

“ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND JOB BURNOUT – A REVIEW”

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ABSTRACT

Today, in the era of global economic recession due to the recent crisis, the main roots of work stress are feelings of insecurity and threat on behalf of employee. This is because these factors can very easily lead to a point of fear and panic. But especially these days, stress at work cannot be analyzed separately and independently of other factors. Most employees experiencing bitterness and frustration and scientists believe that there is a strong evidence of increased pressure that may lead to burnout syndrome. The syndrome does not appear suddenly as an acute disorder or stroke. Instead, it is a problem which occurs over time, if the conditions entailing persist and torment the person. Every job position involves certain forms of behavior that is expected to be “exhibited” by the person who works in a certain sector. Things are not quite as simple as they seem at first, because specified forms of behavior are not always clear and unambiguous and are often contradictory. The “exercise” of a role within an organization can be linked to stress when requirements and expectations of the individual are in conflict to the requirements and expectations of the organization. But strategies of organizational culture may help to overcome such situations and may help employees to reduce the level of stress in their job.

KEYWORDS: Organizational Culture, Job Burnout, Burnout Syndrome

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Burnout Syndrome applies to all employees. It refers to psycho-emotional conflict between human existence and the object of his work. Within his working environment, the person is often alienation due to values, dignity, spirit and desires. It is a syndrome of emotional, physical and mental fatigue and is the reaction of employee's chronic interpersonal stress of work which is defined by three parameters: cynicism, exhaustion and ineffectiveness. The research and understanding of the syndrome are important, because failure to address leads to low efficiency of the employee, but also to psychological, physical and spiritual effects on the person which shouldn't be overlooked. It is therefore important to identify the factors that contribute to the development of the syndrome. The rhythms of life and economic competitiveness lead to spread in many work contexts. In the influence and growth of the phenomenon contributes organizational culture, a set of beliefs, values, customs, traditions and practices which are experiences and beliefs of all members of an organization. The expectations of the culture create standards of acceptable behavior and ways of carrying out tasks. Organizational culture is proportional to one's personality i.e, as a person, so the organization can be described as conservative / progressive, stable / dynamic, controlled / uncontrolled etc. Culture affects the way in which members of an organization are linked to each other, and also their relationship with other people who are not part of the organization. So therefore, we can associate organizational culture and job burnout and define the assumption that “bad” organizational culture also means increasing level of burnout syndrome.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Burnout Syndrome Job burnout is the most excessive type of occupational stress in which the employee experiences physical, mental and emotional exhaustion, caused by long term exposure and involvement in emotionally demanding situations (Maslach, 1993). Job burnout is experienced by employees in their everyday interactions with colleagues and customers and can be attributed both to individual and organizational factors. Maslach (2003) defined job burnout as a means of reducing employees physical and psychological energy and leading them to exhaustion. In particular, Maslach and Jackson (1981) distinguished three aspects of job burnout: 1. Emotional Exhaustion, which refers to the employee's feeling of mental fatigue that makes him/ her lack the energy to invest and dedicate to his/ her work, 2. Depersonalization, which includes the person's negative behavior towards colleagues and customers, creation of impersonal relationships and withdrawal, and 3. Reduced sense of personal accomplishment, which is the reduction of the employee's efficiency, productivity and self-efficacy, and is likely to result to his/ her resignation (Maslach, 2003; Maslach & Jackson, 1981)).

Emotional exhaustion refers to a phenomenon of someone feeling emotional exhausted and "drained" because of his/her daily contact with other people (Maslach & Jackson, 1986). The emotional exhaustion/burnout is a work-related stress that mostly appears to workers that communicate extensively in person with other people. As a result, they feel ineffective and unable to meet the needs of people as they could in the past, and perceive their work as a torture, which makes it difficult and unable to endure another work day (Cavous & Demir, 2010). Burnout syndrome has prompted many scientists to engage. They have been through, over the years, various theories about it. According to Dr. Freudenberger, (1975) burnout is a state of fatigue or exhaustion caused by devotion to a cause, a way of life or a relationship that fails to yield an expected reward. Syndrome is directly related to the degree of commitment that individual has, in his job and the frustration experienced by the failure to achieve its objectives. The lack of variety and insufficient feedback often encounter employees contribute to the emergence and development of this syndrome (Freudenberger, 1975; Koustelios & Kousteliou, 2001).

