

The Relationship Between Stress And Violence At The Workplace

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With the dawn of the information age, the possibility of a person segregating his or her work from his or her personal life has become almost an impossibility. People are not able to separate work from their personal lives. People not only struggle to maintain the relationships they have built in the workplace but also try to avoid the risk of losing business. This leads to working late or even taking work calls, emailing and texting home time. Work hours have consistently crept past the conventional work hours along with family activities like eating, taking care of kids, socializing and many more, as they are basically intertwined. Take, for example, a day you went for lunch or dinner, and you never checked your phone a couple of times during the meal. 99% of us check our phones and even reply to texts and try to fix business deals during home hours. This emerging norm has its own adverse effects, like health issues and stress for those who cannot be able to navigate through the juggling of multiple tasks. Therefore, this paper will discuss the relationship between stress and violence at the workplace, the causes of work stress and finally, how an I-O psychologist facilitates work-life merge in today's busy life.

Studies have established that there exists a direct link between stress and aggression. They technically feed off each other, thus leading to the cycle of violence witnessed in the workplace. It is evident from our friends how they react when they are under stress. Everybody tends to be more likely to lose his or herself when he is under stress. He is likely to fly off the handle, and when this happens, the individual's level of stress increases due to guilt or anger. Researchers have invested a lot of time and resources in this phenomenon to try and connect if there is any connection between if there is any connection between stress and violence in the workplace.

Sometimes a normal and gentle person may come to work one day and tends to boil up to levels that end up in him or her being violent and aggressive (Magnavita, 2014). Other cases are those people who are subjected to continuous stress by their families and, therefore, tend to be always stressed and aggressive. The other group of people is those people who get irritated by very small things, and their level of anger goes up to the extent of not being able to control him or herself. Recent studies showed that there is a direct connection between stress and violence. The experiment that was done using rats showed that when the stress levels of a person go up, the level of Corticosterone in the bloodstream soars upwards. As the level rose, the rats lost it and started to attack other rats, even those that were almost lifeless.

As this happened, the level of Corticosterone rose even higher, therefore indicating that the level of stress rose too. This same phenomenon is what happens in the human body. A person gets irritated at home or somewhere else. This can be due to the stress brought about by trying to merge family and

work, a phenomenon that is common in this error of communication. This double stress sets one in some mild stress that is sometimes taken to be normal and controllable. But as this person goes to work, he or she has to interact with other people and also deal with the work pressures. The body of this person reacts by producing the Corticosterone hormone, thus increasing the individual's stress levels. This is to try to help the body get rid of the accumulating stress. But the effect of this is being aggressive and violent. This is because there may be another person who is in the same condition, and if these two individuals close lines, it may end up nasty as they may not be able to control themselves and not go into violence (Magnavita, 2014). This encounter does not make the person feel good. It rather makes the individual feel bad, and his or her stress level increases further. This situation plunges the individuals into hopelessness and continues violence in the workplace and even at home.

One of the research showed that a high level of stress may lead to a person being aggressive even without being irritated in any way. As per the case of the rats used in the experiment, the stressed rats did not need an opponent to get riled up. They were just aggressive and violent as the levels of stress rose. This explains why when someone has a bad day with his or her family goes to work and takes out the anger with his coworkers or even his or her boss. This phenomenon may be the other way around, where when we have a bad day at the office, we make it hard for our loved ones back at home (Magnavita, 2014). This cycle of violence may get worse if not managed as the level of stress keeps going up as one is involved in an encounter with a colleague or his or her loved ones.

This explanation explains the reason why a peaceful guy who is known to be peaceful suddenly goes into violence and boils over, leading to road rage, domestic violence or even worse. He or she could have been irritated by very small thing like another guy cutting into his lane a factor that sends his stress levels up. This feeds his aggression side, sending his stress even higher, and this is where things go sideways. Anybody who crosses this individual's line gets a rough day.

The recent past has witnessed an increased rate of workplace violence and stress. The trade unions, employees, and employers are all worried about the phenomenon, the magnitude at which it is advancing and the possible consequences. Regardless of the fact that violence has always been a part of the working environment, the surge in workplace violence in the recent past is alarming. Millions of workers are getting scared of it and what it may lead to. Violence at work can be analyzed from different forms since the violence itself is fasted in different forms. The most common is Psychological violence, or It can be in the form of physical assault that is often expressed through bullying or harassment based on many grounds, including gender, sexuality or race. The most common violence against women is the sexual assault in the workplace. Psychological violence is the most common in the workplace, but it goes unreported. The forms of violence may be different depending on the organization and the sector in which they are happening. For instance, teachers are the ones who suffer and are exposed to the maximum stress as compared to all other sectors. They are the most affected by the violence at work because of the stresses involved in doing their work. This is because teachers are subjected to more physical assault from the students they teach and also the parents who constantly inflict stress on the teachers regarding their children's performance and

life in school. This constant stress can be attributed to the increased rate of violence witnessed in the educational sector.

