

NON-WORK TO WORK STRESS SPILL-OVER: EFFECT ON ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

(A Case Study of Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited, Visakhapatnam)

Dr. Divya Joseph

Research Scholar, DCMS, Andhra University

Abstract

Organisational Behaviour is rooted in the behaviour of employees. There is an increasing realization of preserving valuable employees and their mental wellbeing. It is known that stressors of any kind can dilute the performance of employees inevitably affecting the productivity of the organisation. This study examines the Non-work related stressors in employees' life which adversely affects the organisation in terms of employees' quality and quantity of work output. Furthermore, suggestions are provided for the organisation to undertake to deal with the perils of stressed workers. Many organizations are now aiding their employees to sort out work-related issues and non-work related issues through different means. Many firms, however, are yet to realize the criticality of this need in spite of the stress that is adversely affecting employee wellness.

Keywords: *Organisational Behaviour, Stress, Spill-over, Mental Well-being*

Introduction:

Organizational behavior (OB) is a field of study devoted to recognizing, explaining, and eventually developing the attitudes and behaviors of people (individual and group) within organizations. Organizational behavior is based on scientific knowledge and applied practice. According to Kaifi (2010)ⁱ, the "RED Analysis" can be applied by practitioners and researchers for understanding organizational behavior issues:

R- Recognize

E- Explain

D- Develop

Understanding Organisational Behaviour is an unending task comprising the above mentioned three components of recognizing areas of concern, explaining the causal effect of each employee's behaviour and continuous development of strategies that can counter any adverse effect of the same and help transform the organization into thriving one.

Managers should hence be equipped to understand human resource management and strategic management so that they are able to inculcate a desired culture with tailored employee behaviour. That said it is a Herculean task to predict human behaviour yet alone influence it. A myriad experiences shape human perspective of things and hence each individual deals differently in a given scenario. To expect every employee to work coherently with a tailor-made attitude aligning with organisational goals is like expecting humans to behave like machinery. This leaves us to understand the significance of learning human behaviour so as to be able to control it from straying away from organisational goals, while "within" the organisation.

Study of Organisational Behaviour helps us to diagnose those issues and form solutions. The three primary outcomes of organizational behavior are job performance, organizational commitment, and quality of work life (QWL). Understanding organizational behavior requires a rudimentary understanding of psychology, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, and axiology. From a psychological perspective, human behaviors and mental processes dictate how organizations perform; from an anthropological perspective, the culture, language, and beliefs of each individual dictate how organizations perform; from a sociological perspective, the development of human and social behavior dictate how organizations function; from a philosophical perspective, the morals and ethics of an individual dictate how organizations function; and from an axiological perspective, an individual's values dictate how organizations function. Other disciplines (e.g., economics, engineering, or social psychology) may be applied to organizational behavior, as well.

Oliver Sheldon (1923)ⁱⁱ said that, "no industry can be rendered efficient so long as the basic fact remains unrecognized that it is primarily human. It is not a mass of machines and technical process but a body of men. It is not a complex of matter, but a complex of humanity. It fulfils its functions, not by virtue of some impersonal force, but by human energy. It's body is not an intricate maze of mechanical device but a magnified nervous system". Human resources demand cautious control, involving behaviour prediction to maximum possible extent considering the complexities involved in their management.

Identification of the Problem:

Every employees' state of psychology, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, and axiology would differ. Hence, the mechanism to solve issues related to each individual has to be flexible and wide-ranged. This study reflects one of the above aspects of employee behaviour i.e. the psychological aspect of employee behaviour and projects its impact on the organisation. There is a galore of literature on how stress invalidates employees from giving their best at work. It impairs the mind's ability to work at its optimum capacity. This study was undertaken to understand the non-work related stress

factors of employees which cause spill-over into the realm of employees' work life, invariably affecting their productivity and hence, the productivity of the organisation.

Significance of the Study:

This paper and its findings can serve as basis for understanding the non-work related stress factors that can impair the output/performance of employees. Results from this study can reveal the different factors of employee' personal life that adversely affect their psychological state which can unfavourably influence their behavior at work and hence affect the organisation. This research can enlighten organisations about the risks of having employees work under stress. If employees are working under stress, they wouldn't be able to produce optimum quality and quantity of work, hence adversely affecting the organisation. Therefore, any source of stress, even if personal in nature to the employee, becomes important for the employer to understand and take appropriate action about. A lot of organisations are now catering to help employees with issues arising in Non-Work realm, knowing very well that stress spill-over can occur both ways, i.e. from Work to Non-work and from Non-work to Work Realm in every employees' life. By acknowledging the possibility of the same, organisations can equip themselves to deal with employees undergoing stress due to specific reasons and help such employees to de-stress and improve their performance through multiple solutions. This study is also significant as it contributes to the body of knowledge about the relationship between stress and factors affecting employee productivity.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To examine the different personal stressors in employees' life which have an adverse impact on their work life.
2. To examine how the quantity and quality of work is compromised due to personal stressors in employees' life.
3. To offer suggestions to the organisation to counter the observed problems.

