A Study on Stress Management in Jagorani Chakra Foundation (JCF), Jashore

Abstract: Stress has become an important issue in most of the organizations irrespective of the organizational size and the industry in which it operates. This is more evident in the apparel industry as it has more labor usage. This study aims to identify organizational behavior issue at JCF. Identified Organizational Behavior in the company is “stress”. Stress causes communication gap, reduction in employee retention and high employee turnover, absenteeism, motivation, low quality and defective products at different levels in the company. For the study purpose thirty Executive level employees selected from JCF in order to carry out the analysis. High stress is a disruptive and an expensive organizational behavior which effects company products quality, low returns as well as low health conditions of employees. This report analyses stress as organizational behavior issue in JCF. This report further highlights the consequences of stress at three level such as work place, Individual and organizational level. Finally based on the analysis recommendations are given to mitigate the Stress and its consequences.

Keywords: Stress management, Organizational behavior, Communication, Employee retention and turnover, Absenteeism, Motivation, and productivity.

INTRODUCTION

The stress is a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, demand, or resource related to what the individual desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important (Stephen P. Robbins and Timothy A. Judge, 2013). In general, we can say that Different people have different understanding of stress. Stress is an unpleasant state of emotional and physiological stimulation that people experience in situations that they perceive as dangerous or threatening to their wellbeing. Challenge stressors, Stressors associated with workload, pressure to complete tasks, and time urgency, hindrance stressors, stressors that keep you from reaching your goals (Stephen P. Robbins and Timothy A. Judge, 2013). A leading expert on stress, cardiologist Robert Eliot gives the following prescription for dealing with stress: “Rule No. 1 is, don’t sweat the small stuff. Rule No. 2 is, it’s all small stuff. And if you can’t fight and you can’t flee, flow.” What is happening in today’s organizations, however, is that the “small stuff” is getting to employees, and they are not going with the “flow.” Stress has become a major buzzword and legitimate concern of the times (Fred Luthans, 2013). Communication is the conveying of messages by exchanging thoughts or information via speech, visuals, signals, writing, or behavior. Communication requires a sender, a message, and a recipient, although the receiver may not be present or aware of the sender’s intent to communicate at the time of communication. Communication requires that the communicating parties share some area of commonality. The communication process is complete once the receiver has understood the message of the sender (Bernad, 2003). The concept of motivation is not new in the field of Human resource management. Several scholars have defined and viewed this term in several fields and they have provided different meanings to motivation of employee. However, several of these definitions show similar ideas. From the perspective of psychology, human studies and economy, motivation is referred to one reason or many that make an individual to get engaged in a specific behavior (Bratton & Gold, 2007, p. 112). From this context, an individual can be influenced by several drives and fundamental needs such as food and desire for a state of being or an object can be included in this reason for motivating an individual to act in a specific manner or to perform certain tasks. On the other hand, the concept of motivation refers to extrinsic together with intrinsic factors that makes a person to take specific actions (Adair, 2009, p. 101). Employee turnover can be defined as voluntarily or involuntary permanent withdrawal from an organization (Robbins, Judge & Vohra, 2012). As Nawaz (2009) indicates that there are two types of employee turnover happen in companies, voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary employee turnover
involves employee’s intention to quit the job or decide to give resignation from job. It can be due to better opportunity, job dissatisfaction, work pressure, supervisor’s bad behavior, etc. And involuntary employee turnover is that when an organization fires employees by itself. It can be like retirement cases, organization needs to cut cost, restructure or downsizing, low performers firing from the job or dismissals, permanent disability or employee death case etc. Absenteeism has been defined as non-attendance when an employee is scheduled to work (Price and Mueller, 1986). Sometimes there have been absent from work for one reason or another. Some are absenting more than others, but when it takes place on a regular basis then absenteeism becomes a noticeable problem for the company. A theoretical model for Preventing Stress is referred and suggested for the company under the recommendation of this report.

