



A Research of Stress over Medical Employees which is caused by Job Conditions in Sivas

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Introduction

Institutional development is an affair which should be dealt with by activating all the components of the organization and by taking the requirements of time, science and technology into consideration. It is not possible for all profit making or non-profit organizations to survive without having an aim to develop. Hospitals, village clinics and medical establishments also aim to develop. If these establishments cannot fulfill their aim, they turn into establishments that cannot furnish enough service for present demands. The fundamental component that provides development is the human factor namely human capital that is called employees. A great many of enterprises may not take the state of the employees into consideration while performing physical growth. However, the stress which is faced at workplace can also cause employee's self-actualization effort to disappear besides affecting the motivation in a negative way.

While the conditions faced in the establishments can be a source of motivation from time to time, they can also transform into the cause of the stress themselves. Thus the organization executives have to consider the job conditions (spiritual and material). The medical establishments in Turkey have many problems related to employees and executives due to their structure (a great number of patients, deficient employees, deficiencies in physical space). These problems complicate the job conditions and can be the cause of stress. Among the employees of medical establishments especially for nurses and doctors, the disagreeable behavior of the patients because of the troubles they experienced can easily become a cause of the stress since they deal with the patients directly (Laal and Aliramaie, 2010: 169). It is getting difficult for the individuals under stress to be successful and happy. According to a research on student stress, it is seen that the students under stress become unsuccessful and it causes negative output (Conner vd., 2009: 54). To know the stress that might influence the organizational success directly, to have information about its indication and method; are considerably important in terms of minimizing the negative outputs caused by stress.

The Concept of Stress, Its Indications and Stress Giving Components

As employees of private or public institutions, it is an unavoidable fact for individuals to meet stress. As a word from Latin origin, stress is used in physics and engineering sciences before being used to explain the related state of human beings and the other living creatures. The concept of stress is used in two different meanings. The first one tells about a fact that the balance is destabilized according to the factors and conditions that a human being or another organism is under danger. The second one is wide enough to cover all the factors (emotional tensions, internal and external conflicts, trauma, environmental factors etc.) that might destabilize the organism's balance (Ertekin, 1993). Stress as a word covers the meanings of clenching, squeezing, pressurizing, attaching and overwhelming. Stress is a power that raises tension. When this power is applied on an object, it causes the deformation of the object. In such a case the external stimulus in question is an external factor (Stora, 1992). The first scientist to define stress with its known meaning is Hans Selye. He defines stress as the differences in the organism which are results of internal and external factors in his work published in 1950 (Ozdevecioglu vd. 2003:131). Stress can also be defined as non original physical and chemical reactions (Alzaem vd. 2010:240) that the organism gives depending on some factors (stress giving factors). Stress can also arise because of the person himself (psychology) in addition to the external (sociological, environmental) reasons (Sharma vd. 2010:349). The individuals who are under pressure and who can not reflect their original behavior and attitudes towards their job might get an idea that their workplace is stressful. However, another individual can work with less stress in the same workplace thanks to their personal characteristics. For most people original lifestyle is the reason for original behavior, original personality and psychological comfort. The life of people who are constantly influenced by their environment, who display behavior required by the environment and who do not have an original personality can be rather stressful. Stress is the difficulties and tensions resulting from physical, mental and emotional pressures (Altuntas, 2003). It is also possible to define as "non special reaction to impact over the individual". The meaning of the concept of "non special reaction" which is used to explain stress is that the organism does not give the same reactions in certain circumstances (Guler vd. 2001). Although the factors that constitute stress might be material and spiritual, it is observed that especially higher level stress leads to physical and psychological results for individuals (Varlow vd., 2009:30). Stress-related problems, either physical or psychological, reduce motivation.

Job conditions, reasons concerning the family and environmental factors can be thought as stress giving factors. However it is particularly useful to mention stress giving factors related to job conditions. Ertekin (1993) stated about job conditions that the factors such as heavy work, long work hours, high and hard working tempo, monotony, lack of confidence and work place are crucial. Admi and Moshe-Eilon (2010) stated work load, role conflict, role ambiguity, lack of social support are stress givers particularly for nurses. On the other hand, there are also a certain number of factors caused by the nature of job and work place (Ozdevecioglu vd. 2003:131).

It cannot be expected from an employee whose health is under physical and spiritual danger to be useful for the organization. This kind of troubles faced by the employees cause organizational problems in time and the concept of organizational stress comes up. The indications of organizational stress are: increase in number of complaints and fights, disorders of work harmony, ignorance of rules, decrease in

productivity etc. (Tarhan, 2002: 20). Fighting against individual and organizational stress is a requirement of modern management conception. Therefore it is appropriate to mention the ways of handling stress.

Ways of Handling Stress

The ones who realize individual stress try to solve it. Among these efforts negative behavior such as alcohol, cigarette, drug that are known as negative ways of handling are examples which are not advised for individual and organizational terms. On the other hand, spiritual and religious activities, social and physical activities, professional consultation committees are known as positive ways of handling (Curling and Simmons, 2010). First of all, knowing the stress giving factors well is one of the components that will be made use of in coping with this problem. Sometimes the executive of the organization or way of managing are the main source of stress. For instance, according to a research that is applied on employees of a petrochemical firm in Iran, stress on employees has increased a lot after the firm was privatized (Aghaei vd., 2010).

