

Energy Management of Employee at Work

-A Theoretical Framework-

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Abstract

In this study, there are theoretical descriptions of individual energy management that is rarely handled in the literature. The purpose of this study is to contribute enrich the literature and to be a basis for empirical studies to be done on the topic. In any organization, for an individuals' using energy fully or using their energy in a highly productive way is important for the individual and for the organization. Individuals who get tired during hard work and who consume their energy can restore their energy mentally, physically and emotionally. In addition, there are energy management strategies in and out of the organization. Individuals' consuming their energy and restoring this energy has great effect on reaching aims of the individuals and the organization.

Personal Energy and Its Features

Human energy is an emotional state that includes willing and lively to take an action besides having the ability to make a move (Fritz, Lam & Spreitzer, 2011). According to another definition, energy is an emotional state, which includes strength and willingness, needed to overtake or make a move (Atwater & Carmeli, 2009). The personnel can do their job properly with the help of their energy that they have. Having energetic personnel can be a must in terms of organizational success. That is because people with a lot of energy are more productive, creative and they have a positive influence on other (Atwater & Carmeli, 2009; Schippers & Hogenes, 2011).

Employees of today's business world have to do their job in the best way in a high tempo and mostly by racing against time. Inter-organizations competition forces the individual in terms of work pace and quality. Under these circumstances, success of organization depends on the presence of highly energetic employees. Organizational success and overcoming difficulties cannot be managed with employees feeling tired, even exhausted.

It is long known that there is a relationship between human energy and physical and psychological health (Ryan & Frederick, 1997; Schippers & Hogenes, 2011). Departing from this, one can conclude that an individual with a high level of energy is also healthy in physically and psychologically, and that a physically and mentally healthy individual has a high potential to be energetic.

Trying to maximize the energy and motivation of employees of the organization destroys the organization in long term. Energy of employees should be in the optimal level.

Reasons for cases of deaths observed in Japan, which are found to be due to overworking, is extreme motivation and excessive energy (Welbourne, Andrews & Andrews, 2005).

The energy of an employee is used up as a battery is (Fritz, Lam & Spreitzer, 2011; Schippers & Hogenes, 2011). Energy of an individual is like an important and limited amount of fuel needed for success of organizations(Fritz, Lam & Spreitzer, 2011).Employees of the organization are willing to avoid factors that can cause decline of this energy, try to protect and increase it (Quinn & Dutton, 2005). That is, they need this energy for high performance. One can regain the energy lost after a working day or working week by having a rest in the evening or at the weekend. In order to have an energetic start for a new day or a new week, having a rest and regeneration are very important (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2005; Schippers & Hogenes, 2011).

Energy is positive feeling, provides individuals with a positive point of view, and increases their expectations (Quinn & Dutton, 2005). An energetic individual is self-confident, always in positive feelings and believes that he or she can succeed in all duties. Positive feelings that he or she has contribute to his or her success.

There is a strong cohesion between energy and motivation (Welbourne, Andrews & Andrews, 2005; Atwater & Carmeli, 2009; Schippers & Hogenes, 2011). An individual can have a high motivation on a subject. However, in order to have good results of high motivation, one must have a high level of energy as well. Motivation can only pave the way to success if it is with energy.

Another subject closely related to energy is the “burnout”. In burnout, it is the case that the energy level of the person is continuously at the same low level for a long time (Schippers & Hogenes, 2011; Fritz, Lam & Spreitzer, 2011). If energy levels of employees are not followed up regularly, the organization can face burnout.

A person can evaluate the energy levels of others and his or her own by observing body language (Quinn & Dutton, 2005). Therefore, an individual can decide to have a break realizing an increase in his or her energy. Alternatively, an administrator can decide for a longer break realizing the employees' burnout after a long workday. In order to get individuals' having high performances at work and maintain this performance, they should observe their energy levels and it is important that administrators should observe these levels and have necessary precautions for the success of the organization as well.

Three kinds of energy are often discerned (Schippers & Hogenes, 2011) namely 1. *Mental energy* (being able to intensely focus), 2. *Physical energy* (strength, endurance, flexibility), and 3. *Emotional energy* (being in touch with one's own feelings and core values). Within the energy dimensions, three characteristics of energy can be discerned, namely 1. *The amount of Energy*; there is an important potential is ready for showing effort as much as the energy is. Limited amount of energy means limited amount of effort. 2. *The Stability of energy*: If energy is not consumed in a short time, and if it has a long durability, there is that much of an advantage. A person who gets tired in a short time cannot make an effort for long-term objectives. 3. *The Direction of energy* (Schippers & Hogenes, 2011). It is important to use energy in the proper direction. Energy, which is used in the wrong direction unnecessarily, will not lead the person to success.

