


Chapter 24

Psychological Resilience to Mitigate Mental Distress Due to COVID–19 Pandemic Among the Employees of SMEs

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ABSTRACT

A key change brought due to COVID-19 is an upsurge in pandemic-related psychological imbalances, which acts as a substantial stressor for unprecedented distress to the mental health of the employees in SMEs. The study concentrates upon risk factors associated with COVID-19 pandemic, which lead to psychological imbalances among the employees. It also identifies different physiological, emotional, and behavioral inconsistencies caused due to the impact of the pandemic. The study explains various techniques of psychological resilience, which include the assessment of the four pillars (i.e., sleep hygiene, nutrition, physical fitness, and social support), emotion-based coping, grounding, diaphragmatic breathing, mindfulness, altruism, and self-awareness. The exploratory study performed an analysis of available published data from different recognized directories of journals with the use of the systematic review technique.

INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of a new public health emergency due to the widespread of corona-virus acquired huge attention since its inception. This deadly virus later turned into a pandemic and was termed as severe acute respiratory syndrome corona-virus (SARS-CoV). The word pandemic is a combination of two

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words, ‘pan’ which means all, and ‘demos’ which includes people. Vieira et al (2020) in the study found that the term pandemic is used by medical experts to refer to the phenomenon which affects the whole population of the world. Because of globalization, an infectious disease travels from one continent to another in a matter of hours and increases the importance of the international coordination of efforts to respond to new outbreaks of infectious disease termed as COVID-19 (Man, Toma, Matic et al., 2020). The term COVID-19 is abbreviated from **C**orona **V**irus **D**isease-**2019**. The word ‘Coronavirus’ originated from Latin word corona, which signifies either a crown or halo, that reveals to the typical look indicating crown or solar corona beside the virions (Ali et al., 2020). The study of Yael Lahav (2020) stated that to slow down the spread of this potentially fatal virus, strict measures were taken which included restrictions of outdoor activities, cancellation of gatherings, closure of schools & institutes, minimization of public transportation etc. The evolved situation drastically altered people’s lives (Xiong, Lipsitz et al., 2020). The prevalent transition from public health pandemic to the global crisis, provides a sitch for different stakeholders to identify the major trends during and posts COVID-19 (Syriopoulos et al., 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic economically, politically and socially challenged the country which beholds a severe impact on the mental distress of employees and contributes in the wake of a catastrophe- altered mental health plight as an aftermath of the Pandemic. It threatens the physical and mental health of the employees (Gao et al., 2020) due to absence of any special treatment for it (Guan et al., 2020; Zhon et al., 2020). Mental distress categorizes various symptoms and issues of an individual’s life that causes trouble, disturbance and confusion. A medical history of chronic illness is also associated with elevated levels of imbalances and distress (Mazza, Ricci, Biondi et al., 2020). This leads to an asynchronous relationship between the personal and professional life of the employees which ultimately impacts the quality of Work-Life Balance. The COVID-19 pandemic led to numerous detrimental consequences, including fatalities and significant socio-economic impacts (e.g., significant medical costs, increased unemployment and financial stress). In addition to medical and economic consequences, growing literature suggests prevalent psychological distress (e.g., depression and anxiety) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Achdut & Refaeli (2020) stated that psychological imbalance is defined as a “form of worry, tension, unhappiness, pessimism, and so on”. Though, recovery is gradually seen in situations where containment measures are implemented, the evolution of business recovery in each sector depends on how the mental health condition of the employees rehabilitate. The Small and Medium Enterprises which are the one of the pillars of Indian Economy, need critical consideration for the comeback. In the present circumstances, the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) showcase the restricted competence to counter-attack the risks involved and overcome the costs due to less business activity for a definite duration of time. The Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) also mentioned assorted beliefs about the duration of disruptions linked with COVID-19 Pandemic along with the necessity of different health policy interventions. This is clearly associated with adherence to the norms of lockdown measures and includes social distancing, restriction on travel & transportation, and limited on human assemblage. The present crisis situation evoked augmentation to avail medical facilities which undesirably acts as a curse for low income people. There is also a steep rise in concern for individuals with no personal health insurance which ultimately leads to the psychological imbalances. Even after the termination of the crisis, the current economic situation is not expected to revive to its previous state. To help the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), it is crucial to understand how the pandemic affects the psychological imbalance of the employees which causes Mental Distress. While psychological guidance is provided to the employees, mental health also requires significant attention at the same time (Xiong, Lipsitz et al., 2020). Hence, the organizations should pay utmost attention to the mental stability of their employees

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