

Leadership Development: Managing Job Stress and Job Demands in Organizations

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ABSTRACT

Stress is a major problem faced by employees in the working environment that affects performance. As a result, there is a common perception that leaders have higher stress levels than non leaders. However, if leaders also experience a heightened sense of control—a psychological factor known to have powerful stress-buffering effects—leadership should be associated with reduced stress levels. Understanding the state of stress for leaders today means not only identifying what causes stress but also who causes stress. Because leaders must interact with different groups of people, stress comes from different places. While no one group appears to contribute more stress than another, groups such as bosses, peers, direct reports and customers contribute to an individual leader's stress in different ways. The purpose of the paper is to increase the knowledge concerning leadership and stress in the modern business scenario. This paper on work stress and leadership development highlights on the characteristics and styles of leaders, managing their job demands and increasing job control. The application of ethical leadership concept creates increased job performance and improves the organisational efficiency and effectiveness.

Keywords: Leadership; Stress, Organisations; psychological factors; performance.

I. Introduction:

Being a leader often includes handling stressful situations, taking decisions and actions which could have implications for the leader himself/herself for subordinates and sometimes also for organisation. For a leader, these situations can be more or less challenging to deal with. The type of challenge the leader is exposed to depend upon which context the leader and

organisation operate in. Leadership can be defined as a social influence process. It involves determining the group or organization's objectives, encouraging behaviour in pursuit of these objectives, and influencing group maintenance and culture (Yukl, 1991). Effective leadership is therefore essential to ensure that change leads to increased efficiency and profitability (Pittaway et al. 1998). The intension of leaders is not to eliminate the stress completely because stress sometimes leads to potential gain i.e. functional stress to give his or her performance best at crucial times. Kelloway & Barling (2010) define leadership as a process of social influence that is enacted by individuals in formal positions of power or leadership positions within an organisation, such as managers and supervisors. leadership involves establishing a direction (e.g. creating a vision and establishing strategies), aligning people with organisational goals (e.g. communicating goals and seeking commitment) and motivating and inspiring people to achieve organisational goals (e.g. empowering subordinates) (Kotter, 1990; cited in Northouse, 2010). Despite these differing functions, leaders are also involved in planning and organising tasks in order to get the job done (i.e. management function) and similarly managers are often involved in helping groups achieve their goals (i.e. leadership function) (Northouse, 2010).

The quality of leadership has been linked to an array of outcomes within occupational health psychology due to the increase in the stress level of employees: positive outcomes such as psychological well-being (Arnold, Turner, Barling, Kelloway, & McKee, 2007), and organizational safety climate (Zohar, 2002) and negative outcomes, including employee stress (Offermann & Hellmann, 1996), cardiovascular disease (Kivimaki et al., 2005), workplace incidents and injuries (Barling, Loughlin, & Kelloway, 2002) and health-related behaviours such as alcohol use (e.g., Bamberger & Bacharach, 2006). In short, virtually every outcome variable in the field of occupational health psychology is empirically related to organizational leadership (Mullen & Kelloway, 2011).

II. Job stress:

There has been a growing belief that the experience of stress at work has undesirable consequences for organisations and the health of their employees. Stress is a fact of everyday life. Life today is becoming increasingly complex, tension ridden and a great source of stress. People in workplaces are experiencing high levels of stress. Stress is a pervasive and essential part of life. It is defined as the reaction of individuals to demands (stressors) imposed upon them. Stress plays a positive role by triggering the mobilization of adaptive responses (Selye,

1976). Among life situations, the workplace stands out as a potentially important source of stress purely because of the amount of time that is spent in this setting.

Modern definitions of stress all recognise that it is a personal experience caused by pressure or demands on an individual, and impacts upon the individual's ability to cope or rather, his/her perception of that ability. Stress can come from any situation or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or anxious. Everyone sees situations differently and has different coping skills. For this reason, no two people will respond exactly the same way to a given situation. Stress is a normal part of life. In small quantities, stress is good; it can motivate you and help you become more productive. However, too much stress, or a strong response to stress can be harmful. Work-related stress can be caused by poor work organisation (the way we design jobs and work systems, and the way we manage them), by poor work design (for example, lack of control over work processes), poor management, unsatisfactory working conditions, and lack of support from colleagues and supervisors.