Factors Increasing and Decreasing Personal Energy

There have been some studies on how personal energy, which is very important for the success of organizations, can be increased. According to one of these studies, factors that increases the energy level of employees of an organization are strategies depending on learning, meaningfulness of work for the person, positive relationships in the workplace, person's focus on exhilarative things at work, defining new goals and doing things that can make workmates happy.

According to another study, there are four topics for factors increasing energy levels of employees (Fritz, Lam & Spreitzer, 2011). 1. *Physical*: This includes making physical activities such as drinking or eating something. 2. *Relational*: Interacting with other people in a positive manner like helping them. 3. *Mental*: Making a list of things to do or making plans for the evening or the weekend. 4. *Spiritual*: These are used to see the "bigger picture" of things. Thinking about the meaningfulness of work may give energy to the person.

With another classification, tactics to increase energy can be studied in two topics:

1. Intraorganizational energy management tactics: Drinking tea or coffee, checking personal e-mails, surfing the internet, chatting with workmates, planning things to do, etc.
2. Extraorganizational energy management tactics: Taking photos, going for a walk, visiting friends, having time with relatives, going to the cinema, painting, etc.

Because learning improves humankind, it turns out to be a psychological source and gives energy to the person. Positive relationships, which a person lives with workmates and administrators, have fast and permanent effects positive on the cardiovascular, immune and nerve systems of the person. Besides these, it helps to increase the energy level of the person (Atwater & Carmeli, 2009; Fritz, Lam & Spreitzer, 2011). In contrast, negative relationships between people in the workplace is like a blackhole absorbing all the energy in people.

People's having friendships and free time activities out of the organization has remedial and energy-giving features (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2005; Hahn, Binnewies & Haun, 2012; Iwasaki, 2003). Moreover, it is understood that when people see the meaningfulness, importance and usefulness of their work, they have been more successful. Therefore, it is vital for administrations to define an inspirational mission and to emphasize how the organization would be fruitful for the public in this way. In this respect, it is possible for employees to act in the same direction of purposes and values of the organization and to become more energetic (Harrison, 1987).

The role of administrators in employees' gaining energy cannot be ignored. If there are administrators who have the qualities of a leader in the organization, they can create positive and creative energy with people even in hard times (Naiman, 2009; Atwater & Carmeli, 2009; Schippers & Hogenes, 2011). When we consider the emotions communicable, administrators who are not stuck to negative feelings, stays positive, creating a shared vision and devoted themselves to this vision despite great difficulties, and create excitement among employees in this direction can increase the energy of all people.

If people are sure that administrators pay attention to their ideas and that administrators inform them correctly, the energy level will be high (Naiman, 2009). Therefore, administrators should create atmospheres where employees can express themselves fearlessly and liberally. The more the employees take part in problem-solving processes, the

more sense of appropriation they will have. Another thing that administrators should do is taking measurements that will comfort employees while working and, if necessary, support them in many ways. Creating a team spirit and cooperation has the potential to increase energy of people.

One of the objectives of a good administrator is making the workplace enjoyable for employees. If employees consider the workplace enjoyable, they will be more positive, more energetic and more productive (Naiman, 2009). Administrators' communicating with employees smiling in the morning of working day, thanking them for their efforts and works will increase their energy.

Another source of energy for organizations is employee empowerment. It is stated that empowerment increases employee energy in organizations (Quinn & Dutton, 2005; Fritz, Lam & Spreitzer, 2011). Because the empowered personnel have been given the right to make decisions about their works, they feel themselves important and valuable, and, thus, self-confident. Moreover, they see themselves as owners of the organization. Thus, they work with all their efforts and they do whatever they can for success. Under these circumstances, it is expected that the empowered employees will have higher energy levels.

If keeping the employees energetic is desired, they should be away from punishment as much as possible (Quinn & Dutton, 2005; Fritz, Lam & Spreitzer, 2011). Researches done have determined that punishment consumes human energy. It is long known that punishment has negative psychological effects on humans. Even if they are definitely guilty, they do not accept the punishment. They feel degraded, offended and negative. They lose their confidence. Under these circumstances, it is expected that energy level of these people will decline.

One of the factors that directly affect the energy of employees of an organization is work environment. If the energy level of employees in an organization is desired to be high, a working environment that employees will feel good and that they will be keen on working in. The working environment should be safe, clean and ergonomically designed (Naiman, 2009). Plants, paintings and color of walls will affect human energy. Targets should be identified clearly, chances to show their abilities should be given and they should feel proud of their contribution to the success of organization. Family-friend policies like flexible working hours and homeworking should be carried out in the organization.

