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ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE VS. ORGANIZATIONAL ROLE STRESS

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Abstract:

Any organization operates in a society and fulfills many societal needs. The products and services of an organization are utilized by the people of the society. The climate prevailing in an organization is a major determinant of the quality of work life which in turn influences the quality of life. Climate, not conducive to effective working, tends to generate stress within the employees. Stress, as person's response to his environment, influences the normal style of working. Stress retards employee productivity and organizational productivity. Both work stress and role stress simultaneously smooth flow of work. A study of the climate and role stress was undertaken. This paper is based on a study of the organizational climate and role stress. The methodology encompasses statement of the problem, structuring the research questions, finalizing the site and sample, formulation of hypotheses, selection of statistical tests, applying statistical tools, interpretation the statistical results followed by recommendations.

KEYWORDS:

Organizations, Organizational Climate, Organizational Culture, Stress, Organizational Role Stress,

1.INTRODUCTION:

Organizational climate plays a dominant role in shaping and moulding employee behaviours which is also responsible for the culmination of successful accomplishment of the job; determining productivity, satisfaction of the workforce, interactions among the employees. Organizational climate is one of the most frequently researched topics in the field of organizational behaviour or psychology.

Organizations must lay emphasis to improve the climate (motivational climate of organizations) and reduce the organizational role stresses to develop the quality of work life and quality of life as well. In order to improve the climate organizations need to concentrate onto the culture which is relatively a uniform perception held in the organization; it has common characteristics, it can distinguish one organization from another and it integrates individual, group and organization system variables. Organizational climate clearly influences the success of an organization.

Organizational climate is influenced by the HRM climate; how managers are handling HRM issues. In identical situations different managers behave in diverse ways. Thus managerial styles are strong determinants of HRM climate that often leads to generation of organizational role stress. Any great organization attempts to find the root causes behind stress just to reduce the stressors. It has been evidenced

by few researchers that organizational climate and organizational role stress are reciprocally dependent. A conceptual model has been developed and annexed at the end of this paper.

2 OBJECTIVES

From the work so far done in the different fields of organisational climate and organisational role stresses it is clear that individual performance as well as organizational performance are affected by stresses generated within employees and its management can positively contribute to achieving smooth functioning of organization, reduced labour unrest, less attrition, improved quality of work life, etc. Successful stress management is essentially required in organisations to derive multiple benefits.

In view of the foregoing, the present study makes an attempt to

Exploring the organisational climate of select companies
Finding effect of organisational culture behind generation of stresses
Identifying potential stressors in organisations
Recognizing effects of stresses on organisational functioning
Making out means of managing stresses
Identifying benefits of stress management practices to organisations, etc.

3 METHODOLOGY

The methodology comprises hypothesis, sampling, sampling characteristics, sample size, probable statistics to be used and statistical tools, scales, and brief procedures.

4 ORGANIZATION

Organizations fulfill a greater variety of our societal and personal needs and affect a larger segment of our lives. Talcott Parsons (1979) perceives organizations as 'a social unit which is deliberately constructed and reconstructed to seek specific goals'. For example, corporation, army, hospital church, schools, prisons are social units. Organizations have relatively fixed boundaries, a normative order, authority rank, a communication system and an incentive system, which enables various types of participants or employees to work together in the pursuit of common goals.

4.1 Organizational Climate

The persons employed in organizations communicate, extend cooperation to others, strive to achieve common objectives, and conform to rules and regulations provided the environment of the organization is healthy and transparent. In other words, the organizational climate should be conducive to work, exchanging information, where mutual trust and cooperation prevail. Thus organizational climate manifests its importance.

