



Job Stress And Organisational Environment In Indian Context

Dr. Sanjay Kothiram Meshram

Abstract

The present study is an attempt to determine the work culture and occupational stress of managers working in public and private organisations. The sample of the study comprised of 80 middle level managers from Krishak Bharthi Cooperative Limited (KRIBHCO), a public sector organisation (n=40) and DABAR India Ltd., a private sector organisation (n=40). Tools used were the Work Culture Scale and the Occupational Stress Scale. The results of the study revealed that on dimensions of work culture like job challenge, communication, and social cohesion, the scores of managers from two organisations did not differ significantly, whereas, on trust and innovation scores they differed significantly. As regards occupational stress, two groups did not differ significantly on the dimensions of under participation, powerlessness, poor peer relation, strenuous working condition, unprofitably.

Key Words : Work Culture, Occupational Stress, Public, Private, Organisation, Middle level Managers

Introduction

Work Culture comprises the attitudes, experiences, beliefs and values of an organisation. It has been defined as the specific collection of values and norms that are shared by the people and groups in an organisation and that control the way they interact with each other and with the stakeholders outside the organisation. On the basis of organisational values one can develop organisational norms, guidelines or expectations that prescribe appropriate kinds of behavior by employees in particular situations and control the behavior of organisational members towards one another. Organisational culture influences the various aspects of people working within them. They may include the management styles, decision making processes and various psychological processes. There is a difference between the internal work culture of public and private sector in India. The model of culture fit was utilised to explain the ways in which the external sociocultural environment and enterprise variables influence the internal work culture which, in turn, has an impact on human resource management practices.

Compared to public sector organisations, the internal work culture of private enterprises have placed greater emphasis on internal locus of control, future orientation in planning, participation in decision-making, and obligation towards others in the work context.

The Survey on Workplace Absence, Sickness and Ill Health also indicates that differences in public and private sector sickness absence rates are small when account is taken of the size of an organisation and differences in the age and gender profiles. The survey, based on 10,000 interviews with employees, confirmed that levels of absence were higher in organisations with more than 250 employees. Almost all public sector organisations have more than 250 employees. But, the majority of private sector employees work in small or medium sized organisations where the average number of days of absence per employee is 4 days, compared to 7 days in larger organisations.

Stress is one of the important consequences resulting from organisational culture. Job stress is a chronic disease caused by conditions in the work place that negatively affect an individual's performance and overall well being of his body and mind. On the basis of research it was found that a combination of personal and job factors placed individual at the risk of getting sick. Employees, who perceived that they have control over their job responsibility, but did not have confidence to solve the problem and blamed themselves for bad outcomes, were most likely to experience stress.

The trend over the last several decades towards increased and widespread decentralisation of decision making throughout the public sector is an important reason for occupational stress. Other studies linked workplace stress with workplace violence, accident, substance abuse and burnout. In private sector significantly more people experience very high stress levels (22.6%) than in public sector (13.5%). The sectors showing the highest levels of stress are skilled trades (45% of workers), cleaning (36%), hotels, restaurants & catering, and retail (both 32.4%). In those sectors, two to three times as many people experience high stress levels compared to other areas, such as manufacturing (13.1%), teaching (13.8%), the public sector (14.3%) or financial services (15.5%). A very low level of educational attainment is closely related to the experience of high stress levels.

The study reported that compared to other managers, the medical professionals tended to exhibit greater job-related stress, more specifically in terms of workload, managerial role and daily hassles. Conversely, they reported less stress associated with recognition and achievement. There were no differences in terms of type A behavior and coping, but medical directors displayed higher levels of internal locus of control. The majority expressed favorable evaluation of working climate. Overall, they were more satisfied with their work and this was most apparent with respect to intrinsic job satisfaction, organisational satisfaction and organisational security. Daily hassles (day to day irritants and aggravations

in the workplace) emerged as the single stress determinant of physical and psychological well-being for the physician group.

Moreover, factors such as lack of control, physical environment, frustration and work organisation are also prominent. These factors are certainly all significant in terms of their impact on individuals' overall stress levels. However, several other aspects also have a major impact in this regard such as lack of work-life balance, lack of support and difficult relationships. People working in the skilled trades clearly attribute their stress to lack of support and as noted represent a vulnerable group with 45% of people experiencing a very high level of stress. In the care taking and cleaning sector, with a 36% incidence of very high stress levels, the factors of organisation and other people's demands best explain the experience of stress.

Method

Participants The sample comprised of 80 respondents working in two different organisations i.e. Public, Viz. Krishak Bharati Cooperative Limited (KRIBHCO, the world's premier fertilizer producing Cooperative, incorporated on 17th April 1980 as a national-level Cooperative Society to manufacture and distribute chemical fertilizers and allied farm inputs; n=40) and Private, viz. Dabur India Limited (Dabur, the fourth largest FMCG Company in India with interests in Health care, Personal care and Food products with powerful brands like Dabur Amla, Dabur Chyawanprash, Vatika, Hajmola & Real. Dabur has been in the forefront of popularizing this alternative way of life, marketing its products in more than 50 countries all over the world; n=40) from Delhi and NCR. Subjects taken for the study were middle level managers within the age bracket of 24 - 35yrs having work experience of 3 to 6yrs.

