

Role Stress Study: An Effective Tool for Employee Engagement

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ABSTRACT

The present paper is basically a theoretical paper which throws light on various factors which impact on the role stress and the consequences of the stress. It also discusses the coping strategies that the organizations can adopt in order to avoid burnout in order to retain the talented employees.

Keywords

Role Stress, coping strategies, employee wellbeing

INTRODUCTION

The Modern Era, change and innovation is unavoidable. Excellence in today's highly competitive workplace demands more than a thorough knowledge of specialized field. Achieving excellence in this dynamic era needs a comprehensive grounding in all the areas. In this scuffle of achieving excellence, performance pressures and indispensable surge for top positions, individuals and organizations are in a continuous state of tension, resulting in 'stress'. As the organisation become more complex, the potential for the amount of stress also increases. Hans Soyle (1956), the father of stress research, says that 'the stress of exhilarating, creative successful work is beneficial, while that of failure, humiliation or infection is detrimental.

Stress at the work place occurs when the demand from a job exceeds the individuals performing ability (Harrison, 1978); it disrupts his or her mental status or psychological equilibrium. In the modern era, most of the individuals are experiencing stress because of factors like better performance by an individual, the technological advancement which leads to easy tracking of job ability, the standard of living asks for more salary, complicated family life, ultimately the work place becomes a stressful place which will have a direct impact on employee well

being. The various types of work related stress that can occur to an employee are task demands, role conflict (inconsistent and difficult expectations on the job), and interpersonal conflict. Out of all factors, role stress would be very crucial since the overall performance of an employee depends on it which in turn directly affects the organisation (Blix, Cruise, Mitchell & Blix, 1994, Gandham, 2000, Reynolds, 1997).

Role stress results from the problems aroused during one's performance on job. In any social system, such as family, religious community, work organization, individuals have certain obligations towards the system, which in turn gives each one of them a defined in the society. This system of mutual obligation can be called as "role". Role is the position one occupies in a social system as defined by the functions one performs in response to the expectations of the 'significant' members of social system, and one's own expectations from that position.

A Role (Pareek 1993) of an employee in an organization is defined as the expectations of the superior, the subordinate, the peers and the employee himself. Especially in case of service organizations we have to include the esteemed customers. If the individual is not able to meet up the expectations, or is not able to complete the tasks on time or is not able to communicate with the subordinates, superiors and customers then the role occupant will be stressed out, which is called as "role stress". Hence role stress arises from the occupation of an employee.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRESS AND WORK – THE INVERTED U CURVE

To better understand the effects of stress to performance, Nixon, P. (1979) created the following graph of the stress performance curve explaining how stress affects performance in theoretical terms.