

THE IMPACT OF STRESS DURING RESTRUCTURING IN A TERTIARY INSTITUTION

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on stress during restructuring in a tertiary institution in New Zealand. Although certain amount of stress can enhance a person's performance, too much stress can have a reverse impact on a person's health resulting in lower productivity. Therefore the aim of this research is to determine the impact of stress on staff effectiveness and performance; thus determining if stress was experienced within an organisation that is currently undergoing restructuring.

A quantitative research method was adopted to collect data from a large sample of participants. Surveys were carried out to determine the impact of stress and how to minimise the impact. The survey was distributed electronically to 291 participants comprising of staff from "Faculty A" at a Tertiary Education Organisation (TEO) in Auckland and the response rate was 20.3%.

The findings of the study demonstrate high positive results with regards to factors that cause stress within organisations during organisational restructuring. This indicates that stress was not managed up to staff expectations during the restructuring at the chosen TEO and the impact was more severe than was expected.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the current economy stress within organisations has taken an all time high. Budget cuts, limited resources and layoffs have lead to a tremendous increase in stress among people within the work force due to the uncertainty that prevails in the current environment (Belmonte, 2008). The Department of Labour (New Zealand) confirmed that the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 was promulgated to include all employers and work places. The Act was amended in 2002 to specify "work-related stress" (Rudman, 2010). It puts the emphasis on the need to

address stress management within the work place as the amended Act allows an employee to sue their employer for causing undue stress. Therefore, to reduce risk and ensure the best performance by staff it is important to try and minimise stress within an organisation.

More than a decade ago already, Dimmock (1999), was of the opinion that educational organisational restructuring is becoming necessary due to globalisation and internationalisation of education. With increasing students travelling overseas to acquire a qualification, there is a constant requirement for educational organisations to change their business practices by reshaping their basic ways including the design, management style and delivery of their academic practices.

When referred to the word “staff”, it includes management, administration and lecturers in a Faculty (“Faculty A”) in this paper. Staff members are unsure about their job security at the chosen TEO due to restructuring taking place. Job security is one of the stress factors identified by Clausen and Petruka (2009). During this period of changes and uncertainty it is important to manage stress. These stress factors have to be identified and addressed. By managing stress while providing a better work environment and support, “Faculty A” staff would be able to perform more effectively in their respective roles (Kardam, 2005). This in turn could help the organisation in performing to its utmost potential as a tertiary institution.

This research discusses stress management issues among staff during organisational restructuring to enhance human resource efficiency and how neglecting stress within an organisation can have a significant impact on staff performance. These issues need to be addressed so as to provide guidelines to management for a better working environment.

When an organisation undergoes restructuring, redundancy is considered as one of the main stress factors that staff experience during such a process. Compensating staff as a result of making them redundant was not defined in any New Zealand statute until the Employment Relations Act was amended in 2004 (Rudman, 2010). The Act now requires all collective employment agreements to encompass an employee protection provision to defend any staff/employee that is made redundant. Staff that is made redundant due to the restructuring should be financially compensated as part of the redundancy entitlements if stated in their employment contracts. This would help support staff for part of a period that they will be jobless.

When making staff redundant as a result of restructuring, it is also vital for an organisation to justify the dismissal for redundancy by illustrating valid grounds for terminating a particular position. Poor performance should not be considered a factor for making staff redundant as redundancy cannot be adopted by an organisation as an excuse to dismiss staff when the actual problem could be lack of performance or misconduct. Hence, management should keep this in mind when carrying out such tasks. After a staff member is made redundant an organisation must also not replace that position or employ someone else to do similar sort of work as it can result in unjustifiable termination leading to court proceedings, according to Rudman (2010).

Data was collected from all departments of the TEO's "Faculty A" staff. The reason for selecting and examining the three categories of staff was to ensure an adequate sample size for the research and to fairly represent "Faculty A" in different discipline areas which will form the basis of this research. All proposed plans, implementation processes and outcomes have been assessed, documented, tabled and graphed.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem is, what stress factors could be managed to enhance staff performance in an organisation during restructuring and what is the impact of stress on staff. This research also identifies how stress and performance relate to each other and also identifies the relationship between stress and job performance.

3. AIMS OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to recognise and classify issues and factors having an impact on staff during restructuring. There are five main areas in this research, but due to limitation of the length of this paper only the first two are reported on in this paper:

- a) To theoretically study organisational stress management.
- b) To identify the factors that cause stress within an organisation by carrying out a survey.
- c) To determine the impact of restructuring on staff.
- d) To get information from Faculty staff by carrying out a survey about how stress relates with staff performance.
- e) To determine methods and guidelines by which stress can be managed among staff to improve staff performance and in-turn an organisation's efficiency.

One of the three hypotheses derived from these areas is as discussed:

H1- Restructuring has raised stress during the restructuring of "Faculty A" and had an impact on staff.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to a study carried out at the Otago Polytechnic, organisational restructuring has a significant impact on employee commitment. Brauch as cited in Theissen, (2004) mentions that in the current age of restructuring and downsizing work commitment is viewed differently. Many

staff within organisations supports the change process simply to secure their jobs rather than having any attachment to it. According to research, work commitment plays an important role impacting staff performance and their efficiency from a manager's point of view. Organisations can effectively manage and maintain staff commitment during restructuring by communicating periodically with staff, planning in advance, respecting staff seniority and ensuring that the organisation's values and objectives are clearly aligned and communicated (Theissen, 2004).

