A STUDY ON JOB STRESS AMONG EMPLOYEES OF IT & ITES IN CHENNAI

S Uma Mageswari
Research Scholar
Sathyabama University

Dr. N R V Prabhu
Director,
Sunshine Group of Institutions,
Rajkot, Gujarat.

ABSTRACT

A lot of research has been conducted into stress over the last hundred years. Some of the theories behind it are now settled and accepted; others are still being researched and debated. During this time, there seems to have been something approaching open warfare between competing theories and definitions: Views have been passionately held and aggressively defended. What complicates this is that intuitively we all feel that we know what stress is, as it is something we have all experienced. Over the past decade, IT industry has become one of the fastest growing industries in India. Strong demand over the past few years has placed India amongst the fastest growing IT markets in Asia – Pacific region. The reason for choosing particularly IT & ITES employees is that the level of stress these employees face is comparatively higher than other employees. Any kind of a job has targets and an employee becomes stressed when he or she is allotted with unachievable targets and are unable to manage the given situation. Thus the main aim of this article is to bring to lime light the level of stress with IT & ITES employees in Chennai. The author has not taken any particular sample in an organization but it is in general IT & ITES employees in and around Chennai, Tamil Nadu - India.

Key Words: Stress, Job Stress, IT & ITES.
INTRODUCTION

Stress is a part of day-to-day living of every individual. We generally believe that the stress is caused by the external events and the dynamics of the environment. But we need to emphasis the fact that the Stress is caused by our reaction to the external environment. The manner in which we perceive and understand the changes or the particular event creates same event can bring happiness and cause. Hans Selye was one of the founding fathers of stress research. His view in 1956 was that "stress is not necessarily something bad – it all depends on how you take it. The stress of exhilarating, creative successful work is beneficial, while that of failure, humiliation or infection is detrimental." Selye believed that the biochemical effects of stress would be experienced irrespective of whether the situation was positive or negative.

IT & ITES

The Indian Software and Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) industry has grown at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 28% during the last 5 years. The key segments that have contributed significantly to the industry’s exports include – software services (IT & ITES services. Indian Information Technology (IT) and ITES-BPO sector is playing vital role in the growth of our country’s economy. Due to liberalization of Indian economic policy, the growth of IT industry is in commendable position. Due to cost advantage, availability of skilled manpower, quality services are the main reasons for the growth of IT industry in India.

JOB STRESS

Occupational (job, work or workplace) stress has become one of the most serious health issues in the modern world (Lu et al., 2003, 479), as it occurs in any job and is even more present than decades ago. Namely, the world of work differs considerably from the working environment of 30 years ago: longer hours at work are not unusual, frequent changes in culture and structure are often cited, as well as the loss of lifetime career paths (Cooper & Locke, 2000 in Fotinatos-Ventouratos & Cooper 2005), which all leads to greater presence and levels of stress.

Stress, in general, can be defined as the reaction of individuals to demands (stressors) imposed upon them (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2006, 287). It refers to situations where the well-being of individuals is detrimentally affected by their failure to cope with the demands of their environment (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2006, 287).Occupational stress, in particular, is the inability to cope with the pressures in a job (Rees, 1997), because of a poor fit between someone’s abilities and his/her work requirements and conditions (Holmlund- Rytkönen & Strandvik, 2005). It is a mental and physical condition which affects an individual’s productivity, effectiveness, personal health and quality of work (Comish & Swindle, 1994, 26).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To study the causes of Job stress among IT & ITES employees.
To examine the consequences of Job stress and its related factors.
To identify stress coping –up strategies.
To suggest ways and means to overcome stress.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Human resources often account for a large part of an organization’s cost structure in delivering its products and services and any substantial increase in these costs can adversely affect the ongoing viability and profitability of the organization. Job stress is a growing problem that results in substantial costs to individual employees and work organizations around the globe.

“Stress refers to physiological, behavioural and cognitive responses to events appraised as threatening or exceeding one’s coping responses and options.” (Lazarus, 1966)

Job stress occurs in response to both workplace and employee factors, but the characteristics of the workplace likely play the primary role. A recent report by the National Institute for occupational Safety and Health identified the following job conditions that are related to stress: The word stress is derived from the Latin word, stingere, meaning to draw tight.

"Job stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. Job stress can lead to poor health and even injury." [Stress at work, (United States National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, Cincinnati, 1999.) "the emotional, cognitive, behavioural and physiological reaction to aversive and noxious aspects of work, work environments and work organizations. It is a state characterised by high levels of arousal and distress and often by feelings of not coping." [Guidance on work-related stress: Spice of life - or kiss of death, European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs]. "Stress is the reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them." Managing stress at work: Discussion document, United Kingdom Health and Safety Commission, London, 1999.]

Selye (1974) beautifully summarized the nature of stress in the following words: The term ‘stress’ has been used in so many different contexts that there is confusion regarding the exact meaning of the term. Few definitions of stress are given below and they are useful according the scope and clarity. “Stress is any condition that disturbs normal functioning.” (Arnold, 1960). “Stress is a non-specific response of the body to any demand.” (Selye, 1914).

