



Sources of Job Stress Among IT Professionals

KEYWORDS

Compost, Vermicompost, Yield, Trigonella

Dr. V. LAZAR

Assistant. Professor, Department of Psychology, Y.V. University, Kadapa

ABSTRACT *Stress is an inevitable phenomenon in any organization. Job stress is a condition arising from the interaction of people and their jobs and characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning. The purpose of the study is to find out the level of sources of Job Stress among IT professionals. The tool used Pressure Management Indicator. The sample consists of 435 (male=265 and female-170) Information Technology Professionals (who is working technically in Software Company). The data was collected by random sampling technique the data was analyzed by using SPSS. The results would be discussed in the light of psychological interventions and further study required for intervention programmes.*

Introduction

Inevitably, stress either internal or external is implicit all motivated activities of the human kind. It has the motivating value, without which people do not tend to turn to any piece of recognizable work. Within limits, it helps individuals use their energy to reach the targets. However, overwhelming and continuous stress beyond the resources of the individuals to sustain it results into several negative psycho-physical consequences. Stress that is compatible with the coping resources of the individual could be called as eustress and the one that transgresses the optimum level as distress. Work determines individuals life style. Work satisfaction is life satisfaction. Any dissatisfaction consequent upon stress and strain at work would be reflected on individual's personal life too. Therefore in present days where enormous value is being attached to quality of life, the work life of the individual attains enormous importance. The belief of individuals that they can control situation to a large extent influences their perception of in the situation as stressful or otherwise.

Researchers have attempted to study the job situations and job attitudes of personnel in the IT profession. Selye (1951) emphasizes individuals physio-psychological responses to stress in the form of General Adaptive Syndrome (GAS). Another traditional stress model of Lazarus and Folkman (1984) advocates' stress-appraisal-strain coming theory and it is also known as cognitive theory of psychological stress and coping. Hobfoll (1998) conservation of resources theory emphasizes the nature of one's environment, both objective (e.g., actual resources) and socially construed (eg. access to resources), in determining the stress process rather than solely the outcome of stress or individual's cognitive appraisal of stressors of these theories. Various studies confirm the relationship between burnout, job demands and resources. On the basis of research by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and many other organizations, it is widely believed that job stress increases the risk for development of back and upper-extremity musculoskeletal disorders (Sauter et al 1997). High levels of stress are associated with substantial increases in health service utilization (NIOSH 1999). The studies carried out on Indian scenario shows few studies on job stress among teachers (Upadhyay & Singh, 1999); software professionals (Rajeswari & Anantharaman, 2003); senior level officers (Chandraiah et al., 2003), special educators (Mathew, 2005); Call center employees (Sudhasree, 2005). Dhar and Bhagat (2008) study also tried to throw some light on the interventions of the professionals regarding leaving their organizations.

Objectives.

1. To study the effect of age and gender differences in the experience of job stress, of the subjects.

2. To identify the sources of job stress among the sample.
3. To identify the contributing factors of sources of job stress among low and high level groups.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There are significant age and gender differences in experience of job stress among Subjects.

Hypothesis 2: There are significant differences between the high and the low stress groups in their

Sources of stress.

Sample:

The sample of 435 IT Professionals, men=265 and women =170 of two different age groups of 21-25 yrs and 26-30 yrs and random sample technique was used.

Tool:

Pressure Management Indicator – Williams and Cooper (1998)

Operational definition of IT Professionals: The subjects of the study could be operationally defined as professionals working in information technology companies. As the field of information technology is widely popularized with the acronym IT: it is used to refer subjects of the study, the information technology professionals as IT professional.

Method

All the subjects of the study were contacted individually at their work place after obtaining prior permission from their employers. The subjects were asked to record their responses in the questionnaire at the respective places only as there were no separate answer sheets given. The filled questionnaires were collected from them after one week or ten days. The questionnaires which were incomplete and were not properly filled were excluded from the study. This resulted in a sample of 265 male and 170 female subjects for the study. Responses of the subjects were tabulated and analysed using suitable statistical techniques in order to verify the hypotheses.

Results and Discussion:

The results of the study are as follows:

Table 1. Analysis of scores on Job Stress

Sources of Variance	Sum of Squares	d	Mean sum of Squares	F
Age	286.50	1	286.50	0.52 @
Gender	29.19	1	29.19	0.05 @

Age and Gender	0.23	1	0.23	0.00 @
Within	237321.59	431	550.63	

@ Not Significant.

Researches conducted on subjects in services other than IT showed that those in the older age group experience less job stress than their younger colleagues. Perhaps with increasing years of age and maturation certain job aspects may be perceived relatively less stressful (Cherniss, 1985; Sin, Spector, Cooper and Donald, 2001). Gender differences in the experience of job stress were found in the studies of Bolino and Tunley, 2005; Chaplain, 1995; and Wells et al, 2006. However, from the lack of age and gender difference in the experiences of job stress in the present sample it could be inferred show that perhaps the field of Information Technology provides similar job aspects to all employees without any bias to their age and gender. Findings of the study thus warrant rejection of hypotheses 1.

In order to verify the hypothesis 2 subjects scoring high and those scoring low on job stress were identified by taking 27% of the two extremes of job stress score distribution and the significance of difference between the mean scores of the two groups on each of the sub scale was tested using t' test.