Restructuring if not undertaken appropriately can cause distress among staff within an organisation. Stuart as cited in Raukko, (2009) mentions that organisational restructuring and change can cause trauma, catastrophe and abuse among staff. The author further indicates that organisational restructuring can have a negative impact on staff as it can lower their morale, increase stress levels, lead to loss of control and direction, create uncertainty and anxiety as well as reduce staff loyalty within an organisation. It can also have an impact on management functions comprising of training, recruitment, planning, staff compensation and organisational development (Du Plessis 2009; Belohlav & LaVan, 1989).

Appelbaum, Henson and Knee, (1999) state that organisation downsizing if not planned properly can result in psycho social problems among staff not affected by downsizing collectively known as "survivor syndrome". Such survivors tend to become narrow minded, risk averse and self absorbed which results in lowered self-esteem and loyalty in-turn affecting the organisational functioning. They continue to state that many organisations fail downsizing due to poor management and the existence of unmanaged resistance.

During organisational restructuring, social change in an organisation can also arise when there is disparity between the organisational environment and systems. Social change refers to an action

such as restructuring that affects and influences a group of people with shared values and characteristics. The change is likely to have a negative impact on staff and systems when disparity between the organisation environments is increased and a positive impact when it is reduced (Young, 1977).

Certain amount of stress is essential for an individual's development, growth, change, performance at work and in their personal lives. Brief, as cited in Larson, (2004) states that stress to an extent can help enhance our effectiveness and performance. An example would be a promotion which can be quite an exciting yet a challenging experience. Stress if not managed properly can lead to individual stressors which are harmful to both staff as well as their organisations. Hence the more stressors that prevail within the work environment even as a result of restructuring, the more stressed out staff will feel which in turn can result in lowered performance.

Therefore, excess stress of any kind can result in physical, psychological and behavioural problems leading to poor work performance and frustration. This is because excess stress enables us to perform well only to a certain extent after which a person's performance tends to decline (Larson, 2004).

When stress is high within an organisation for example during organisation restructuring, it is important for managers to think and act in a positive manner. This helps reduce stress among subordinates and other staff members as staff tend to act in accordance to how management reacts during such times. The methods and guidelines stated below are of double the importance for managers as compared to other staff comprising of lecturers and administration staff (Nadia, 2009).

Enhance communication

- Staff roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined.
- Staff must be made aware of their job prospects during restructuring to minimise ambiguity.
- Communication should be carried out regularly and efficiently among staff in a pleasant manner.

Conduct staff discussions

- Staff should feel that they are valued by discussing scheduling of work activities and rules within the organisation.
- Encourage staff participation in decision making.
- Assign appropriate workload among staff that matches their skills and abilities.

Provide staff incentives

- Reward staff for their achievements.
- Offer career development prospects for staff.
- Congratulate staff verbally and by offering certificates of merit based on their performance.
- Create a friendly work environment.

Develop a social environment

- Social gatherings among staff should be carried out from time to time.
- Harassment at work should not be accepted (Belmonte, 2008).

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Sample Selection

Based on the topic of this research it was anticipated to carry out the study among staff members within an organisation where restructuring has currently been undertaken to determine their stress levels and its impact on staff. Hence, “Faculty A” staff was selected for carrying out this research as some departments of the organisation have already undergone restructuring while other departments are still in the process. Thus staff members from eight departments in the same Faculty were considered the appropriate sample for this research as they had all been influenced by the restructure to a certain extent.

The online survey was sent to 291 staff members comprising of administration staff, managers and lecturers. This sample comprised of staff members from all of the eight departments that constitute “Faculty A” of the TEO. According to CRS, (2009) “the larger the sample size, the more certain you can be that their answers will truly reflect the population”.

5.2 Questionnaire Development

The questionnaire was developed and categorized in six parts. The first part comprised of demographic data pertaining to participant’s age, category, level and duration of service. The second part comprised of eight common factors that cause stress during organisational restructuring which included work overload, job security, longer work hours, role knowledge, inter role conflicts, lack of training, lack of management support and organisational commitment. The participants had to answer questions pertaining to each of the eight factors.

The questionnaire contains 32 questions subdivided into the eight most commonly occurring organisational stress factors. Each question within the questionnaire is assigned 5 marks. Hence the total marks for the 8 stress factors would be 32 (i.e. no. of questions) x5 (i.e. no. of marks) = 160 marks overall. Part of this questionnaire was developed on a study carried out by Theissen (2004), which was based on the impact of organisational restructuring on employee commitment at the Otago Polytechnic.

The remaining four parts of the survey included the factors that cause stress within an organisation, the impact of restructuring on staff, identifying how stress relates with staff performance and determining how stress can be managed. These last four parts of the survey were not given any rankings.

5.3 Pilot Study

Six fellow colleagues including staff were invited to carry out the pilot test by completing an online survey prior to sending out the survey link to all other respondents. The pilot test was carried out to identify any shortfalls of the survey for e.g. spelling errors, incorrect wording and so on. The respondents that participated in the pilot study were requested to test if they found any aspects of the survey to be misapprehended, confusing and ambiguous.

Participants on average spent between 10 to 15 minutes to complete the pilot survey. After conducting the pilot study only three modifications were made to the final survey which was then sent out to all other respondents at the beginning of August 2009.