Job burnout can have serious impacts on both physical and mental health of the individual and the professional and personal life. More specifically, regarding the impact on someone's career, it can vary from one having the inclination to resign, often being absent from the work place, being indifferent to the job, having no moral values and barriers and not being satisfied by its profession (Van Tonder & Williams, 2009). Also, the literature has documented that there is a correlation between burnout and heart attacks (Angerer, 2003), physical exhaustion and illness, with family problems and increased use of alcohol and drugs (Koeske & Koeske, 1989). Furthermore, according to Maslach and Jackson (1981) it is likely for someone to show up psychological problems because of the job burnout that he/she is experiencing. Specifically, various research have found that burnout can cause psychosomatic problems, insomnia and depression, which contribute to the worsening of the problem and decreasing the efficiency and productivity of the individual (Gill, Flaschner, & Shachar, 2006).

3. HISTORY OF BURNOUT

In the mid-1970s the United States began the first inquiries about the feelings of employees, which identify, describe and record the phenomenon and his great frequency. Early research focused on health professionals. Investigations initiated by the observation that after a while employees "emptied" of emotions and lose motivation and dedication. Then, there were the first definitions of the burnout Syndrome. The first period of investigations of the syndrome had two main directions: the mental health and social axis. With respect to the axis of mental health symptoms and focused on the issues of mental health. In social level, was investigated the relationship between provider and recipient of care (Schaufeli & Baker, 2004). In this period, it became clear that there were certain elements that appear regularly in cases of occupational stress. Emotional difficulty detected in health professions, the cynicism which resulting from the efforts of employees to cope with the emotional stress and the alienation that put in their work relations. Also recorded the heavy workloads and the negative feedback they receive often by their clients as factors that contribute to burnout.

This period was characterized by social, economic, cultural and historical factors that influenced the health system in the U.S., making health care one purely commercial affair, complicating the people who choose careers in order to raise their job satisfaction (Van Tonder & Williams, 2009). During the 1980s the study of the syndrome became more systematic and empirical. They were created and distributed measurement scales for assessing the degree of burnout of individuals with work fatigue, predominant was the measurement scale of Maslach (1991). In the development of surveys, in job burnout syndrome, helped industrial psychology considered that the syndrome is

work-related stress associated with satisfaction, dedication to work and frustrations that may arise in working conditions and relations (Maslach, 1991).

4. CHARACTERISTICS OF BURNOUT SYNDROME

Figley (1997), recorded the areas of functioning of person's adversely affected by burnout: In Cognitive Domain: The person who experiencing burnout syndrome is impaired in concentration, low self-esteem, apathy, stiffness, disorientation, perfectionism, preoccupation with traumatic experiences and ideas of self-destruction.

In an Emotional Level: The person presents feelings of weakness, guilt, anger, fear, sadness, depression. These are often accompanied by an emotional numbness or intense mood swings and increased sensitivity.

In a Behavior Level: The person shows impatience, social withdrawal, regressions to earlier stages of development, sleep disorders, nightmares, eating disorders, alertness. Finally, people are also more prone to accidents.

In Spiritual - Religious Level: The employee who is experiencing fatigue poses existential concerns as to the value of life, deny the purpose of living, loses hope, gets angry with the divine, denies his religious beliefs, he is skeptic and ceases to trusts himself.

In Interpersonal Relationships: The person may begin to isolate, to lose interest in relationships and sex, is skeptical, becomes overprotective parent or partner, raises in others anger or guilt, easily loses his patience, feels intense loneliness and engage in interpersonal conflicts.

In Psychosomatic Level: The person presents symptoms of shock, profuse sweating, accelerated respiration rate, increases the speed pulse, shortness of breath, muscle aches, dizziness, disorientation and other symptoms.

Finally, as to the Work Level: The person has low morale, not enough motivation; avoid fulfilling his duties, giving too much importance to immaterial details. His attitude to work is characterized by negativity, alienation and apathy. Not associated with their job, the quality of performance is low, irritable, involved in quarrelling with colleagues and avoids them (Figley, 1997).

5. THEORETICAL MODELS OF JOB BURNOUT

Most theoretical models attempting to explain the syndrome of occupational stress in the light of a dynamic interaction between the person and the environment. Many researchers argue that job burnout is mainly due to stressful and adverse business conditions and particularly the busy schedule, the lack of autonomy and authority, inadequate psychological support and authoritarian management of the organization. Others researchers emphasize the importance of individual factors, arguing that job burnout depends on the expectations that the employee has for himself and also from the section that he works (Nelson, 2005). Following is a summary of the most important models of job burnout:

Model of Edelwich & Brodsky (1980) Edelwich & Brodsky (1980), described a series of four developmental stages of job burnout, which follows employee from the beginning of his career, specifically:

Excitement: Employee starts his career with enthusiasm. Once he has entered the professional arena he has too high goals and often unrealistic expectations. At this stage employee over- invests in his work, devoting his time and soul, while also over- invests in developing relationships with patients. As, however, finds that the work he produces does not meet his expectations he feels disappointment.

