



Stoic Management and Philosophy: Resilience and Stress Management in the Workplace

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ABSTRACT

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This research examines the relationship between the principles of Stoic philosophy and their application in a management context, specifically in terms of resilience and stress management in the workplace. Stoic philosophy, which flourished in Ancient Greece and Rome, offers a view of life that can help individuals face life's challenges with poise and wisdom. Using the literature review research method, this article analyzes various studies and theories that link Stoic teachings to modern management, as well as how Stoic principles can be applied to increase mental resilience, reduce stress, and promote well-being in the workplace. This research aims to provide insight into the relevance of Stoic philosophy in improving managerial effectiveness and workers' psychological well-being

INTRODUCTION

Workplace stress has become one of the major issues gaining increasing attention in the world of management and industrial psychology. In a fast-paced and stressful work environment, many employees feel overwhelmed by high job demands, tight deadlines, as well as the uncertainty that comes from organizational changes and market dynamics. These factors can lead to a significant increase in stress among employees, which can potentially affect their mental and physical well-being. Kabat-Zinn (1990), in his book *Full Catastrophe Living*, states that chronic stress, if not managed properly, can decrease productivity, cause emotional exhaustion, as well as reduce the quality of work life. In addition, excessive stress can contribute to psychological disorders such as anxiety, depression, and burnout, which in turn can reduce job satisfaction and overall well-being (Cohen & Wills, 1985).

In response to the widespread negative impact of stress, many organizations are now increasingly recognizing the importance of developing strategies to manage stress in the workplace. One emerging approach is the application of the principles of Stoic philosophy in professional life. Stoic philosophy, which originated in Ancient Greece and was developed by great thinkers such as Epictetus, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius, teaches the importance of self-control, wisdom, and acceptance of unchangeable realities (Pigliucci, 2017). Stoic teachings are particularly relevant in stress management as this philosophy focuses on control over our reactions to external events and encourages us to pay attention only to those things we can control while accepting gracefully those things beyond our control (Becker, 1998).

Stress in the workplace often arises from an imbalance between the demands of the job and the individual's capacity to deal with them. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) stress management theory states that stress occurs when individuals feel that demands from the work environment exceed their resources or capacity to deal with them. In this case, an individual can feel trapped in a situation full of uncertainty and difficulty, which in turn increases levels of anxiety and psychological tension. Stoicism, with its emphasis on acceptance and self-control, offers a perspective that can help individuals cope with feelings of distress in a more constructive and calm manner. In this regard, Stoic philosophy can be considered as a tool for enhancing resilience that enables individuals to remain stable and effective despite being under stress.

Resilience theory suggests that mental resilience is an individual's ability to remain flexible and adaptive in the face of challenges, difficulties, and stress that come in personal or professional life. According to Luthans (2002), mental resilience consists of various components, including optimism, hope, and self-control. Stoic concepts that focus on controlling reactions to stress and accepting things that cannot be changed are very much in line with the principles of mental resilience. By internalizing Stoic principles, individuals can develop the ability to see stress as an inevitable part of life and focus more on how they respond to it.

In addition, the Stoic principle that teaches to focus on things that can be controlled and let go of things that cannot be controlled is also very profound in

the context of coping strategies used to manage stress. According to Cohen and Wills (1985), social support and effective coping strategies can serve as a buffer to reduce the negative impact of stress. Stoic principles that teach acceptance of unchangeable realities, such as tight deadlines or decisions made by management, provide a way for individuals to avoid excessive stress due to feeling trapped in a situation they cannot change. Instead, Stoicism teaches that they only need to focus on things that are within their control, such as their reaction to the situation, wisdom in decision-making, and management of emotions.

Against this background, this study aims to explore how Stoic principles can be applied in the context of stress management and the development of mental resilience in the workplace. This study uses a literature review approach to identify and analyze existing research on the relationship between Stoic philosophy and stress management in the workplace. The main focus of this study is to understand how Stoic teachings can serve as an effective foundation for managing stress, developing mental resilience, as well as improving employee well-being in stressful work environments.

