

STRESS: THE HALF-FULL GLASS VIEW

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ABSTRACT

“Stress” on average always thought in a negative contest. In this presentation, the authors tries to bring out some of the positive fact of stress. Stress by itself is not a bad construction, it is a felt state of mind and body in that it cannot always be bad or negative. An attempt is made to define “stress” and various related ideas like factors affecting, stress audit, stress reliever, stress tolerance limit, optimal stress levels etc. Arguments are presented as a part of the presentation to highlight how and why one should consider stress positively or think about stress with the “Half-Full Glass” perspective rather than the “Half-Empty Glass” perspective. In the concluding paragraphs, “Stress” is seen as a process outcome, result of an interactive system, functioning within the purview of the external environment and a background of the internal environment. When seen as an outcome of a process, one can appreciate that the variables interesting or the factors affecting the process, as well as the outcome, can be managed to a certain level if not entirely. Stress management thus is seen as a regulatory function regulating the process inputs to achieve a desirable level of stress and maintained the same. The authors hold to the maximum that stress is a manageable construct, Methods of stress management are also discussed to lead to the positive effects of a well managed leave of stress for organizational efficiency and individual effectiveness.

Keywords: *Stress, Management, Efficiency, effectiveness*

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INTRODUCTION

As a part of management literature, especially in the organizational behavior and group dynamics studies “Stress” finds its due mention. But mostly this mentioning is in contextual discussion on the ill effects or the negative Impact of “Stress” on the outcome of human endeavor. Researcher over a period of time have found and scholars have noted the incidences when it was observed that “Stress” by itself is not negative or does not lead to failures, In fact evidence point at the fact that a certain level of stress is invertible for positive motivation towards a beautiful task completion.

Defining Stress: Simplistically, psychologist have tried to define “Stress” as an emotional reaction to some acuity Technically “Stress” is defined as an objects load bearing capacity. The Oxford Dictionary defines stress as “pressure tension, quantity, measuring, physical or mental strain, emphasis” behavior and new man have defined “stress” as a condition arising from the interaction of people and their jobs and are characterized by changes within people that force them to reduce from their normal functioning. Substantial literature is available conceptualizing “Stress” in variety of contextual references. But majority of the writings talk about stress in a negative manner. Stress is an invisible disease that disturbs individual mental health in a way that also ultimately affects the physical well being. A more responsible view would say that stress refers to an adaptive response to an external situation that result in physical psychological and behavioral durations for organizational participants still more responsible point of view talks of stress as balance between demands made on an individual from external sources and the capabilities of an individual to meet those demands.

DETERMINATION OF STRESS (STRESSORS)

As a part of a study on stress it is useful to acquaint on self with stress determinants or stressors. Stressors can be thought of as those variables, factors, influences that lead to a cognizance or relation of an enhancement in the felt state of psychological and/or physical imbalance. In other words the stress determinants are those stimuli which lead to change in the felt state of mind and body. These are different ways in the stressors can be described or classified let us take up the following Tri-component description as a classification of the factors leading to stress.

1. Job & Organization: Individually, the job that the person is involved in decides to a great extent the level of stress generation, while in the groups dynamics perspective the organization in which the person is operating, defines the level of stress development. At this (what) it is important to note that stress generation or development does not mean stress realization. Stress realization is the awareness about the changes that happens the felt state of mind and body.

2. Social Factors: Man is the social animal and hence lives in society. The proximity of social relations, the frequency and level of interaction, the hierarchical status of the person in the society are a few of the factors that determine the quantum of stress amongst others. The layers of social class and the member of sub-class that a person belongs to, also determine “stress” for him. The extent of the overlap in social interactions also greatly defines the quality of stress experience.

3. Intra Psychological Factors: The psychological characteristics of individual and the extent of manifestation of these characteristics also determine the stress as realize by that individual. A temperamentally introvert individual when made to socialize will experience stress. The mindset of the individual is again a compress web of psychological process and the reaction to these processes. This phenomenon would become more explicit when studied in contact of trends Id, Ego and super-ego theory.

Stress Tolerance Limit: The load bearing capacity conceptualization of stress leads us to a level at which an individual is no more able to tolerate stress. We can come to a finite range of stress cognizance, starting from the lower threshold the level of strength of stress at which an individual realizes the stress; and the upper threshold the highest level of stress at which the individual is aware of stress. A collateral of Elasticity theory could well explain the stress thresholds.

