Stressors Among the Staff and its Role on Their Performance in Golestan University

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ABSTRACT: The main aim of this study is to survey the stressors among the staff and its role on their performance in Golestan University. The research methodology of this study is descriptive-survey. The research population includes all of the staff of Golestan University which consists of 333 individuals. The research measuring tools are researcher’s questionnaire made of 51 closed-answer questions (items) and an open question in Likert rating scale with Cronbach’s alpha of 0.89. For data analyzing of the research data in two levels of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, frequency, mean, percent, deviation, standard, variance, one sample t-test were used. Research findings showed that stressors resulted from poor working facilities in level \( p > 0.01 \) has more effect on the staff performance than the medium level, and also in level \( p > 0.05 \) the stressors resulted from work overload have more effect on the staff performance than the medium level, and ultimately in level \( p > 0.01 \) the stressors resulted from poor organizational structure and stressors resulted from external factors have more effect on the staff performance than the medium level.

Keywords: Job stress, Positive stress, Negative stress, Work overload, Role conflict.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the several facilities of the industrial and postindustrial world provided for the human survives, it also produced several problems. Individuals’ concern about the family, job, social and economic problems, organizations’ expectations from the staff, management problems and staff expectations all result in the excitement, tension, anxiety, fear and hopes of individual from the moment of awakening till sleeping of the individual. Sometimes these events are adequate for the physical and mental capacity of the individuals and sometimes they are not adequate. The set of these states and pressures resulted from them are called stress. In a relatively comprehensive definition stress is considered as a state which within it the individual faces with opportunities, limitations, threats, and inquiries which the result of each of them are important to him/her. But the possibility of surveying the above mentioned results is unpredictable, uncertain and unknown. In this definition, limitations are the forces that prohibit the individual from doing what he/she intends to do, and inquiries or necessities are not getting or loss of some things which are favorable for the individual (Decenzo & Robbins, 1998). Changes such as increase of global competition, effect of information technology, redesigning of commercial processes and development of service sectors affect the world of work (Cascio, 1995; Cooper, 1998; Frese, 2000). Several researches showed that such changes lead to the increase of levels of stress resulted from the job (Perrew et al., 2000).

The issue of stresses and its causes and outcomes are newly introduced in the discussion of organizational behavior, and it is a short time since the scholars started to analyze the stress and its effects in the organization and on the performance of the members. The realities in the discussion of organizational behavior shows that a considerable percentage of causes of common mental illnesses and disorders caused by work among the organization members could be searched in the behavioral practices, interactions and personality of managers. Costs resulted from the job stress are really high (Janssen & Houkes, 2000). Several researches showed that stresses caused by job lead to the different psychological, physical, and behavioral reactions such as emotional exhaustion, psychosomatic illnesses, and decrease of career motivation (Schaufeli et al., 1993; Cooper, 1998). Also researches show that absence, turnover and decrease of performance are some of the important behavioral results of stress (Hepburn & Barling, 1996). In USA annually a

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sum over 200 million dollars are expended for the consequences of stresses caused by the job (such as absence, decrease of efficiency, medical expenses, and so on) (International Labor Office, 1993). In England, the cost of absence and not being on-time for coming to work which are caused by stress and mental disorders are around 5 million pounds per year (Cooper et al., 1996). Also the individuals’ responses to these stresses caused by the job could be psychological, physiological and/or behavioral (Jex & Beehr, 1991). However the understanding and appropriate and correct analysis of the antecedents and consequences of stress is the first step for minimizing or possibly preventing from the destructive effects. It must be considered that his/her coping methods with stress and other personal variables with environmental and organizational factors interact, and it results in specific reactions from the individual (Tosi et al., 1994).

Based on this, since the stresses caused by the job had continuous increase in the recent decades, in order to prevent and reduce the dangers threatening the occupational health considerable efforts must made. Such efforts could be made through evaluation and monitoring of the job environment, detecting problems and developing interventions (Levi, 1998; European Commission, 1997). Thus in this research it is tried to study and survey the stresses and its role on the performance of the staff of Golestan University.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology of current research is descriptive-survey. The current research population includes all of the staff of Golestan University which consists of 333 individuals, and from these 333 individuals 125 individuals were randomly chosen by the use of Krejcie and Morgan table and random sampling. Also in this research the library and field methods and research questionnaire made with 51 closed questions (items) in likert rating scale and one open question were used for data collection, and Cronbach’s alpha was used for surveying the reliability and it was 0.89. Also the SPSS software was used for analyzing the data in two levels of descriptive and inferential statistics.

RESULTS

In the current research the inferential statistics method such as one-sample t-test was used for data analysis and the results are shown in table 1.

Table 1. Data analysis results about the research hypotheses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stress caused by poor working facilities affects the staff performance.</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>0.602</td>
<td>0.060</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress caused by role conflict affects the staff performance.</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>0.648</td>
<td>0.0654</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>0.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress caused by work overload affects the staff performance.</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>0.702</td>
<td>0.0709</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress caused by the poor organizational structure affects the staff performance.</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>0.533</td>
<td>0.0538</td>
<td>7.54</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress caused by the external organization factors affects the staff performance.</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>0.687</td>
<td>0.0685</td>
<td>6.76</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results from the one-sample t-test about all of the research hypotheses show that the observed t in levels of p<0.01 and p>0.05 is significant, thus the stresses caused by the five factors (poor working facilities, role conflict, work overload, poor organizational structure and external organization factors) affects the staff performance.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

According to the results from the first hypothesis analysis it could be concluded that the stresses caused by poor working facilities affect the staff performance. The research result was consistent with the research of Cahill (1995), Perniston (1990), Golparvar et al(2011), Azad-marzabadi (2007), and Ahmadi (2013). Thus it is suggested to revise the working environment conditions such as being equipped with appropriate facilities for offering to the university students based on the standards, and aggregation of units sponsored by educational centers. Also the results of testing the second hypothesis confirms that the stresses caused by role conflict affect the staff performance, and this research result was consistent with the research of Freegans (1973), University of Michigan Institute for Social Research (1994), Murphy (1995), and Falahzadeh et al (2008). Thus it is suggested that the surveying and codification of job description of staff be conducted realistically.

The results of testing the third hypothesis indicate that the stresses caused by work overload affect the staff performance. The result of this research was consistent with the research of European Commission (1997), Bickford (2005), Hypes (1992), Wainwright et al (2002), Perrew et al (1993), Wichert (2002), thus it is suggested to provide the
sabbaticals for the directors of educational centers and faculty members and to avoid repetitive reports. In addition to the above mentioned results, the results of testing the fourth hypothesis show that the stresses caused by the poor organizational structure affect the staff performance. The result of this research was consistent with the research of Abtahi and Alvani (1992), and Hypes (1992). Thus based on these results it is suggested to explicitly and applicably impart the guidelines and circulars to the educational centers, and to conduct realistic codification about the organizational positions according to the duties of the educational centers. Also the sabbaticals should be provided for the directors of educational centers and faculty members, and to avoid repetitive reports. And as the last finding, the results of analyzing the fifth hypothesis confirm the effect of stresses from external organization factors on the staff performance, and the result of this research is consistent with the research of Ongori et al (2008), Villanueva et al (2009).

Thus it is suggested to run the educational centers in a way that they have adequate preparedness toward the changes in the budgeting system and also toward the changes in the macroeconomic management and in other words it is suggested to predict adequate trainings for the directors of educational centers in this matter.

REFERENCES