III. Leadership Practices:

Leadership is one of the world's oldest preoccupations and a universal phenomenon in humans (Bass, 1990). From ancient to modern history, leadership has played an integral role in developing groups, societies, and nations. Over centuries, leadership has been defined in terms of leader's behaviours. Bass attempted to define the concept of leadership from the classics of Western, Egyptian, Greek, and Chinese literature as early as the 6th century BC. The Old and New Testaments and the classics of Homer, Plato, Aristotle, and Confucius noted the roles of leaders. As civilization and administration intricately and intimately develop in history and flow through history (Waldo, 2001), leadership also emerges. Several theorists see leadership from trait perspective. Some theorists look leadership from situational perspective. Some theorist made argument, that leader cannot exist without followers, so leader-members relations become a primary aspect of the leadership dynamic. Much more, several theorists try to describe leadership in more practical manner. Finally, there is no universal definition of leadership that can be accepted because leadership is a complex phenomenon. If we used different perspective, it will create different definition of leadership too. Thompson (2000) define leadership is "a process of non-coercive social influence whereby a leader guiding the activities and members of a group toward shared objectives and goals in an organization". Thompson's definition suggest that influences of leader is not in form of coercive action, but merely in form of non coercive social influence by personal

approach, authentic style and two-way communication. Leader gives a follower direction and guidance in participative manner in order to the follower can achieve shared objective and goals of organization. According to Bass (Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly & Konopaske, 2006) a leader are an agent of change, person whose acts affect other people more than other people's acts affect them. Leadership occurs when one group member modifies the motivation or competencies of others in the group. While, Kouzes & Posner (2007) stated that "leadership could bring forth the best from others by action and practice in organization in daily living". All of statements above confirmed that the role of leader has a significant impact on subordinate's work performance. When a leader can creates a positive climate and authentic support to follower, then follower will be able to perform their job better to achieve best work result.

IV. Objective:

The objective of this study is to analyse how effectively managers can influence the employees to work with full motivation without being under pressure/stress under different styles of leadership.

V. Research Methodology:

The primary and secondary data are both essential to make a study more empirical and authentic. This study pays relevance to the secondary data with the base of relevant studies in the field of leadership and stress.

VI. Research Questions:

The research focuses on the psychological perspective, taking into consideration two aspects- Leadership and Stress.

In the research field of leadership, research has been focused on the leadership – how the decisions and actions affect the leader's followers. Leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. Leaders carry out this process by applying their leadership attributes, such as beliefs, values, ethics, character, knowledge, and skills.

Research on stress has a long history and covers a broad field. The word 'stress' now forms part of most people's daily vocabulary but its reach and meaning remain unclear. Work-related stress occurs when there is a mismatch between the demands of the job and the resources and capabilities of the individual worker to meet those demands.

Therefore the aim of this paper is to enhance the knowledge of leadership in the stressful work environment and address the following research questions-

- How can leadership influence their followers?
- How does a leader work under stressful conditions- causes and management techniques?

VII. Leadership Styles in Managing Job Demands:

A leadership style is a leader's style of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people. Different types of leadership styles exist in work environments.

Authoritarian leadership styles often follow the vision of those that are in control, and may not necessarily be compatible with those that are being led. Authoritarian leaders have a focus on efficiency, as other styles, such as a democratic style, may be seen as a hindrance on progress. Critics of authoritarian leadership argue that the leadership style leads to high member dissatisfaction, turn-over, and absenteeism (Gastil, 1994). An authoritarian style of leadership may create a climate of fear, where there is little or no room for dialogue and where complaining may be considered futile. Authoritarian leaders solve the problem or make the decision by themselves using the information available at the time (Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 1996).

The way a Paternalistic leader works is by acting as a father figure by taking care of their subordinates as a parent would. In this style of leadership the leader supplies complete concern for his followers or workers. In return he receives the complete trust and loyalty of his people. Workers under this style of leader are expected to become totally committed to what the leader believes and will not strive off and work independently. The relationship between these co-workers and leader are extremely solid. The workers are expected to stay with a company for a longer period of time because of the loyalty and trust. Not only do they treat each other like family inside the work force, but outside too. These workers are able to go to each other with any problems they have regarding something because they believe in what they say is going to truly help them. This system will allow their workers to work even better because there is something for them at the end of the tunnel. While doing this they will also be able to accomplish more work in a set time frame.