Measures

Organisational Culture Inventory consists of 18 items with five dimensions i.e. job challenge, communication, trust, innovation, and social cohesion. Responses to these items were made on a five point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Occupational Stress Inventory consists of 46 items having twelve dimensions, e.g. role overload, role ambiguity, role conflict, unreasonable group, person responsibility, under participation, powerlessness, poor peer relation, strenuous working condition, unprofitability etc. Responses are rated on five point scales having alpha coefficient .935 and .90 respectively.

Procedure

For the purpose of the study subjects from different organisations were contacted personally in order to collect data. After rapport formation participants were convinced to fill the responses. The confidentiality of the responses was also assured.

Results

The obtained scores were analyzed in terms of t-ratio in order to see the significance of difference between the work culture and occupational stress scores of middle level managers from public and private organisation. Correlation coefficient was calculated to see the relationship between work culture and occupational stress.

Results indicated that there is no significant difference between the two groups on most of the dimensions of work culture. i.e. job challenge, communication, and social cohesion. They differed significantly on trust and innovation. . Results revealed higher mean scores of private sector managers than public sector on trust and innovation scores. This indicates that managers from private organisation share their views more freely with their employees and prefer open minded environment. As innovation refers to supportive environment for developing new ideas and sustained improvement of the organisation, enhancing problem solving behavior and creative potential among the employees, the managers from private organisation opt for the same.

On total score of work culture managers from both the sectors did not show significant difference. Responses collected personally through interview indicated that managers of both the organisations were highly dedicated towards their work. They are doing their best for the overall growth of the organisation.

Findings indicate that role ambiguity, perceived organisational support, leader member exchange, and task variety are the independent factors. The popular view that public sector workers take more sick leave than their private sector counterparts is misleading says an HSE (2006) report. IT has changed the way industry does business. Following its impact in the manufacturing and service industries, the next vertical experiencing the positive impact of technology in India is the public sector. Technology is making our public sector more transparent and effective.

Results on occupational stress scores showed that public sector managers differed significantly from their private counterparts on role overload, role ambiguity, role conflict, unreasonable group, personal responsibility, intrinsic impoverishment, low states, total scores. This is due to the fact that private sector employees have to work under pressure due to competitive working condition, demand for high quality task, work deadline etc. as compared to public sector employees, and that leads to stress. On role conflict, respondents from public sector mentioned that they have a fixed target for work and they are very clear

and satisfied with their task. On unreasonable group and peer pressure, people are expected to behave in a certain unpredictable way, and hence it creates pressure on them. The responsibility of the work is more in the private sector than the public one. On the dimension of strenuous working condition, unprofitability, powerlessness and poor peer relation, no significant difference was found between the two groups. Total scores on occupational stress showed high significant difference which proved our hypothesis that on occupational stress both the organizations, i.e. private and public, differed significantly.

Our study is on the line of study conducted on institutional context of policing. Results revealed that nature of acute stressor reported was varied and included both occupational and organisational acute stressor. Culture influences the way in which officers perceive themselves and their environment.

Although job related stress has a number of causes, but the most important is lack of alignment between the managers' societal values and culture of the organisation in which the managers work.

The study has also demonstrated a positive relationship between work culture and occupational stress. The observation attributed to the fact that work culture of an organisation is an important determinant of overall effectiveness of the organisation. Previous study describes the role of organisational culture on workplace stress through work culture health model. A review of the business and health literature related to organisational culture was conducted and applied to the model. The results show that work stress is as much a managerial and business concern as a health concern.

Collective stress and coping in the context of Organisational culture found that collective stress emerged as a response of two types of signals: imperfect adaptation to the environment of the division or work unit or friction inside the community. The research on 305 US organisations with 238 executives, examining the relationship that exists between the organisational cultures and the role

Conclusion

The present study indicated that stress level is high among the managers working in private organisations as compared to their public counterparts. Hence there is a need to develop strategies and techniques to cope with stressful conditions. Stress has been said to be a perceived challenge gap between the demand and supply of individual capability to perform or adapt. However, occupational excellence is subject to the person having strong will power with different techniques to achieve their goals and dreams.

References

- Anderson, G. (1999). *Social Foundation of Post Industrial Economics*, Oxford University Press.
- Dick, P. (2000). The social construction of the meaning of acute stressor: a qualitative study of the personal accounts of police officers using a stress counseling service, *Work and Stress*, 14 (3), 226-244.
- Hill, C.W. & Jones, G.R. (2001). *Strategic Management: An Integrated Approach*, Houghton Mifflin Company, U.S.A.
- Joiner & Therese, A. (2001). The influence of national culture and organisational culture alignment of job stress and performance, *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 16 (3) 229-242.
- Kirkclady, B.D. & Siefen, G. (2000). The occupational stress and health outcome profiles of clinical directors in child and adolescent psychiatry, *Wiley Inter Science*, 18 (4), 161-172.
- Länsisalmi, H., Peiró, J.M. & Kivimäki, M. (2000). Collective stress and coping in the context of Organisational culture. *European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology*, 9, 527-559.
- Matur, P., Aycan, Z. & Rabindra, N. (1996). Work culture in Indian organisations, a comparison between public and private sector, *Indian Psychological Abstract and Reviews*, 14, (19), 199-222.