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Management research on preventing pressure of the new generation of migrant workers

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ABSTRACT

It is of great importance to study how to effectively prevent and relieve the pressure or stress faced by the special group known as the new generation of migrant workers. This paper first reviews the researches related to the pressure prevention and holds the idea that traditional management mode of preventing pressure cannot resolve the problem faced by the group, and then it establishes a new management mode of stress prevention that is built on the basis of controlling the source of pressure. After considering the main conclusions drawn from empirical analysis of pressure source, this paper comes up with a new aid strategy based on controlling pressure source for this group.

KEYWORDS

New generation of migrant workers; Pressure source; Pressure prevention; Aid strategy.



INTRODUCTION

In recent years, reports on some extreme events happened to the new generation of migrant workers due to the enormous pressure is often seen on newspapers. In the process mode of stress management established by Zhu Shaoying, Ling Wenquan and Lu Juncheng (2011), stress management is divided into five stages: prevention, early warning, response, treatment and rehabilitation. Currently, the focus of the academic research is on the stage of prevention.

REVIEW ON MANAGEMENT RESEARCH OF STRESS PREVENTION

Traditional researches divided the management of stress prevention into two levels: organizational level management, individual level management. The establishment of stress prevention mechanism in the organizational level is deemed to be more important than in the latter one Zhu Shaoying, Ling Wenquan and Lu Juncheng^[1].

In the organizational level, the greatest impact on stress prevention comes from the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which has been given in-depth studies. It stresses that before the germination of pressure issues, the organization should get rid of them through internal or external professionals^[2]. From the researches at home or abroad, the object of researches are primarily medical workers, teachers and managers, and the new generation of migrant workers are given much less attention. From a practical perspective, the ratio of accepting psychological assistance willingly is low due to their under-education^[3]. In addition, cities or towns where the booming of manufacturing attracts larger population of migrant worker are in no condition to provide professional psychological assistance in such a short time.

In the individual level, although the influence from personal characteristics like gender and age on stress has studies abroad, no particularly convincing conclusions have been drawn. Yin Jianping, Yan Shangjun and Wang Bo^[4] proposed that mental state, goal and social support should be regarded as individual differences and they are worthy of further study.

In summary, research and establishment of new management mode of stress prevention are in urgent need for the sake of this group.

MANAGEMENT MODE OF STRESS PREVENTION BASED ON CONTROLLING STRESS SOURCE

Review of management mode of stress prevention

Stress management mode has gone through three stages, namely stimulus mode, response mode and stimulus-response mode^[5]. After a thorough search, only Yin Jianping, Yan Shangjun and Wang Bo^[4] proposed a management mode for the stress faced by the group based on the Pressure Mode of Robbins. The management mode provides guidance for relevant studies. But it has its own weakness. First of all, it itself only provides a framework for better understanding, there is no thorough discussion about specific strategies. This is mainly due to the lack of empirical research. Secondly, in the strategy for stress management, this mode puts forward that in the transition period, studies on the group should not be conducted in the traditional way, studies from the organizational level and individual level are not enough and they should also be conducted from social level. Even so, this mode has broken the frame of the existing theoretical mode, which is worthwhile achievement. Meanwhile, it should be noted that: firstly, it is more appropriate that the stress management strategies from social level in the mode should be expressed as from government level; secondly, as a detailed research work, the majority of stress management strategies in the government level (called as social level) in the mode such as steadily promote social transformation are difficult to carry out for they are too big and extensive without core.

At present stage, if domestic research wishes to make breakthrough, there will be a long way to go by only counting on management strategies of stress prevention in the organizational and individual levels. Management strategies in government level (called social level in the mode), organization level and individual level are given the same attention in the mode established by Yin, Yan and Wang^[4], which is debatable. Giving full play to the role of government should be placed in the first place.

The establishment of management mode of stress prevention based on controlling stress source

Given the above analysis, stimulus-response mode shall be taken as base to update the mode proposed by Yin, Yan and Wang with the current national conditions, the characteristics of the group and the feasibility of research being taken into consideration. Thus, the management mode of stress prevention based on controlling stress source is established, as shown in the Figure 1.

In the mode, first of all, among all the potential stress sources, stress from company, interpersonal stress, work stress and life stress shall be highlighted, and social stress can be neglected. In addition, three individual differences (also called moderating variables) namely mental state, goal and social support should be given consideration in the mode. Thirdly, focus of study should be placed on the stress prevention management instead of the whole stress management. At last, management strategies of stress prevention, which is called aid strategy in the government level should be given priority to.