5.4 Questionnaire Data Collection

Data pertaining to this study was collected electronically via e-mail that was sent by the researcher to all “Faculty A” staff members of the TEO. The staff members comprised of lecturers, administration staff and management. The e-mail included a link to an online survey that was sent out to 291 participants out of which 59 staff members completed the survey thus a response rate of 20.3% was achieved.

5.5 Data Analysis

The data pertaining to the surveys were exported to Microsoft Office Excel for analysis. All data was imported from an online tool called Survey Monkey which was used to carry out the surveys electronically via e-mail. Many tables and charts were developed using Excel to portray the results of the survey.

Some of the data was also quantitatively analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) programme. The SPSS programme was selected due to the numerous advantages that it provides for analysing quantitative data.

The degree of errors was reduced as data was directly collected online and not entered manually as in the case of physical (hard copy) surveys. The data from the survey was analysed by means of descriptive statistics comprising of percentages.

6. ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

The focus of this research is to identify the impact of stress among staff during organisational restructuring by obtaining staff’s perspectives. The researcher demonstrates the respondent’s comments and opinions on the eight common factors that cause stress during organisational

restructuring while discussing stress, organisational restructure, change and staff performance related issues and finally stress management issues.

The respondents were asked how they felt about lack of management support. The result shows that only 21% of the participants responded that they trust senior management to make sensible decisions for the organisation's future. Participants responded that 41% felt that their line managers have done all they can to help them understand exactly what is expected of them following the changes to the organisation.

It is alarming that 62% of the respondents responded that management did not plan and did not support the changes carefully in the organisation while only 22% rarely feel that management has been as honest with bad news as good news about changes to the organisation during restructuring.

This research has identified that the majority (55%) of the respondents distrust management decisions regarding the future of the organisation and trust therefore is only 24%, while 21% feel this way from time to time. It can therefore be deduced that the staff do not trust senior management in making sensible decisions for the organisation's future.

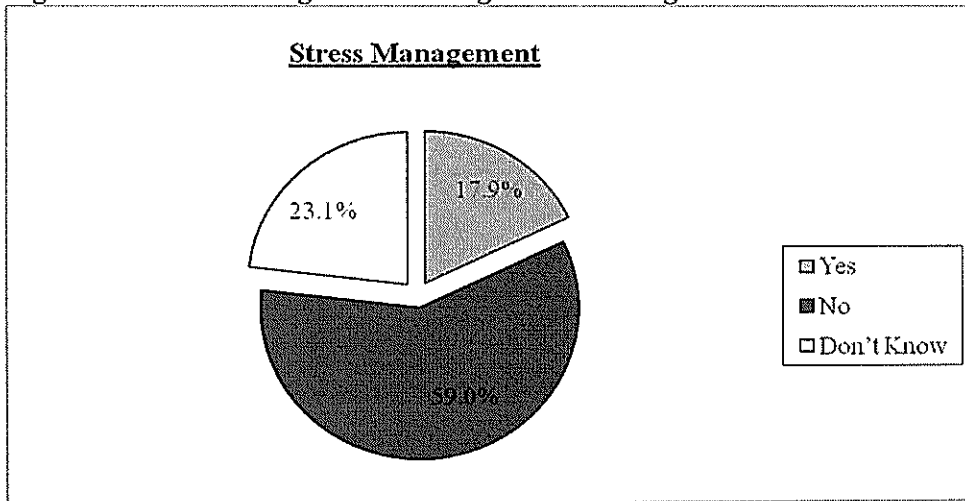
In the next question the survey participants were asked how they felt about organisational commitment. The result shows that a mere 13% of the respondents felt that the TEO has always kept its promises and commitments to staff about the demands of their job. A huge amount of participants (73%) rarely and never felt that the new structure inspired them to perform better. Another surprise was the 80% of respondents who responded that from time to time, often and always found it difficult to agree with some of this organisation's policies on important matters relating to its employees.

A further negative was recorded where 70% of the respondents felt that they would be willing to accept any type of work assignment to stay with this organisation. More than three quarters (78%) of the participants from time to time, often and always (combined) felt that it would take very little change in their present role/circumstances giving them a reason to leave the organisation while a mere 22% feel otherwise to the organisation.

It should be of great concern for management that 80% of the respondents disagree with some of the organisation policies relating to its staff and only 23% of respondents are always loyal, while more than half (55%) is unsure and only feel loyal from time to time or often. It can therefore be deduced that although staff find it difficult to agree with some of the organisation's policies on important matters relating to its employees, some of them do feel somewhat loyal to the organisation. If the respondents' years of service at the TEO is taken into account (66% have service from 6 to 20 years), this statement is then significant.

The survey participants were asked the question "In your opinion, do you believe that stress was managed properly during the restructure"? This question required participants to answer by agreeing to the statement as in "Yes" or then disagreeing to the statement as in "No". The result shows that the majority of the respondents (59%) disagreed to the fact that stress was managed properly during the restructure. Only 17.9% of respondents on the other hand disagreed with the statement and believed that stress was managed properly during the restructure while 23.1% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. See Figure 1 below.