Table 2. Means, SD's and t' values for scores on sources of stress of the high and low job stress groups (N=118)

Subscales	Means & SD	Low stress group	High stress group	t
Workload	Mean SD	13.20 2.95	22.05 3.06	22.69**
Relationships	Mean SD	10.29 2.17	19.19 2.94	22.82**
Recognition	Mean SD	7.58 1.94	14.86 1.95	29.12**
Organization climate	Mean SD	12.65 2.95	22.97 3.32	25.17**
Personal responsibility	Mean SD	6.21 1.97	11.50 1.65	22.04**
Managerial role	Mean SD	6.60 2.25	11.43 3.70	12.38**
Home-work balance	Mean SD	7.03 1.73	13.04 3.11	18.21**
Daily hassles	Mean SD	7.61 1.83	14.24 2.35	24.55**

** Significant at 0.01 level

It could be seen from table 3 that the high stress group is scoring significantly higher on all sub scales of job stress than the low stress group. However, an attempt made here to see whether there were any specific sources in which the two groups differ shows that in all sources the high stress group is scoring significantly higher than the low group.

The hypothesis was examined further by computing stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) to find out the contribution of each source of stress to the total score, - for total sample low stress group, high stress group and (tables3, 4, and 5).

Table 3. Results of MRA for total sample (N=435)

Variables Entered	R	R Squares	Percent Variance
Climate	.870	.757	75.8%
Workload	.927	.859	10.7 %

Relationships	.967	.934	7.5 %
Managerial Role	.978	.956	2.2 %
Daily hassles	.985	.971	1.5 %
Home-work balance	.992	.983	1.1 %
Recognition	.997	.995	0.08 %
Personal Responsibility	1.000	1.000	0.05 %

Observation of MRA results in table 3 shows that organization climate has contributed considerably (75.8%), followed by workload (10.7%), relationships (7.5%) and managerial role (2.2%) to the total stress scores of the entire sample. The contribution of remaining sources is less than 2%. Similar results are obtained from the analysis of scores for low stress group also in the order of entry of variables in to the

regression equation (table 5).

Table 4. Results of MRA for low stress group (N=118)

Variables Entered	R	R Squares	Percent Variance
Organization Climate	.591	.349	34.9%
Workload	.748	.560	21.1%
Relationships	.850	.723	16.3%
Managerial Role	.917	.840	11.7%
Home-work balance	.952	.906	6.6%
Daily hassles	.974	.948	4.2%
Recognition	.990	.980	3.2%
Personal Responsibility	1.000	.983	2.1%

Table 5. Results of MRA for high stress group (N=118)

Variables Entered	R	R Squares	Percent Variance
Organization Climate	.663	.440	44 %
Daily hassles	.797	.635	19.5 %
Personal Responsibility	.860	.740	10.5%
Relationships	.899	.838	9.8%
Workload	.951	.905	6.7%
Managerial Role	.971	.943	3.8%
Recognition	.986	.972	2.9%
Home-work balance	1.000	1.000	2.8%

In this group also organization climate contributed to a large extent (34.91%) followed by workload (21.1%), relationships (16.3%), managerial role (11.7%), home-work balance (6.6%) to the total job stress, but the contribution of daily hassles recognition and personal responsibility is less than 5%. However, the MRA results obtained for high stress group are somewhat different. Though organization climate

contributed majorly (44%) to the total scores like that of low stress group and total sample, it is followed by daily hassles (19.5%), relationships (9.8%), workload (6.7%) and the contribution of remaining sources is less than 5% to the total stress score.

Close observation of the sources entered the regression equation shows that organization climate is the first to enter in all the three groups. The entry order of all other sources is similar for the low stress group and total sample. However, in the high stress group, sources like daily hassles (19.5%) and personal responsibility (10.5%), which are at the tail end to enter in the other two groups, entered the equation in the second and third step with considerable contribution to the total score. Sources like workload, relationships and managerial role entered in the equation in the second. The third and the fourth steps for low stress group and also for total sample, whereas for the high stress group these sources entered the equation in the fourth, the fifth, and the sixth step. This clearly shows the glaring differences in the priority of sources of stress within the high and the low stress groups. The significant differences between the high and the low stress groups in sources of stress speak of the importance to be given in the interventional efforts to help the IT professionals overcome the stress implicit in some of the sources. Thus this study identifies clearly organization climate, daily hassles and personal responsibility as the most stressful job aspects among IT professionals. In the light of these findings hypothesis 2 is accepted.

Similar findings were reported by the following - Lee and Ashforth's (1996) results revealed that job demands were strongly associated with exhaustion, cynicism was associated with both resources and demands and professional efficacy was largely uncorrelated to job demands and job resources. Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998) analyzed 27 published studies and found that job demands correlate most strongly with exhaustion and least with professional efficacy. They also found that professional efficacy shows a comparatively strong association with resources. A number of studies by Dr Dennis Rose and colleagues between 2001-2004 have found a very strong link between Organizational Climate and employee reactions such as stress levels, absenteeism and commitment and participation (Rafferty et al, 2001, Rose et al 2002).

Conclusions:

1. There are no significant age and differences in subjects' experience of job stress.
2. There are no significant gender differences in subjects' experience of job stress.
3. There are significant differences between the high and the low stress groups in their sources of job stress.
4. The organization climate, daily hassles and personal responsibility on the job appear to be the most stressful aspects of job for the high stress group. Excepting organization climate, daily hassles and personal responsibility which took priority in high stress group occupied the last category of source of stress in low stress group.

Implications :

1. A similar study on a large sample of male and female IT Professionals would facilitate generalization of the findings.
2. A study on similar lines of the present study with the inclusion of some more personality variables would help in identifying the crucial factors influencing the experience of job stress, coping strategies and burnout among IT professionals.
3. Psychological interventions based on indigenous practices would be helpful in reducing job stress.

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