Hans Selye, the father of stress theory, defined stress as "the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it." The "demand" can be a threat, a challenge or any kind of change which requires the body to adapt. The response is automatic and immediate. Stress can be good (called "eustress") when it helps us perform better, or it can be bad ("distress") when it causes upset or makes us sick. Another commonly accepted definition of stress (mainly attributed to Richard S Lazarus) is that stress is a condition or a feeling that is experienced when a person perceives that “demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilise.”

STRESS & ITS TYPES

We cannot have a stress free life. Stress is of course essential for every human being as it is considered as a boost that takes an employee to the highest ladder in the organization. The various types of stress is mentioned below:
**Eustress** is a type of short term stress that provides immediate strength. It is a positive stress that arises when motivation & inspiration are needed.

**Distress**, on the other hand, is a negative stress brought about by constant readjustments and alternatives in a routine. Distress creates feelings of discomfort and unfamiliarity.

**Hyper stress** occurs when an individual is pushed beyond what he or she can handle. It results from being over loaded or over worked.

**Hypo stress** occurs when an individual is bored or unchallenged. People who experience hypo stress are often restless.

**STAGES OF WORK STRESS:**

According to Pestonjee (1992) work stress progresses through a series of five stages.

1. **The Honeymoon stage**: Euphoric feeling if excitement, enthusiasm, challenges and pride on getting a new job. Dysfunctional processes include the depletion of energy reserves in coping and adapting to the new environment/

2. **The full throttle stage**: Going full swing leads to a depletion of resources. Other symptoms include dissatisfaction, sleep disturbances, overeating, drinking or smoking.

3. **The Chronic symptom stage**: Development of Chronic symptoms like physical illness, anger and depression.

4. **The Crisis Stage**: Persistence of symptoms leads to disease, chronic backache, headache, high B.P., insomnia, etc. would develop.

5. **Hitting the wall stage**: No person can continue under strain for too long and one may reach the end of one’s professional career. Burn out stress syndrome (BOSS) takes over.

6. **The opposite**: Rust out stress syndrome (ROSS) occurs under extreme hypo stress. This is likely to occur when the gap between one’s capabilities and environmental demands becomes too wide.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A structured questionnaire was circulated among IT & ITES employees of different organizations’. As the population size is unknown simple random sampling technique was used. The following is the data analysis and interpretation.

**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE [ANOVA]**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Yoga</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Meditation</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Work out</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>jogging</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>others</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Null Hypothesis H0:
There is no significant difference between the time and the stress relaxation techniques followed.
\( \mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3 \)

Alternative Hypothesis H1:
There is a significant difference between the time and the stress relaxation techniques followed.
\( \mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3 \)

Correction Factor:
\[ CF = \frac{T_2}{n} \]

\[ SSC = \sum a^2 + \sum b^2 + \sum c^2 + \sum d^2 + \sum e^2 - C.F \]

\[ SST = \frac{(\sum a)^2}{n_1} + \frac{(\sum b)^2}{n_2} + \frac{(\sum c)^2}{n_3} + \frac{(\sum d)^2}{n_4} + \frac{(\sum e)^2}{n_5} - C.F \]

\[ SSE = SST - SSC \]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>Sum of Square</th>
<th>Degree of Freedom</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Sample</td>
<td>SSC</td>
<td>V1 = C – 1 = 4</td>
<td>MSC = SSC/ C-1 = 11,021.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Sample</td>
<td>SSE</td>
<td>V2 = n – C = 20</td>
<td>MSE = SSE/n-C = -2116.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>SST</td>
<td>n-1 = 24</td>
<td>F = MSC / MSE = -5.208</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table Value = 4.35
Calculated Value = -5.208
Table Value > Calculated Value
4.35 > -5.208

H0 is accepted. There is no significant difference between the time and the stress relaxation techniques followed.
Thereby we infer that invariably all employees belonging to different IT and ITES opt the same for relaxation techniques irrespective of time.
SUGGESTIONS

- Superior-subordinate relationship can be improved thereby they can achieve the goals of the organization.
- A very good grievance handling system in the organization creates a healthy environment.
- The motivation program conducted by the organization will assist the employees to perform well.
- Employees must give importance to time management techniques thereby they can complete their work within the allotted time.
- Many tasks can be delegated to subordinates without losing effectiveness so that overload of work can be reduced.
- Employees will be able to achieve more targets if the reward system is improved.
- Organizations can arrange for relaxation programs / parties.
- Meditation, yoga, exercises on a daily routine basis will keep the mind and body fresh.

CONCLUSIONS

Stress in the work place has become the black plague of the present century. Much of the stress at work is caused not only by work overload and time pressure but also by lack of rewards and praise, and more importantly, by not providing individuals with the autonomy to do their work as they would like, most of the employees were not satisfied with the grievance handling procedure of the organization which was found by the unstructured interview.

Organization must begin to manage people at work differently, treating them with respect and valuing their contribution. If we enhance the psychological well being and health of the employees, in the coming future the organization would make more revenue as well as employee retention.

REFERENCES:

2. Hans Selye (1946) - Organizational Stress
4. Cartwright and Cooper, 1997 - Stress in Organization
5. Stephen P. Robbins and Seema Sanghi (Eleventh edition) - Organizational Behaviour

***