**BACKGROUND OF THE ORGANIZATION**

At the end of 1975 some jubilant youths of Jessore formed Jagorani Chakra Foundation (JCF) to develop the situation of poor communities. They also identified that the problem is more social and political than economical. JCF started its journey with adult literacy program and developed its own adult literacy curriculum which was a unique example at that time.

In 1976, JCF implemented its first development intervention and started non-formal education centre for the children and in 1977 got the registration from Directorate of Social Welfare. JCF still believes education is the key to all development and it is the first priority in taking any new intervention. In 1981, a new horizon opened before JCF when it started working with the untouchable community, the sweeper community. The success of this intervention gave JCF courage to go with community development approach and later JCF successfully implemented a number of community development projects whose beneficiaries are now running their own people’s institution by themselves.

JCF always tries to keep the promise of ensuring safe, healthy and risk free work place for all its employees. At the same time it is strongly prohibited for the staff to use drugs or take alcohol in office and the use of unsafe office tools and equipment’s is forbidden for them. It has updated service policy, gender policy, child protection policy, pay scale and TA/DA policy which comply with the present market condition, inflation and benefit of other NGOs and private organizations. The latest service rule is updated on January 2017 and new pay scale is given in July 2016. The head office of JCF is under the 24 hours surveillance of CC camera and all staff and visitors need to use punch card to enter into the main office premises. The building also has the firefighting systems and an assigned security officer to look after the safety and security concern of JCF head office. Apart from the head office of JCF all of its project and branch offices have their own security staff to ensure work place safety.

All permanent staff of JCF are entitled for one festival bonus, incentive, CPF and Gratuity facility but except some projects majority project staff don’t have gratuity and incentive facility. At the end of every year after successfully performing the annual assessment every staff get increment as per service rule. In recruiting new staff for more than one year project 6 months’ probation time is granted and after that if that staff can’t perform accordingly additional 3 months’ time is given for this purpose. In case of less than one year project the probation period will be 3 months. The organization also has staff development plan and as a part of that skill development training is provided by the training cell or arrange training from outside. There is a Death and Accident Benefits (DAB) Fund formed by the monthly fees given by all staff of JCF for mitigating health benefit of the staff and if any staff member become sick or become victim of any fatal accident then his/her treatment fees is borne in some extent from this fund. And if any staff member dies then the nominee(s) will receive the invested fund with interest. In addition to this fund there is another fund called Health Assistance Fund (HAF) from where any staff member can get the treatment cost if fall in sudden accident. The permanent staff of JCF are also eligible to get loan for purchasing motorcycle and bicycle.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study engages in identifying the level of stress of the executive employees in the JCF in Jashore. The study was carried out through a survey and primary data were collected at the JCF’ Head Office located at Jashore. For the survey an online questionnaire was send using “Google forms” for a selected number of Executive employees. Face to face interview held with the Group HR Manager and Assistant Manager – Human Resources, over the phone interview with the HRM Manager and few Executives from JCF. We have selected 50 (38 male and 12 female) employee from the organization JCF representing 24% females and 76% males. A brainstorming session was carried out for all group members to recognize the scope, objectives and to understand the assignment on Organization Behavior. With the view of collecting primary data, secondary data, interviews, related journal articles, corporate web sites, corporate magazines and articles on press releases were further assisted on our assignment.

**Organization behavioral issues with JCF and background of the main organizational behavior issue**

It has been identified that JCF has strong concerns on stress. JCF’s has responded to stress management in
order to enhance their legitimacy and survival by providing necessary resources as it suits them. It is evident by the survey data obtained and results indicated maximum out of the sample selected employees were on stress. Out of the sample selected there were three executives from HRM, represented two females and a male. Female working employees that represented overall 24% of the sample selected. At the interview with the HRM manager stated that the female employees (Executives) have personal issues such as family commitments and other social activities reflects on the job effectiveness. As women have more commitments on family matters like house management, child care and elders care such management is crucial. These factors lead female employees to take leave frequently, some instances without prior approval. To address these types of issues JCF has facilitated manufacturing plants located in rural areas as Jashore District. Employees of this area were provided closer location to their home and enabled the employees to keep away from stress on transport and time management.