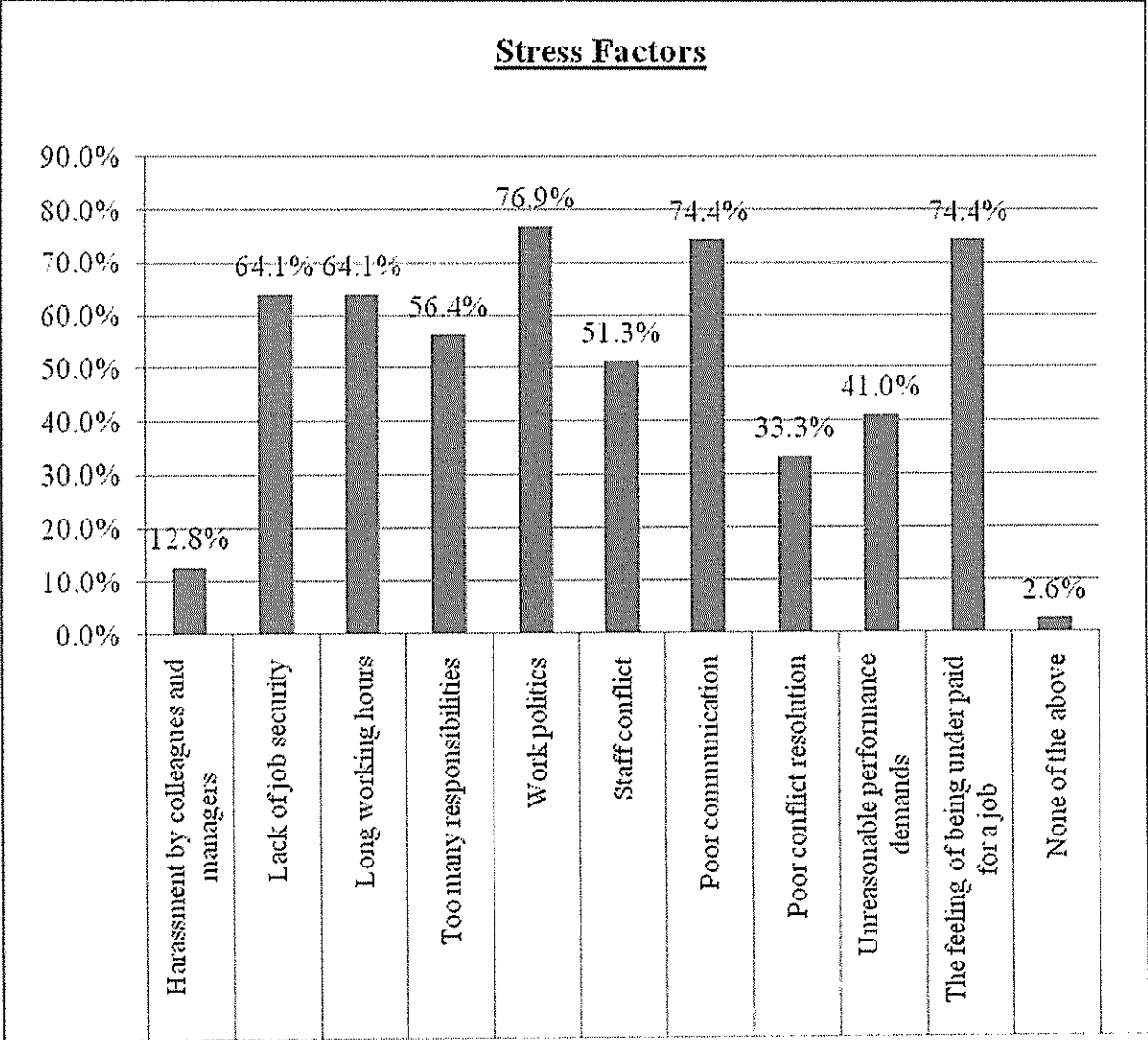
Figure 1: Stress management during restructuring



The findings of the second question in Section Three of the survey are presented in Figure 2, below. The survey participants were asked the question “Which of the following stress factors have you experienced during the restructuring process”? This question required participants to mark as many of the stress factors that applied to them. Three main areas of concern for management that they should address are: work politics at 76.9% followed by poor communication at 74.4% and the feeling of being underpaid for a job at an equal rating of 74.4%. These were considered as the top three stress factors by staff as a result of restructuring.

A lower consensus, but still a factor for concern for management, showed lack of job security at 64.1% and longer working hours with an equal rating of 64.1% as other stress factors as a result of the restructure. Management will have to address longer working hours as soon as possible because of the consequences it might have with the OSH Act. On the other hand harassment by colleagues and managers was given the lowest stress factor priority at 12.8% by the respondents.

Figure 2: Stress factors during restructuring



Respondents were asked if they had any other comments that they would like to state relating to stress factors they have experienced resulting from the restructure. Responses to this section of the question comprised of a number of different comments by respondents. The most common remarks made by the respondents are stated in the table below.

Table 1: Other staff comments on stress resulting from the restructure

Other (please specify):-
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of support from manager.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of leadership and cynicism from line managers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of confidence in senior management.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack on meaningful consultation and understanding of what is working effectively, change that is not steeped in clear thinking and fact, short term fiscal drivers rather than pedagogical sense, the lack of acknowledgment that staff on the ground need to buy into change as they are the implementers. This list could go on - get your hands on the submissions made to the academic leadership and admin review.

