

Social Support at Workplace

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Abstract

Review Article

Man, being a social animal, always looks up to people in times of need. This is true in case of an organization setting as well, since human beings spend considerable amount of time working for a project or any other activity at the office. Interactions between peers are very common in any organization, but does that guarantee that these interactions would keep an employee happy and ensure that they stay back in the organization for a long period of time? Why is it that they even need to interact with people in the organization? To answer these questions, a review paper has been written on what social support means and why is it important, especially in the context of an organization. For this, various journals, books and videos have been referred in order to do a thorough study and frame it in a proper structure.

Keywords: Social support, interactions, organization, peers.

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INTRODUCTION

It has always been stated that a man is a social animal and constantly needs to interact with other social beings to keep him happy. This interaction with other fellow beings not only makes him happy, but it affects a person's mental well-being in a positive manner, since the person knows that he can turn to someone in case of stress or a problem. That person could be a mother, father, friend, relative or anyone else who the person trusts a lot. This ultimately forms the foundation of social support, which is defined as having a network of family and friends who could be relied on in times of need.

This concept, however, does not only limit to a person's personal life, but it is also popular in his professional life as well. Its concept is also well established in organizations and industrial settings. Various research articles suggest that having a supportive relationship at the workplace contribute to the well-being of the employees and that in turn boosts rates of retention.

Background of the Study

Sloan, Evenson Newson, & Thompson [1] opine that employees share many experiences with their fellow mates and that is the beginning of the formation of a deep bond between people who work in the same company. These experiences include dealing with the same clients, supervisors, managers and other co-workers. Various topics like policies of the organization and the working space are also discussed by the employees. These experiences enhance the psychological well-being of a

person by increasing self-esteem of a person and inculcating a sense of belongingness for the person.

Research suggests that happiness at workplace is directly related to the perceived emotional support that an employee receives from his/her co-workers. This reduces negative feelings of an individual towards his/her job and avoids depressive symptoms. More than that, co-workers also provide the required support in dealing with work-related emotional experiences, that also includes the emotional labor that a person performs for others while working and expressing feelings of anger towards another employee at the workplace.

Chou, P [2] states that people who spend most of their time at the workplace have certain personal needs that are to be fulfilled while working. These personal needs represent the social support at the workplace which represents a variety of interpersonal behaviors that an employee expects at work. In addition to it, extensive research has been done which prove that there is a positive relationship between social support at workplace and mental health at the workplace.

Why is Social Support at Workplace Important? To Combat Stress

Botean, A [3] in her YouTube video, "Social Support at Work" is of the opinion that majority of the people suffer from stress at workplace. It is not only due to pressure of work, but it could also arise due to lack of support from co-workers or senior manager.

Stress is the main reason as to why many employees do not stay back in the organization. Even though factors like dissatisfaction of salary and monotonous work do play an important role in assessing the exit of employees in an organization, but stress is predominantly one of the main factors due to which an employee opts to leave the organization.

In times like these, it becomes very important for a person to turn to someone for emotional support. When an individual is stressed out, he wants to talk to someone who could calm him/her down and let that individual know that work is a part of life and everything will subside soon and that there is no need to worry.

Further, it is stated that if employees are suffering from stress related issues, it could result in lower productivity, increase in absenteeism and high turnover of staff. If the supervisor or the manager of the organization is aware about it, he could emphasize on the concept of stress management and thereby, introduce the importance of social support as a means to combat stress and make sure that every employee is happy at the workplace.

To Increase Job Satisfaction

Singh, K [4] defines job satisfaction as the general attitude of employees towards their work or a job. It is also defined as the collection of specific job attitudes that can be related to the various aspects of job. The sources of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction vary from person to person and this is dependent on various work factors like the reward structure, working conditions, fringe benefits and the presence of other people in the organization, which is the main focus of the article.

“Individuals will be satisfied with their supervisors, co-workers and subordinates who help them attain rewards. Individuals will be more satisfied with colleagues who see things the same way they do”. This statement is an explanation of the presence of other people in the organization as one of the work factors for job satisfaction.

When an individual feels that there are people who will support them in time of need, that has a positive impact on the mind of the person and he will be interested in coming to the workplace often. Coming to the workplace indicates that the absenteeism rate will be low and the productivity of the person while working will definitely increase, which is beneficial for both the organization as well as the employee. Since the employee is productive and he will have the required support in times of need, which would definitely increase his/her job satisfaction.

To Have a Better Relationship with Colleagues

This is a direct consequence of the above two factors. Not only that, it is also a very important factor in determining if a person would stay in an organization. If a

person chooses to leave the organization he is working for, one of the reasons could be due to uncordial relations with co-workers as well. It is imperative to state that when one learns to combat stress and like the job he is doing, that person will also bond well with the people working with him. This is an important aspect for any employee since an average employee spends quite some time and it is important for an individual to feel comfortable with the people working with him. Due to this, it becomes helpful for the organization to conduct group activities and informal programs where employees show active participation and take a keen interest in being a part of such programs. Collaborating on projects also becomes easier and when the employees get along with their co-workers for any assignment, it makes them comfortable to work with them and as a result of which, they are able to achieve their desired targets. This benefits the organization because it helps the organization to focus on its long-term goals and strategize ways to increase its profitability.

CONCLUSION

In today's world, it has become important to address various factors that are not really taken seriously by people. As mentioned earlier, the concept of social support has widened its scope to organizations and it is one of the topics that haven't gained much recognition in corporates. However, Chou, P [2] states that an establishment of a social culture or a climate through management and Human Resource Practices is vital for the development for the social support of employees at the workplace to meet their basic psychological needs. Not only does it create a positive atmosphere at the workplace, but it also creates a sense of predictability and stability in one's life that leads to an increase in the self-worth of the person as well.

Due to the above factors, it is important for organizations to be aware of the importance of social support at the workplace and implement Human Resource Practices just as leadership development, coaching, mentoring and organizing various task support programs so that employees look forward to coming to the organization with zeal and contribute to the organization immensely.

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