Another example of where stress is directly linked to violence in the workplace is in the communication and media industry, where journalists are subjected to their fair share of bullying, loneliness, and psychological bullying. The intense competition also heightens the stress levels suffered by journalists. On top of that, the nature of their work exposes them to direct contact with the public and coverage of issues such as war and homicide cases that inflict stress on them. This is attributed to the high level of violence and assault that is witnessed in the industry, for instance, the sexual assault that is at its peak. The stress the journalists are subjected to makes them react and be aggressive to their coworkers and even the management.

Everyone has once been affected by work-related stress. Some have experienced the worst of it, but some have just experienced a little. But most important is the fact that none of us ever enjoyed living with the stress or getting used to it. In addition to that, every person has his or her own perspective of what is stress. Other people may view the things that stress others to be motivational and the reaction that every person gives to a certain situation is different. Therefore, the first step in understanding stress and its causes is to know what stress is and how to know we are under stress. The most common factors that cause work-related stress include

Demands

Every day, we are required to perform in the workplace. This includes the workload and the work patterns that we all need to fit in. For instance, everyone is required to be in the office by eight a.m., and this means that this person has to wake up really early so as to keep up with that time. To make matters worse, an individual has a family to take care of. This person has to make sure that the kids are set for school, or maybe sometimes they need to be dropped off before heading for work. This further heightens the levels of stress this person is suffering.

On reaching the office, the first thing to find on the desk is a whole lot of work to be done. Sometimes, this work is set to unrealistic deadlines. This makes the person feel demoralized and used. This puts him or her under so much stress to complete the work within the deadline. In addition to that, the person is expected to give a high-quality standard that is not achievable within the set deadlines. Requiring an employee to produce unrealistic outcomes sets them in standards as they struggle so much to achieve their employer's expectations. This leads to deadline violations and low-quality outcomes that do not meet any expectations. This further stresses the employee and affects his or her work.

In addition to that, there is an increased technological overload in offices today. For instance, most companies are struggling to be at the brim of technology, thus adopting many new technologies into their operations. This requires that employees have very little time to master the new technologies

before they can perform perfectly. But they don't have such times. Instead, they are taken through a one-day or two-day session about the new technology, and they are set to use the new technology to do the tasks assigned to them. This leads to a lot of disappointments and stresses due to underperformance or being stuck in using the new equipment.

Another aspect of demand that causes stress at the workplace is being assigned to do a workload that is unmanageable. This may be that the work is far from the expertise of the employee or too much workload that cannot be handled by one person. This creates unnecessary pressure on the employee and thus kills his or her morale. The high workload leads to employees trying to work faster to meet the deadlines and, therefore, end up doing low-quality work that may lead to summons, something that every employee hates. In addition to that, the employee does not enjoy doing his or her work thus ending up in stress and tension on how to manage the workload. Under-recruitment also puts the current employees under stress as they are overworked. A specific task always requires a specific workforce and skills. But when an organization goes on to minimize the workforce, it leads to demotivation of the workforce and definitely stress as the employees start worrying about how to finish the task on time and also produce quality work (Shanafelt et al., 2015). This also leads to workers extending their stay in the office with the aim of reducing the workload assigned to them.

Lack Of Control

This refers to the power and authority employees have in doing their jobs. When an employee lacks consultation on how the job in his or her field is done, he or she gets under pressure and consequently into stress. Among the factors reflecting on control is when an employee has little control over the aspects of the job. Every person sometimes needs to be consulted regarding some matters so as to make him or her feel part of the organization. Giving such a person at least a little control over his or her work will give her a sense of belonging and thus reduce stress on the job. In addition to that, decision-making is a critical process for any organization. This requires that every employee and even the support staff be involved in the process. Excluding an employee from the decision-making process will only make that person feel unworthy in the organization and thus not needed (Shanafelt et al. et al.5). This will lead to souring of stress and underperformance of the employees who are not involved in decision-making.

The management also has to take the account of staff idea and suggestions regarding their role in the organization. Ignoring such suggestions makes the employees feel disregarded and therefore, start being stressed about what the management may be feeling about their suggestion or if the management will work on implementing the ideas or suggestions. Employees also need to work in an environment that they feel most comfortable. The suggestions are given; therefore, reflect on what environment will make them feel most comfortable and stress-free.