Research Methodology:

585 Executive Class employees from different departments of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant were selected for the study. Primary Data was collected through a questionnaire distributed to the employees in order to draw the information concerning the common problems they are facing in their personal lives that causes stress spill-over at work, i.e. hinders their Job in terms of quantity and quality.

Major Findings:

Following were the Non-work related stress factors that were adversely affecting the performance of employees at work.

1. 9.7 percent experience stress related to medical problems 'very frequently' impairing their day to day work.
2. 7 percent employees responded that they "Frequently" faced marital stress and 1.7 percent employees responded that they "Very Frequently" faced spouse related stress.
3. 8.9 percent employees responded that they "Frequently" deal with stress due to their child's/children's problems and 3.6 percent employees responded that they "Very Frequently" got stressed due to problems related to their child/children.
4. 7 percent employees responded that they "Frequently" underwent stress due to family problems (related to parents or in-laws) and 2.6 percent employees responded that they "Very Frequently" dealt with stress due to such family problems.
5. Respondents were asked how often they feel sad or depressed. 10.8 percent employees responded that they "Frequently" felt sad or depressed. 2.6 percent employees responded that they "Very Frequently" felt sad or depressed.
6. 7.4 percent employees responded that they "Frequently" underwent stress due substance abuse related problems and 1.2 percent employees responded that they "Very Frequently" dealt with stress due to such problems.
7. Respondents were asked to tell how frequently they were faced with legal problems that they needed advice in. 3.8 percent employees responded that they "Frequently" underwent stress due to personal legal matters and 0.9 percent employees responded that they "Very Frequently" dealt with stress due to such problems.
8. 4.4 percent employees responded that they "Frequently" encountered financial problems and 1.2 percent employees responded that they "Very Frequently" dealt with financial problems that they wanted advice or help in.

Findings on Personal Problems causing Quantity of Work Lost

9. 5.3 percent of respondents admitted that personal problems caused them to take leave very frequently, 11.1 percent employees admitted to taking leave frequently, 33.8 percent admitted to taking leave occasionally for the same reason and 36.1 percent were observed to be taking leave rarely because of personal problems. On the contrary, 13.7 percent employees claimed to "Never" take leave because of personal problems.
10. 2.7 percent of respondents admitted that personal problems caused them to be late for work very frequently, 11.5 percent employees admitted to be late frequently, 24.1 percent admitted to be late occasionally for the same reason and 36.8 percent claimed to be late rarely because of personal problems. On the contrary, 25 percent employees claimed to never have been late because of personal problems.
11. 5.1 percent of respondents admitted that personal problems caused them to take off early from work very frequently, 7.4 percent employees admitted to take off frequently, 20 percent admitted to take off occasionally for the same reason and 42.2 percent claimed to take off from work rarely because of personal problems. On the other hand, 25.3 percent employees claimed that they never took off from workplace because of personal problems.
12. The research observed how frequently personal problems caused them to be pulled away from their normal work location while still at work. 3.1 percent of respondents admitted that personal problems caused them to be pulled away from their normal work location very frequently, 9.4 percent employees favoured the response frequently, 19.7 percent admitted to be pulled away from normal work location occasionally for the same reason and 29.7 percent claimed that they were rarely pulled away from normal work location because of personal problems. On the other hand, 38.1 percent employees claimed that personal problems never caused them to be pulled away from normal work location.

13. The research investigated how frequently personal problems required respondents to be on the phone, e-mail or internet while at work. 2.9 percent of respondents admitted that personal problems required them to be on the phone, e-mail or internet while at work very frequently. 10.3 percent employees favoured the response frequently, 24.3 percent admitted to be occasionally use phone, email or internet because of personal problems. 34.9 percent respondents said that they rarely required to use the same for personal problems while at work whereas 27.7 claimed that personal problems never required them to be on phone, e-mail or internet while they were at work.
14. The research studied how often respondents discussed their personal problems with their colleagues at work. 5.3 percent of respondents admitted that they very frequently discussed their personal problems with colleagues at work, 8.5 percent revealed that they frequently discussed their personal problems with colleagues at work, 31.8 percent said that they occasionally discussed their personal problems with colleagues at work whereas 35 percent said that they rarely discussed their personal problems with colleagues at work. 19.3 percent respondents claimed that they never discussed any personal problems with their colleagues.