Research work on organizational climate dates back to early twentieth century. The concept and framework of organizational climate has evolved over a long time with the earliest available reference on the concept and framework of organizational climate from the works of (Lewin, Lippitt and White 1939). Organizational climate is a relatively enduring quality of the internal environment that the members experience, influences their behaviour and that can be described in terms of values of particular set of characteristics of the organization. Organizational climate is the set of characteristics that describe an organization and that, (a) distinguishes one organization from other organization; (b) are relatively enduring overtime and (c) influences the behaviour of the people in the organization. Organizational climate is defined as the perceived attributes of an organization and its subsystems, as reflected in the way an organization deals with its members, groups and issues (Pareek 2006).

4.2 Influences of Organizational Climate

Organizational climate has enormous influence on organizational effectiveness, role efficacy or effectiveness, and role stress. Srivastav (2009) emphasizes that organizational climate is a conceptual synthesis of characteristics that distinguish organizations from one another. It depends on the perception of organizational members and significantly influences their motivation and behaviour. Academicians have researched on organizational climate and submit their findings in regards to influences on various aspects

like employee empowerment, customer satisfaction, concern for employees, organizational performance, creativity and innovation, profit rates as economic factors, and so forth. Climate is as well characterized by customer commitment, communication, empowerment, innovation, rewards and recognition, community involvement or environmental responsibility, and teamwork.

4.3 Dimensions of Organizational Climate

Organizational climate depends on the perception of the organizational members about various dimensions of the organization. The six dimensions of organizational climate propounded by Likert (1967) are leadership, motivation, communication, decisions, goals, and control. Litwin and Stringer (1968) proposed seven dimensions: conformity, responsibility, standards, rewards, organizational clarity, warmth and support, and leadership.

Pareek (2002) reviewed various studies, discussed managers and proposed 12 processes in regards to organizational climate: orientation, interpersonal relationships, supervision, problem management, management of mistakes, conflict management, communication, decision making, trust, management of rewards, risk taking, and innovation and change. For any of the dimension, dominance of one aspect hints the motivational climate of the organization. The climate may be functional or dysfunctional.

4.4 Organizational Climate vs. Organizational Culture

For any organization, the terms culture and climate are intertwined. Every organization has some characteristics which are common with any other organization. At the same time, each organization has its unique set of characteristics and properties. This psychological structure of organization and their sub-units is usually referred to as 'Organizational Culture'. Culture is a commonly experienced phenomenon and many word like, climate atmosphere, environment and milieu are often used interchangeably to describe it. In fact, most of the studies which have tried to measure an organization's 'Culture' have operationalised it in terms of 'Organizational Climate'.

4.5 Influence of HRM Climate on Organizational Culture

HRM climate dimensions influence organizational climates (Ibrahim and Dickie 2010). The concept of workplace friendship is of utmost importance for a healthy work environment. HRM climate dimensions encompass job autonomy, level of participation, employee integration, training, welfare, and supervisory support. HRM climate clubbed with opportunity and prevalence or popularity of practices constitutes the workplace friendship.

4.6 Motivational Climate in Organizations

Pareek (2002) mentions six commonly observed motives among organizational persons which are: achievement, expert influence, extension, control, dependency, and affiliation. Of all the six motives achievement, expert influence, and extension are functional. But, the motives control, dependency, and affiliation are dysfunctional. Each motive has its unique indicators.

5 Roles of Managers in Organization

Role is expectations of significant persons in an organization. Role is also the 'behaviour pattern' expected of a person. Effectiveness in organizational roles is the key to the success of business organizations, yet this area has been relatively under explored by behavioural scientists. Employees can be motivated to have consistently high performance if their roles were designed in a suitable way that matches their personalities (Pareek 1993).

6 Stress

Stress is a person's response to his environment. Work related stress is of growing concern today, than it was two decades ago. Different people have different views about stress as it can be experienced from variety of sources (Pestonjee 1999). The business persons view stress as frustration or emotional tension; the air traffic controller sees it as a problem of alertness and concentration; and the biochemists perceive it as a purely chemical event. Stress has become a major problem for the individuals working in an

organization as well as for the organization itself.

