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A Study on Managing Stress on Project Management

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Abstract

Stress has been related with every human life and is there to stay for all times to come. Right from birth every individual is undeniablyunprotected to various stress conditions. However, stress is not always evil. Some stress is always essential to inspire and kindle us. Hence stress of certain level is very helpful. It has become a great matter of anxiety for the personnel of all establishments. People working in the information technology field face more stress because they have to be up-to-date in their knowledge unceasingly.

Key Words: Stress, project manager, management, organization.

1. Introduction

Project Manager (PM) is no doubt one of the most stressful jobs out there as the project manager is directly responsible and accountable for the success or failure of a project. Some project managers believed that they can handle and cope with the high level of stress but there are some who are ignoring or refuse to recognize that they are under stress. The experience of stress is not only impacting the cognitive and behavioral performance, it can also have a negative impact on your personal health, wellbeing, and family life. You might not able to change the amount of stress you have on a daily basis, but you can change how you deal with it. It is important to manage the stress before it becomes more and more difficult to handle and manage.
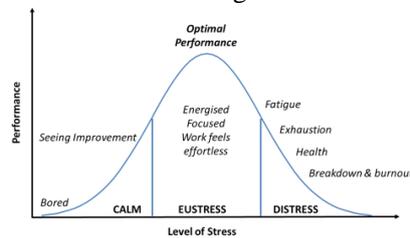
The Yerkes-Dodson Curve

Based on the Yerkes-Dodson curve, moderate level of stress improves performance and when the stress level increases more, the performance decreases. Hence, it is crucial for project managers to be able to moderate the stress levels for optimal performance.

Project Manager must first acknowledge or recognize that he or she is being under stress and then develop self-discipline before proceeding to learn and practice what are the techniques to manage stress. Learning to manage stress successfully begins with our willingness to take an honest look at ourselves.

Many techniques can help to manage stress. There is no-one-size-fits-all technique and no technique will be able to eliminate stress totally. Each person must decide what will work best for him or her. A few techniques should be explored to determine which works best and once they have found some strategies that work, commitment to practicing them is the key for managing stress.

2. Review of Literature

In the context of the transnational nature of the ROSE project, Michie& Williams (2002) review on reducing work related psychological ill health and sickness absence was particular significant, as it provided an assessment of whether associations between work factors and psychological ill health were similar across sector and across countries. In the UK factors associated with psychological distress, emotional exhaustion, anxiety and depression in doctors,

from junior to senior grades, were long working hours (Baldwin et al.,1997), high workload and pressure at work (Agius et al.,1996; Deary et al.,1996; Sutherland and Cooper, 1993), and lack of role clarity (Heyworth et al.,1993).

In a study conducted with 4 dentists, pressure at work was found to be associated with poor mental health (Cooper et al.,1988). In a study carried out amongst family doctors, the issues were interruptions during and outside surgery hours and patients demands (Sutherland and Cooper, 1993). Among UK nurses the most frequently reported source of psychological distress was workload pressures (Tyler and Cushway, 1992).

In a study conducted amongst 164 student nurses, low involvement in decision making and use of skills, and low social support at work were found to be associated with anxiety, depression and sickness absence (Parkes, 1982). Two studies looked at absence from work, one study found a negative association with job demands (Parkes, 1982), while the other found no association with control over work (Rees & Cooper, 1992). Similar factors were associated with psychological ill health in health care workers in the rest of Europe, the USA, and Australia. The one study of doctors found an association between work control and social support and psychological distress (Johnson et al.,1995). Among nurses, lack of co-worker support (Marshall & Barnett, 1992; Pisarskiet al.,1998), job influence (Pettersonet al.,1995), and organisation climate and role ambiguity (Revicki& May,1989) were associated with psychological distress. Among other hospital workers, work overload and pressure, role ambiguity, lack of control over work, and lack of participation in decision making were all found to be associated with distress (Arsenault et al., 1991; EstrynBehar et al.,1990; Martin, 1984). Sickness absence was associated with work pressures and lack of training (Landeweerd&Boumans, 1992), unsupportive management style (Gray-Toft& Anderson, 1985), role ambiguity, tolerance of absenteeism and low pay (Brooke & Price, 1989).

The studies show that, while level of psychological ill health associations between work factors and psychological ill health are higher in health care than in non-health care workers (Wall, 1997), the associations between work factors and psychological ill health are similar. They are also similar across continents. This review suggests that a generic approach to reducing work related psychological ill-health may be appropriate. The findings from this review are also consistent with the demand-control model of job strain (Karasek, 1979). They highlight the 6 key areas of work design that commonly lead to stress (i.e. control, demands, support, relationships, role and change).

Objectives
Primary

To find out managing stress on project management.
Secondary

1. To analyze the measures taken by the employer to reduce the stress.

2. To analyses on the project manager's view point on existing stress management programmes.

3. Research Methodology

The present study is analytic and exploratory nature. Accordingly the use has been made of primary and secondary data. To know the problems in managing stress on project management structured questionnaire have been used to collect the data from project manager.

Data Collection

Primary data has been collected through questionnaire. A sample size of 20 respondents has been taken. Secondary data on the other hand are those which have been already collected by someone else and which have been passed through the statistical process. E.g books, magazines, internet, publications and reports.

4. Finding and Suggestion

Stress can't be completely avoided. It is part of life and is even beneficial in small doses to keep the body ready to respond to environmental demands. To avoid or diminish the effects of stress, however, several ways to combat it need to be known. Methods and techniques to combat stress, include but are not limited to: stress awareness, avoidance of people or situations known cause stress, sports or physical exercise, time management and change management, boosting self4motivation and self4respect, learning relaxation methods like meditation, breathing techniques, positive thinking, etc.

On a personal level, complete stress prevention is not possible, and is not recommended, because stress is a catalyst for growth and human creativity. As each person becomes stressed for whatever reason, it experiences stress differently than others and therefore effective methods and techniques to combat stress will also be different depending on the nature and number of stressors, but also depending on the extent to which the person can manage their stress. In general, a number of changes in attitude and behavior works satisfactorily to most people affected. But researchers found that the best way to prevent stress on the individual is learning a model of proactive attitudes and behavior, prevention of stress or cope with stress during childhood. Regarding stress in projects, most do not list specific differences between key processes of project management and stress management. Because stress has a major impact on the successful delivery of project results to the beneficiary, the stress analysis in projects should be considered paramount, as it is manifested in the project team As a result, due to the stress appearance at physical or psychological level among project team members, there may appear unexpected side effects that may not be anticipated, but may affect activities.

5. Conclusion

It is vital that the project manager focuses on direct contact and manage tensions, conflicts and stress by various methods, including but not limited to: improving emotional intelligence competencies, time management and promotion of change, stimulating the respect for self and others, maintaining positive interpersonal relationships between team members through open and effective communication and maintaining motivation through appropriate rewards. Systematic and controlled stress management minimizes negative effects on individual level, which will automatically lead to growth and positive value results, labor efficiency, increase productivity and quality in projects.

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