Motivation is also necessary for any organization. When the employees don't have control over the work targets, it makes them feel stressed and not part of the organization. To achieve a stress-free

workforce, the management should include the employees in setting up the work targets so that the employees are not overworked or underworked. Finally, in doing their job, the employees should be left to plan their time. This will help the management to create breaks in between tasks so that the employees can relax a little and, therefore, reduce any tension or stress that could have developed. Lack of time for employees makes them feel that they don't have any control over the organization thus demoralizing them and thus the low quality of work. The employees need to have control over their pace of work and how they use their skills to do their jobs (Luckman, 2016). Taking into consideration the employee's suggestions will give them the opportunity to learn and be able to avoid any stresses in new and challenging tasks.

Minimal Support

Employees are often stressed when they learn that they don't have any support from the management or their employer. Knowing that the organization and other employees support you will give you motivation and a boost, especially when you have a bad day in the workplace. But when a person discovers that he or she does not have any support or has very little support can lead to disappointments, frustrations and the feeling of being of no value to the organization. An employee requires policies that, in one way or the other, support him or her. This will make an individual feel valued and part of the organization. Other than motivation, the employee will also support the organization in case he is required to. Teamwork will also be successful as every employee will feel obligated to achieve the organizational target. The employee should also feel that the management and the organization are caring for them. For instance, the management should come up with programs to help employees manage their workplace stresses. The employees also should be trained to help their colleagues in managing their workplace stresses. To do all this, the employees should be made to understand and know the place to go in case they need help related to workplace stresses. The process of accessing this place should also be made clear to them. And finally, on support, all employees need feedback. Ignoring employee inquiries only puts them under stress and makes them feel unsupported. Therefore, trying to give feedback to the employees will help reduce the stresses that develop in the workplace and thus improve the productivity of the employees.

Role Ambiguity

Work-related stress can be caused when employees do not understand their work fully. This is in cases where they have not been trained enough for such tasks or when there is a conflicting responsibility in their roles. This misunderstanding makes employees hate their work and feel that they are doing something wrong and not something they are skilled to do. The stress built up in doing the tasks can lead to unfavorable behaviors that may inhibit the overall performance of the organization.

The ambiguity of employee's roles and responsibilities decreases the performance of the workforce

and, in extreme cases, can lead to high labor turnover. Migration of an employee from one organization to another is itself stressful as the person is required to start afresh in a totally new organization with new policies and new employees. It takes time before someone gets used to an organization's policy and also the people he or she will be working with. This demotivates workers and also leads to heightened stress levels that may be devastating to the performance of the employee. Job satisfaction also may be a direct source of stress to the employees and it is the main cause of attachment to the company. If an employee is not satisfied with the job, he or she will be under constant stress on how to get a new job, and that may not be good for the present organization. This is because the employee will not be motivated enough to give the company his or her best.

To avoid this kind of stress, all the roles of an employee should be clearly defined, and the information should be made available to the employee before he or she is offered a job in the company. This will ensure that the employee is comfortable with his or her role and there is nothing to make him or her get stressed after getting the job.

Work-Life Balance Issues

This is a topic that is striking the heads of many organizations and employees. Everyone is struggling to balance time for his or her job and also have time for his family or personal life. It is the most pressing challenge every employee has. The demands of the jobs have a potential effect on personal life and, therefore, strain the relationships thriving outside the workplace. For instance, most people today are required to work for long hours therefore not having enough time for their families and loved ones. The work schedules are also over demanding and inflexible in nature thus killing all the possibilities of enjoying your personal life (Jones, Burke & Westman, 2013).

Families, on the other hand, put so much pressure on the individual with the aim of getting back the time that has been taken by work. This puts the individual in question on a string and very high pressure that leads to the development of stress. There are other jobs that require a person to travel a lot. This, on its own, puts so much stress on a person. Nobody likes being on the road all through. We all require a place to relax while doing our job, and a road is not one of those places. And finally, there are other jobs that interfere with a person's personal life. This only succeeds in building stress on the employee as he or she will be trying to fit in the workplace and also in his personal life. Therefore to avoid stresses due to work-life balance, organizations should come up with a policy to promote a culture of smart working and no longer working.