The stresses relating to person's role is termed as role stress (Pareek, 1993). Role is defined as a set of functions, which an individual performs in response to the expectations of others as well as his own expectations. Therefore it is of utmost importance both for the individual and the organization to work in the area of role stress management. Cooper and Eaker (1978) have identified following six major sources of stresses at work: Factors intrinsic to the job, Role in the organization, Relationship at work, Refers to the working relationship which one has with colleagues and others, Career development, and Non-work factor. It must be noted that all stresses are not distress. A certain amount of stress or pressure is necessary and shows a positive adaptation being made by a person. Bad or negative stress is called 'distresses. It is the negative psychological and emotional response when stress is intense or unresolved. Burnout is defined as the end result of stress resulting in symptoms of exhaustion, irritation, ineffectiveness, inaction, discounting of self and others, and heath problems (hypertension, ulcers, heart ailments, etc. Burnout occurs at individual level and is a negative psychological experience.

6.1 Organizational Role Stress

Organizational role stress (ORS) is experienced while performing roles. ORS scale measures ten types of ORS variables which are briefed.

1.Inter-Role Distance (IRD) – IRD arises when there are difficulties in balancing between organizational and non-organizational roles.
2.Role Stagnation (RS) – RS develops when there are difficulties in taking over the new role responsibilities due to lack of preparedness. The role occupant keeps on stagnating in the old one, which is secure, familiar, and comfortable.
3.Role Expectation Conflict (REC) – REC appears when there are conflicting role expectations.
4.Role Erosion (RE) – RE results when some of the important functions of one's role are performed by others or when the credit for one's role performance is given to others.
5.Role Overload (RO) – RO generates from too high or too many role expectations.
6.Role Isolation (RI) – RI results when the role occupant feels isolated due to lack of communication.
7.Personal Inadequacy (PI) – PI develops when there is lack of competencies for the role.
8.Self-Role Distance (SRD) – SRD develops when (a) the role occupant has to do what he/she dislikes, (b) his/her main skills are not utilised, or (c) the role occupant perceives a conflict between the self and the role.
9.Role Ambiguity (RA) – RA results from unclear and indistinct role expectations.
10.Resource Inadequacy (RIn) – RIn generates when the role occupant perceives that role performance is suffering due to lack of external resources.

Of the above ten most prominent organizational stressors, an individual role occupant can take appropriate measures for addressing frequently encountered problems (while performing his/her role) that create high stress, jeopardizing his/her well-being, performance, and effectiveness.

6.2 Consequences of Stress

Consequences of stresses are manifested through medical/physical, psychological, cognitive, and behavioural disorders. Stress is inevitable and one can only manage it functionally (Sayle 1936). Whatever be the type of stress, it can be of short duration or chronic. The body cannot distinguish between physical and psychological stresses. Chronic Stress or long-term exposure to stress can lead to serious health problems. Chronic stress disrupts almost every system in the body. It can raise blood pressure, suppress the immune system, increase the risk of heart attack and stroke, contribute to infertility, and speed up aging process. Long-term stress can even impair the brain, leaving you more vulnerable to anxiety and depression. Stresses must be managed as they are manageable.

Stress and Personality and Organizational Variables: Stress affects both personality variables (needs, locus of control, personality type, coping strategies, and efforts) and organizational variables (organizational climate, job satisfaction, occupational stress, and psychological participation).

Stress vs. Work Life Balance: Stress upsets work life balance impeding in striking a balance between professional and personal priority; organizational and non-organizational roles.

Stress vs. Performance: An employee will perform to full capacity in optimum level of stress. The individual will be bored and apathy will set in if the stress is below this optimum level. If behaviour is concerned, the person is likely to psychologically withdraw from work. Psychological withdrawal will result in frequent careless mistakes, forgetting to do things and thinking of things other than work during

work hours (Pestonjee 1999). On the other hand, if the level of stress is too high and intense, then their effects on performance will again be adverse. They will suffer from burst out stress syndrome. Errors will increase because of anxiety and nervousness, bad decisions will be made and individual may experience insomnia, and psychosomatic illness like peptic ulcer, asthma etc.

