Responsibilities of Manager and Leader in Relation to the Reduction of Workplace Stress

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Abstract—**Pressure is part and parcel of all work and helps to keep employees motivated. But excessive pressure can lead to workplace stress which undermines performance; it is costly to employers and can make people ill. To reduce the stress the leaders and managers should undertake different responsibilities in their own station. The current essay analyzed the major sources of workplace stress firstly. Then the responsibilities of a manager and a leader were analyzed respectively. The manager should reduce workplace stress from plan, communication, assigning task and solve problems without blame, and the leaders responsibility include activate, evaluation status, authorization, beliefs and passion. Differences between leaders and managers responsibility to alleviate workplace stress is the focus of this essay, and make this article differs from other related studies.**

Keywords–Workplace stress; Manager Responsibilities; Leader responsibilities; Stress reduction

I. INTRODUCTION

Stress has been defined as the relationship between a person and his/her environment that is perceived to be unbalanced in terms of one's physical and psychological resources and the demands of the situation (Lazarus and Folkman 1984[1]). Workplace stress is often related to the design of the job, the culture and environment of the workplace setting, relationships that exist in the workplace, or some combination of these (Yoo et al. 2009[2]). The Health and Safety Executive (HSE [3]) define stress as "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them". Recent research shows that this 'adverse reaction' can seriously undermine the quality of people's working lives and, in turn, the effectiveness of the workplace. There is a growing awareness of the importance of health and safety and recognition that healthy employees make a greater contribution to a business. People are more aware of the harmful effects of stress in workplaces but it is not new - psychologists have been studying stress since the 1950s. Stress can also be related to the prevalence of musculoskeletal disorders, which are the most commonly reported work-related illness, causing long-term absenteeism in the workplace (Paton N. 2005[4]).

Most of the existing research pay attention to workplace stress faced by managers and leaders, this essay will focus on how managers and leaders to exercise their responsibility to reduce workplace stress faced by other members of the organization. The remainder of the essay is organized in the following way. In section 2 we analyzed manager's responsibility to reduction of workplace stress, and analyzed leader's responsibility to reduction of workplace stress in section 3. Concluding remarks follow.

II. MAJOR SOURCES OF WORKPLACE STRESS

One of the major sources of anxiety and stress is work itself. However, reducing the working pressure and the changing its content is not easy. In fact, it may be almost impossible. A more practical and sensible choice therefore would be to adopt effective strategies to cope with stress at workplace. As Koushiki Choudhury (2013[5]) mentioned, the major sources that have a bearing on stress at the workplace as following.

A. Stress Arising out of Environmental Turmoil

Turbulent economic and competitive conditions have resulted in substantial organizational restructurings, takeovers and mergers. These have turned out to be major stressors for employees. The upshot is that you have to work longer and harder just to maintain the lifestyle and economic status you have enjoyed so far. In this state of affairs, work overload prevails with too much work to do and too few people to do it, thanks to wholesale, random and indiscriminate lay-offs and freeze in hiring. Unrealistic expectations of performance lead to excessive unreasonable pressure on the employee. What is more, increased workload coupled with extremely long working hours, all for the same pay, can leave employees physically and emotionally drained. Besides, with variable pay becoming more and more popular, employees face another stressor in terms of uncertain, fluctuating incomes.

B. Stress Arising out of Workplace Interpersonal Milieu

Maladjustment to workplace norms and cultures and the attitudinal characteristics of the boss, co-workers and subordinates may lead to subtle interpersonal conflicts with them. Office politics, nepotism and office gossip can turn out to be major stressors. In fact, one of the most important stressors in the workplace is the interpersonal conflict that happens at work-conflicts, misunderstandings and disagreements with colleagues, superiors and subordinates.

C. Stress Arising out of the Job Structure and Framework

Some degree of fluid boundaries are expected to occur as firms attempt to swiftly respond to the rapidly changing environment, for instance, say in response to customers' needs or competitors' moves. However, what employees face are persistent vagueness of job boundaries, lack of clarity about responsibilities, lack of clarity with regards to what exactly each employee is supposed to do, assignment

of jobs in a haphazard manner and role ambiguity. These worsen the confusion of employees, especially when they are new to the organization. The problems get more pronounced when the firm is acquired by another one or merged into another one. An additional source of job stress is role conflict. Role conflict may also arise due to employees reporting to multiple bosses. Furthermore, often employees find themselves doing work which they do not consider as meaningful, where there is no variety and where their skills, interests and aptitudes are not matched with the work they are doing.

