



PERCEPTION OF EMPLOYEES TOWARDS IMPACT OF WORK STRESS IN SELECT IT COMPANIES

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Abstract

The success of any organization depends to a large extent upon the capability, competence, efficiency, and level of development of human resources, who are the active agents, accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, and build social, economic and political organizations. It is evident from history that work stress has implications for the workers' community. Realizing that stress occurs in multiple areas of life, occupational health psychologists are continually seeking to add value to individuals and organizations by helping to reduce the experienced levels of stress which can then result in increased productivity, reduced accident rates, decreased absenteeism rates, and overall enhancement in workforce well-being. Therefore, there is a need to find ways of using stress in a productive way, reducing dysfunctional stress and dealing effectively with it. With this background, the researchers have made an attempt to study the impact of work stress in the select IT companies in Puducherry. This study is confined to the women employees of the select IT companies in Puducherry. There are more than 30 IT companies are in operation in Puducherry. In the present study, 3 IT companies namely, Waysure Technologies, Roadmap IT Solutions and Zeuxine Technologies are only selected on purposive basis. In the second stage, by adopting quota sampling 300 women employees i.e. 100 employees were selected from each company. As an essential part of the study, the primary data were collected from 300 women employees with the help of questionnaire for a period of 6 months from January 2016 to June 2016. The questionnaire was constructed based on Likert Scaling technique. The secondary data were collected mainly from journals, reports, books, and records of the select IT companies in Puducherry. The findings of this study bring to light that there exists work stress among the employees. It has now become necessary for IT companies to find ways of reducing unwanted pressure within an organization. Therefore the women employees need to be treated differently.

Keywords: *Work Stress, Role Conflict, Occupational Stress, Stress, Etc.*

Introduction

The success of any organization depends to a large extent upon the capability, competence, efficiency, and level of development of human resources, who are the active agents, accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, and build social, economic and political organizations. No organization can think of viability and effectiveness without the efficient utilization of human resources. Therefore, human resource is the most important resource and is considered the backbone of every organization. Though factors such as exploration of natural resources, availability of physical and financial resources, and international aid contribute to the economic development of a country, none of these factors is more significant than committed manpower. In fact, all the development comes from the human mind. It is evident from history that work has occupied an important place in the life of human beings. How people have thought and felt about the working experience has also been an age old concern for both workers and managers. With the rapidly changing technological, socio-economic, political, and legal environment, effective management of human resources has become a challenging job. With the growing recognition of the 'human relations approach' in management, the discomforts and dishonors associated with work are apparently missing today, but the intangible vulnerability and hazards in the shape of stress, strain and anxiety are still ingrained in it. Stress is an unavoidable consequence of modern living. It is the consequence of imbalance between a person and his environment. With the growth of industries, pressure in the urban areas, quantitative growth in population and various problems in day to day life are some of the reasons for increase in stress. In the 1990s India emerged as a major player in the field of software engineering, information technology services and web-based services. The information technology and IT enabled services industries in India have become highly visible nodes of the global economy, attracting substantial attention from international media and business interests as a prime destination for outsourcing and off-shoring. Indian information technology industry employs a little more than half million people and provides indirect employment to over a quarter of a million people. IT has become the career option for many young educated Indians, for whom it offers salaries unknown in other sectors as well as an opportunity to live and work outside of India. People employed in IT related occupations can be said to constitute a new kind of workforce: they are highly educated, well-paid, mobile, and closely linked into the global services economy, whether working in India or abroad.

Concept of Work Stress

Work stress is defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when job requirements do not match with the worker's capabilities, resources, and needs. Work-related stress is a pattern of reactions that occurs when workers are



presented with work demands that are not matched to their knowledge, skills or abilities, and which challenge their ability to cope. Work stress is the natural reaction of people to being put under intense pressure at work over a period of time. Work stress is a state that an individual could not adjust himself to the aroused situation affecting body and mind and lessening productivity. Stressed workers are more likely to be unhealthy, poorly motivated, less productive and less safe at work. Work related stress costs the national economy a staggering amount in sick pay, lost productivity, health care, and litigation costs.