Stress vs. Creativity: Creative personalities, while performing their roles in organizations, encounter certain types of potential stresses (Pestonjee 1999). Traits are characteristics of human beings. Creative individuals possess traits like: courage and independence, risk taking propensity, persistence and determination, inquisitiveness, etc. The potential stressors vary with the trait.

6.3 Organizational Role Stress - Measurement

Organizational Role Stress (ORS) - Scale designed by Udai Pareek: the scale comprises 50 items divided into 10 subscales. The subscales are the ORS variables mentioned in the section organizational role stress.

7 ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE VS. ORGANIZATIONAL ROLE STRESS

The interdependency or reciprocal dependency of organizational climate and organizational role stress have been studied by many researchers including Pareek (1981), Pestonjee (1999), Srivastav (2006) who have offered their invaluable comments.

7.1 Coping and Coping Strategies

Coping means handling a potential stressor or the resulting stressful situation to minimize their harmful consequences. Coping comprises efforts, both action-oriented and intra-psychic, to manage the demands and conflicts. When coping is effective, the potential stressor does not result in a stressful situation. The strategies for coping are referred to as coping strategy. Pestonjee (1999) has discussed cognitive restructuring and cognitive type coping strategies, and has quoted certain strategies to cope with the stress that frequently arise in the organization.

The counsellor needs to explain the above and advise the stressed person accordingly in a very convincing manner so that the counselee remembers his words. During counselling, a counsellor has to provide people with a better understanding of them and elucidate in a heartening way the ill effects of stress. As a counsellor propose the most suitable, considering the situation, method from your arsenal.

7.2 COPING STRATEGY DIMENSIONS

The three coping strategy dimensions are – internality, externality, and mode (Pestonjee 1999). A stressed person may try to cope with the stress individually, discuss others or engage others to find a solution. Furthermore, his/her intention may be to avoid and get rid of the situation causing the stress.

Internality: This dimension reflects the extent to which the stressed person concerned engages himself/herself with the problem causing stress, either to confront or avoid.

Externality: This dimension reflects the extent to which the stressed person involves or engages others with the problem causing stress, either to confront or avoid.

Mode - This dimension reflects the intention of the person. The intention may Avoidance or Approach. If the person concerned runs away from the problems creating stress, that is 'Avoidance' mode. On the other hand, if the intention is to solve the problem, that refers to 'Approach' mode.

The dimensions, internality and externality, coexist in varying degree and each can be low or high. Based on binary or twofold nature of the three dimensions, eight types of strategies evolve. The eight types of coping strategies are: Impunitive, Intropunitive, Extrapunitive, Defensive, Impersistive, Intropersistive, Extrapersistive, and Interpersistive.

7.3 Coping Strategy Focus

Strategy adopted for coping with stress is known as coping strategy (Taylor et. al. 1998). The strategy comprises behavioural and psychological efforts made by people to handle stressful events encountered by them to minimize the harmful consequences of stressful events. Coping strategies are classified as: Problem focused, Emotion focused, Functional, Dysfunctional, Proactive, and Reactive. The counsellor considers the situation and advices the strategy.

7.4 Stress Management Intervention

Researches have established that management of stress influence the nature of family interactions and reduce violence, and promote quality of life. The interventions have been successfully used on bio-behavioral processes in breast cancer patients undergoing medical treatment and reduced mood disturbance in before surgical operations. Stress management interventions are frequently used in organizational life. Stress management intervention including stress and coping, coping strategies, and self-imposed behaviour modification methods are discussed.

7.5 Managing Job Stress

Job stress is a leading cause of chronic stress. The strategies which can help one stay healthy and potentially reverse many of the negative effects of stress are: reduce daily stressors, learn stress-reducing practices, find ways to reduce stress at work and enjoy the job more, making changes may feel challenging at first, strengthen your relationships, and invest in ones emotional health. Most importantly one has to invest time to learn how to relax.