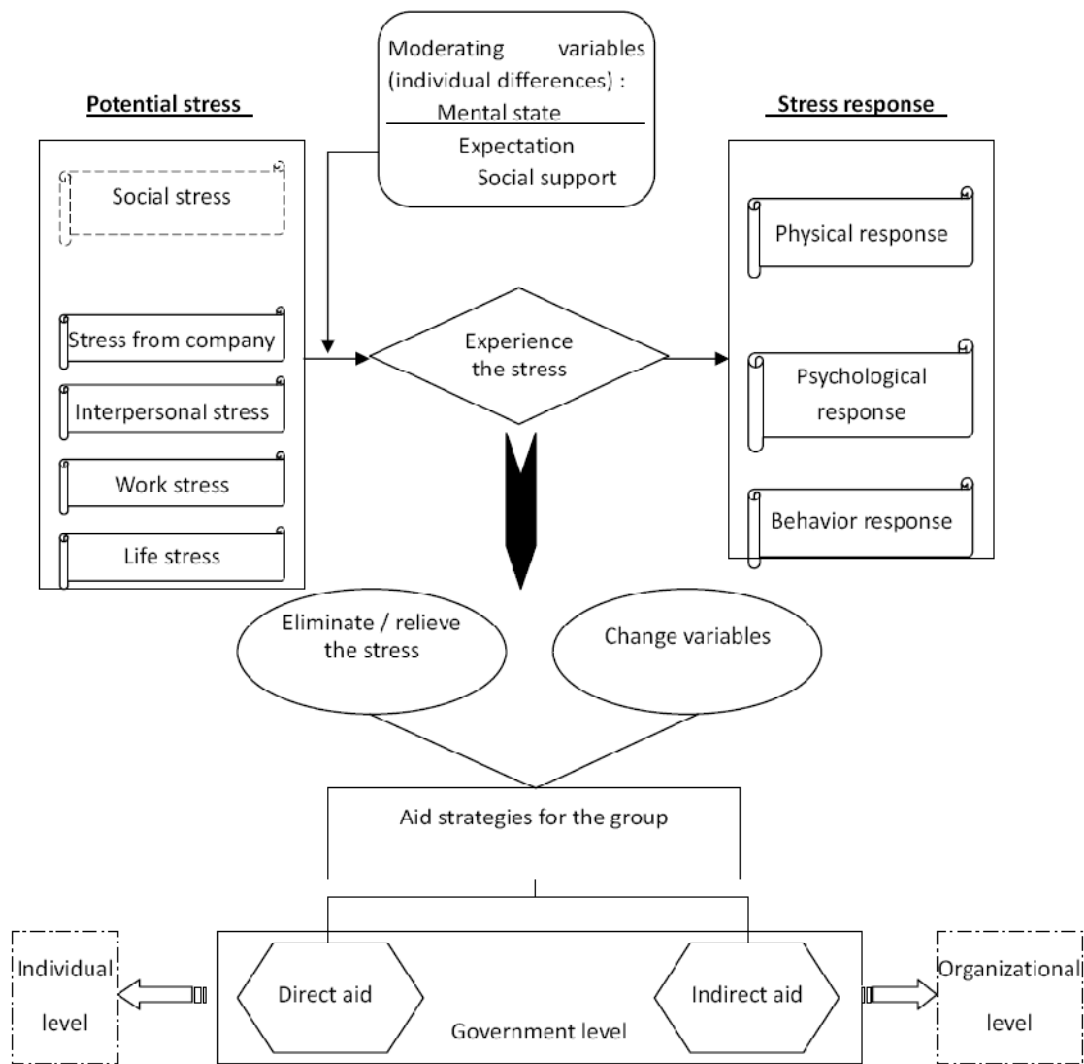


Figure 1 : Management mode of stress prevention based on controlling stress source

Conclusion drawn from the empirical analysis on stress sources of the group

Most migrant workers go to the developed coastal areas. In the background of accelerating the urbanization, medium and small cities/ towns become the main places to absorb the migrant workers during the industrial transfer. Before an effective aid strategy is put forward in the government level, the government should first have a clear understanding of the stress sources of this group. For this purpose, the Jiaxing City, Zhejiang province where migrant workers gather shall be taken as a sampling area. Survey covers over 200 companies and in the survey, stress response, stress source and moderating variables are included. A total of 1,092 samples are obtained. The study found a number of valuable conclusions, include:

1. Migrant workers in need of stress prevention management account for one in five of the total migrant workers, which strongly confirms the necessity to carry out the study.
2. The main stress sources surfaced, and the most significant ones are: adaptability of working at other place, workplace safety, work repeatability, and happiness, and speed of assembly line, noise. In addition, friends and humidity also produce a rather significant impact.
3. Mental state and expectation are found to have a regulatory effect on the stress response. Positive mental state can reduce the impact on stress response posed by stress sources. Besides, if the gap between expectation and reality is small, the impact of stress sources on stress response is lesser. These findings have laid a solid foundation for effective aid policy in the government level.