Statement of the Problem

In the fast changing world of today, no individual is free from stress. As organizations become more complex, the potential for and amount of stress increases. Urbanization, industrialization and increase in scale of operations in the society are causing increased stress. These are inevitable consequences of socio-economic complexity and to some extent its stimulating causes as well. The concept of work stress has implications for the workers' community. Realizing that stress occurs in multiple areas of life, occupational health psychologists are continually seeking to add value to individuals and organizations by helping to reduce the experienced levels of stress which can then result in increased productivity, reduced accident rates, decreased absenteeism rates, and overall enhancement in workforce well-being. Therefore, there is a need to find ways of using stress in a productive way, reducing dysfunctional stress and dealing effectively with it. With this background, the researchers have made an attempt to study the impact of work stress in the select IT companies in Puducherry.

Objectives of the Study

The study has the following objectives:

1. To find out the causes for the work stress of women employees in the select IT companies in Puducherry.
2. To study the perception of the women employees towards impact of work stress in the select IT companies in Puducherry.
3. To offer suitable measures to mitigate the work stress of the women employees in the select IT companies based on the findings of the study.

Testing of Hypotheses

In order to examine the perception of the women employees towards impact of work stress in the select IT companies, the following null hypotheses were formulated and tested.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship among the acceptance levels of the respondents belonging to different demographic profiles towards causes of work stress in the select IT companies in Puducherry.

H₀₂: The demographic variables of the women employees do not have any influence on their perception towards impact of work stress in the select IT companies in Puducherry.

Scope of the Study

The present study attempts to examine the causes for and impact of work stress of women employees in the select IT companies in Puducherry. The study is confined to 3 IT companies namely, Waysure Technologies, Roadmap IT Solutions and Zeuxine Technologies. Work stress is a vast subject; therefore, the present study focuses its main attention only on the causes for and impact of work stress in the select IT companies in Puducherry.

Sampling Design

This study is confined to the women employees of the select IT companies in Puducherry. There are more than 30 IT companies in operation in Puducherry. In the present study, 3 IT companies namely, Waysure Technologies, Roadmap IT Solutions and Zeuxine Technologies are only selected on purposive basis. In the second stage, by adopting quota sampling 300 women employees i.e. 100 employees were selected from each company.

Materials and Methods

The present study is empirical in nature based on survey method. The first-hand information for the study was collected from the select IT companies. As an essential part of the study, the primary data were collected from 300 women employees with the help of questionnaire for a period of 6 months from January 2016 to June 2016. The questionnaire was constructed based on Likert Scaling technique. The secondary data were collected mainly from journals, reports, books, and records of the select IT companies in Puducherry. In order to analyze the impact of work stress, student t test, analysis of variance, coefficient of variation, multiple regression analysis, multiple discriminant function analysis, discriminant function analysis and percentage analysis were employed.



Findings

1. 54% of the respondents join IT companies for the reason of attractive salary. 47.33% of the respondents are influenced by lots of perks and 41.33% are influenced by career development. Ranging from 34 per cent to 39 per cent of the respondents join IT companies because of aboard job opportunity, social status, team work and good work environment.
2. No significant relationship is found among the acceptance levels of the respondents belonging to different age groups, educational status groups, salary groups and varied tenure of experience towards factors contributing to work stress of women employees in the select IT companies. A significant relationship is found among the acceptance levels belonging to different cadres and IT companies towards factors contributing to work stress of women employees.
3. Respondents in the age group above 45 years, respondents having degree qualification, respondents drawing monthly salary above Rs.40000, technical employees, respondents with the experience above 15 years and women employees working at Zeuxine Technologies have higher acceptance level towards factors contributing to work stress.
4. There is consistency in the acceptance level of respondents belonging to 26-35 years, respondents who have degree qualification, respondents drawing salary above Rs.40000, respondents having above 15 years of experience and women employees of Waysure Technologies towards factors contributing to work stress.
5. There has been a low correlation (0.239) between the overall score of the factors contributing to work stress of women employees and the selected personal variables. The R square indicates 5.70 per cent of variation in the factors contributing to work stress of women employees as explained by all personal variables taken together in the IT companies. The F value indicates that the multiple correlation coefficients are significant at 1 per cent significance level. Further, age, educational status, monthly salary, years of experience, marital status and family pattern of the women employees have no significant effect on the factors contributing to work stress. Cadre of the women employees has significant effect on the factors contributing to work stress.
6. The multiple discriminant function technique applied resulted in two discriminant functions, of which the factors relating to human related causes, personal and societal causes contributed to the first function (Personal Causes) and the variable job related causes contributed to the second discriminant function (Job Causes). The efficiency of these functions were tested using classification matrix which predicted 63.20% of the cases correctly. The MDA results further show that the women employees of Waysure Technologies and Roadmap IT Solutions differ more on personal causes as well as job causes. The effects of these two dimensions on Waysure Technologies were lower compared to employees of Roadmap IT Solutions, while employees of Zeuxine Technologies have scored moderately and fall between women employees of Waysure Technologies and Roadmap IT Solutions.
7. In regards to organizational causes of work stress of women employees in the select IT companies, majority of the respondents reveal that they disagree (35%), followed closely by agree (22.33%) and strongly agree (17.66%). 16.33% and 8.66% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree and strongly disagree respectively with the organizational causes of the work stress. The mean acceptance score reveals that the respondents have a higher acceptance level (3.29) towards inadequate salary, followed by poor support from management (3.27). In the case of inhuman attitude, the respondents have a lower acceptance level (2.80).
8. Majority of the respondents indicate that they agree (40.33%) with the job related causes of work stress of women employees, followed by strongly agree (17.66%) and disagree (15.66%). 14% and 12.33% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree and strongly disagree respectively with the job related causes of work stress. The mean acceptance score shows that the respondents have a higher acceptance level (3.89) about time pressure to perform the assignments, followed by unsatisfactory working conditions (3.78). On the other hand, the respondents have a low level of acceptance (2.48) towards distraction of work in the IT companies.
9. Majority of the respondents indicate that they agree (43.66%) with the human related causes of work stress of women employees, followed by strongly disagree (21%) and strongly agree (14%). 14.33% and 7% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree and disagree respectively with the human related causes of work stress. The