If the components that compose stress (Stress Givers) are to be assessed (Baltas and Baltas, 2004: 59; Yılmaz and Ekici, 2006:32):

- Those are caused by the physical environment: air pollution, noise, crowd, radiation, temperature, dust, coldness etc.
- Those are caused by work or being busy issues: hard work, night work, piece production, overloading, performing an easy job under timing pressure, jobs that require great responsibility with difficulties of decision making, jobs that do not allow any contribution, boring jobs, deficiency of job safety, atmosphere of the organization etc.
- Those are caused by psychosocial features: It is possible to explain social stress faced during human life as daily stress, developmental stress and stress that is at the same level with vital crisis.

It is certain that the matters which are mentioned above will have different effect on individuals. Since personal features of people are very different from each other, although mentioned stress givers cause stress for a person, they may not cause stress for another. On the other hand, environmental features, growing environment, features concerning the family are also really effective in perceiving problems as stress giving factors. Family, being mother and father can sometimes stressful as they are roles that require crucial responsibility (Wheatley and Wille, 2009:121). On the contrary, the roles that the family chooses for their children can be heavier than the children can bear and that results in the children's growing up as stressful individuals. Strengthening personal features, atmosphere of tolerance, having a conscious circle play an important role in coping with stress. According to a research on nurses (Laal and Aliramaie, 2010), 70% of the participants are on intermediate or decent level in handling stress. In this research it is revealed that the factors affecting nurses' handling stress in a positive way are age, job experience and workplace.

Another important way of handling stress is social support. Social support can be used as a vehicle of organizational stress management. Friendship and attachment circle leaning against self-sacrifice which is developed either in environment or workplace increases employees' spiritual power. Social support is defined as "the satisfaction of the basic needs of individual which take place in the hierarchy of needs such as

belonging, love, esteem and self-actualization as a result of the interaction with other individuals” (Ekinci and Ekici, 2003:110). It is easier for individuals to cope with a problem that they share with their friends and circle. The executive who want to apply social support as a method in the organization have to constitute professional support groups and guidance committees.

Stress also affects the establishments in terms of finance by decreasing employee performance. For instance, In the United States of America the cost of stress in economy is calculated as 150 billion dollars and it is determined that 75-80% of work accidents are resulted from stress (Yılmaz and Ekici, 2003:2). Stress is a case that has an impact on individuals and it affects their behavior, efficiency, social and psychological relationships in a negative way (Yuksel, 2002:174). Organization executives have to develop vehicles to cope with stress by taking individual and organizational stress into consideration.

The Aim and Method of the Research

There are a great many factors causing stress. In this research, the stress caused by job conditions which is one of these factors is discussed. In this context the aim of this research is to introduce medical employees’ ideas and perceptions related to the stress caused by job conditions. In this research, questionnaire and field survey methods are used and the theoretical substructure is formed by scanning the literature.

The Result and Suggestions

There are quite a few factors giving way to stress in business life. The factors such as job conditions, physical environment conditions, the structure of the establishment, way of performing or employee’s personal features can be considered as the sources of stress in business life. Especially the stress caused by the natural structure of the establishment is a crucial source of stress.

The subject of the research healthcare sector has lots of features that can cause stress due to its nature. Within the context of the data obtained from the result of the questionnaire; while there is no difference in opinions about working hours by considering gender and marital status (gender: $t=1,32;p>0,05$; marital status: $t=1,42;p>0,05$), there are differences in opinions about the establishment worked for ($t=-5,13;p<0,05$). In parallel with determined differences, employees working for public hospitals are subject to more stress because of working hours when compared with employees working for private hospitals. As part of the research, age and income are also factors causing stress because of working hours. Determined differences show that the employees who are at or above 40 are less stressful than the ones who are between 25 and 39. Also in terms of income, the ones who have an income of 2001TL or more are less stressful when compared with the ones who have an income of between 1001TL and 2000TL. In the light of these results, it is possible to state that as the age and income of individuals rise, they are less stressful.

It is a fact that using incentives to increase employees’ efficiency and to motivate them is a must in business life. Award and reward that are important incentives for employees are crucial subjects which determine the stress level of employees. The evaluations of the questionnaire results show that when employees are satisfied with rewards, there is an increase in their job satisfaction and there is a decrease in their

complaints. It is seen that award is not used effectively and it is perceived negatively by employees.

A crucial step in handling stress is identifying the sources of stress. It is not possible to get stress under control effectively without identifying the sources. Stress that is not controlled becomes chronic. As a result both employees and establishment suffer seriously. In order to prevent all these, the establishment has to be well connected with employees. First of all, establishment-related stress factors have to be revised and eliminated. Stress which is a crucial problem of our age should be struggled sometimes by taking simple measures and sometimes by co-operating with more establishments and governments. Individual and organizational strategies are considerably important thanks to the contributions they supplied in decreasing work stress and preventing it from becoming chronic.

In business life it is not possible to eliminate all the stress giving factors since the personality of individual causes differences in the level of being affected by stress and there is no such a fact that everybody will be affected in the same way by the same stress factor. Thus organization managements have a great task of decreasing stress rather than eliminating it completely. Some resources claim the necessity of stress to a certain degree for the efficiency of employees (Ucar, 2010). Stress mentioned here is enough to motivate individuals. Otherwise experiencing the troubles mentioned in the literature is unavoidable. In this research, it is notable that the stress experienced by medical employees working for public sectors is high. It can be advised that the executives of public medical establishments should take measures for decreasing stress by taking this matter into consideration. On the other hand, it can be advised executives to take stress decreasing measures by considering the reasons of younger employees' having higher stress level at length.