By analyzing relevant literature, this research aims to provide insights into how Stoic principles can be integrated into stress management training programs and how their application can assist individuals and organizations in improving productivity and overall psychological well-being.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Stoic Philosophy and Its Key Principles

Stoic philosophy is a school of philosophy that developed in ancient Greece and focuses on achieving happiness through self-control and moral virtue. Stoics taught that happiness does not depend on external events but rather on our internal attitudes and responses to those events (Epictetus, 2008). A key Stoic principle is to distinguish between things we can and cannot have control over and to manage our reactions to things that are beyond our control. This is particularly relevant in the context of stress management and the development of mental resilience.

A key principle in Stoicism is self-control. Stoics believe that we cannot control external events, but we can control how we respond to them. Epictetus (2008) taught that "Nothing bothers us but the way we respond to it". This is in line with the concept of self-regulation in psychology, which is the ability to regulate emotions and behavior in order to achieve goals (Baumeister et al., 2007). Baumeister and colleagues (2007) explain that self-regulation is closely related to the ability of individuals to manage their drives and emotions in the face of stressful situations. In this context, the Stoics emphasize the importance of using common sense and patience in dealing with stress.

Another Stoic principle is acceptance of things that are beyond our control. Stoics teach that we should accept what we cannot change, such as external events and the actions of others, and focus on what we can control - our responses and attitudes (Seneca, 2014). This concept is very similar to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) developed by Hayes et al. (2006), which teaches that individuals should accept unpleasant emotional experiences

without trying to avoid them or change them and commit to acting on their values. By accepting negative feelings without avoiding them, we can reduce the anxiety and stress caused by these feelings (Hayes et al., 2006).

In Stoicism, rational thinking is an important principle for managing stress. Stoics teach that we should assess situations with a clear and rational mind without letting our emotions dominate our judgment. Epictetus (2008) states that how we feel about something often comes from our perception of it, not from the event itself. In this context, it is important to assess events with common sense and not let emotions such as anxiety or anger rule us. This principle is similar to the approach in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) developed by Beck (1976), which emphasizes the importance of replacing negative thoughts with more realistic and rational thoughts to reduce anxiety and stress.

Stoics emphasized the importance of developing virtues as part of living a good life. Virtues such as wisdom, courage, justice, and self-control are key to achieving happiness and inner peace (Pigliucci, 2017). Stoics argue that by developing these virtues, one can deal with external events in a calmer and wiser way. Research by Tugade and Fredrickson (2004) shows that individuals who possess mental resilience, which is often related to virtues such as self-control and wisdom, are better able to deal with stress in an effective way. This mental resilience helps individuals to remain stable in the face of pressure, in line with Stoic teachings on the importance of having virtues in life.

The Stoics taught the importance of understanding the difference between what we can and cannot control. We cannot control external events, but we can control our reactions to them (Epictetus, 2008). This principle is closely related to the locus of control theory introduced by Rotter (1966), which distinguishes between individuals with an internal locus of control, who feel they can influence their life outcomes, and individuals with an external locus of control, who feel that outside factors, such as fate or the actions of others, control their lives. Individuals with an internal locus of control tend to be better able to cope with stress because they feel more empowered to change their responses to stressful situations.

The conclusion is that Stoic principles, such as self-control, acceptance, rational thinking, and benevolence, are highly relevant for stress management and the development of mental resilience. These teachings are in line with many concepts in modern psychology, including self-regulation theory, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), and locus of control. By adopting these Stoic principles, individuals can reduce stress, improve emotional well-being, and achieve inner calm even in stressful situations.

Describe your research findings according to the research problem and purpose of the study. Discuss your findings according to the perspective of theory, concept or previous findings. Should describe this section in a comprehensive, simple and detailed manner. The author can make subchapters in this section.

Mental Resilience in the Workplace

Workplace mental resilience refers to an individual's ability to persist and function well in the face of stress or adversity, which is critical for maintaining productivity and psychological well-being in stressful work environments (Luthans et al., 2006). Factors that can enhance mental resilience include social support, which acts as a buffer against stress by providing a sense of connectedness and reinforcement from coworkers or superiors (Fredrickson, 2001; Cohen & Wills, 1985). Feelings of control over work, such as the ability to organize tasks or decisions, can reduce feelings of powerlessness that often add to anxiety and stress (Luthans et al., 2006; Rotter, 1966). In addition, emotion management is a key factor that enables individuals to respond adaptively to stressful situations, reduce the negative impact on mental and physical health, and improve performance (Gross, 2002; Gupta & Singh, 2017). This concept is in line with self-regulation theory, which states that individuals who are able to control their emotions and reactions in the face of pressure will be better able to maintain their well-being (Baumeister et al., 2007). Research also shows that individuals with high mental resilience tend to have more effective coping strategies, such as problem-focused coping, that allow them to overcome challenges in a more constructive way (Carver et al., 1989). Therefore, creating a work environment that supports the development of mental resilience through social support, control over work, and emotion management training can improve employee productivity and mental health and strengthen organizational resilience to stress and change.