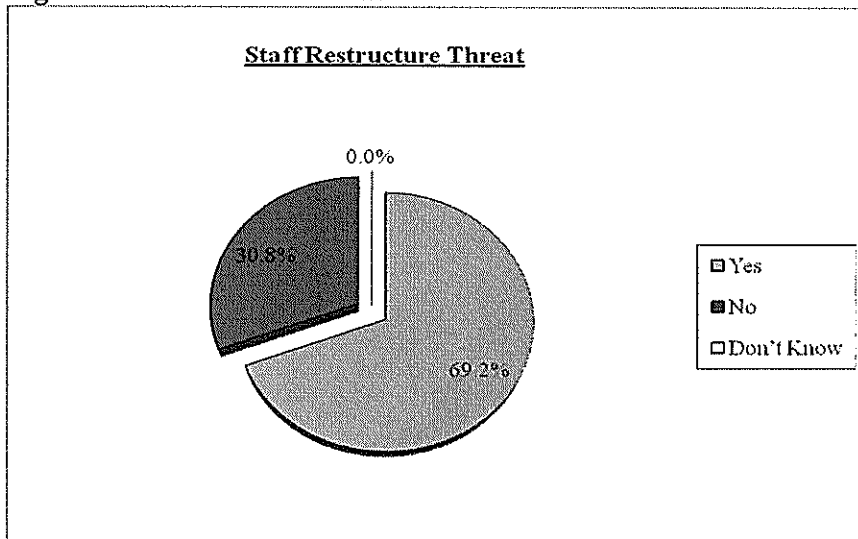
This result supports H1 that restructuring has raised stress during the restructuring of “Faculty A”.

The survey participants were asked the question “Did you feel threatened by the restructure”?

This question required participants to answer by agreeing to the statement as in “Yes” or then disagreeing to the statement as in “No”. The result shows that majority of the staff members (69.2%) agreed to the fact that they felt threatened by the restructure. The remaining 30.8% of respondents on the other hand disagreed with the statement and did not believe that they were threatened by the restructure.

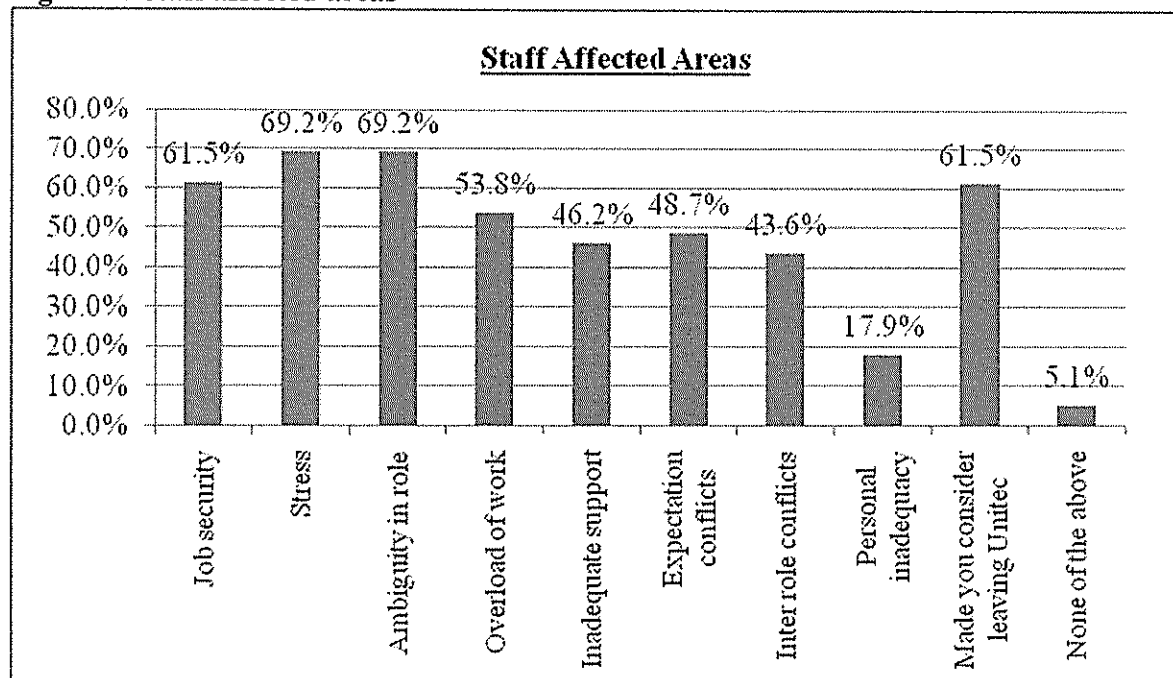
See Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Restructure threat



The findings of the second question in Section Four of the survey are presented in Figure 4, below. The respondents were asked the question “Did restructuring effect you in any of the following areas”? This question required participants to mark as many of the staff affected areas that applied to them. The result illustrate that stress and ambiguity in role were both given an equal rating of 69.2% and were considered as the most affected areas by staff as a result of restructuring. A lower consensus showed job security and staff considering leaving the TEO with an equal rating of 61.5% as other main affected areas followed with work overload at 53.8% as a result of the restructure. On the other hand the area of personal inadequacy was given the lowest priority of 17.9% by the participants.

Figure 4: Staff affected areas



When asked if staff had any additional comments that they would like to make about the restructuring process that was undertaken at the TEO, some staff members stated that top management did not completely abide by the organisations code of conduct. Staff commented about a number of issues of conduct that were violated and overlooked by top management. These comprised of the following:

- Staff members were not treated fairly with dignity and respect during the restructuring process.
- There was lack of open dialogue between management and staff.
- There was inequity within the organisation during the restructuring.
- There was poor management support with regards to resolving problems.

