



Research Paper

# New capabilities of skill-set and workplace stress: Human resource management innovation

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## ABSTRACT

The objective of this research review paper is to identify the importance of new capabilities of skill-set for strategic productivity through people, and as a means by which a focused human resource management innovation may be used to ameliorate the challenges of workplace stress. In the light of the challenges, the research explored the concept of new capabilities of skill set as innovation addressing workplace stress. The study employed qualitative techniques that made use of data collection through words, collected literature review, general interaction with organizational management scholars. The data were complemented by face-to-face interviews with captains of industries in organizational management. The study employed Human Capital theory in the topic discussion. Findings divulged that workplace stress is against a corporate culture that improves productivity through people, and workplace stress creates a gap in organization's effective management. The study proffered strategies such as recruitment of teaching staff, develop capabilities building of employees, invest in employ trainings etc to achieve a transformation process in an organization through human resource management.

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Organizations are entities for goal attainment, and employees are the building blocks to make possible for such goal attainment. Characteristics common to successfully achieve such desired goal is to attract qualified, knowledgeable and skillful employees through human resource department for organization's effectiveness. The primary role of human resource management is to determine innovations for organizational goals, strategies and design therein engage employees, train, compensate them, develop policies that relates to personnel and establish strategies to retain the employees (Chai and Sutner, 2023). An organization is as good as its employees; this makes human resource management a vital department enhancing the health of the business through training and retraining that will expose the employees to new capabilities of skill set. In today's management, human resource management has undergone many changes, and more vital roles are given. Human resource is employee management with an emphasis on improving employees' knowledge and skills as an important asset of the organization. They are known as human capital. The aim of human capital is based on the tendencies to enhance their capacity through new capabilities of skill set that will reduce workplace stress, make effective use of employees and increase return on investment (Frasch, David and Jared, 2009). An employee affected with workplace stress cannot be aligned with organizational goals. For an organization to be successful, workplace stress should be a top solution priority. Guided by the defined boundaries of this discourse, the paper finds it convenient to proceed by examining and analyzing:

- What new capabilities of skill set is within an organization's business setting.
- The problems of workplace stress the context of creating and maintaining a nimble organization capable of operating successfully in its environment.
- The human resource management functions and required coping attributes for sustained result oriented employee new capabilities of skill set.

In an organization where workplace stress is manifested, leads to decreased job satisfaction, performance employment disengagement and a reflection on negative overall employee experience. In addition, workplace stress generates mental, emotional and behavioural disorder that deteriorates into employee disillusionment making it impossible for the employee to be productive and aligned with organization's goals. Challenges of workplace stress when not properly handled can weaken human resource management essence which is to make use of human capital to create innovation in order to achieve organizational goals.

The paper applied observation and explorative method that is relied in qualitative method of data collection through content analysis and considerable review of related literature.

## 2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 | New Capabilities of Skill Set: What is it?

The new capabilities of skill set are to ponder what knowledge, skill and ability (KSAs) innovation will employees need to face future production challenges in an organization. In this context, the term organization is seen to be social entity that is goal directed, with deliberately structured activity systems, and with a link to the external environment (Daft, 1998). All organizations with whatever business aims (such as public/organization like ministries, departments and their agencies (MDAs), mercantile, industrial and service orientated outfits in the organized private sector etc) are all corporate entities. Agreeing with the above definition, Ejiogu (2001), organization is described as a collectivity of human groupings intentionally constructed and reconstructed to meet particular goals. Therefore, organizations can be seen as a human social system which usually evolves in all enterprises. By implication organization is special purpose group designed and structured in the interest of maximum efficiency (Schaefer and Lamm, 1995). To evolve in all enterprises for the interest of maximum efficiency, new capabilities of skill set is required to activate this human social entity, organization. Simply put, skill set is the combination of knowledge, individual qualities and abilities that are developed through employee's work and life experience. Skill set emphasis is on specific range of an employee's knowledge (experience), skill and abilities needed to acquire and perfectly execute a job (Talentyft, 2020). On a wider perspective, in his own view Doyle (2020), posits that over time a particular skill set coverage can include technological know-how skills, leadership skills, management skill, accounting, planning, human relations, research and development (R&D), security etc. For corporate organization to survival in competitive global changes, there is need for human resource management to be evolving into human focused functions that will tackle the challenges of workplace stress. This implies that new capabilities of skill set is a human focused functions that are peoples' (employees) transformation to improve their performance development that will enhance production to achieve organization's goals. New capabilities of skill set is a performance development that provides insight on how to keep ahead and transform human capital from a process focused function to a people driven business. Taken a little further, skill set is the interaction among two key elements, that is: (i) Soft skill and (ii) Hard skill.