Studies show that breaks in working day and physical activities done in these breaks help employees regain their energy lost during the day (Fritz, Lam & Spreitzer, 2011). Relaxing during breaks and diverting their attention (Iwasaki, 2003; Caldwell, 2005; Trougakos, Beal & Green, 2008) decreases burnout and stress, while increasing positive feelings, decreases negative feelings, contributes mental, physical, social and emotional health. Continuous and long working hours do not mean productive working. Working productively is important. Productivity comes only with employees with high energy levels. If burnt out personnel are forced to work more, besides slow work, quality of work will decline. Therefore, giving break for work in proper intermediates is not lost in terms of production. Because breaks give employees chance to renewal and regaining energy lost, it helps productivity and higher quality.

One of the energy sources in an organization is human. There is energy giving people in organizations as well as energy absorbing people (Schippers & Hogenes, 2011). These people may be workmates or administrators. Those who gather people around themselves for

organizational missions give energy to other people. In addition, people who see life through a positive point of view, in positive feelings transferring these feelings to other people are energy-giving people. Similarly, people who see life through a negative point of view, in negative feelings transferring these feelings to other people are energy-consuming people. These energy-giving and energy-consuming people affect performances of people around themselves considerably.

High level of energy of employees in an organization is quite important for person-organization fit. If there is a fit, this means the person is at a high level of energy (Schippers & Hogenes, 2011). If there is no fit, the energy level will be low. It is expected that a person who does the work that he or she likes and that is suitable with his or her qualifications will be energetic. In contrary, it cannot be expected a person who does a work that he or she is not qualified for and that he or she does not like will be energetic.

The energy level of people is related to the regulatory focuses (Schippers & Hogenes, 2011). Promotion focused people are energetic and they give energy while prevention focused people are with low energy levels and they lower the energy level of others. It is inevitable that promotion focused people are positive to all events, are in positive feelings, so, they are energetic and give energy to others. On the other hand, prevention focused people are negative to all events, are in negative feelings, so, they are not energetic and they consume the energy of others.

Determining long-term objectives, making plans and keeping fit with physical activities increase people's energy levels (Taylor, 2005; Schippers & Hogenes, 2011; Naiman 2009). Especially it is known that physical activity decreases stress, makes people feel positive and affects their lives positively. Due to the positive effects of physical activities, it can be said that doing physical activities during and after work is highly important for increasing energy level. In this respect, going to work by doing simple physical activities like riding bicycle or walking are sufficient to obtain the above-mentioned benefits.

An issue that administrators who are in quest for tactics to increase energy level of employees is to secure psychological safety. If the personnel of organization feel themselves safe, that is, if they feel there will be no risk for themselves when they question, demand feedback, report an error or offer a new idea, the energy level will be higher (Kark & Carmeli, 2009). In contrast, if they feel themselves under risk, unsafe, they are not comfortable with their works and there is no possibility of having energetic employees.

Moreover, there are things that employees of the organization can personally do to increase the energy level. A formula to increase energy level is to determine the activities they like and do them from time to time (Schippers & Hogenes, 2011). People who have hobbies can spare time for these activities and rest, refresh and improve themselves. People's self-confidence, saving time for their interests in their homes may help them regain their energy (Teasdale, 2006). Another thing that can personally be done to restore energy is to sleep. Sleeping is one of the important medium to restore the energy that humans lost (Fritz, Lam & Spreitzer, 2011)

Conclusion

Individuals lose energy for some reasons in their organizations. If this loss of energy becomes chronic, it is a burnout. Before burnout, individuals have to regain this energy and increase their performances. Otherwise, both individuals and organizations will be damaged.

In the individual side, we can see the emergence of work-family conflicts, decrease in quality of life, antisocial behaviors, burnout and some psychological problems. On the side of the organization, we can face dissatisfaction of individuals, unwillingness, loosened loyalty, low motivation, rise in disengagement behaviors and aggressive behaviors.

Individual energy management is an issue that must be emphasized and different aspects of it should be exposed with field studies. Reasons of energy losses and tactics for restoring this energy should be presented.

The primary work to be done is to increase the number of scales in the field. In terms of different profession groups, there must be different studies for scaling and case studies should be realized through these scales. Following the determination of state, with the help of detailed studies, we must determine how some occupational groups face loss of energy, and by which tactics this energy is restored. We expect this study to have a theoretical framework.

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