As evident above “Stress” is an identified main organizational behavior issue at JCF as it represents 47% Executive level employees are at stress.

Other issues on “organizational behavior”
Following complementary issues were identified on with related to workplace, individual level and in organization itself which relates to “Organizational Behavior”.

Work place: 1. Communication 2. Employee Turnover 3. Absenteeism
Individual level: 4. Inadequacy of salaries 5. Motivation

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employee retention and turnover</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inadequate salaries</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Absenteeism</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Low quality, defective products</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>08%</td>
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<td>Lower returns (low profits)</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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**COMMUNICATION**

Company’s Assistant Manager stated “We have an open-door policy for communication” at the interview with related to the employee grievances and issues. In spite of the culture of the organization culture the organization has no appointee for resolutions for grievances and issues. Employees were affected with the introduction of the new designing technology that was adopted few years ago. This was not communicated to the employees to incorporate and redesign their plan.

Communication had become necessary for up skilling, handling multiple tasks and new hazards arisen at work. With the expansion of the company formal communication had become vital in the organization. Communication has been a challenging issue in the company due to these reasons. The sudden communication leads to cause pressure among executives. Employees were required to submit reports and make programs frequently and implement innovative changes to make the company competitive in the global market.

Available Online: [https://iarconsortium.org/journal-info/IARJBM](https://iarconsortium.org/journal-info/IARJBM)
Employee retention and turnover

JCF maintains high employee retention overall. However, in the study it was revealed that five sub departments have low retention ratios are being maintain. High employee turnover is harmful to JCF productivity because employee population of a JCF is containing high percentage of newly recruited executives as the skilled executives often leave. A high Employee turnover rate increases recruiting, selection and training cost as well on the other hand (Annexure 1- Retention Ratio calculation for the JCF). A significant number of employees were resigning almost every other month at the Executive level in JCF. They are giving various reasons and excuses for their resignation and the organization is finding it hard to immediately replace the skilled employees who are leaving the JCF. 30% out of the selected sample takes increased risk-taking activities during stress situation.

Inadequate salaries

At JCF, Executives have multiple job titles such as Supervisor, Safety Officer and Quality Assurance Officer. However with the complex job roles they perform the executives need to survive without adequate increase in salary. This environment has become stressful for executives. Organizations budgets and targets were extraordinary at their promotional seasons as in “Global Fashion week” and on seasonal festivals as Ramadan, Durga Puza and on Christmas. Organizations expectations and too many responsibilities cause stress with the inadequacy in financial benefits.

Absenteeism

Because of stress many Executives don’t have interest to go to work regularly and taking leaves. Mainly Work load and short deadlines causing stress at workplace. Because of stress many Executives don’t have interest to go to work regularly and taking leaves. Mainly Work load and short deadlines causing stress at workplace. With the study, it has been identified 20% represents out of the sample selected were difficult to stay calm under pressure. This factor has a possibility to cause Absenteeism. Though certain studies in the HR field reveal that people who are dissatisfied with their jobs are absent more frequently. In JCF it was observed that was not a critical reason for stress management.

It is evident to a certain extent that the type of dissatisfaction that most often leads employees to miss work is dissatisfaction with the work itself. Such displeased employees become absent due to work pressure, long working hours and the belief that their work is less important (Jinky Leilanie Lu, 2010).