Managing Stress in the Workplace

Workplace stress is common and can be caused by a variety of factors, such as work overload, role vagueness, interpersonal conflict, and organizational uncertainty. Sustained stress can have a serious impact on an individual's well-being, causing a decrease in productivity, as well as increasing the risk of anxiety, depression, and various other health problems (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Poorly managed stress can also lead to decreased quality of work and affect relationships between coworkers (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). Therefore, it is crucial for managers to have effective strategies in managing stress, both for themselves and for their teams. Some stress management techniques often used in the workplace include relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing and physical exercise, time management, which allows individuals to organize their workload more effectively, and mindfulness-based approaches (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). Mindfulness, as a practice involving mindfulness in the present moment without judgment, has been shown to reduce anxiety and improve psychological well-being at work (Kabat-Zinn, 1990; Shapiro et al., 2006). In addition, cognitive reframing techniques, which involve changing the way stressors are viewed, are also effective approaches to reducing the negative impact of stress (Beck, 1976).

Integration of Stoic Philosophy in Stress Management

In recent years, the application of Stoic principles in stress management has gained increasing attention. Stoic philosophy teaches individuals to differentiate between what can and cannot be controlled and to change attitudes and perceptions toward these events (Epictetus, 2008). Donaldson et

al. (2019) showed that Stoic teachings can help individuals manage stress more effectively, for example, by changing the way they perceive events that cannot be controlled, such as failure or criticism. By accepting the fact that we cannot control many things outside of ourselves, we can reduce anxiety and emotional tension that often arise in stressful situations (Pigliucci, 2017). In addition, Stoics encourage workers to develop virtues such as patience, perseverance, and gratitude, all of which can increase mental resilience and reduce stress levels (Pigliucci, 2017). This concept aligns with research showing that individuals with an internal locus of control orientation who feel in control of their reactions to external events are better able to manage stress and have better psychological well-being (Rotter, 1966; Gupta & Singh, 2017).

The Stoic approach also relates to psychological resilience theory, which emphasizes the importance of an individual's ability to adapt well despite stress and adversity (Masten, 2001). For example, acceptance in Stoicism, which encourages us to accept circumstances that cannot be changed, is in line with the principles of acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), which teaches acceptance of negative feelings and commitment to act in accordance with our values (Hayes et al., 2006). By adopting Stoic principles, individuals can develop a calmer, more rational, and focused attitude towards things they can control, which in turn can help them manage stress in a more effective way and improve their psychological well-being at work.

METHODS

This research uses a literature review approach to identify and analyze various relevant sources regarding the application of Stoic philosophy in the management and management of stress in the workplace. The sources used in this research include scientific journal articles, books, as well as previous research that discusses the application of Stoic philosophy in the context of psychology and management.

The research process involved searching for relevant literature through academic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and ScienceDirect. The articles selected met the criteria of high relevance to the research theme, which is about the relationship between Stoicism, stress management, and mental resilience in the workplace.

RESULTS

In this study, through a literature review approach, various relevant literature has been analyzed to explore the application of Stoic philosophy in stress management and the development of mental resilience in the workplace. The results show that Stoic principles, which emphasize self-control, acceptance of unchangeable realities, and rational thinking, are highly relevant and applicable in the context of managing stress in the workplace.

Self-Control in Managing Stress

The principle of self-control taught by the Stoics focuses on the understanding that we cannot control external events, but we have complete control over how we respond to them (Epictetus, 2008). In the context of the workplace, stress often arises from uncontrollable external factors, such as high

workloads, tight deadlines, or interpersonal conflicts. Studies show that individuals who internalize Stoic principles of self-control tend to be better able to manage their emotional responses in the face of stressful situations (Baumeister et al., 2007). This is also in line with self-regulation theory in psychology, which suggests that individuals who can control their emotions and reactions in the face of pressure are better able to maintain their psychological well-being and work productivity.

