

Episodic Stress Management Among Employees of Post Office in Bikaner District



Management

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ABSTRACT

Episodic stress is a stress which affects those who suffer from Acute stress frequently. People that suffer from this tend to always be in a rush. They take too much on and can't organize themselves to deal with the demands and pressures. Episodic Acute stress affects interpersonal skills and can make sufferers hostile towards others causing rapid deterioration of relationships especially in the workplace. This paper unearths episodic stress management among employees of post office in Bikaner district. Sample size taken was 100 employees and Chi square test was used to analyze the data.

Introduction

Acute stress that is suffered too frequently is called episodic stress. This type of stress is usually seen in people who make self-inflicted, unrealistic or unreasonable demands which get all clamored up and bring too much stress in their attempt to accomplish these goals. Episodic stress is not like chronic stress, though, because this type of stress ceases from time to time yet not as frequently as acute stress does. Its symptoms include prolonged over stimulation, persistent tension, headaches or migraines, hypertension, chest pains and even heart disease. This type of stress can be helped with lifestyle changes but professional help may be needed before chronic problems develop.

Review of literature

Cobb (1975) has the opinion that, "The responsibility load creates severe stress among workers and managers." If the individual manager cannot cope with the increased responsibilities it may lead to several physical and psychological disorders among them. **Brook (1973)** reported that qualitative changes in the job create adjustment problem among employees. The interpersonal relationships within the department and between the departments create qualitative difficulties within the organisation to a great extent.

Miles and Perreault (1976) identify four different types of role conflict: 1. Intra-sender role conflict 2. Inter sender role conflict. 3. Person- role conflict; 4. Role over load. The use of role concepts suggests that job related stress is associated with individual, interpersonal, and structural variables (Katz and Kahn, 1978; Whetten, 1978). The presence of supportive peer groups and supportive relationships with super visors are negatively correlated with R.C. (Caplan et al., 1964).

Beehr and Newman (1978) define occupational stress as "A condition arising from the interaction of people and their jobs and characterised by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning." There is evidence that role incumbents with high levels of role ambiguity also respond to their situation with anxiety, depression, physical symptoms, a sense of futility or lower self esteem, lower levels of job involvement and organisational commitment, and perceptions of lower performance on the part of the organisation, of supervisors, and of themselves (Brief and Aldag, 1976; Greene, 1979).

Meyerson (1994) and **Handy (1988)** point out that an important consideration in terms of stress research should be that stress occurs in a particular context, since individuals differ in the meaning they attribute to stressful experiences. Therefore, the influence of the social construction of stressful experiences should be taken into account.

According to **Spielberger and Vagg (1990)**, the identification of major sources of stress at work offers a twofold benefit for

both management and employees: firstly, by resulting in work environment changes that reduce stress and increase productivity; and secondly, by facilitating the development of effective interventions that could reduce the debilitating effects of occupational stress.

Lu (1993) argued that stress has become one of the most serious health issues, a problem not just for individuals but also for employers. Research over the past three decades has shown that the experience of occupational stress is closely related to the health and safety of individuals and has definite implications for the well-being of organizations.

Cooper & Cartwright, (1994) concluded that stress was the second most frequently reported condition of individuals who disclosed a work-related illness. Moreover, occupational stress has become one of the commonest reasons for medical retirement. It is evident, however, that in order for any organisation to address stress-related issues and implement effective interventions, it is necessary to diagnose job characteristics and working conditions that the workforce perceive to be stressful, investigate the outcomes of any stressors that are experienced and establish whether any particular sub-group of the working population is at greater risk.

Research Methodology

Research methodology shows various steps that are generally adopted by a researcher in studying his research problem along with the logic behind them. It is a science of studying how research is done scientifically. Research methodology helps to understand not only the products of scientific inquiry but the process itself. It is necessary for the researcher to design research methodology for his problem as the same may differ from problem to problem. The section would contain five distinct phases including population & sampling, description of the sample, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis.

Objectives of the study

1. To determine the type of Episodic stress experienced by employees.
2. To determine the causes of Episodic stress among employees.
3. To determine the Episodic stress management strategies used by employees.

Research design

Research design is a catalogue of the various phases and facts relating to the formulation of a research effort. It is an arrangement of the essential conditions for collection and analysis of data in a form that aims to combine relevance to research purpose with economy in the procedure. Research design aids the researcher in the allocation of limited resources by posing

crucial choices in methodology. In other words it is the plan , structure and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions and control variance. The descriptive research design is being used to study the formulated problem. Descriptive research is designed to describe the characteristics of a population.