mean acceptance score reveals that the respondents have a higher acceptance level (3.68) towards gender related issues, followed by dogmatic nature of peers (3.39). Conversely, the respondents have a low level of acceptance (2.82) towards absence of mutual help among women employees in the select IT companies.

10. Out of 300 respondents, majority of the respondents say that they strongly agree (44%) with the social causes of work stress of women employees in the select IT companies, followed closely by strongly disagree (20.66%), and agree (16.33%). 10.66% and 8.33% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree and disagree respectively with the social causes of work stress. The mean acceptance score reveals that the respondents have a higher acceptance level (3.16) towards social obligations and restrictions, followed by problems with neighbours (3.07). The respondents have a lower acceptance level (2.76) towards poor relations with relatives.
11. Majority of the respondents express that they strongly disagree (46%) with the familial and domestic causes of work stress, followed by agree (16.33%) and strongly agree (13.66%). 13% and 11% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree and disagree respectively towards familial and domestic causes of work stress. The mean acceptance score shows that the respondents have a higher acceptance level (3.11) towards inability to have enough time with family, followed by imbalance between personal and professional life (2.99). In the case of problems from family members, the respondents have a lower acceptance score (2.47).
12. No significant relationship is found among the acceptance levels of the respondents belonging to different age groups, educational status groups, salary groups and tenure of experience towards impact of work stress in the select IT companies. A significant relationship is found among the acceptance levels belonging to different cadres and different IT companies towards impact of work stress.
13. Respondents in the age group upto 25 years, respondents having Diploma/ITI qualification, respondents drawing monthly salary Rs.30001-40000, technical employees, respondents with above 15 years of experience and women employees working at Waysure Technologies have higher acceptance level towards impact of work stress.
14. There is consistency in the acceptance level of respondents belonging to 26-35 years, respondents who have Diploma/ITI qualification, respondents drawing salary above Rs.40000, non-technical women employees, respondents having above 15 years of experience and women employees of Roadmap IT Solutions towards impact of work stress.
15. There has been a moderate correlation (0.472) between the overall score on the impact of work stress and the selected personal variables. The R square indicates 22.30 per cent of variation in the impact of work stress as explained by all personal variables taken together in the select IT companies. The F value indicates that the multiple correlation coefficients are significant at 1 per cent significance level. Further, age, education, monthly salary, years of experience, marital status and family pattern of the women employees have no significant effect on the impact of work stress in the select IT companies. Respondents' cadre has a significant influence on the impact of work stress in the select IT companies.
16. The results of the discriminant function analysis showed that 'behavioural symptoms' is the maximum discriminating factor ($R^2=68.89\%$) between technical and non-technical employees, followed by "physical symptoms" (38.07%), 'intellectual symptoms (21.62%) in that order. Organizational symptoms contribute least (14.59%) in discriminating between technical and non-technical employees.
17. Respondents ranging from 42.33 per cent to 61.33 per cent suggest that personal counseling, stress audit, flexible work schedule, relaxation exercises, eliminating self-defeating behaviours, and career counseling and training will reduce the work stress of women employees in the select IT companies. Equal opportunity, welfare and safety, work place democracy, interpersonal relationship, reasonable work load and objectivity of superiors are the suggestions of the respondents ranging from 64.66 per cent to 69 per cent to reduce the work stress of the women employees.