7.6 Managing Organizational Role Stresses

The strategies can be both dysfunctional as well functional (Pestonjee 1999).

Organizational Role Stress	Dysfunctional Strategies (Avoidance)	Functional Strategies (Proactive)
Inter-role distance	▪ Role partition ▪ Role elimination	Role negotiation
Role stagnation	▪ Role fixation	Role transition
Role expectation conflict	▪ Role taking	Role making
Role erosion	▪ Role visibility	Role development / enrichment
Role overload	▪ Role reduction	Role slimming
Role isolation	▪ Role bounded-ness	Role linkages
Personal inadequacy	▪ Role shrinkage	Role linkage/relearning
Self Role Distance	▪ Role rejection ▪ Self rejection	Role integration
Role ambiguity	▪ Role prescription	Role clarification
Resource inadequacy	▪ Role atrophy	Resource generation

As a change agent, an organizational leader must know the people well and understand their stress and tolerance level. The change agent has to develop a strong inventory of stress management skills. This is necessary to maintain a sense of mastery and control over themselves and life/work to avoid feeling victimized, overwhelmed or controlled by pressure and demands.

7.7 Stress Free Living

'Stress Free Living' gives us an opportunity to learn what we have to change; and how to expand our personal capacity and way to strengthen our ability to respond. We live in world of exponential change, constantly demanding us to increase our ability to respond. We are flooded with information than any other generation earlier. There are, therefore, two challenges which every human being face in this 21st century. The first is how to continue to respond effectively and positively to people and the world around us, and secondly, how to manage ourselves and the world inside us. In both these worlds, everyone now experiences some stress everyday. A large majority is still trying to absorb or live with that stress, and majority is dwindling to decide upon what can be done. We evidence divorce, crime and substance abuse rates in all spheres of life for carry.

Stressed persons have to be ready to explore and make changes to their life experience of stress, before it becomes painful. If they are experiencing pain, they have to do something now. Flame of

continuous learning in order to make the changes will make them stronger, calmer, and more enlightened persons. They will be able to manage them, their relationships, and their life journey in more conscious and focused way.

If one practice he will receive important information and insight, self-inspiration and practical methods of stress-free living. Vision of the person will change. In the world, so many of our needs and desires are met almost instantly; many goals remain unachieved also. Do not unnecessarily get frustrated. In context of stress management and prevention, only one person can do the work, develop the understanding, make the changes, and learn new skills. The person is none but 'you'. As the owner of the key of stress free living, only the stressed person can turn the key to unlock to enter in the psychological world of his own freedom holding hands of his near and dear ones.

7.8 Principle of Stress Free Living

Stress is part and parcel of work life and the social life. In order to lead a stress free life we need to adhere to some principles: be conscious, observe, practice detached involvement, recovery, accept, understanding of time, managing expectations, cultivate personal mastery, practice daily meditation, and be patient.

8 RESEARCH FINDINGS

a)Role stresses, if managed effectively, will enhance the functional climates (Achievement, Expert Influence, and Extension) and positively contribute to organizational health; restore a trusting relationship, improve interpersonal communication, ensure openness, enrich collaboration and cooperation, and so forth.

b)Using statistical tools reciprocal relationship between organizational climate and organizational role stress has been observed.

c)Confidence building workshops help to reduce the tendency to depend onto others. Enhanced sense of organizational belonging facilitates any sensible person to utilize the affiliation for constructive purposes. Dysfunctional climate fosters high levels of role stress. Extent of control should be reduced to the minimal for to develop mutual trust. Stressed senior management levels are prone to exercise more control. Over supervision tend to reduce employee performances and is a potent cause behind turnover. Dependency on system should be encouraged.

d)Organizations (manufacture, telecom, and academia) do not have any structured method of managing stress. They are sending personnel, generally of senior management levels, to attend courses and management development programmes conducted by reputed institutes.

