

EFFECT OF CHALLENGE – HINDRANCE STRESS MODEL ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract:-

The aim of this study is to find the association among hindrance model of stress and employee engagement. This study helps to find the role of psychological capital in relationship between challenge stress, hindrance stress and employee engagement. Survey has shown 92% response rate after distributing 300 questionnaires; out of which 277 were functional. This study suggested that psychological capital facilitates employees to agree to challenge stressor and increase work engagement. Research will help to identify remedies for stress but it does not illustrate utility of diagnosing stressors. Implications for managers are that they should try to reduce hindrance stressors as they will not result in positive outcomes; however to some extent all type of stressors are fine at workplace. Conversely manager may reduce the challenge stressors to reduce the related strains.

Keywords: - Hindrance Stress, Employee Engagement, Work Stress

INTRODUCTION

One of the competitive advantages of any organization is its employees for they are the most important asset of any organization (Demerouti & Burke, 2009). Many organizations are competing with others by introducing new technologies, innovations and action plans (Schmidt & Hayes, 2002). When we compare important strategic tool; employee engagement is the most important tool. Research focusing on employee engagement has shown it to have a significant impact on economy and corporate social responsibility as well (Steyn & Mostert, 2004). All the organizations try to keep and develop their employees but as employee dissatisfaction is increasing it becomes very difficult to retain the employees. Now a day's stress at work place has become top factor, hence attracting the attention of researchers. Pakistani economy has become poorer as compare to past situations. Pakistan is also experiencing alleviated unemployment caused by energy crisis and changing political structure; this in turn is resulting in high rate of stress on employees as well as all businesses regardless of their size (Bakker, 2007). In recent times workplace environment has changed in Pakistan because of increase in job rules, increased workload and many other factors. All these factors are reason of increased tension. Job stressor has been discerned (Demerouti & Burke, 2009). Hindrance stress affects negatively whereas challenge stress results into high employee motivation and achievement of goals (LePine & Fitzgibbons, 2004).

Sometimes, organizations implement operational strategies which are not for welfare of employees, but these strategies may result in decreased labor cost; such are the type of strategies which cause stress or psychological pressure in employees. Now a day, restructuring an organization is the main focus of organizations to survive in this competitive environment (Bates, 2004). Literature suggests that employee engagement is the an important aspect in current turbulent times to increase productivity, employee performance and for maximization of profits (Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002; Bates, 2004)

Literature Review: Challenge – Hindrance Theories

Word “stress” is derived from a Latin word “stingere”. Stingere means pull tight, Selye (1936). In recent times organizations are trying to reduce workplace stress by taking important measures (Bauer et al., 2007). All those stressors like psychological and behavioral factors which cause difficulty for an employee to perform his duty are known as hindrance. Fretfulness and frustration is caused by physical and psychological stress (Carver & Scheier, 2002). There are three forms of stress; behavioral, psychological and physical. Job dissatisfaction and job burnout is due to psychological stress (Spector, 2009). Behavioral stress is the negative behavior which is marked by absenteeism and deviant workplace behavior by employees as a result of high stress (Jex & Beehr, 1991). Recently researchers are finding ways of decreasing work place stress. There are several factors of stress like personal, psychological, environmental, organizational, time, and human consequences. Each factor has different type which affects employee welfare.

Environmental factor includes workload and role conflict which causes an individual stress (Coetzee & Rothmann, 2007). Stress is good for performance up to a certain level but if you keep on increasing the level of stress employee performance will decrease resulting in job dissatisfaction and burnout. Employees often show negative behavior like absenteeism and deviant work place behavior called behavioral exhaustion. This type of behavior is due to high work place stress (Coutu, 2002). Currently results are inconsistent when measuring job stress and employee performance, showing inconsistency findings Canvanugh et.al. (2000). Beehr & Newman (1978).

There are few conflicts in results that all stressors are harmful for workers. According to Beer & Newman (1978) there are some stressors which can bring a positive outcome and change in employee's life. Challenge stressors include time constraints, pressure, workload, new projects and high level of stimuli. Challenge stressors help employees to build their professional capabilities to meet their work demands, it also help improve an employee professionally (Dewa et al., 2011). When conducted a survey of managers it was found that time pressure is useful for completing the task Mc Call, Lombardo & Morrison (1988). After reviewing job stressors; beneficial stressors impetus increased Beehr & Newman (1978). It was suggested that job stressors should be examined and the positive aspects of job stress be studied. There are two dimensions of job stressors. According to two dimensional job stress theory there are beneficial job stressors as well as harmful job stressors that improve an employee's performance (LePine, 2007). Whenever a problem arises challenge stressors stimulate the problem solving behavior towards problem.