The respondents were asked the question “Do you have any additional comments that you would like to make about the restructuring process that has been undertaken at the organisation”?

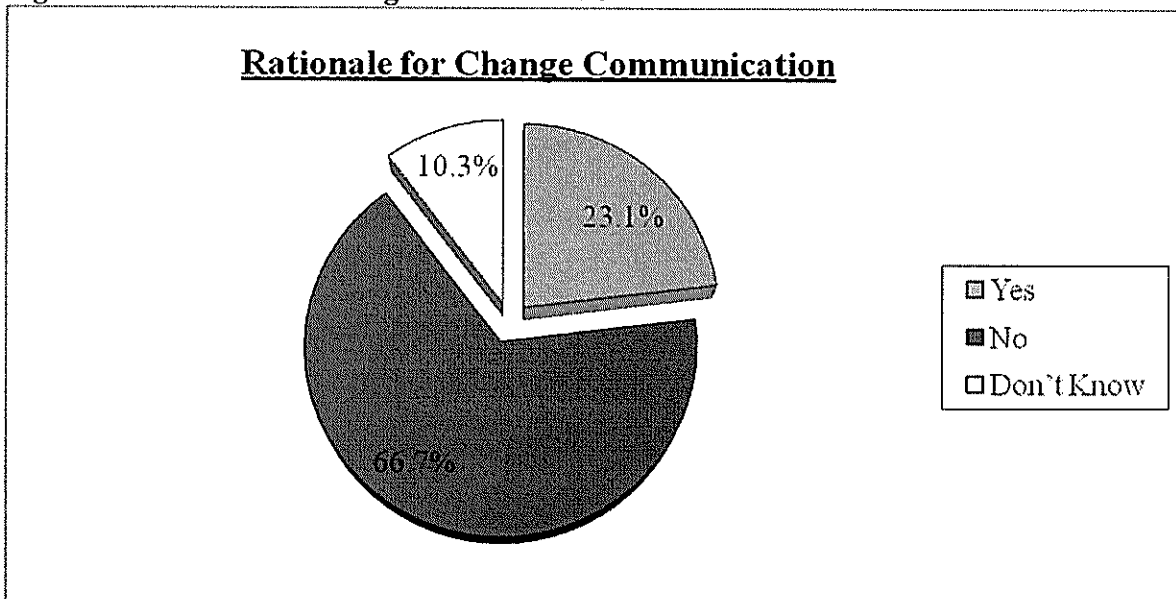
Table 2: Additional staff comments on restructuring process

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress is far too slow.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no strategic vision to justify.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The restructure is being carried out to save money not to improve performance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is lack of honesty and transparency of process, role change and institutional expectation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is very difficult to constantly adjust to a continuously shifting, yet poorly articulated, process with no clear objective or end point.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consultation has been farcical. There has not been enough detail in the documents to allow considered feedback, however it has allowed the panels to say that what we read into it, was not what they meant.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The restructuring has largely been a waste of time in achieving financial savings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The people driving the reorganisation have demonstrated little or no understanding of how to restructure or even manage an organisation of this size.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The people driving the reorganisation have demonstrated a lack understanding or a total disregard of the main function (to provide education) of the organisation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The feedback that staff provided has been ignored and treated with contempt.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The serious consequences now arise where many staff, no longer feel a connection with or that they are part of the organisation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was poor change management with lack of real consultation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructuring administrators opinions have not been taken into consideration by the steering committee.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The restructuring was not necessary as only a few minor changes could have put things in perspective.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The restructure was not undertaken sensitively with regards to staff.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members from the last restructure have hardly been given the time to settle in their new roles.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The restructure has been carried out to increase profit margins and not performance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot of the feedback provided has not been taken into consideration.

This was an open ended question that required participants to answer the question to obtain their point of view. Responses to this question comprised of a number of different comments by participants which are stated in the table above.

The respondents were asked the question “In your view, was the rationale for change effectively communicated to employees”? It is not surprising that the result shows that two thirds of the respondents (66.7%) disagreed to the fact that the rationale for change was effectively communicated to employees. Just 23.1% of respondents on the other hand agreed with the statement while 10.3% of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