D. Stress Arising out of Work-Life Imbalance

Each employee has different roles to play in life-he or she may be a parent with children to look after, a partner to someone who is perhaps pursuing a career and a son or daughter taking care of aged, sick parents. In such scenarios, threshing out a work-life balance equation can be extremely taxing and stressful.

E. Stress Arising out of the Job Ambiance

These include stressors arising out of unpleasant office ambiance, uncomfortable working conditions, unhygienic working conditions, poorly designed office spaces, lack of proper ventilation and improper temperatures, lighting and noise levels. Working in unsafe areas say such as in the mines and high-risk neighborhoods in the cities, as well as working with radiation, dangerous diseases and hazardous chemicals, amplifies the stress that employees encounter.

In summary, the most influential factor of the work pressure in an organization is associated with managers and leaders. I will distinguish between these two approximate concepts here. A leader is a person who provides the vision for the future. S/he is aware of the possibilities and can see where the group is headed, and then inspires others to come along with him or her. A manager is usually a person in a designated position. Managers have a job position or title that lets others know they are in charge. They are the people who make things happen and get things done. They take the leader's vision and organize whatever needs to be done to make the vision a reality (Sandra V. 2008[6]).

One solution to workplace stress is of course to avoid getting into situations that are likely to overwhelm our stress coping abilities. In order to reduce the workplace stress, a manager and a leader will assume different responsibilities.

III. MANAGER'S RESPONSIBILITY

As Peter Drucker says, "Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things." [8] The reduction of workplace stress means to bring about a reduction in the number of employees who go off sick, or who cannot perform well at work because of stress. Managers are usually the person in designated positions. Managers have a job position or title that lets others know they are in charge. They are the people who make things happen and get things done. They take the leader's vision and organize whatever needs to be done to make the vision a reality. The ability to manage well is more a 'left-brain activity', involving structure and organization. There are many qualities and skills managers must possess in order to do their job well. In order to achieve this aim, the responsibilities of a manager in relation to the reduction of workplace stress as following:

A. Plan and Perform

Excellent plans to make all members of the work to determine the formation of expectations and effectively reduce workplace stress with the uncertainty about the future. Good managers understand and create systems and know which ones will work best to enable their team to be most effective and efficient. Managers should have the ability to multitask and keep track of a lot of things at once. Effective managers keep detailed daily notes about all that happens on the unit. With the help of these notes they are able to make decisions, delegate, create schedules, and monitor work climate. A good manager is in touch with all that is happening in the unit on a 24-hour basis.

B. Engage in Dialogue and Debate, Not Coercion

To maintain the enthusiasm of members, manager should give credit at every opportunity for successes and a job that is well done, and pass on compliments. At the same time, excellent manager will accept responsibility for things that go wrong. Ultimately it's your responsibility to insure that you have the right staff members in the right positions, and that they are well trained. If something goes wrong it's because this hasn't happened. Let people know how they are doing, and offer praise often. Verbally appreciate people in private and in front of others. If correction is needed, give it privately and with respect, and focus on the positive and your belief in their ability to improve.

C. Delegate Tasks Rationally

Fair distribution of tasks can effectively alleviate workplace stress. Effective managers direct staff to complete tasks in the most time and financially efficient ways possible. This requires knowledge of each individual team member's abilities, preferences, and learning needs. They give clear, complete instructions designed to communicate to each employee based on their experience and ability. A good manager is able to speak the language of their team members and to meet them at their level. Good managers will be flexible and able to move quickly from one role to another. They wear many hats, and may be required to switch from counseling to educating to delegating within a short period of time.

D. Solve Problems without Blame

Employees in the task implementation will inevitably encounter various difficulties and resulting workplace stress. Good managers face situations realistically and deal with them immediately. They deal with issues, not emotion, and focus on what was learned from a situation and how it can be done differently next time. This helps to move their staff members forward rather than keeping them stuck in mistakes. When Listen, ask questions and respect answers. Good managers are effective communicators. They are approachable and believe that each person has a right to an

opinion, something to offer the team, and has a right to be heard.

E. Matching Tasks and Employees Reasonably

There are still differences in ability between different members although within the same organization, which resulted in problems of matching skills and jobs. When a manager assigns a task to a team member s/he demonstrates faith and respect in the ability of that member to do the job to the best of their ability. Managers are aware of the specific personalities and learning needs of each of their employees. An effective manager meets with each team member to discuss job satisfaction and goals for personal and professional growth. Together the manager and employee create action plans to move the team member toward the goals.

