

Abstract

In the workforce, there has been an increase of women holding high ranking positions. This has made the study of occupational stress and its effect on them more important. Not only do women have different causes of their stress, but they also experience different consequences from that stress. Since women experience occupational stress differently, it is important to find specific coping techniques that will be beneficial for them. There are many different types of coping techniques and interventions that have been shown to be successful for women. Some of these techniques include Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, stress management interventions, exercise, and leisure activities. These techniques should become more common within businesses in order to increase employees’ wellbeing, which will also help to improve productivity and efficiency. More research should be conducted on these techniques and how they specifically affect women. Research also needs to be conducted to discover the best ways to implement these techniques into the workforce.

Introduction

- Occupational stress, also known as workplace stress, is stress that is caused by an individual’s job.
- A high level of occupational stress has a negative relationship to both an individual’s job performance and their job satisfaction (Krajewski & Goffin, 2005; Tudu & Pathak, 2013).
- There have been significant relationships found between occupational stress and turnover rates, burnout rates, and worker productivity (as cited in Krajewski & Goffin, 2005).
- It is important for businesses to examine the causes of stress in the workplace, and to find ways to reduce their employee’s workplace stress.

Question

What techniques to reduce occupational stress in high ranking females can be implemented into the workforce?

Causes of Occupational Stress in Women

- A positive relationship has been found between work-family conflict and occupational stress in managerial women (Fei, Kuan, Yang, Hing, & Yaw (2017).
- Women have a positive correlation with experiencing greater work interference with family and greater family interference with work (Shockley, Shen, DeNunzio, &Arvan and Knudsen, 2017).
- Women experience a lot of stress from their household responsibilities (Lundberg & Frankenhaeuser, 1999).
- Workplace barriers
- The workforce and high ranking positions still tend to be very masculine environments.
- It has been found that in order to succeed women tend to have the same attitudes of men and they become more masculine.

Consequences of Occupational Stress

- Women experience some different consequences of occupational stress.
- Women are less likely to be focused on their work and are less likely to enjoy their time at home.
- Women’s turnover rates are more than doubled men’s when dealing with a lot of stress (Fei et al., 2017).
- Women experience different physical and psychological symptoms than men (as cited in Nelson & Burke, 2000).
- Researchers have found that men and women take different pathways between coping with stress and their stress outcome (Watson, Goh, & Sawang, 2011).

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

- Mindfulness is used to help increase awareness and reduce negative emotions and maladaptive behaviors.
- Reduces occupational stress in female employees.
- Helps employees with burnout, depression, relaxation, satisfaction and mood (Janssen, Heerkens, Kuijer, van der Heijden, & Engels, 2018).
- Given online
- Different durations and intensities of the intervention.
- Giving access to and information to employees.

Stress Management Interventions

- Cognitive-behavioral interventions, relaxation techniques and multimodal approaches.
- Cognitive-behavioral interventions has significant relationship with the reduction of occupational stress (van der Klink, Blonk, Schene, & van Dijk, 2001; Richardson & Rothstein, 2008).
- Cognitive-behavioral interventions should be a top choice of stress management interventions for businesses to implement.
- This intervention can vary in length and require hiring a specialist.
- More research should be conducted to look at the specific effects that cognitive-behavioral interventions have on women in high ranking positions.

Conclusion

More research needs to be conducted on the effects of different coping techniques on high ranking women. Research also needs to be conducted on how well different implementation methods work at reducing occupational stress.

Exercise

- Exercise has a positive relationship with well-being.
- Individuals who were more physically active were less likely to experience occupational stress (Gerber, Jonsdottir, Lindwall, & Ahlborg, 2014).
- Occupational stress decreased in participants in the exercise group and the decerase was consistent a year later (Kettunen, Vuorimaa, & Vasankari, 2015)
- Businesses could have their own gym, give gym memberships as a benefit, or have company sports leagues.

Leisure

- Leisure allows individuals to decompress after stressful situations and can help distract
- Iwasaki, MacKay, and Mactavish (2005) found that women use arts and cultural activities to handle stress
- Women were also more likely to use leisure exercise to reduce the likelihood of experiencing stress
- Businesses can give employees information on using leisure as a way to reduce stress
- Businesses could also inform employees of events going on around the area

References

Fei, L. K., Kuan, N. Y., Yang, F. C., Hing, L. Y., & Yaw, W. K. (2017). Occupational stress among women managers. *Global Business and Management Research*, 9, 415–427.

Gerber, M., Jonsdottir, I. H., Lindwall, M., & Ahlborg, G. (2014). Physical activity in employees with differing occupational stress and mental health profiles: A latent profile analysis. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 15, 649-658. doi:10.1016/j.psychsport.2014.07.012

Iwasaki, Y., MacKay, K., & Mactavish, J. (2005). Gender-based analyses of coping with stress among professional managers: Leisure coping and non-leisure coping. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 37, 1–28. doi:10.1080/00222216.2005.11950038

Janssen, M., Heerkens, Y., Kuijer, W., van der Heijden, B., & Engels, J. (2018). Effects of mindfulness-based stress reduction on employees’ mental health: A systematic review. *PLoS One*, 13, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0191332

Kettunen, O., Vuorimaa, T., & Vasankari, T. (2015). A 12-month exercise intervention decreased stress symptoms and increased mental resources among working adults - results perceived after a 12-month follow-up. *International Journal of Occupational Medicine and Environmental Health*, 28, 157–168. doi:10.13075/ijomeh.1896.00263

Krajewski, H. T., & Goffin, R. D. (2005). Predicting occupational coping responses: The interactive effect of gender and work stressor context. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 10, 44–53. doi:10.1037/1076-8998.10.1.44

Lundberg, U., & Frankenhaeuser, M. (1999). Stress and workload of men and women in high-ranking positions. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 4, 142–151. doi:10.1037/1076-8998.4.2.142

Richardson, K. M., & Rothstein, H. R. (2008). Effects of occupational stress management intervention programs: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 13, 69–93. doi:10.1037/1076-8998.13.1.69

Tudu, P. N., & Pathak, P. (2013). Managing executive stress in organizations- a critical appraisal. *Social Science International*, 29, 1–10.

van der Klink, J. J., Blonk, R. W., Schene, A. H., & van Dijk, F. J. (2001). The benefits of interventions for work-related stress. *American Journal of Public Health*, 91, 270–276.

Watson, S. B., Goh, Y. W., & Sawang, S. (2011). Gender influences on the work-related stress-coping process. *Journal of Individual Differences*, 32, 39–46. doi:10.1027/1614-0001/a000033