The democratic style of leadership encompasses discussion, debate and sharing of ideas and encouragement of people to feel good about their involvement. The democratic style encompasses the notion that everyone, by virtue of their human status, should play a part in

the group's decisions. Democratic leadership is associated with increased follower productivity, satisfaction, involvement, and commitment (Hackman & Johnson, 1996). The democratic style demands the leader to make decisions on who should be called upon within the group and who is given the right to participate in, make and vote on decisions. (Gastil, 1994; Kunter, 1965), reviewing the definition of democratic leadership is essential to understanding both democratic leadership and the progress made in democratic movements. Laissez-faire leaders allow followers to have complete freedom to make decisions concerning the completion of their work. It allows followers a high degree of autonomy and self-rule, while at the same time offering guidance and support when requested. The laissez-faire leader using guided freedom provides the followers with all materials necessary to accomplish their goals, but does not directly participate in decision making unless the followers request their assistance.

The transactional leaders focus their leadership on motivating followers through a system of rewards and punishments. This type of leader identifies the needs of their followers and gives rewards to satisfy those needs in exchange of certain level of performance. Transactional leaders focus on increasing the efficiency of established routines and procedures. They are more concerned with following existing rules than with making changes to the organization. A transformational leader is a type of person in which the leader is not limited by his or her followers' perception. The main objective is to work to change or transform his or her followers' needs and redirect their thinking. Leaders that follow the transformation style of leading, challenge and inspire their followers with a sense of purpose and excitement. Transformational leadership moves followers to accomplish more than expected. They become motivated to transcend their own self-interests for the good of the group or organization (Bass and Avolio, 1990; Northouse, 2001; Shamir, 1995).

VIII. Subordinate's job stress and leadership power bases:

Overall, the global organizations are facing a challenge to reduce organizational stress and to analyze the factors generating it. Leadership plays an important role in leading a group and influencing that group to achieve its goals. Different leadership styles are adopted to motivate employees and to promote innovations. Some powers are granted to the leaders which usually have negative effect on the working activities of employees and ultimately inducing organizational stress.

Karasek's (1979) job demands-control model offers a theoretical basis for exploring the relationship between perceived supervisor power and subordinate stress. This model hinges on the psychological role that personal control plays in determining how individuals respond to their jobs and work demands. According to the model, job demands thrust the employee into an aroused state. If the employee has high personal control over work, the arousal will likely be released in the normal execution of the job. On the other hand, if the arousal is accompanied by a perception of low personal control, the arousal cannot be appropriately channelled into a coping response and, thus, leads to negative psychological and physical consequences. A review by Ganster and Schaubroeck (1991) suggests that there is a growing consensus regarding the importance of perceived personal control for employees' health and well-being. Not only is the subordinate highly dependent on the supervisor (Emerson, 1962), but also the administration of the reward or punishment by the supervisor lies beyond the subordinate's direct control. The perceived lack of control and the anxiety associated with the need to satisfy the supervisor are likely to provoke subordinate stress (Ganster and Schaubroeck, 1991). Therefore, the legitimate power of the supervisor would be positively related to stress, because the subordinate is constantly reminded of responsibilities to be fulfilled and realizes that his or her performance will be monitored and evaluated. The constant focus on duties and evaluation will likely increase subordinate stress. Several researchers have noted the significant benefits of having strong social support in dealing with stress (e.g. Cohen and Wills, 1985; Kahn and Byosiere, 1992). Strong social support helps people cope positively with stressful events by acting as a buffer against stress as well as contributing to their psychological and physical well-being.

IX. Conclusion:

Managers use various leadership styles to influence subordinates and to get things done in organizations. Behaving in ways that motivate and inspire those around them, paying attention to each individual's needs for achievement and growth, creating a supportive organizational climate, recognizing individual differences in needs and desires, encouraging a two-way exchange in communication, and actively listening to subordinates' concerns and opinions are all examples of personal power sources that are relationship-oriented. On the other hand, giving orders without listening to subordinates' ideas, punishing and withdrawing rewards or promotion are examples of positional powers that are task oriented. Organizational success in a changing business environment depends on determining which

leadership power is effective at a given managerial level and on taking corrective measures when leadership behaviour does not match organizational requirements.

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