Based on these findings, it is important for organizations to include self-control training in stress management programs. For example, techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, or mindfulness can be used to help employees more effectively manage their emotions and respond rationally to stress rather than reacting impulsively, which can make things worse.

Acceptance of Things that Cannot Be Controlled

The Stoic principle of acceptance of things that are beyond our control is particularly relevant in managing stress in the workplace. Stress often occurs when individuals feel trapped in situations they cannot change, such as changes in organizational policy or managerial decisions they disagree with. Stoics teach that individuals should accept this reality and focus on the things they can control, namely their response and attitude to the situation (Seneca, 2014).

Research shows that this acceptance does not mean passivity or giving up but rather the ability to see reality clearly and choose a more constructive response. For example, someone facing criticism or failure at work may adopt a Stoic attitude by accepting reality, learning from the experience, and focusing on improvement efforts without overburdening themselves with negative feelings such as frustration or anger (Pigliucci, 2017). Therapeutic techniques such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) that teach acceptance of negative feelings also support these findings, with evidence that acceptance can reduce anxiety and improve psychological well-being (Hayes et al., 2006).

Rational Thinking and Stress Management

Stoics emphasize the importance of rational thinking in dealing with stress. Epictetus (2008) states that how we feel about an event often comes from our perception of it rather than the event itself. In the context of the workplace, many employees experience stress because of the way they perceive the tasks to be completed or their relationships with coworkers. By developing rational thinking, individuals can assess situations objectively and not let emotions such as anxiety or anger rule their judgment.

Research shows that this approach is in line with techniques used in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), which aims to identify and change negative thought patterns that can exacerbate stress (Beck, 1976). By using rational thinking to replace exaggerated or unrealistic judgments, individuals can reduce anxiety and improve their perception of workplace stressors.

Virtues and Mental Resilience

The Stoic virtues, which include wisdom, courage, justice, and self-control, play an important role in building mental resilience. Individuals who develop these virtues tend to be better able to deal with workplace challenges and stress in a more thoughtful and controlled manner (Pigliucci, 2017). Research by Tugade and Fredrickson (2004) confirmed that individuals with

high mental resilience, which is often related to self-control and wisdom, have the ability to remain calm and effective under pressure.

Mental resilience is particularly important in stressful work environments, as employees who possess mental resilience are more likely to be able to persevere and function well despite significant stress (Luthans et al., 2006). Therefore, developing virtues such as wisdom in decision-making and the courage to face challenges with poise are crucial steps to reducing the negative impact of stress and improving employee well-being.

Integration of Stoic Philosophy in Stress Management Training Program
Based on the above findings, the application of Stoic principles in stress management can be an effective approach in improving employee well-being and productivity in the workplace. Integrating Stoic teachings in stress management training programs can help employees develop skills to manage stress in a more effective way, whether through self-control, acceptance of the uncontrollable, rational thinking, or development of virtues.

In addition, developing mental resilience through Stoic principles can enhance an individual's ability to remain flexible and adaptive in the face of workplace challenges. Stoic-based training can also strengthen the sense of control over situations, which is closely related to the internal locus of control so that individuals feel more empowered in the face of stress and change (Rotter, 1966).

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion of this study suggests that the application of Stoic principles, such as self-control, acceptance of things that cannot be changed, rational thinking, and cultivation of virtues, can be an effective approach to managing stress and enhancing mental resilience in the workplace. Stoic teachings help individuals to focus on what they can control - their reactions and attitudes to external stressors - thereby reducing anxiety and improving psychological well-being. Moreover, by internalizing these principles, employees can develop better mental resilience, which allows them to remain stable and productive despite the pressures and challenges at work. The integration of Stoic teachings in stress management training programs can strengthen individuals' ability to cope with stress more rationally and constructively and improve well-being in stressful work environments.

FURTHER STUDY

To further develop research linking Stoic philosophy with workplace stress management and mental resilience, some possible research avenues include experimental approaches, development of intervention models, and exploration in more specific contexts.

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