Soft skill, is interpersonal concern when appropriately applied at workplace environment will reduce workplace stress. According to Ayton (2021), soft skill involves the ability to manage one's character that is acceptable in workplace. This means it relates to employee's personality and the ability to collaborate, understand and tolerate with other work colleagues. This involves an in-demand skill set that includes good communication, listening, attention to details, critical thinking, empathy, peace and conflict resolution abilities among other individual skills (Doyle, 2020). Hard skills are particular knowledge, skills and abilities needed for a specific job (Ayton, 2021). By implication they are quantifiable, measureable and teachable skill

set that can take care of the challenges of workplace stress, and can easily be listed in the employee resume'. Hard skills involve the specific technical knowledge and abilities required for a job to avoid workplace stress. In addition, it includes transferable and job specific development skills. Ayton (2021) posits that, transferable skills apply to many various career fields which include soft skills such as critical thinking and problem solving; and hard skills like writing, quantitative abilities and data analysis, while job specific are necessary for a particular employment position.

## 2.2 | New Capabilities Building as a Productive Drive Innovation

The object of the new capabilities building of skill set as a productive drive innovation is the capacity to obtain new competencies and acknowledge to evolving context. Capabilities building is more embracing postulation that focuses at the wider sketch of an employee prospective skills. It is the building block that adds to the development of capabilities (DISPRZI, 2023). For instant, data analysis is a skill, a personal capability to make data driven resolution, along with others such as evaluative thinking and appreciating of business settings. Capabilities building stimulate employee's growth and advancement. This implies that, it is the process of developing and improving skills, knowledge and capabilities of employees or organizations. These improvements permit organization's workforce to successfully execute jobs, attain objectives and adjust to changing context. For new capabilities building to effectively seen as a productive drive must include the possession of new competencies, the enhancement of existent skills and development of mental attitude that accepts sustained learning and development. New capabilities building are psychologically connected to employee's task to overcome workplace stress. Significance of new capabilities building allows employees to improve skills, promoting career growth and organizational accomplishment through a skilled, modified workforce. In addition, new capabilities building as a productive drive generates:

- (i) Accelerate quality performance and productivity.
- (ii) Empower quicker transformation
- (iii) Draws and keep talented employees
- (iv) Align employees with organizational objectives
- (v) Builds a supportive structure for sequential arrangement in the business organization.

## 2.3 | Performance, High or Low: workplace Stress makes the Difference

The hallmark of performance in every organization is the 'productive index' (Ejiogu, 2001). Performance can be measured by the level of efficiency with which resources of all kinds, human and material (or inputs) are transformed into goods and services (or output). Effective performance cannot be achieved in a workplace environment where workplace stress is glaring. workplace stress generates a huge gap in the course of performance to actualize high productive index. workplace stress has an impact and once-for-all effects on employee performance which is a major factor of high impact on employee productivity. According to Messmer (2004), workplace stress is all about work demands and pressure that are not matched with employee's knowledge, skills, and abilities which ultimately creates difficulties on employee's ability to cope. It generates harmful, physical and emotional reactions that happen when the job requirements do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of the employee. The main difficulties created by workplace stress can lead to employee poor health and even injury, employee disillusionment, poor collaboration at workplace which eventually leads to employee disengagement and its adverse effect on employee emotional well-being. At times workplace stress may result to untimely death.

workplace stress associate with the following challenges:

- Employee not able to cope with demands for the job
- Employee do not comprehend job roles and duties
- Employee having problems with relationships at workplace
- Employee being often bullied at workplace
- Employee inability to control the way on performance of job roles
- Employee lack adequate information and support to perform his job roles. However, workplace stress may result from heavy workload, people's issues, work life balance and lack of job employment security.

