“Self-Management- A Key to Manage Stress” An Empirical Study with special Reference to Mass Media

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Abstract:

Self- management now forms a part of daily vocabulary in accomplishing things in one’s life. It involves a can do attitude to establish personal goals and set high standards to climb the career ladder. The word ‘stress’ lingers all day in the minds of people but its reach and meaning remain unclear. Stress is everywhere, but as a relatively new phenomenon. Work related stress continuously proves to be an evergreen issue and one finds many difficulties in overcoming it. In this electronic world, technology plays a dual role of being boon and a ban in managing stress. According to a survey Indian workers experience 57% ‘higher’ or ‘much higher’ growth rate in stress over the past two years. This study focuses on how one could manage stress through self management. Self management involves strategic, tactical or simple decision making which would certainly be an effective tool to reduce stress. This empirical paper details on the factors and consequences of self management and suggests ways to manage stress.

Key Words: Self Management, stress, impact, balance, work and life

Introduction:

According to Wikipedia Self-management refers to methods, skills, and strategies by which individuals can effectively direct their own activities toward the achievement of objectives, and includes goal setting, decision making, focusing, planning, scheduling, time management, task tracking, self-evaluation, self-intervention, self-development etc. Researchers have shown keen interest towards self-management in recent years as it serves to be the pioneer in developing other skills (Koegel & Koegel, 2006). The key elements of Self-management includes

- Personal Vision & Goal Setting
- Evaluation & Monitoring
- Knowledge & Confidence
- Responsibility
- Can-Do Attitude

A person mastering the above skills is said to possess “Self Management “skills. Self management can be achieved through Self Control, Transparency, Adaptability, Achievement, Initiative and Optimism.

Literature Review:

The concept of self-management is not new; research in this area has been around since Trist's examination of self-regulated coal miners in the 1950s (Trist et al, 1963).) Mills (1983) defined self-management as pre-determined efforts by an individual to control his or her own behavior. Self-
management involves assessing problems, establishing goals, monitoring time and environmental issues that may hinder the accomplishment of those goals, and using reinforcement and punishment to regulate goal progress and attainment (Frayne, 1991). The ability to organize one’s internal work and structure to best accomplish goals is considered to be the key aspects of self management (Hackman 1986). Self-monitoring involves individuals’ active monitoring of their own time and environmental management and the identification of issues or situations that may prevent individuals from reaching their goals. The fourth and final step in self-management is the self-evaluation stage, wherein the individuals evaluate the success of their plan and refine their tactics if necessary. Self-management has become a “defining element” (Castaneda, Kolenko, & Aldag, 1999) of the new organization and is often the distinctive element of the best firms (Hout & Carter, 1995). In a recent survey, human resource executives cited self-management skills as crucial for future managerial careers (Allred & Snow, 1996).

Self-managing individuals have the responsibility to determine approaches towards task execution as well as for monitoring and managing their own behaviors (Manz & Sims, 1989). According to Manz and Sims (1984), basic self-managing skills include self problem assessment, self-goal setting, self-rehearsal, self-observation and evaluation, and self-reinforcement and/or punishment. Individuals with high levels of self-management skills have a significant amount of decision-making authority. They manage themselves in planning and scheduling of work (set goals, pace of work), make product-related decisions (inventory, quality control), and solve problems (member discipline, quality) (Pearce and Ravlin, 1987; Wellins et al, 1990).

Moorhead and Griffen(1989) defines stress as a person’s adaptive response to a stimulus that places excessive psychological or physical demands on that person. Luthans (2002) defines work stress as an adaptive response to an external situation that results in physical, psychological and behavioral deviations for organizational participants. Workplace stress has for a long time been considered as a major work environment problem in organizations (Cox et al., 2000). Also over commitment at work could entail increased risk to experience work issues as stressful (J. Siegrist, 2000). Overcommitted coworkers suffer from inappropriate perceptions of demands and of their own coping resources. (D. Preckel, R. von Känel, B.M. Kudielka, J.E. Fischer, 2005). Walton (1985) identified self-management as critical route for competitive advantage in contemporary markets because of its emphasis on employee commitment rather than on control-oriented approaches to management. This commitment comes from self, not external (e.g., boss), control over behavior and is referred as “the missing link” in organizational effectiveness. (Luthans & Davis, 1979). Self-management can indirectly increase team effectiveness by increasing team members’ sense of responsibility and ownership of work. This increase in responsibility and authority has been linked to intrinsic motivation (Deci et al, 1990), job satisfaction (Lawler, 1986) and increased effort (Manz, 1992).

**Objectives:**

1. To study the factors that contributes towards self management.
2. To identify the consequences of self management.
3. To find the impact of technology and its change towards stress.
4. To suggest ways to manage stress through self management.
Conceptual Framework:

Methodology:

This study is an empirical research with a sample of 100 young adults in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. The samples are constituted from television media belonging to the age group of 16 to 30 years. Purposive quota sampling technique was used. The data was collected through a structured questionnaire from the respondents. Likert’s 5 point scale was used to get the opinion of the respondents. The data obtained were subjected to simple percentage analysis and statistical analysis like chi-square.

Sample Composition:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Under Graduate</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Post Graduate</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Professionally Qualified</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Occupational Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 – 20 years</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>Lower Level</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 30 years</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>Middle level</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 40 years</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Upper level</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

64% of the respondents were male and 36% were female respondents where 81% belong to the age group of 20-30. 28% of the respondents are post graduates and 76% of the respondents are working in mid-sector.

