

Understanding the impact of stress risk on work engagement

In today's climate organisations face new challenges in their efforts to remain competitive. These challenges include heightened performance pressures, new technology and the outsourcing of effort. Employers need people who are motivated and committed and who can identify with the organisation's goals. The recent focus for organisations has been on trying to improve and sustain organisational performance, with emphasis on the positive benefits of organisational behaviour concepts such as work engagement. Work engagement has been associated with different indicators of wellbeing, such as:

- Health
- Self-esteem
- Job satisfaction
- Organisational Commitment

Most approaches to assessing organisational wellbeing such as work engagement, resilience and stress involve the use of surveys that highlight the key issues. However, surveys do not always give contextual information about the collective environment and clarity on how the issues can be addressed. In order to address these issues, The Keil Centre developed a Team Resilience Assessment- Card Sort (TRA-CS) tool. The TRA-CS methodology promotes an open, solutions-focused facilitated discussion about the factors that impact on team resilience and performance. The methodology is based around measuring the 6 key stress risk factors identified by the HSE (Demands, Control, Support, Role, Relationships & Change) and has been applied in a variety of industries.

A Masters research project conducted with a global oil and gas organisation by Andrea Valeriote in 2013 found that TRA-CS is

statistically valid and reliable. Many of the items within TRA-CS are linked to important organisational factors such as work engagement, organisational support, stress & mental health. The most notable contribution made by this research, is that using the stress risk items help to provide practical and validated recommendations that increase work engagement. Therefore, the TRA-CS methodology is likely to result in benefits such as higher employee morale and satisfaction as well as higher engagement that can lead to an increase in the business performance. Additionally, from the human factors perspective increasing work engagement and reducing stress has a positive effect on safety performance and the reduction of errors.

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