e)ORS depends on auxiliary variables like age, length of experience, employment of spouse (for male employees), nature of employment, etc.
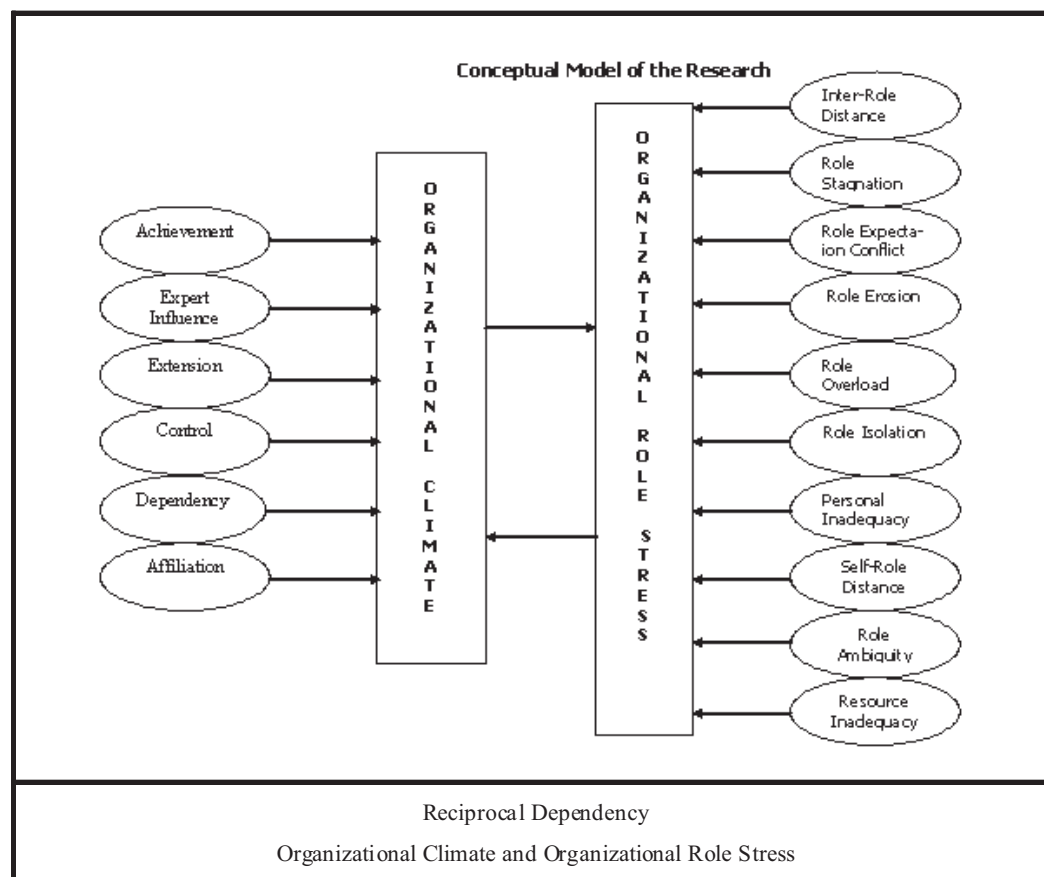
9 CONCLUSION

Stress hinders in usual style working, diminishes employee productivity which in turn decreases organizational productivity. Thus, stress is a hidden cost to the companies. The role stresses depend on various factors. Managers and employees face the problems of stress despite changing technologies that have made their lives easy. Culture remains at the back front while it is manifested as organizational climate in the forefront. Organizational climate and organizational role stress are reciprocally dependent. Managers, in addition to traditional roles, need to execute stress management role encompassing measuring levels of job satisfaction, conducting climate survey, organizing HR audit, matching qualification and job assignments, ensuring work life balance, trimming down brain drainage, employee counselling, etc. Big organizations may develop 'Internal Research Cell' manned by personnel with some knowledge of research methodology, statistical tests and tools, organizational development, and attitude of contributing.

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Conceptual Model of the Research

Reciprocal Dependency

Organizational Climate and Organizational Role Stress

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