Employee Engagement

The concept of employee engagement has emerged as the most “debatable issue in management” since last decade (Welbourne, 2007). Organizations focus more on employee engagement to create an environment of competition in today's business world (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). Employee engagement is required to achieve strategic and competitive edge within an organization (Macey, Schneider, Barbera & Young, 2009). The concept of engagement became a part of physiological and management literature twenty years ago with the observation of employee work role and attitude, and to this date four categories of engagement are under consideration; personal engagement, employee engagement, burnout engagement and work engagement. However, various factors contribute in defining and measurement of engagement (Shuck & Wollard, 2010).

Personal engagement as defined by Kahn (1990) is the conduct of an individual to whether involve or leave out his personal self during work performances. He believes that exploiting the organizational employee will make them feel more devoted to their work or more aptly to their specified tasks physically as well as mentally and nourishes the engagement (Kahn, 1992). The perception is greatly applicable during studies of engagement. In the opinion of Schaufeli & Bakker (2001) engagement and burnout being opposite to each other are equally important and measured independently. Work engagement is perceived as “constructive, satisfying work associated state of mind marked by robustness, perseverance, and engagement (Schaufeli, Bakker, 2005). Macey et al., (2009) assumed after studying 65 companies on engagement

index that those companies who are at bottom 25% on index show less return on asset (ROA) as compared to those companies who are at the top of 25% on engagement index. Demerouti & Verbeke (2004) identified performances of employees who are engaged in work are better than non-engaged employees. Bakker (2007) enlightened that devotion is credited as emotional facet of work engagement involving an employee's deep and full participation.

Psychological Capital

Field of Positive Psychology

Positive psychology gave birth to psychological capital which emerged as separate field in 1998 when Martin Seligman made it accessible to everyone. Positive psychology is a rapidly expanding and contemporary extension in the view of Peterson (2000). It focuses on improving positive aspects and strengths rather than considering and addressing negative attributes and shortcomings of employees (LePine et al., 2005). Positive psychology not only unveiled value of positivity in workplace, it also paved a unique channel in considering the phenomenon of flourishing one's capabilities (Luthans, 2002).

Positive Organizational Behavior

Luthans, (2002) gave a new concept which is specifically more important; positive organizational behavior (POB). Positive organizational behavior (POB) could be delineated as studying and applying strengths and psychological abilities of humans which are positive and can be measured, established and accomplished to improve their performance at work (Luthans, 2002b, p. 59). Positive organizational behavior (POB) by definition includes clearly defined standards for constructs; construct having positive attitude must be of psychological capacity; it should be quantitative and exhibit authentic ground to conduct research to measure its impact on performance management at workplace (Luthans et al., 2007). Four defined standards exist for POB: hope, resilience, optimism and self-efficacy (Luthans et al., 2007). Psychological capital outweighs other relevant concepts like social capital and human capital (Avolio & Luthans, 2006). Psychological capital could be established as, "an individual's positive psychological state of development and it is characterized by: (1) having confidence (Self-efficacy) to accept and put in the unavoidable effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (Optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) being persistent towards goals, and when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (Hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (Resiliency) to attain success" (Luthans & Youssef, 2007). Thus, its focus relies on expanding and managing to perform at a standard set by one-self. (Luthans & Youssef, 2007).

Hope: The term "hope" is very common and widely applied day-to-day but psychological principles have its own specific meaning. Hope is specifically defined as, "a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-oriented energy) and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)". Hope is faith and intellectual configuration which provokes an individual to achieve goal in his own defined ways (Snyder & Lopez, 2005). To summarize, goals, avenue and resolutions are considered integral and exclusive facets of hope. The agency feature is considered to be a steady aptitude towards performing specified task and challenge (Babyak & Higgins, 2005). Components of hope; will power of a person in achieving desired goals and pathways taken to accomplish the goals, are mandatory for achievement of hope.

Resilience: Resilience is thought to be the ability to cope up with unfavorable situations. This construct is derived by observing adolescent children clinical studies results who managed to survive extremely adverse conditions (Masten & Reed, 2009). Being an extremely significant construct, its gaining much consideration throughout organizational and HRM studies because of extreme environment of competition and tempestuous business. Resilience is defined as, "the positive psychological capacity to rebound, to bounce back from adversity, uncertainty, conflict, failure, or even positive change, progress and increased responsibility." (Masten & Reed, 2009), demonstrate that resilience is capability and essence of positive observation and adaptation in accordance to environment. It was believed by (Masten, 2001) that resilience arises "from the everyday magic of ordinary, normative human resources, and has profound implications for promoting competence and human capital in individuals and society." People observing resilience in deep are great observer of reality and believe that life is of great value and have obscure flexibility to cope up with adverse changes of life (Coutu, 2002).