IV.   LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

Managers and employees will ignore a large proportion of workplace stress when they believe the organization get forward in the right direction. The leader's responsibility is to lead the organization in the right direction. To maintain the entire organization efficiently operation leaders are obliged to keep the whole organization managers and employees have a comfortable working environment. For reduce workplace stress, leaders need to exercise their various duties effectively. The responsibilities of a leader in relation to the reduction of workplace stress as following:

A. Activate Work Environment

One potentially powerful way for leaders to cultivate an active work environment is to foster self-leadership in them and in their employees. Self-leadership is the most effective method to relieve stress in an organization with exceeded workplace stress. The ability to lead is not connected to education, although most leaders are intelligent people. Leading is a "right-brain activity", more about creating and following vision than about structure and organization. To an effective leader is a person others will respect and follow. Leadership is about influencing those you lead, and there are several qualities and characteristics a leader must possess to do this. Have a clear vision of where the group is going.

B. Accurate Understanding of the Current Situation

Leaders may not know some specific operations, but must keep a deep understanding of the current situation at all times. To reduce the stress, leaders should be clear on the reality of whatever situation they are currently in, and also believe completely that they will eventually prevail. This mindset is exemplified by the attitude of Admiral James Stockdale, who was the highest-ranking US military officer imprisoned in Viet Nam. He was a prisoner in the most horrible conditions for over eight years, and his description of those who survived and those who didn't illustrates this quality. He says that those who survived were not the optimists, who said "We'll be home by Christmas, or we'll be home by next Easter". For when those dates came and went, these men became more and more disheartened, and eventually died of a broken heart. Those who survived were the ones who "never lost faith in the end of the story.

C. Reasonable Arrangements and Fully Authorized

Authorization systems provide modern distributed applications programmers a more effective and scalable means of specifying and enforcing authorization policies (Peter C. et al. 2008[8]). Authorization is the basis for the completion of the target responsibility. The exercise of power for manager is responsible to the assignment. Corresponding responsibilities with power to ensure manager achieve their goals effectively.

Full authorization can reduce workplace stress to the greatest extent, however, authorization only still not sufficient. Leaders also need democracy. Listen well and lead with questions, not answers can fully display the authorization and trust. Leaders are much more interested in listening and learning than telling and directing. Respect people at all levels and always want to hear what they have to say. Good leaders realize that everyone in their organization is equally valuable and important to the overall success of the business. All jobs are built on each other, and what the janitor does is just as important as what the CEO does.

D. Have Strong Values and Beliefs

As an effect leader to reduce workplace stress s/he should have strong values and beliefs, and live them in every area of their life. It's important to be congruent in all. Possess positive self-esteem and are self-confident without being arrogant. Self-esteem is how you feel about yourself and the person you are. People with positive self-esteem maintain high output even though they are in the face of workplaces with high stress. Self-confidence is how you feel about your ability to function in a given situation, and comes from responses or feedback from others.

Leader should have the courage and strength to make difficult decisions. Decision-making requires that you evaluate the entire situation and move in the direction where the outcome will benefit the most people and your organization. This involves evaluating the pros and cons of possible outcomes, and being willing to take a stand that may be unpopular if you feel it's the best way to go. Good leaders are also diplomatic about the way they do this, so people don't feel stepped on.

E. Passionate about Everything

Leaders' enthusiasm will affect every member of the organization. It's clearly that organization which each member is full of enthusiasm for the work has a better ability to resist workplace stress. If correction is needed, they give it privately and with respect, and focus on the positive and their belief in their team member's ability to improve. The other side of passion is to give credit to others for successes, and accept personal responsibility for failures. Good leaders believe that if there is a failure, it's his/her responsibility, if things are fine it's our doing, and if there is a success it's because of the team or an individual member.

V.CONCLUSIONS

Workplace stress is a major cause of occupational ill health, poor productivity and human error. It is also widely recognized that managers and leaders experience of stress is a complex issues, which influenced by a large number of factors which may be work-related, personal, external or indeed due to a combination of these. It is therefore unrealistic to expect that we will manage to eliminate workplace stress entirely. However, there is much we can do as managers and leader to reduce its likelihood and support those unfortunate enough to experience it.

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