Sampling method

Random Sampling was used to select the sample. Random sampling includes choosing subjects from a population through unpredictable means. In its simplest form, subjects all have an equal chance of being selected out of the population being researched.

Sample size

Size of sample means the number of sampling units selected from the population for investigation. The sample size is typically denoted by n and it is always a positive integer. Large sized sample leads to increased precision in estimates of various properties of the population. Sample size should neither be too small nor too large. It should be optimum size. It should fulfils the requirement of efficiency, representativeness, reliability and flexibility. The final sample consist of 100 respondents comprising employees of post office.

Method of data collection

Data are distinct pieces of information, usually formatted in a special way. Data may be obtained either from the primary source or the secondary source. Primary data is a type of information that is obtained directly from first-hand sources by means of surveys, observation or experimentation. Secondary data is the data that have been already collected by and readily available from other sources. Both the primary and secondary sources of data were used in this study. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire. Five-point Likert scale was used in designing the questionnaire. Questionnaire consists of both open and close ended questions. Secondary data was collected from the internet, published reports and books, magazines, and websites etc.

Data analysis

The data, after collection , has to be processed and analyzed in accordance with the outline laid down for the purpose at the time of developing the research plan. It consist of two parts first is processing of data and second is analysis of data. Processing implies editing, coding, classification and tabulation of collected data so that they are amenable to analysis. The term analysis refers to seeing the data in the light of hypothesis of research questions and drawing conclusion. Qualitative data was descriptively analyzed while quantitative data was analyzed using a statistical package (SPSS) and Microsoft office Excel. Analysis of variance , Chi square test was used to test the hypothesis. Analytical tools such as frequency distribution, pie chart, bar diagram, line chart, cumulative percentage etc were used to analyze the data.

Analysis & Interpretation

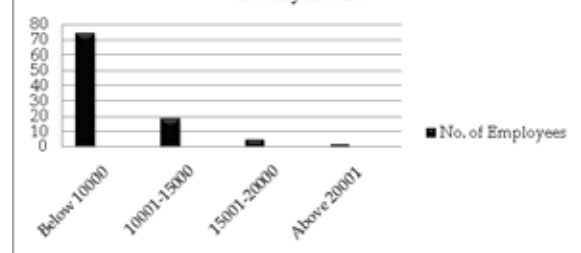
The socio-demographic data shows that majority (59%) of the employees were in clerk level, 15% were fourth class , peon, and rest were officers. Majority of them depend only on their salary earned and money is paid them according to their rank. Majority of them were also promoted within ten years of stay and some were yet to be promoted as at the time of study.

Educational qualification



With regards to the causes of stress, majority of the employees identified poor salary, handling a large number of customer, lack of incentives, lack of promotion, nursing difficult task and harassment from boss. This finding supports the view of Stordeur et al. [2001] who attempted to rank stressors in order of severity of impact, the main ones being ranked as: high workload, conflict with other nurses/physicians, experiencing a lack of clarity about tasks/goals, a head nurse who closely monitors the performance of staff in order to detect mistakes and to take corrective action. Most of them experienced anger, frustration and compulsive behavior as types of emotional stress.

Monthly Income



(Source : Primary data)

Majority of the employees accepted that lack of concentration, forgetfulness and withdrawal as the most psychological types of stress experienced in the ward. With regards to episodic stress management, the findings revealed that majority of the employees sometimes went on break, carryout exercises, and relaxes in other to manage stress. Some also meditated positively or negatively in managing stress.

Conclusion

Episodic Stress is the type of stress that develops when continuous disorganization, chaos, & crisis is a way of life for the individual. For example, Type A's generally suffer from episodic stress. These are the type of people who tend to always be in a rush, but always late. They often take on too many demands, & they can't organize the overabundance of tasks they have accumulated. Episodic stress can also ensue when an individual constantly worries. These individuals tend to be pessimistic, which causes them to be anxious & sometimes depressed. It may be concluded that post office employees are more susceptible to episodic stress because of intense daily activity. Employees are not ever thought of as needing help but only as the care givers, and applying some techniques for stress burnout prevention are more important than we ever thought. In seeking to identify which stress management activities work the best, it is advisable to try a number of different strategies especially the healthy ones and then determine which ones seem to be the most effective.

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