Figure 5: Rationale for change communication

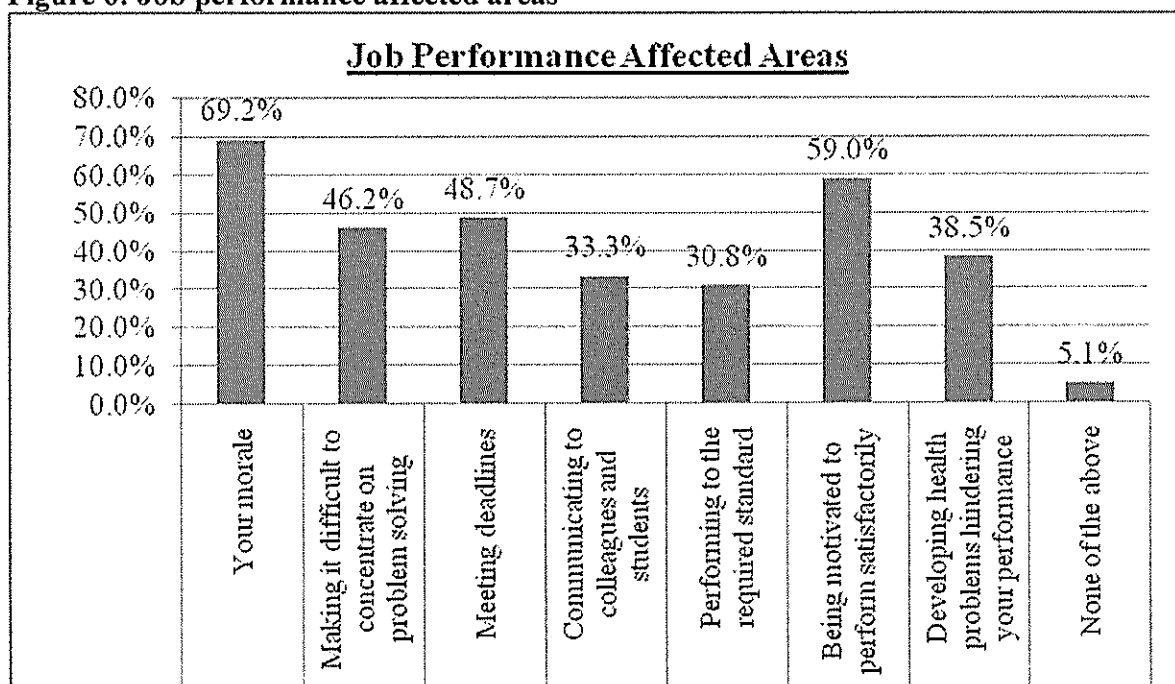


The sixth section of the survey comprised of questions describing stress management related issues. The respondents were asked the question “According to you, has stress affected your job performance in your morale, problem solving, meeting deadlines, communicating to colleagues and students, performance, motivation, developing health problems or none of them”?

It was found that morale was the highest affected area relating to job performance which was given a rating of 69.2% by respondents as a result of restructuring. It can be deduced that morale is linked to the percentage of respondents (78%) who indicated that they consider to leave the organisation, in other words to loyalty. A lower consensus showed being motivated to perform satisfactorily at 59% and meeting deadlines at 48.7% along with difficulty to concentrate on problem solving at 46.2% were other job performance affected areas as a result of the restructure.

Performing to the required standard was given the lowest priority of 30.8% by the respondent's and is something that management must take seriously into account. It can be deduced that the respondents lost some of their interest in standards due to the continuous re-structuring at the TEO.

Figure 6: Job performance affected areas



When asked how stress had affected staff job performance, besides the stated areas in the question, staff commented on the following issues:

Table 3: Staff additional comments on stress and staff job performance

Other:-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress has resulted in numerous doctor-involved stress episodes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress has led to lack of confidence in management impacts on all the above.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress has resulted in high blood pressure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress has resulted in migraine.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE LEADERSHIP TEAM OF THE TEO

Although offering of stress leave was given the lowest priority of 35.9% by the respondents it is something that management must take into consideration to offer to employees.

McPherson, (2008) states that educational institution's morale is usually low among staff members as they complain about salaries not matching inflation and due to extreme work pressure during restructuring. Therefore, management can ensure staff morale is attained by following a number of basic procedures such as regularly checking the flow of communication; monitoring leave to ensure that staff get a break from the daily work routine; listening to any issues that staff have; regularly determining levels of control; and most importantly asking staff themselves as to what motivates them (Sue, 2003).

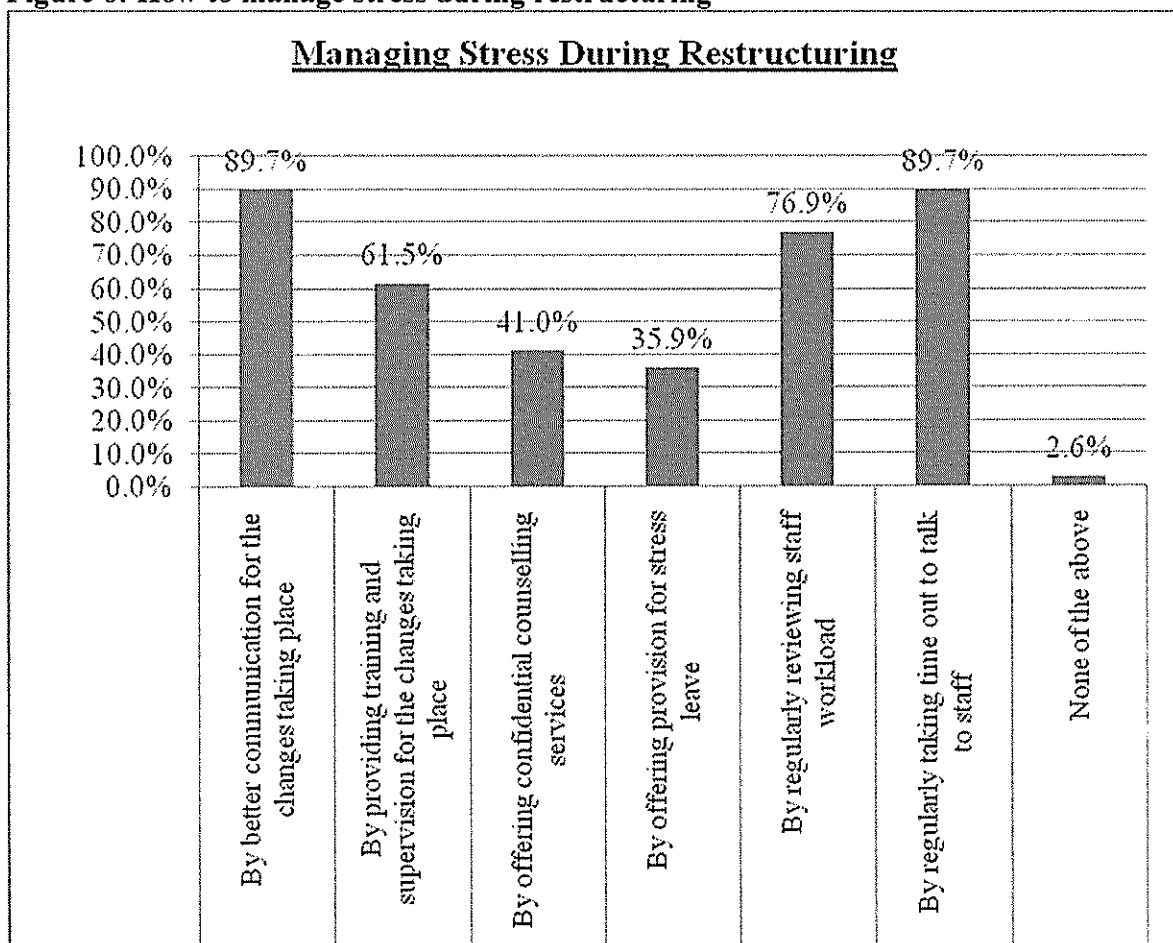
To boost staff morale the leadership team should implement a schedule of morale boosters: conduct annual parties; publicise staff achievements and contributions; encourage staff to pursue further education; give staff authority to perform their tasks independently where and when