Suggestions

1. The nineties was the decade of rapid growth in the IT sector and the consequent quick promotions which often resulted in serious skill gaps at certain levels. This has obviously raised the expectation level of lower cadre women employees who joined later in the IT companies. However, the sluggish growth has greatly deterred the proportionate promotion opportunities to higher levels. This has obviously created organizational frustration and



stress. Therefore, the select IT companies should formulate a committee to mitigate this unpleasant state of affairs and for specific structural and behavioural remedies to inspire the women employees.

2. Conducting stress audit at organizational level, for the purpose teaching individual, what causes stress and its impact on themselves. This leads to design the best suitable strategies for managing the stress. The stress audit should include data gathering on the organizational climate, frustrations and stresses of women employees. Moreover, the select IT companies can conduct regular health checkup, health screening camps, yoga classes and meditation for women employees to make them physically and mentally fit.
3. Eliminating self-defeating behaviours is an important way to relieve stress in the workplace. Many people increase the stress they experience through negative thoughts and behaviours. Turning these self-defeating behaviours around can help them to handle management imposed stress more easily. Therefore, eliminating self-defeating behaviours of employees will help them to reduce their work stress to a greater extent.
4. Cognitive techniques help employees to monitor their thinking, identify unrealistic negative thoughts and replace those thoughts with more positive coping statements. These techniques, used by psychiatrists and other professional counselors, help reduce negative moods such as anxiety and depression. It is suggested that the use of cognitive techniques in select IT companies will prevent negative thoughts and workplace stress.
5. Today women employees in the IT sector are battling with the concept of super mom and the world's best wife and also same time fulltime career women. But maintain balance between all these roles is a challenge. Thus mentoring sessions must be designed and run by female heads to advice about time management at home and office. Also, training about to speed up the work is also necessary. Thus, these mentoring sessions will help women employees about their career growth stability and to reduce stress from their life.
6. Management of the IT companies must provide women career counseling programs and higher education provision along with the job. This will help them to have a definite career path and higher opportunity in their jobs. Such programs will also change their conventional mindset that they are second earning member of family and there is no requirement of upgrading themselves. Thus, proper career counseling will provide them a clear vision to choose their future role and this will definitely improve their work efficiency and a stress free life.
7. Security of women employees requires a serious attention from management and industry, society and the police. Most of the IT companies provide cabs which are generally not owned by them instead of it, they are outsourced. There is no provision of serious background checking. Therefore, the select IT companies must provide a guard in every cab for women employees and firm can go for small mini buses to make a group of 15-20 people traveling together. Centralized technology can be used to monitor the speed and movement of cab drivers.
8. To develop and encourage the participation of women employees in both internal and external communication, networks and forums are required. Besides, special cells must be set up and introduced policies and processes that spur women participation, especially at the higher levels of decision-making to make the security and dignity of women employees a priority. Anti-discrimination legislation must be enforced ensuring that women employees have equal independence and equal access to jobs, provision must be there to educate about punishment under sexual harassment policies.

Conclusion

Stress is the concept given much importance in any organization because it creates high impact on the individual performance and the overall performance of the organization. The study reveals that women employees in the select IT companies have high work stress. The present study was conducted with a sample size of 300 women employees of three IT companies in Puducherry namely, Waysure Technologies, Roadmap IT Solutions and Zeuxine Technologies. The findings of this study bring to light that there exists work stress among the employees. It has now become necessary for IT companies to find ways of reducing unwanted pressure within an organization. With proper stress combating techniques individuals as well as organizations can become happy and healthy. Hence, management of the select IT companies must take essential measures to help them to overcome the work stress. This would help not only the women employees but also to improve the productivity ratio. At organizational level, well designed coping strategies have become the attention of companies. Having broader perspective of life will definitely change the perception of stress. To ensure a positive outcome, attention to the factors



identified in the suggested framework is important for reducing the work stress of women employees in the select IT companies.

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