Motivation

JCF maintains motivated employees by persuing their workforce by assigning specific challenges link to their Key Performance Indicators (KPI). Due to stress, many executives do not get motivated and failed to perform their tasks. The data analysis clearly shows that the Executive level employees are more prone to stress as compared to officers working in the organization. It further shows that there is a significant relationship between employee motivation and job stress. Higher level of job stress leads to lesser motivation and vice-versa. It is commonly understood pay is the basic motivational factor for employees. Reasonable rate of pay increases motivational level of employees which is not being seen at JCF with the evidence of questionnaire. Most of the employees of the JCF feel that they are not able to satisfy their basic needs with the pay they get from their job. 4.7. Low quality, defective products

In the study it was revealed that Executives make many mistakes when they are on pressure. One instance an Assistant Manager Internal Audit stated that “Mistakes are not permitted for Auditors”. However this scenario makes him very stressful at seasonal level and achieving their targets. One of the Plant Manager agreed on the study results as their productivity levels have dropped during the Female employees return from their confinement leave. As a result their level of mistakes and leave taking is high.

Low quality, defective products

In the study it was revealed that Executives make many mistakes when they are on pressure. As shown in the diagram below the level of mistakes that the employees make were at series 4 means that they agreed upon a high tendency of defects in their job. One instance an Assistant Manager Internal Audit stated that “Mistakes are not permitted for Auditors”. However this scenario makes him very stressful at seasonal level and achieving their targets. One of the Plant Manager agreed on the study results as their productivity levels have dropped during the Female employees return from their confinement leave. As a result their level of mistakes and leave taking is high.

Lower returns (low profits)

More defective products discussed in 4.7 affects the high cost for JCF. Since the raw material and stitching cost incurred already, the company is burdened with high cost of production. Company tries to maintain minimal cost level to generate profit.

Recommendations

Stress is not always a bad thing. It can stimulate creativity and productivity. According to Robert Ostermann, professor of psychology at FDUs Teaneck-Hackensack Campus, “No one reaches peak performance without being stressed, whether an athlete, an office worker or a manager.” The natural pattern of human behavior is to experience a stress-causing event or situation, react to it with increased tension and then return to a normal, relaxed state. The problem occurs when stress is so overwhelming or constant that this pattern is broken. Further, for Preventing Stress
suggested for the company for their future planning. The management of JCF could recognize the talents of its employees and reward. Company can organize foreign tours, parties, team gatherings and various special occasions in order to reduce the stress level of the executives of the organization. This will be helpful in many ways to release stress of the employees. Apart from that, building social support is important. They have close connections with trustworthy peers who can listen to their problems and boost their confidence level. Then the JCF current practice of “open door policy” will be effective. Company could encourage a healthy lifestyle as having plenty of water, having healthy eating habits where the companies can organize health camps in educating the employees. Company could introduce the flexi hours to the employees which can be provide work life balance, increased commitment towards the organization and reduce stress as well. Currently JCF is paying overtime for team member level for working hours 7.45 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. there onwards overtime is paid. JCF’s can restructure payment policy and included Executive level employees into the overtime payment category as it will have a motivational factor on Executives. Also JCF’s can promote relaxation techniques such as yoga, listening music and meditation. This will support employees to reduce their stress level and to maintain a good working environment.

CONCLUSION

Stress is a widespread element experienced by employees around the globe. Stress has become major problem for Executives particularly at JCF where the employer doesn’t realize the impact of stress on employee performance. According to the above analysis major reasons behind the stress can be found as: communication and motivation, Lack of communication gap and consultation with subordinates, Lack of communication and consultation with staff, No appreciation of work by people at work, No cooperation as a team, Lack of support by people at work, Being undervalued, Working environment, Staff problems.

Coping with new technology, information overloaded, short deadlines, having to work unsocial hours, having too much work to do. According to the study on stress level of the executives in apparel sector in jashore, it can be concluded that every executive in the company confronts some kind of stress in any given situation. The main reason for the job stress is, they are working in the apparel sector which has more work pressure than the other industries. Dealing with the foreign/local customers and suppliers will cause them stressful environment. This study gives the message to the management of the companies to develop strategies to reduce the stress level of the employees where it consequently enhances the organizational performance. Stress if not well managed will affect companies performance (Nwokwu, Dharmadasa, & Rathnasighe, 2018; Nwokwu, Atapattu, & Azeez, 2019; Nwokwu, 2018; Nwokwu, Rathnasighe & Pradeep, 2019).

REFERENCES