Optimism: In routine life, people expecting everything good in life are optimists, whereas those who always expect bad things in their lives are pessimists (Carver & Scheier, 2005). In field of positive psychology, optimism is considered another distinctive concept. Optimism is a goal oriented construct in case of valuable outcome. An optimist always finds a way out of his problems.

Luthans & Youssef, (2007) define optimism as a stable and positive internal acknowledgment of events whereas unsound and outward ascription of negative events. It indicates that optimist person considers personal, permanent and persistent events as positive facet and vice versa. Luthans & Youssef, (2007) stated that no setbacks or worries horrify an optimistic employee due to his consistency with positivity. Optimism is in comparison with hope; quite like each other in having the element of persistence.

Self – Efficacy: Self-efficacy derived its roots from Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997) (confidence in simple words). It could be defined as, "one's confidence over his capabilities to feast enthusiasm, resources and courses of action to complete a task effectively within given framework (Peterson, 2009). People being high on self-efficacy depend on their

own capabilities to complete a given task. Being confident enough, they accept tasks, manage their time and stamina and remain persistent with their work even in harsh conditions (Peterson, 2009). The self-regulatory, purposefulness and rational consideration capabilities make one-self to put their utmost efforts and devotion towards accomplishment of his goals and objectives (Bandura & Locke, 2003). People having self-efficacy unceasingly contest themselves by setting their own higher goals without waiting for other people to rule over them, labeled as “discrepancy reduction”(Luthans et. al., 2007). Various techniques are efficient in the development of self-efficacy; mastery experiences, social persuasion, modeling and psychological stimulation (Bandura, 2000)

Relationship between challenge-hindrane stress and employee engagement:

In research employee engagement is relatively novel and progressing notion, but the factors that envisage and indicate to engagement are different than those which lead to predictable outcomes like job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Employee engagement is a far-reaching idea which also covers conventional notions such as job engagement, organizational citizenship behavior and commitment (Little & Little, 2006) Researchers have investigated the impact of job stress on all these concepts (Jamal, 2010). When employees are unable to complete their jobs, they face failure in their job demands; they also face stress due to work load which is negatively related with employee engagement (Richman, 2006). Coetzee & De Villiers state that employee stress leads to lower level of employee engagement. Stressor i.e. lack of job autonomy and role conflict is negatively associated with robustness, devotion and fascination – the engagement facets (Coetzee & De Villiers, 2010).Zhou & zhang, 2007 have studied the relationship between three aspects of employee engagement and job stress. They testified substantial negative affiliation between robustness and job stress ($r = -0.252, n=171, p<0.5$), devotion and job stress and engagement and job stress. Another study also validated the outcomes of this study that job stress and employee engagement are negatively connected (Iqbal et. Al, 2011).

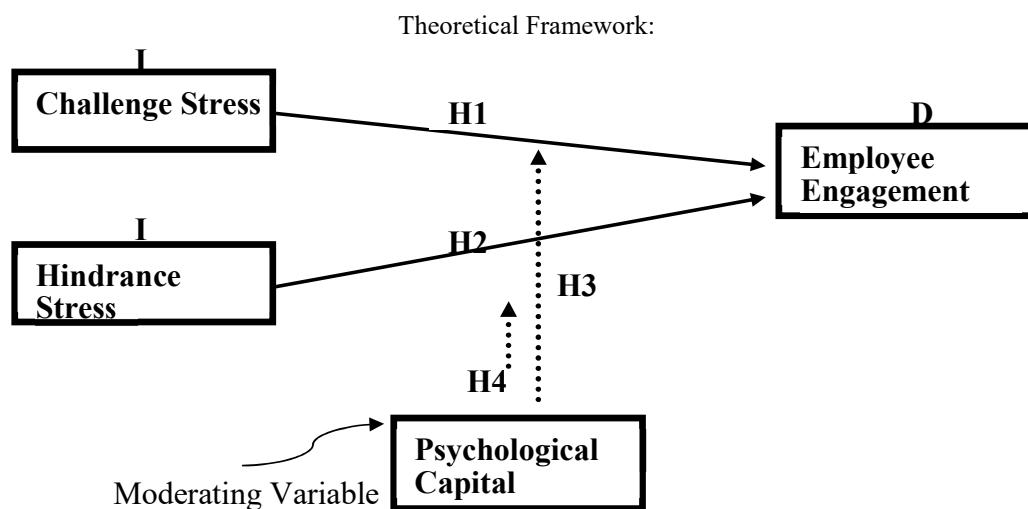
Hence, it can be inferred that challenge stressor’s will have positive influence on engagement level of employee.

H1: There is a positive relationship between employee engagement and challenge stress

H2: There is a positive relationship between hindrance stress and employee engagement

Relationship between employee engagement and psychological capital:

It has been researched that job properties are precursors of employee engagement. Engaged workers are also involved in their life outside workplace, so personal resources also get their due acclaim in engagement (Ennis and Jackson, 2003).