Limitations of the Study:

The present study has the following limitations:

- The main objective of the study is to examine the impact of self-management in managing stress with reference to mass media. Hence this study does not focus on other sectors.
- There are many variables that impacts stress, but the study is confined only to a few selected variables.
Findings & Results:

**Factors that contributes towards self management**

Proper planning of work & personal schedules leads to a less stress life. When a person learns to be self disciplined in time, leisure, family & conflicts he can achieves positive balance. Most of the researchers have confined that the factors which are bound to make a person stressful is

- Family
- Time
- Conflicts
- Leisure
- Goal Setting

On controlling and managing the above factors through technology and organizational support one can easily bring a positive balance towards work & life.

**Chart 1**

**Respondents Opinion On Identifying Factors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Leisure</th>
<th>Goal Setting</th>
<th>Conflicts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondents</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above factors can be controlled only by “Managing Self”. It refers to how an individual develops habit. We shape our behavior to various situations based on unspoken rules and social norms that govern those situations.

**Consequences of self management**

Research critics cite the major consequences of self management as reduced stress, life & career satisfaction. Self management is bound by self-esteem, self-knowledge & social self. Super (1994) observed that the when one controls one’s activities it helps in the development of self esteem. Control of one’s activities depends on how one manages time and schedules it towards various activities. When one is able to control time he automatically is relieved from stress.

**H₀₁:** There is no actual correlation between age and the time allocated to do all things.

**TABLE - 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>Time to do All things</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.378**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**
From the above table it is inferred that the hypothesis was supported. Age correlates significantly with the time allocated to do all things $r = -.378$, $p < .01$.

Organizational support is one of the most important organizational concepts that keep employees in the organization, since organizational support is known as a key factor in increasing job satisfaction and the organizational commitment of employees. On the other hand, organizational commitment and job satisfaction are equally important to customer satisfaction (Lam and Zhang, 2003).

$H_02$: There is no actual correlation when one feels happy in accomplishing each goal and organizational appreciation in doing extra effort.

$H_03$: There is no significant association between spending time with family and one sticking with smartphone always.

$H_04$: There is no significant association between doing work through laptop/tab at home and too many deadlines which are difficult to meet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>Org. Appreciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happy When accomplish each goal</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From the above table it is inferred that the hypothesis was supported. Organizational appreciation in doing extra effort correlates significantly when one feels happy in accomplishing each goal $r = -.580$, $p < .01$.

Perceived control is thought to be associated with positive outcomes in the work sphere such as increased performance and job satisfaction, reduced stress and work adjustment (Terry & Jimmie son, 1999). Organizational support through appreciation is a major stress relieving factor as a person is completely satisfied in job which in-turn enhances his career growth.

**Impact of technology and its change towards stress**

It was perceived that people nowadays stick with smart phones and laptops and are continuously engaged with their work even at home. But this technology helps people to be with their family simultaneously doing their work. Nowadays most of the people do multi-tasking which effectively helps them to be physically present at home and mentally doing their work. This at times reduces their stress as they relax with family & friends.

$H_03$: There is no significant association between spending time with family and one sticking with smartphone always.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chi-Square Tests</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>89.094*</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table it is inferred that $p<0.05$ here is no strong evidence to accept the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is a significant association between spending time with family and one sticking with smartphone always.

Researchers have coined that most of the pressure at work occurs in meeting deadlines. With the advent of technology and the apt skill of self-management one can reduce this stress.

$H_04$: There is no significant association between doing work through laptop/tab at home and too many deadlines which are difficult to meet.
Chi-Square Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75.930</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table it is inferred that $p<0.05$ here is no strong evidence to accept the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is a significant association between doing work through laptop/tab at home and too many deadlines which are difficult to meet.

**Suggestions to Manage Stress through Self-Management**

One cannot get rid of stress completely but can manage it to overcome. Stress leads to various chronicle diseases but can be managed with effective self-management. Few suggestions in order to manage stress would be:

- Think about the changes one needs to make at work in order to reduce stress levels and then take action.
- One can talk over one’s concerns with employer or human resources manager.
- One should make sure they are well organized. One should list tasks in order of priority. Schedule the most difficult tasks of each day for times when fresh, such as first thing in the morning.
- One should take care of oneself. Eat a healthy diet and exercise regularly.
- Consider the benefits of regular relaxation.
- Make sure one has enough free time to self every week.
- One should not take stress on loved ones. One can discuss work problems and ask for their support and suggestions.

People can take the above suggestions into consideration in managing stress through self-management. With the help of technology advances we could frame few applications as most of us are Smartphone freaks. Few applications like “Speak to it Assistant”, “Crunch Time”, “Instapaper App”, “Daily Routine”, “Simply Yoga” and many more would be of great help to balance work and life.

**Conclusion:**

When one is out of stress it enhances organizational commitment and with the support of organization one can achieve great heights. Technology plays a vital role today. People can make use of the apps available and manage time effectively. Apart from time, self management is the key result area towards balancing work & life. Here is a list which help one in managing self and which will in turn lead him to the path of success: -

- Look every new opportunity as an exciting and new-life experience.
- Exhibit self-confidence and self-assurance to complete any task.
- Good attitude toward the upcoming task.
- Always move towards goals.
- Doing things right at the first time.
- Accept responsibility for successes and failures.
- Viewing Job as activities & challenges.
Few suggestions according to a survey would be
1. Schedule work – Make sure u allots time for family and friends too.
2. Rethink on chores – Outsource or one has to do it all alone.
3. Relax – Relax everyday to take up stress & pressure.

With the help of the above suggestions one can plan things perfectly and lead a balanced life without stress and this is done only with the key component of Self management.

Reference