Doubt and Inertia: Then he passes to the second stage, that of doubt and inactivity. The everyday work belies his expectations, so they do not meet the needs of through his work. The worker blames himself for failure and tries more to invest in his profession, but without positive results. So gradually demystifies his work, not having yet still revised its expectations (Edelwich & Brodsky, 1980).

Disappointment and Frustration: Doubt and inaction succeeded by disappointment and frustration. The employee sees that his efforts to be completed through the work frustrated and leads to discouragement and frustration. To escape from the impasse must either revise expectations eventually either be removed from the work area, the source of that stress.

5.1 INTERACTIVE MODEL OF CHERNISS (1980)

According to Cherniss (1980), burnout, is more like a “process” rather than a single “event”, which follows three stages:

Stage of “Work Stress”: This is a disruption between the required and available resources. The occupational stress/burnout is the result of this disruption in employee’s external and internal environment, which is created when the available resources are not sufficient to satisfy, in an appropriate manner, personal goals and demands arising from the workplace. This imbalance can happen to any employee without necessarily lead to job burnout (Cherniss, 1980).

Stage of “Exhaustion”: This is the emotional response to the previous imbalance, which manifests itself in the form of emotional exhaustion, stress, fatigue, boredom, lack of interest and apathy. The workplace is employee’s source exhaustion, while attention is directed more “bureaucratic” aspects of cases relating mostly to incidents faced by healthcare professionals. The employee is in a state of constant tension, that if he does not manage it properly, it may lead to frustration and resignation (Cherniss, 1980).

Stage of “Defense Suffix”: This is the stage where changes are made in the attitude and behavior of employee, which gradually de- invest emotionally his work and expresses cynicism and apathy about other colleagues and customers.

5.2. SYMPTOMS OF BURNOUT SYNDROME

Symptoms of burnout syndrome resemble, in several respects, with depression, post traumatic stress syndrome and anxiety disorders. The person, who feels fatigue, beyond the stress experiencing at work and in his everyday life, displays physical, emotional and behavioral symptoms, which may not be able to afford due to some causes (Koustelios & Kousteliou, 1998). According to Potter (1998), symptoms of burnout syndrome are: Negative Symptoms: Dissatisfaction, distress, frequent protests, feelings of injustice, depression and outbursts of anger. Interpersonal Problems: As feelings of the person affected, there is an impact on interpersonal relationships. The communication skills of person are possessed by excesses, nerves, withdrawal and inefficiency at work and in the family environment Health Problems: The physical ability of the person is affected and he is particularly prone to colds, headaches, insomnia, back pain and fatigue (Potter, 1998). Reduced Efficiency: Those suffering from burnout syndrome bored at work and are unable to be thrilled about everything. They display difficulty in concentrating and in completing their tasks. Substance Abuse: Persons who cope with stress may be resorted to smoking, use of alcohol, medications and even drugs. Eating habits change in larger or smaller amounts of food. The increase or abuse of these substances indicates the problem. Feelings of Inferiority: The person internalizes his failure to work, convert enthusiasm into cynicism and feels unable to positively impact on the work. He is possessed by feelings of inferiority and helplessness. Family Stress: Person’s family is affected as the person is forced to be absent many hours of the day. His presence at home is not problem-free due to labor It does not help at home or in the organization of family program. Refusal of Creating Relations: An employee who suffers from burnout syndrome, losing interest in social relationships. Rarely spends time with his friends and leaves the relationship to end with his removal. At the same time, he doesn’t seek for and be associated with new people. Degeneration of Relations at Work: When burnout is at an advanced stage, employee sees his fellow as enemies, who conspire against him and wish to see his destruction. Finally, he covers his own failure to yield responsibilities under employment. When symptoms get worse the person is led into a depressive state and then it is necessary to take even psychotherapy and medication assistance (Potter, 1998).