Psychological capital as moderator between employee engagement and challenge hindrance stress:

Scholars have examined the association of psychological capital with different workplace actions. Psychological capital escalates organizational commitment. Literature on psychological capital has revealed that in addition to positive relationship with workplace behavior it has impact on negative workplace behavior as well. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) reflect psychological capital as vital to regulate stressful events which eventually result in undesirable behaviors. Job stress can be reduced by increasing resources of employees and lessening job demands (Oginska-Bulik, 2005). These employee resources are constructive emotions, progressive psychological assessment of circumstances and employee characteristics which are adjacent to psychological capital. Challenge stressors have been found to have positive effects on welfare of employees as these stressors supposedly challenge an employee towards sense of accomplishment and provide an opportunity to prove one’s self-worth (Jacobshagen and Meier, 2011). Psychological capital will help an employee to accept work as challenge and engage in work.

H3: Psychological capital moderates the relationship between employee engagement and challenge stress

H4: Psychological capital moderates the relationship between hindrance stress and employee engagement

Results & Discussion

Demographic details

300 questioners were distributed among the target sample. Survey has shown 92% response rate, 277 questioners were functional for data analysis. Most of the respondents are from 31-35 of age and it covers 42% of sample. Second category is from 26-30 of age which covers 20% of sample. **Third categories of respondents are of 26-30 years old and cover 19% of sample. 35% are from remaining category.**

Correlation Analyses

	Psychological	Challenge stress	Hindrance stress	Employee engagement
Psychological	1			
	277			
Challenge stress	-.073	1		
	.226	277		
Hindrance stress	-.174**	.297**	1	
	.004	.000	277	
Employee engagement	.669**	-.103	-.188**	1
	.000	.086	.002	277
	277	277	277	277

Regression Analysis

The summary of the model demonstrate that the value of R is .674 which shows that 67% change in DV is due to IV.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.674 ^a	.454	.448	.37644

a. Predictors: (Constant), Hindrance stress, Psychological, challenge stress the value of beta psychological capital shows a positive impact on employee engagement. However, the value of beta Challenge stress is negative which shows a weak negative impact.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.375 ^a	.141	.132	.62486

a. Predictors: (Constant), ENPI, CRPI
The data shows that 36% change in dependent variables is because of independent variable.

Beta coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	3.791	.103		36.900	.000
	Psycho challenge	.026	.005	.330	5.318	.000
	Psychohindrance	-.004	.006	-.038	-.609	.543

a. Dependent Variable: Employee engagement

The value of beta reflects a positive impact on employee engagement. However, the value of beta hindrance stress is negative which shows a weak negative impact

Discussion

The motive behind the exploration is to find connection amid hindrance challenge stress model and work commitment. The investigation furthermore seeks to recognize the situation of mental capital in connection of hindrance challenge, pressure model & work commitment. First hypothesis of this study clarifies that employee engagement negatively affects due to stress challenge model. The principle theory of the research modification is that going up against pressure will be apathetically identified with laborers commitments. **Steady stress** is experimental as an essential limitation is passion. Behavioral factors causing impediment for workforce to perform in a careful manner are intense. The second hypothesis of this research study explains that employee engagement is negatively related to stress hindrance. The consequent recommendation of this analysis contemplates that **block pressure** will be undesirably associated with **workers meet**. **Hindrance stress is such boosts as formality**. There are different stressors like organizational politics, work and role vagueness and slack resources. Hindrance stressors bring out covert style of trouble initiating in which people endeavor to escape themselves from those specific circumstances. Workload is negatively associated with employee engagement when employees fail to comply with their job demands, such as workload (Coetzer & Rothmann, 2007). The outcomes of the last two hypotheses demonstrate that cognitive capital will direct association among hindrance stress, challenge stress and employee engagement. Psychological capital increases authoritative duty (Shahnawaz & Jafri, 2009), performance and job satisfaction. (Avey et al., 2008) revealed that individuals with elevated expectations are less likely to get frustrated in their feelings and that flexible workers are better in taking care of trouble some individuals and they are also emotionally stable (Roberts et al., 2011). Furthermore, the challenge stressor shows positive effects on well-being.

Conclusion

The research study adds to the study of stress by supporting to the proposed hypotheses. The after effects of our analysis indicate that in spite of the fact that there was a non-trivial association amid challenge and hindrance stressors, there was conflicting relationship with criteria that were consistent with hypothesis. At a more particular level, study exploration adds to hypothesis by offering and testing a hypothesis model that clarifies why test and prevention stressors have diverse association with performance. It might instigate extra empirical study in this vein. In spite of the fact that others discussed the considerable capability of research that incorporates speculations of stress and inspiration (Yperen&Hagedoorn, 2013).

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