Poor Relationships

Finally, the last cause of stress is the poor relationships in the workplace. The workplace is composed of people from different cultures, and they all have different behaviors. Therefore it is not a guarantee that all the employees will go along well with each other. But what is not right is when the employees

clash and end up in a conflict and bullying in the workplace. The company or organization should struggle to promote positive behaviors in the workplace and promote fairness (Jones, Burke & Westman, 2013). On top of that, the organization should come up with conflict resolution that will help minimize stress and consequently build healthy relationships between employees of the organization

The 21st century is getting more complicated as people work more and still have families and personal lives. Both family life and work life are taking different dimensions to accommodate the changing environment. Today's workforce creates a demand for jobs in which people can succeed in all aspects. Industrial-organizational psychology is the scientific study of the workplace. Therefore, for an I-O psychologist to facilitate work-life merge in today's life, he or she should understand Globalization and the virtual workplace. The days when the organizational primary goal was to compete with its rival in town. Competition in the 21st century is in a global market. An I-O should then consider the implications of globalization. For instance, there is increased cultural interactions and cross-cultural leadership. The organizational policies have also changed to accommodate a global wide set of practices. The inclusion of different cultures allows organizations to capitalize on the skills and strengths of an individual employee from any part of the world. I-O psychologists can also educate the employees on globalization and cultural integration in the organization. He or she should also help in educating the workforce about the virtual workplace. Educating the workforce about the effects of globalization and how to balance the changes in the workplace and family life (Harris & Hollman, 2013). I-O psychologists have the knowledge to impact social relationships and take the necessary steps to organizational culture and communication.

In addition to that, the workplace is going online, and even the recruitment and job selection is done online. I-O psychologists should help make the job seekers and the already employed that the process is done online and not in newspapers and traveling to organizations. Advertising their jobs and the roles and obligations online helps inform job seekers of the obligations and roles even before applying for the job. I-O, in this case, can help advise those organizations that have not yet adopted the online platform to adapt it so as to avoid conflicts and ambiguity in roles and obligations the employee is expected to perform (Luckman, 2016). The organizations can also gain knowledge on how to deal with employees from different cultures and also learn the benefits associated with adopting an internet-based system.

I-O psychologists can help define the limits for online searches for the personal information of employees. The just Google it mentality has made information about certain cultures not confidential at all. I-O psychologists can help define the limit to which a person should go into investigating or searching for information about another employee. This is because this leads to conflicts that may lead to stress in the workplace and maybe something worse. I-O professionals can take the chance to educate the management of organizations and also the employees on the risks associated with accessing too much information about a person. For instance, it will destroy the relationship in the workplace and consequently lead to other violent actions like bullying and harassment. An I-O professional can be used to help the organization in coming up with policies that inhibit the searches

of personal information online (Harris & Hollman, 2013). Living a stress-free life at the workplace will help one be able to plan his or her own schedule thus balancing his personal life with the workplace time.

In addition to that, I-O psychologists can help reduce the stress employees have due to the continued innovations. Helping a company come up with technology-based training will help equip the employees with the knowledge required to use the new technologies in the day-to-day running of operations. This will ensure that the specific tasks are completed on time thus not eating through the time an employee had set for his or her personal life.

The Psychologist also can help organizations in focusing and developing top employees. This will help in making them feel part of the organization and therefore be effective and fast in doing their job thus having some time to spend with the family. In addition to that, there will be a significant reduction in the rate of employee turnover since all employees will they are considered to be part of the organization, and, thus, there will be no need to shift. Increasing coaching at the workplace will also assist employees in developing their skills in the way they should relate to each other. In addition to that, coaching sessions will help educate the management on the importance of giving their employees time to enjoy their personal life.

I-O psychologists can also improve employee health by ensuring that the organizations provide a good working environment. A motivated employee means an effective way of working and thus able to work according to the schedule. This helps employees be able to have their own personal life and also work perfectly in the company. A healthy workforce also means that there will be minimal employee turnover, thus making them able to plan and merge work and family without any difficulty.

Many of the trends in the current market are all linked to technology in one way or the other. I-O psychologists can, therefore, educate organizations and employees regarding the current technologies in specific fields and searches. The organizations should also adopt online platforms like Twitter, thus accessing the 21st market fully. The transition to online will give the organization access to job seekers and also be able to advertise and get the most skilled job seekers. Getting the best job and also the most suitable company helps in nurturing the merging of the workplace and home environments.

In conclusion, the world is changing and the workplace is also changing, people are struggling to cope up with the busy schedules at the workplace and also have time for their personal life with their families. But this does not become easy as there are a lot of stresses associated with the merging. The workplace is getting globalized and leadership is taking a cross-cultural trend. Therefore it needs the skills of professionals who understand the situation to help both the organizations and the employees adapt to the new environment and also achieve the desired organizational and personal objectives. I-O professionals help the organizations understand the new trends and then come up with the most favorable policies that could help the employees merge their work and family. Organizations should then look for help from the I-O professionals to help them in running the organization's

workforce so as to achieve the maximum from the emerging trends.

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