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OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG THE IT PROFESSIONALS IN SIRUSERI IT PARK CHENNAI

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ABSTRACT In this information technology era, people like to enter the information technology professions which are the rapidly growing software services sector. These IT professionals are under great occupational stress to balance their work life. Occupational stress in this competitive situation is the burning issue that is bothering IT companies and IT professionals. Literature reviewed and availability of data reveal that majority of IT employees are facing problems while working in various IT companies this leads to develop occupational stress among them. The growth of this performance oriented IT industry depends on the performance of its employees. Further, the performance of individual workforce is related to the level of work pressure one can cope up within the work culture. This article highlights the level of occupational stress among the employees working in three different IT companies in Siruseri IT Park Chennai.

KEYWORDS : Occupational Stress, IT Professionals, Siruseri IT Park

INTRODUCTION

Occupational stress is an increasing phenomenon due to various factors like technological advancement, work culture and changing life style. It is also bound to occur in IT companies where operation is global and employees have different cultural background. Occupational stress has become an integral part of the lives of IT professionals as they face unique challenges. It is unavoidable in the highly competitive work environment and thus, the best one can do is to learn to manage stress and use it to bring out one's potential, rather than hindering oneself (Chauhan and Chauhan, 2005). The concept of stress was first introduced by Hans Selye in 1936. It is derived from the Latin word 'Stringere' (Pestonjee, 2000, p. 15).

Insights from this exploratory research should be of significant value to IT professionals. In this competitive work environment, IT companies should maintain a work atmosphere favourable to creative effort. This research attempts to measure the level of occupational stress experienced by the IT professionals in different IT companies in the study area.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The present research study holds a great significance because it has been carried out towards the occupational stress experienced by the IT professionals in one among the biggest IT Park in Chennai. Today IT professionals in this competitive and challenging environment are significantly more at risk of serious burnout than their counterpart of years before ago. High performance with high technology can exercise a dangerous influence on the human personality. Anyone who is constantly working with computer is at risk (Craig Brod, 1984). Information processing professionals see change in technology as a pre-requisite for their existence, yet the speed of this change can have profound psychological and physiological effects. In their survey, they found that majority of respondents who plan, design and monitor technological systems have experienced greater technostress in their jobs and environments and agreed that change in computer technology creates pressure (Khosrowpour and Culpan, 1990). Thus, it is necessary to understand existing problems which can be addresses with adequate practical assistance. Further, the research findings will provide initial answers as a springboard for future research which shall be of great help to the future researchers.

IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEMS

The major problem identified for analysis under the present study is to measure the occupational stress experienced by the employees working in three selected IT companies of Siruseri IT Park, Chennai. The other problems are identified as how the respondents are managing or handling this stress and the extent of impact of this occupational stress on their work culture and their psychological as well as physical behaviours.

Hence, the present study entitled as "Occupational Stress among the IT Professionals in Siruseri IT Park Chennai" has been undertaken.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Thirumaleswari, T (2013) stated that in the present scenario software industry has become one of the fastest growing industries in India. The reason for choosing particularly software industry and employees is that the level of stress these employees face is comparatively higher than other employees.

Kedar Rayamajhi (2014) made an attempt to study the level of stress among the Government officers: cases from the Nepal. The author defined job stress as the inability to cope with the pressures in a job. The main objective of this study is to explore the level of stress among the government officers working in different offices of Nepal. Study was conducted among the 284 technical and non-technical government officers.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The occupational stress of IT professionals from different IT companies is mainly influenced by the personal factors, psychological factors, organisational environment and work place conflicts. This type of stress is consequence of socio-economic complexity and some extent is a stimulant. The influence of occupational stress stressors on IT professionals from three selected IT companies in Siruseri IT Park, Chennai draws special attention in this research article. Thus, the researcher has made a humble attempt to measure the occupational stress among IT professional working in three different IT companies in Siruseri IT Park, Chennai.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To ascertain the level of occupational stress prevailing among the IT professionals in the select IT companies in the study area.
2. To suggest measures to handle occupational stress based on the findings of the study.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This research study is both descriptive and analytical in nature and hence, it is based on both primary and secondary data. First-hand

information was collected from the IT professional of selected IT companies in the study area by personally interviewing them. The data were collected through pretested structured questionnaire. This study is carried out to measure the occupational stress among the IT professionals by applying the Occupational Stress Index (OSI) developed by Srivastava and Singh, 1983 modification was carried out wherever required. The geographical area covered for this study is Siruseri IT Park, Chennai and the sample units are three IT companies set up in this campus. The sample size and sampling technique considered for the study are 150 respondents and multi-stage sampling method respectively. Statistical tools like frequency distribution, analysis of variance, student 't' test, coefficient of variation, ranking and ANOVA have been employed.

