxation technique which is more powerful and was used by ancient Indian Yogies. It is also known as ‘Shivasan’.

Organizational Coping Strategies: The most famous organizing coping techniques are – change in organizational structure and function, decentralization, job enrichment, role clarity, career planning and counseling.

Learning to Relax

Developing Interest

Improving Diet

Other Techniques

2. Conclusion

Modern science has accepted that in this holistic universe all minds and matters are interconnected at a deeper level. The basic unity of life cannot be broken. Love, sacrifice therefore emerge as the only for a meaningful living. On the basis of this holistic vision, Indians have developed work ethos of life. They found that all work, physical or mental, managerial or administrative have to be directed towards single purpose. Stress can be managed quite confidently with the help of Indian ethos value viz, Yoga, Shivasan etc. Noticing signs and symptoms is the first step to taking action. People who experience work stress due to long hours may need to “take a step back.” It may be time for them to review their working practices or talk to a supervisor about finding ways to reduce the load.

Most people have an activity that helps them relax, such as reading a book, going for a walk, listening to music, or spending time with a friend, loved one, or pet. Joining a choir or a gym also helps some people relax.

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