Findings on Personal Problems causing Quality of Work Lost

15. Regarding their difficulty in doing work because of their personal problems. 40.3 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, whereas 23.8 percent respondents disagreed, 22.2 percent respondents remained neutral, 10.8 percent agreed to the statement whereas 2.9 percent strongly agreed to the statement. The above analysis shows that 13.7 percent of the respondents, when placed with personal problems acknowledge, understand and experience difficulty in doing their routine work.
16. Regarding poor concentration in doing work because of their personal problems. 47 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, whereas 23.2 percent respondents disagreed, 14.4 percent respondents remained neutral to the statement, 13.8 percent agreed to the statement whereas 1.5 percent strongly agreed to the statement. The analysis shows that 15.3 percent of the respondents, when placed with personal problems are unable to concentrate on work.
17. Regarding the statement 'Because of my personal problems I was not able to enjoy my work', 47 percent of respondents strongly disagreed to the statement. 23.2 percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement, 14.4 percent respondents remained neutral, 13.8 percent agreed to the statement whereas 1.5 percent strongly agreed to the statement. The above analysis shows that 9 percent of the respondents, when placed with personal problems admit to not enjoy their work.
18. Regarding their worry about completing their tasks because of their personal problems. 46.3 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, whereas 23.1 percent respondents disagreed, 15.2 percent respondents remained neutral, 13.2 percent agreed to the statement whereas 2.2 percent strongly agreed to the statement. The above analysis shows that 15.4 percent of the respondents because of their personal problems worry about the completion of their work.
19. Regarding compromised work quality, 52.3 percent of respondents strongly disagreed to the statement. 21.2 percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement, 17.4 percent respondents remained neutral, 6.8 percent agreed to the statement whereas 2.2 percent strongly agreed to the statement. The above analysis shows that 9 percent of the respondents, when placed with personal problems admit to have compromised in their work quality.

Suggestions:

1. Organisations must become sensitive to the need of employees being stress-free, considering that it plays an essential role in the way it affects the behaviour of employees at work and ultimately the organisation itself. Hence, it is important to educate employees throughout the hierarchy regarding this.
2. Organisation can introduce the concept of workplace counselling to help employees deal with the stress related to different personal problems. Employees need to be made comfortable with the idea of sharing their problems with the counsellor, made to entrust the concept of counselling and the intent of the process. Creating an environment where stress and its toll is discussed openly among employees can be one of the best ways to reduce the stigma associated with counselling.
3. Employees should be educated about healthy and stress-free mind, its significance and the dangers of mental ill-health. This could be done through lectures provided during different cultural events, emails, brochures, bulletin boards and pamphlets. The more the information is dispersed, the more congenial the atmosphere will become when it comes to opening up about stress-free mind.
4. A common drop box can be placed in every department wherein employees with issues that can be generalised for deliberation (like "dealing with a teenager who has taken to smoking" or "marital issues" or "difficulties in dealing with aging parents") anonymously can pen down this issue (unless they are keen on individual counselling session), which can be collected weekly and produced to the counsellor so that workshops on certain topics can be arranged for discussions on the issue. Experts in the field can be invited for the same and further follow up with employees who need more advanced support can be arranged.
5. Organisation through Human Resource Department must aid explaining, establishing and incorporating Mutual Aid Fellowships/groups for additional support that employees can drive support and strength from while they get a common platform to share their troubles. Feeling a "kinship of common suffering" has known to provide immense support in dealing with problems.
6. It is advised to implement a periodic wellbeing analysis practice of employees by incorporating WHO-5 Index to assess the state of employee wellbeing on a periodic basis, screen employees for depression and make necessary referrals.

Conclusion:

Organizational Behaviour has witnessed voluminous advances in understanding and synergizing organizational goals with employee's expectations. Employers are progressively realizing the significance of developing and preserving valuable human resources and are finally heeding to the concepts exhorted by management experts like Peters and Waterman (1982)ⁱⁱⁱ. Their bestselling book on Corporate Excellence says "Treat people as adults. Treat them as partners: treat them with dignity; treat them with respect. Treat them, not capital spending and automation, as the primary source of productivity gains". In other words, if you want productivity and the financial reward that goes with it, you must treat your workers as your most important asset."

Employees' poor psychological health and the associated consequences thereof like poor performance, absenteeism, presenters, medical expenses etc. levy enormous costs on the economy of every nation. With the ever changing job environment and complexities in employees' life, a substantial share of the Gross National Product (GNP) of industrialized countries is lost each year particularly in respect of stress-related inefficiency. Bypassing the conventional belief that the most important objective of business is to make profit, organizations are now heeding to the need of the overall well-being of its employees, realizing how it ultimately affects the former.

Today, not only have the pressures in every individual's life increased, but also the threshold of endurance of stress related to these pressures has drastically dropped. Bridging this gap has become inevitable for the normal functioning of employees and hence the organisation. Thus organisations must to ensure that employee behaviour is not affected by stress and guard employees' optimum performance against dilution due to stressors.

References

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