At the lower threshold the individual becomes aware of stress and hence a behavioral change in manifested in response to the felt state of stress. It is at the upper threshold that the behavior change is more drastic and most of the time permanent \. A trauma induced shock or the person’s going into a coma are examples of upper threshold limits being crossed, belong the lower threshold limit the stress. Stimuli to weak enough not to, make any impact on the individual.

Optimal Stress Limit: Stress when defined as a felt state of mind and body can be related to the definition of “need”. Need is defined as a felt state of deprivation, and this deprivation can be thought of as the stress generating stimulus. An individual needs satisfaction behavior starts when a particular need is at the highest level of realization compared to various other needs. This behavior culminates

in the satisfaction of need. So extend this concept further it is observed that an individual will behave in a certain manner till the stress-stimulus is related. Management is defined as “to get Work done through others” In other words management is the art and science of obtaining a favorable behavior from Group members leading the achievement of group goals. Co relating this understanding of management with the Stress-stimulus leading to behavior modification theory we can appreciate that a certain level of strength of stress- Stimulus, a particular behavior manifestation can be obtained. Manager would do well to identify the specific stimulus And the level of its strength at which he manifested behavior is most favorable to goal achievement. The level of stress Legalization at this level of strength of the stimulus can be considered as an optional stress limit.

Stress- The Garden of roses: If the strength of the stress stimuli can be managed a very positive behavior Manifestation can be obtained from the individual subjected to this stimulus. In this context it can be realized that if optimal level of stress is maintained, the individual will keep on performing at peak –performance levels, everything is rosy-pink. But the thorns of the rose bushes are all around the most beautiful rose. A slight imbalance in the stress- Stimulus-----behavior manifestation equilibrium would land to harmful behavior manifestation. If you are not careful in plucking the roses, those are bound to bite you. That is where that Art and Science of management comes in maintaining a level of motivation that would result in the most favorable behavior manifestation.

Stress as a Process outcome: An individual is playing so many roles at the same time in the society, in his house, at his place of work and amongst friends. The roles that he plays are an outcome of the interaction his personally the inner self, and the society the external environment. At a micro-level if we would analyze the role played by the individual we see that in attempt to satisfy a particular need he tries to obtain something the society- According to Maslow’s need hierarchy. The society-as a group of individuals is looking for a direction for growth and development and seeks advice from its members. The result of the interaction is a give and take process. The outcome of this give and take process would be a stimulus leading to further behavior. A positive outcome of this process will lead to repetitive behavior and a negative outcome will lead to a behavior manifestation. Thus as Prof. Pestonjee puts it, stress is a part of life and thus if not maintained properly can generate so many diseases. HRD intervention techniques can help maintain the stress level at the levels of the optimality, resulting in most favorable behavior manifestation for long time durations.

Methods to Eliminate Stress Over load: Amongst the HRD intervention techniques these are some(what?) that help in avoiding or eliminating the occurrence of stress over load. Regular medical check-ups, a regimen of exercises and following the yoga doctrines are very helpful in such avoidance or lamination of stress overload. A systematic approach to stress audit also helps in a very big way towards stress over load avoidance. A self audit helps individuals to realize their strengths and weakness. A proper stress-awareness can help learn the appropriate human behavior through psychoactive inputs. Identification of dominant personally traits and accelerating the dominant stress in the organization through a set of remedial measures and training inputs results in a very good stress management. Another approach to optimize the process outcome is to enhance or increase the stress tolerance capacity. Human body has the highest capacity to adjust to change amongst all living creatures. Human mind is also having the greatest capacity to adjust to environmental factors.

SOME OF THE WAYS FOR ENHANCING THE STRESS TOLERANCE CAPACITY

Relaxation, meditation, entertainment, sports, hobbies, laughing, crying and positive attitude, etc. are ways for enhancing the stress tolerance capacity. An individual should engage himself in such act arties or assignments that create joy and mental peace e.g. social service. These result into a pleasurable outcome leading to higher manifestation of favorable behavior.

CONCLUSION

In the light of above we can claim that “Stress” in itself is not a bad concept at all. Through a systematic approach to managing stress, the optimal stress levels can be maintained for best results. The task of a manager can be seen as that of a stress regulator controlling the process inputs to achieve a desirable level of stress resulting into most favorable behavior manifestation leading to highest level of goal achievement. This in other words as a situation where the organization achieves best results with minimum inputs deployment or “efficiency” and the members of the organization are able to obtain the most desired results or “Effectiveness”.