5.3 REASONS OF BURNOUT SYNDROME

Factors causing burnout syndrome, are directly connected with the causes of stress on the individual and supported by the circumstances of his life, such as working environment and family experience. Micklevitz (2001) divided these challenging factors into two broad categories: occupational and personal. The main causes of job burnout are heavy workloads, failure support of employee’s

environment and the existence of few opportunities in personal development. Most companies focus solely on productivity and profit growth, giving little attention to the needs and feelings of employees. As a result, employees are forced to produce the greatest possible work in less time. Particularly in the private sector where competition is

great, the staff must be constantly vigilant to meet the criteria of work and involvement in the company (Micklevitz, 2001; Belias, Koustelios, Sdrollias, Koutiva, & Zournatzi, 2013). A survey of Maslach & Leiter (1997) recorded five elements, which when combined together "contribute" to fatigue of the individual. Initially, they identified the overly busy business schedule. As mentioned above, employee in little time and with few resources is asked to produce his work, something that causes stress. Moreover, the lack of control of employee's satisfaction and lack of camaraderie among colleagues, caused by competition, poor communication and a heavy workload borne the individual and lead to fatigue. Also aggravating factor is the injustice that he feels as to his compensation or evaluation (Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

5.4 THE DIMENSIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Organizational culture, according to Schein (1990), occurs at three levels: (a) the observable appearances/artifacts, (b) the values and (c) the basic subjective assumptions. Artifacts are those first notes, with which someone first comes into contact, with an organizational culture. In this category, are classified directly observable elements of culture: arrangement of space, dress code, the way of communication, as well as elements of a lasting form, but not necessarily directly observable (eg. file records, written rules, philosophy, manufactured products, etc.). It is relatively easy to observe and record one's appearances. Difficulty exists in identifying the true importance and the standards they follow. To accomplish this, we must go to the second level, the values (Schein, 1990). Values refer to what it should be done in every case. Based, on the existing values, propose solutions to problems that arise. These solutions are usually proposed by one of the leaders (founder, director, etc.) and reflect their own values. If the solution, that has been proposed, proved to be successful, the value in which based (the solution) begins to suffer a cognitive transformation and first converted into belief and finally to a key assumption, in something that considers to be assumed, which is the third level of culture. Schein, distinguish between essential values, that have become accepted assumptions, and espoused values, located in a more superficial level. Acceptable values are those, declared either verbally or written, in statutes appear in the documents, etc. These values relate to what the members of an organization say, but not necessarily to what they do. Acceptable values are the ones that are supposed to direct the overall operation of an organization, but in essence, in their underlying assumptions, we will find what really steers behavior (Koustelios & Kousteliou, 2001). So while we talk about meritocracy for example, deep down we believe that only in our people we will find the desired behavior. These values, therefore, are not sufficient enough to explain the functioning of an organization. We need to consider also the assumptions (Lok & Crawford, 2004).

The Relation between Organizational Culture and Job Burnout

The strong relation between job satisfaction and job burnout has been made clear. Numerous researches have studied this relation in terms of organizational culture and its influence on both occupational phenomena. As it was mentioned before, organizational culture is able to cause both positive and negative impact on different levels of employees and organizations. Apart from performance increase, motivation and retention (Larsson, Brousseau, Kling, & Sweet, 2007), organizational culture has also been linked to occupational stress, loss of job commitment, intention to quit, diminished job satisfaction and high levels of burnout (Kleinman, Siegel, & Eckstein, 2002). Studying the relation between organizational culture and job burnout, Jackson et al. (1986) found strong positive correlation between emotional exhaustion and role conflict, individual efficacy (personal accomplishment) and support provided to the total number of employees, and negative attitude in response to others (depersonalization) and lack of individual support.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Organizations must be staffed with qualified and competent staff and make the right choices for individuals available positions; Organizational culture contributes both to prevent and to address fatigue, so every employee has its own value and the ability to express his views and disagree unhesitatingly sometimes with a colleague or his supervisor. Companies which implement strategies of organizational culture give responsibilities and initiatives to all employees, making them feel so important and that both their potentials and their abilities are recognized. Employees also have the opportunity to discuss various cases and their own concerns, which will help them, overcome their personal and psychological job pressure, because it is important for the organization to know that the employee cannot feel trapped in a situation that causes stress. Employees often experience daily stressful situations that can cause confusion and make them unable to process and respond simultaneously. The result of this weakness is the grow of emotions that will lead to imbalances in their psychic world. The despair, that probably employee

feels because of inability to meet the needs and expectations of customers, increases the levels of stress. At this point, companies should organize educational seminars and lectures on topics related to the needs of customers, as well as issues relating to new knowledge and capabilities in the field of provision of services. Also they should organize educational programs or seminars for staff augmentation and professional control by using strategies for tackling difficulties.

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