In the utilization of skills at workplace, 'work' is taken to be supply of physical, mental and emotional efforts to produce goods and services for consumption by others or own consumption (Scott and Marshal, 2005). workplace stress, poses as challenge on effective utilization of skills to perform work in an organization. It has adverse effects that weaken the employee emotional well-being to execute work in an organization. The affected employee feels lost, disenchanted and confused because of not able to cope with the changing demands of work in the organization. The limits of workplace stress is therefore fixed by the utilization quality of new capabilities skill set acquired from both during training, retraining and

development programmes organized by the organization which could be internal or external. Utilization of new capabilities of skill set is one of the major ways to handle the challenges of workplace stress. The identification of this fact and deficiency in the pursuit and sustenance of enduring organization behaviour or funded on a well motivated workforce is one of the critical challenges of human resource management today even as it was in the past.

## 2.4 | Human Resource Management in the workplace

Considering the nexus of new capabilities of skill set, workplace stress, performance and human resource in the workplace, it is not difficult to pin-down the human resource management element as the fulcrum of the mix. In relation to the workplace, the term human resource refers on the staff list (Ejiogu, 2001). Human resource management has implication for their employee's total personalities including knowledge, skill and ability in a body of functions as well as their attitude to work, their social disposition to people and to changing phenomena around them. Human resource has already been identified as the most critical factor in the workplace. The primary purpose of human resource management is to ensure that the organization is able to achieve success through people (Armstrong, 2009). From the strategic and consistent perspective, human resource management is about effective and efficient management of people in the organization such that they help their business gain competitive merit. It is expected to support and enhance employees' performance in the organization (Dixit, 2023), a service of an employees' strategic goals. From effectiveness approach to enhance employees' performance, human resource department have to be dynamic in its role develop employees to be duty relevance in contemporary evolving trend on upgrading the knowledge, skill, and abilities. New capabilities of skill set have become a paradigm for human resource management to reduce or overcome challenges of workplace stress scenario. The primary changing roles of human resource department on its employee include tackling the challenges of workplace stress. The role to embark on development is crucial to orchestrate winning performance and managing employees for successes. Development as a concept is explored in perceptive of career development and performance improvement levers. The development concept focuses on human potentials that will deliver the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) needed to meet changing requirement in an on-going process that stretches each employee is to fulfill winning performance for organization success. Development inclined to focus attention on a longer-term strategic change and to reflect on improving capabilities of current or future skills and knowledge. Ghodke (2018) asserts that development is directed more toward widening an employee's skills for future responsibility. In this sense, development is an attempt to enhance winning performance (to avoid workplace stress) by imparting knowledge, changing attitude, added skill and knowledge. From the above context, development process consists of:

- Accessing the organization's strategic needs to boost competitiveness?
- Appraising employee's current performances.
- And, developing the employee and his career for future ability.

It is not easy to differentiate where 'training' stops and where 'development' starts. Training entails acquiring new information or presenting employees' knowledge and skills they require to execute their jobs (Desseler, 2008). This may involve having current job holder explaining the job to the new employee, teaching to new information. Furthermore, training is often applied effectively to explain almost any effort initiated by an organization to promote learning among its employees (Sage, 2018). Training tends to be more specific focused and orientated toward short term performance concern. Human resource management use of training and development take cognizance the blending of ventures organizations involve to up-grade skill base of employees. Both training and development expressions engage on indispensable roles in nurturing and intensifying these proficiencies that overcome workplace stress. These approaches have become fraction of the cornerstone of strategic execution to enhance employee's human capital. McKay (2020) remind us that in global economy, there is on-going rapidly changing technologies requirement that employees need to constantly hone their knowledge, skills and abilities to cope with new processes and methodologies (new capabilities of skill set) that will avoid workplace stress. The changing role of human resource management is as a result of today's job that require low skill are quickly being replaced by jobs that need technical know-how, problem solving and inter-personal skills. Training and development inclined toward empowerment, total quality management (TQM) and team-work. International businesses has made it necessary for human resource practitioners as well as employees, to develop and train for the skills that will enable them to handle new and more demanding job assignments.