OCCUPATIONAL STRESS INDEX

The Occupational Stress Index has been used to measure six sources of occupational stress namely job conditions, role stress, interpersonal factors, career development, organisational structure and home-work interface. The Occupational Stress Index is based on a five point scale containing five statements for each source and a total of 30 statements are provided. The reliability test has been done for the scale.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The outcome of this study cannot be generalized across the entire IT field because the limited sample size of the population. All the inherent limitations and drawbacks of a sample study can be expected. However, few significant conclusions can be made from this study.
2. This research study is limited to three IT companies out of 30 IT companies located in the campus of Siruseri IT Park, Chennai. Thus, results cannot be generalized due to different geographical coverage.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The collected data have been analysed with the help of descriptive statistics. Skewness and Kurtosis have been calculated to determine the score distribution. The summary of descriptive analysis is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Summary of Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Job Conditions	7.63	1.88	.21	-.51
Role Stress	7.82	1.96	.31	-.57
Interpersonal Factors	7.52	1.68	,17	-.29
Career Development	8.43	1.98	.70	-.67
Organisational Structure	7.48	1.61	.11	-.19
Home work Interface	7.58	1.77	.19	-.38

Source: Computed Primary Data

Table 1 shows the data based on 6 variables Occupational Stress Index namely job conditions, role stress, interpersonal factors, career development, organizational structure and home work interface. It can be inferred that all the 6 measures of occupational stress are positively skewed. Thus, the IT professionals perceive high level of occupational stress irrespective of the dimensions of OSI. The level of occupational stress of the respondents based on descriptive statistics is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Level of Occupational Stress among the Respondents

Variables	Standard Mean (Low)	Standard Mean(Medium)	Standard Mean (High)
Job Conditions	2	4	8
Role Stress	7	9	12
Interpersonal Factors	2	5	7
Career Development	3	6	9
Organisational Structure	1	3	5
Home work Interface	1	3	8

Source: Computed Primary Data

The data and its analysis relating to Correlations Matrix are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

	Inter Role Distance	Job Conditions	Role Stress	Interpersonal Factors	Career Development	Organisational Structure	Home work Interface	Job Performance
Inter Role Distance		.219	.234	.153	.248	.155	.282	-.055
Job Conditions			.256	.239	.208	.199	.211	-.076
Role Stress				.337	.224	.307	.300	-.111
Interpersonal Factors					.281	.208	.143	-.102
Career Development						.231	.245	-.093
Organisational Structure							.267	-.097
Home work Interface								

Source: Computed Primary Data

It is inferred from Table 3 that the dimensions of occupational stress correlates with job performance of the respondents.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. It is found that IT professionals perceive high level of occupational stress on most of the measures of the Occupational Stress Index.
2. It is observed that when IT professionals are confronted with conflicting expectations from their peers, they lack of power, too many expectations, all these factors create high level of occupational stress.
3. It is observed that the IT professionals perceive high level of stress when they are not clear about the expectations from their role which may be due to lack of information available to them or their inability to understand the cues available to them.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Identification of factors leading to occupational stress is not so easy for everyone. Hence, it is suggested that external counsellors may be appointed to identify the problems faced by the employees working in the IT companies which could result in managing such stress.
2. It is suggested that the promotional polices should be renovated so that even the more experience person feels happy over the position. It is further suggested that apart from efficiency based promotions, time bound may also be introduced. This will help the employees to get promotion periodically.

CONCLUSION

The main sources of occupational stress are job conditions, career development and organizational structure. The IT companies must seek to redesign job structure to reduce task demand and work place conflict. Role expectations must be clearly articulated. There is a need for the improvement of organizational structure and interpersonal factors by improving personal relationships at work and by providing open channels of communication and career growth and motivation.

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