possible; greet staff at the start and end of the day; offer special anniversary gifts to acknowledge staff that have been within an organisation for “X” amount of years; have a honour day to honour staff contributions; conduct meetings at different venues and display employee of the month either monthly or then quarterly on the organisation top achievers board and reward high achievers.

One of the recommendations is that stress could and should be managed by the leadership team.

Figure 6, below, depicts the areas and how this should be done by the leadership according to the respondents.

Figure 6: How to manage stress during restructuring



When asked how stress can be managed and minimised in an organisation during restructuring, besides the stated areas in the question, staff commented on the following issues:

Table 4: Staff comments on managing of stress and minimising thereof

<u>Other:-</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By speeding the process as far as practicable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By understanding the organisation BEFORE restructuring takes place.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By ensuring equal workloads as some particularly admin staff are doing much higher workloads than others, only because they are more capable which is unfair.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By managers ensuring support and encouragement that is given to administration staff.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making senior management aware of people's stress.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rationale for changes is no longer clear. There are no clear institutional goals. ACT on staff feedback. Some know much more than their managers. We know the consequences if it goes wrong - qualifications are compromised and students migrate for e.g. latest BAF & BS experience.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any change is stressful, no matter how many communications there are. But certainly lots of communication will help alleviate the stress to an extent.

8. CONCLUSION

The TEO's leadership team should use the results of this survey to identify the impact that restructuring has on such staff and their performance. The leadership team of the TEO could also be informed how the stress experienced by staff during the re-structuring including the influence/affects it had or still has on them can best be managed. It was also expected that a greater response rate would be achieved if the research had the backing and support of such an organisation's body. Organisation support when carrying out surveys helps to develop trust and confidence among the respondents while encouraging staff to see the need of such an exercise (Lusty, 2007).

H1 is that restructuring has raised stress during the restructuring of “Faculty A”. This hypothesis is found to be positive. The main research question and sub-questions identifying the stress factors that could be managed to enhance staff performance in an organisation during restructuring are all answered. Some of the key issues that respondents raised with regards to the restructure were as follows:

- 60% of respondents did not feel secure of their jobs at the TEO during the restructure.
- 78% of respondents feel that after the restructure their new role interferes with their personal life and interests (e.g. social, religious and family) which are neglected due to lack of time causing stress.
- 81% of respondents feel that the scope of promotion is limited within staff roles due to restructuring, increasing their stress levels.
- 55% of the respondents distrust management decisions regarding the future of the organisation.
- 80% of respondents find it difficult to agree with some of the organisation's policies on important matters relating to its employees and only 23% of respondents are always loyal, while more than half (55%) is unsure and only feel loyal from time to time or often.

The respondents also raised some further issues with regards to the restructure which are as follows:

- Unfavourable work politics during the restructuring process.
- The feeling of being threatened by the restructure.
- A conventional, autocratic and authoritarian approach/style in carrying out the change at the TEO.

- How the stress caused, due to the restructure, has affected staff performance by lowering their morale.
- A total of 89.7% of the respondents responded that stress can be managed and minimised during restructuring through better communication. Regularly reviewing staff workload was also regarded important by 76.9% of respondents to manage stress.
- Management should reduce the fear of failure at all times as it leads to many people not performing up to expectations and standards

Stress factors are very closely related to a person's perception of his/her work environment. Stress management should be the responsibility of the leadership team to ensure that their entire staff can perform to their utmost potential by monitoring and managing all stressors within the work environment. There must be clear and two way communication with feedback to overcome some of the stressors. If a solution to a problem is not found, it can lead to lower efficiency, poor staff morale and a considerable impact on the physical and psychological health of staff. Some recommendations were given in the previous section.

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