The term human resource implies that employees have capabilities that drive career development and enhance performance. The primary aim that human resource engages in career development of employee is to bring their knowledge, skills and abilities up to the level needed for sufficiently good

performance to overcome workplace stress. As these employees proceed with on the job, appended career development creates opportunities for them to acquire new knowledge and skills. Career development is a process to overcome challenges associated with workplace stress. McKay (2020) defined career development as the process of making choice of a career, improving employee's skills and expressing along a career track. It is a life-long process of learning and decision-making that brings the employee closer to his ideal job, skill-set and knowledge improvement. Career development has strategic orientation that involves the entire work-life of an employee. Human resource management make use of 'human capital' and 'intellectual assets' to drive career development. This engagement driven brings to focus that career development consists of personal skill-set improvement under taken by an employee through training, development and education programmes organized by the organization (Source: Wikipedia, From: <https://www.businessmanagement.ideas.com/human-resource-management-2/career-development/w>)

This system of development helps to possess new capabilities skill-set and it emphasizes to equipping employee's career to be relevant in an intra or inter-organizational context. Development programmes relevant for career development includes:

- Training and development linked to career and development.
- Mentoring and coaching for continuous improvement of employees.
- Job rotation across the functional areas to appreciate functional nexus in the organization.
- Allowing sabbatical and finding it to gain knowledge by the employee from outside the organization.
- Information dissemination to make the employees aware of new trends in their area of expertise and working of the organization as an organic system (McKay, 2020).

The primary aim of career development is to make sure that an employee acquire appropriate skill-set, qualifications and experiences are provided when needed. It has become an integral aspect of career management and important role of the human resource management to embark with main emphasis being on the up-grading of employees' skill-set(s). The new capabilities of skill-set must commensurate with the requirements of the job that will improve productivity and overcome challenges of workplace stress.

## 2.5 | Theoretical Framework

Human capital theory as propounded by Gray Becker is the conceptual framework employed as support or guide for understanding the relevance of capabilities of skill-set to reduce workplace stress. In empirical terms, human capital assumes that investment in capabilities building is relevant to acquire knowledge, skill, training/learning which in return will improve individual capital (Eide and Showalter, 2010). Human capital in education involve of knowledge, skills and health that employees invest in and gather together during passages of their lives, ensuring them to actualize their potentials as productive members of the organization. Observed, human capital facilitates the pace of development both on an employee and the organization. When human capital is effectively developed, it consists of knowledge, skills and capacity employees pull together in their process of working. Human capital developments are economic and serve as social empowerment to the employees and the development of the organization.

## 3 | CONCLUSION

The main essence of human resource management is bringing together and maintaining various kinds of people to create innovation (employees to achieve a common organization's purpose). To achieve organization's common purpose, employee must be stimulated to their maintaining of knowledge and skills. The human resource department handles specific challenges and issues that pertain to human activities to make sure organizational productivity will be crystallized in what is described as the nimble organization. To be able to consistently succeed in unpredictable and contested environment, human resource should embark on plans for new capabilities building for its employees to avoid challenges of workplace stress. Embarking on plans to acquire new skill-set is to respond to implementing rapid changes for efficiently and effectively business operations than its competitors.

The modern and efficient human resource department has a critical challenge to provide the tools and an enabling environment to facilitate capabilities building for the employees to overcome challenges of workplace stress, actualize them and achieve organization's goals. Human resource department in organization has the implication for their employees' total personalities including their inherited and acquired attributes of intelligence, knowledge and skills in a body of functions as well as their attitude to works, their social dispositions to people and to changing phenomena around them.

## 3.1 | Proffered Strategies

For human resource department of an organization to be able to deliver effectively, it must focus on partnering with the workforce. Partnering with the workforce is to stimulate the human resource management role in this respect, is to:

- Carefully recruit, develop and retain employees that are teachable, open to learn with the right combination of specialist know-how, skill and attributes needed to match the business's demands.
- Enhance employee capabilities to produce effective performance without relying on hierarchical authority.
- Release and develop the capabilities building of employees.
- Invest in employees and the organization in learning, workshop and libraries.
- Human resource department must have access to adequate funds to bank-roll capabilities build opportunities for employees.
- Maintain and improve the physical, mental and emotional well-being of the work-force by making available appropriate working conditions, health and safety initiatives.
- Always embarking on training, retraining and department programmes for the employees to update their knowledge and skills.
- Design, implement individually and in work-team towards capabilities building, business priorities and results.

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