RESEARCH ON AID STRATEGY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CONTROLLING STRESS SOURCES

At present, the ratio of accepting psychological assistance willingly among migrant workers is low, and medium and small-sized cities or towns are in no condition to provide professional psychological assistance in such a short time. In this case, the possible method for us to do is that stress prevention management should be considered firstly and direct aid or

indirect aid from government should be used to control stress sources. On the basis of carrying out empirical analysis, aid strategies from the perspective of controlling stress sources should include the following aspects:

Eliminate the barriers hindering the process of granting migrant workers citizenship

Among all the stress sources that the new generation of migrant worker faces, the effect by the adaptability of working at other places is the most significant one. We must strengthen the migrant workers' adaptability of working at other places. And in order to do this, we must promote the new-type of urbanization with greater effort to create conditions for the shift of workforce from countryside to cities or towns and for the migrant worker becoming a part of the cities or towns. The core of promoting the new-type of urbanization is for the people. Jiaxing City carried out integrated and comprehensive pilot reforms to balance urban and rural development in Zhejiang province. In 2008, Jiaxing Government started the reform of ten different areas and gained certain experience in eliminating the urban-rural dual structure and promoting new-type of urbanization^[6]. There are some pieces of advice to further strengthen the migrant workers' adaptability of working at other places. Firstly, accelerate the expansion of traffic, banks, restaurants, entertainment and other public facilities to rural areas. Secondly, learn from the apartment buildings for talents and promote the establishment of apartment buildings for migrant workers in the places where migrant workers live. Thirdly, make efforts to let migrant workers and urban residents have the equal opportunity to access the public services like employment, housing, old-age services, medical services and education. By eliminating the barriers hindering the process of granting migrant workers citizenship, the two-way integration can be achieved.

Further improve the working environment and working conditions

The stress source migrant workers encounter is from the work. Survey showed that working hours and income did not become the major source of stress, indicating that impressive progress has been made during the last few years. However, workplace safety, work repeatability, and happiness, and speed of assembly line, noise, friends and humidity all have played their roles. In terms of working environment and conditions, we need to take measures to do better, which are as follows: make the workplace safety as a criterion to assess the works of governments at all levels, and strengthen the routine inspection of workplace safety; enhance the training of these migrant workers, actively promote the post rotation system and effectively reduce the job burnout; Endeavor to promote behavior management mode on the basis of scientific enterprise management, shorten working hours and encourages enterprises to improve the working environment. As long as we improve the working environment and conditions, we can relieve and even eliminate the stress from the major stress sources.

Further strengthen the emotional communication

A survey indicates that effective emotional communication has played an important role in easing the stress of the new generation of migrant workers. In terms of life, to be happiness causes the stress on life, and the pursuit of happiness instead of family burden becomes the main stress source, which shows the new generation of migrant workers is different from the previous generation who is more focused on themselves. In terms of interpersonal stress, friends circle has a significant impact while the work circle does not. There are some measures we can take to further strengthen the emotional communication. We can hold a gathering of blind date for those unmarried young workers, we can also help to build a child-care centre or a kindergarten for each village or town where migrant workers stay to solve the problems of getting their children into a child-care centre or a kindergarten. What's more, having an Association of Young Workers, or holding a singer contest for workers or a sports meeting is a brilliant way to broaden the social circles of these workers and strengthen the emotional communication between these workers. We can also build a post house of emotion to hear their problems and help them deal with these issues.

“4 Bring mental state and expectation into play and exploit the positive effect of them

Mental state and expectation in a survey are found to have a regulatory effect on the stress response. Thus, in order to achieve the benefits from these two aspects, we can, on one hand, promote simple and effective stress coping strategies, such as lectures given by experts can help this new generation of migrant workers know some small tricks about relieving stress and staying positive and reset their unrealistic expectation, or expand an effective coping strategies for physical stress or emotional stress. On the other hand, in the qualified companies, a dual path for migrant workers to develop themselves and narrow the gap between expectation and reality could be explored.

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