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A Dipstick Study on Work Stress and Its Effect on Absenteeism and Quitting Intention

KEYWORDS: Work stress, absenteeism, quitting intentions.

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ABSTRACT *This study examines the effect of absenteeism and quitting intentions on employee work stress in IT and ecommerce sector. This paper highlights on five different criteria of measuring work stress via job demand, job control, career opportunities, job benefit, and job support. Questionnaire method was used to collect the data from the respondents. Multiple regressions were used to find the effect of different stressorsof work stress. The result indicates that job demand related stress factor have highest effect on both absenteeism and quitting intentions.*

Introduction
Organizational stress can be defined as an emotional, cognitive, behavioural and physiological response to the aggressive and harmful aspects of work, work environment and organizational climate.The information technology (IT) and information technology enabled services (ITeS) industry has been one of the key driving forces fuelling India's economic growth.It has employed almost 10 million Indians and hence, has contributed a lot to social transformation in the country. But, captains of IT industry are guarded in their response to anecdotal evidence of a spike in reported cases of depression among workers in the sector. In its edition dated April 25, ET had reported that the percentage of IT workers visiting NIMHANS Bangalore, one of India's largest psychiatric and counselling centres, was on course to increase from about one-third two years ago to half. "Earlier, when the sector was booming, IT executives suffered stress," P Satish Chandra, director, NIMHANS, told ET. "But they are showing signs of depression now."

Literature Review
Ciftcioglu, A. (2011), this research investigates burnout roles in occupational commitment and turnover intention relationship. Results of regression analysis showed that there was a negative relationship between occupational commitment and occupational turnover intention .Results also indicated that burnout has a role between occupational commitment and occupational turnover intention relationship.

Elangovan, A. R. (2001), This study addresses the confusion prevailing over the nature of the relationship between satisfaction and commitment in regards to employee turnover, and examines the causal pattern of relationships among stress, satisfaction, commitment, and turnover intentions by employing a structural equations analysis approach. Data were collected from 155 graduate business students enrolled in a large, public university. Several models specifying different patterns of relationships were tested using LISREL.

Staufenbiel, T., &König, C. J. (2010), A model is tested in which job insecurity is simultaneously a hindrance and a challenge stressor. In particular, job insecurity is proposed to have a predominantly harmful effect on performance, turnover intention, and absenteeism, and it is argued that these effects are mediated by (reduced) work attitudes. In addition, job insecurity is also assumed to affect these behaviours in the opposite way (i.e. a suppressor effect) because job insecurity might motivate employees to make them more valuable to the organization by working harder and being less absent

Theoretical Background
Work-related stress is the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope. Individual demographics, as well as the occupation itself, had subtle impact on stress formation, absence behaviour, intention of quitting job, and work morale. People from top-level had the highest morale, followed by junior- and middle-level, and people from senior-level had the lowest work morale. Second, higher educational level was related to less occurrence of absence behaviour. In the light of reviewed literature, the researcher decided to study work stress and other related variables such as coping strategies, health problems, work environment and expectations regarding organizational interventions. This paper highlights on five different criteria of measuring work stress that leads to absenteeism at work and quitting intentions.

Job Demand
Job demands as those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (i.e., cognitive or emotional) effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs. Although job demands are not necessarily negative, they may turn into job stressors when meeting those demands requires high effort and is therefore associated with high costs that elicit negative responses such as depression, anxiety, or burnout.

Job Control
Job control refers to a person's level of control over time allocation and organizational decisions.

Career Opportunities
Career opportunities refer to a favourable or advantageous circumstance or combination of circumstances at the job. This also includes promotion opportunities and job enrichment. It is also considered as the progress through history of an institution

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Job Support
Job Support refers to the support of co-workers and supervisors for work related and personal matters at the workplace. It also includes job coaching, mentoring, physical support including on the job physiotherapy or attendant care, etc

Job Benefit
Employee job benefits and benefits in kind (also called fringe benefits, perquisites, or perks) include various types of non-wage compensation provided to employees in addition to their normal wages or salaries. Examples of these benefits include: housing (employer-provided or employer-paid), group insurance (health, dental, life etc.), disability income protection, retirement benefits, daycares, tuition reimbursement, sick leave, vacation (paid and non-paid), social security, profit sharing, funding of education, and other specialized benefits.

Objective of Study
- To measure the effect of work stress on absenteeism and quitting intentions.
- To understand which organizational factor have higher significant effect on the work stress

Methodology
This is a descriptive study to understand relationships between various factors related to work stress in the context of absenteeism and quitting intentions.

Sample and Source of Data
The study was conducted by a questionnaire survey on a randomly selected sample of ecommerce and IT professionals from several selected firms of Ahmedabad city. The respondents include mangers, assistant mangers, executives, analysts, software developers having 70% males and 30% females.Out of 100 questionnaires distributed in several firms, 78 completed questionnaires were received back from firms, which participated in the survey of the study.

Data Analysis Tools and Technique
The data collected through questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively by using SPSS software. Multiple regressionswere used to find the effect of different stressors on quitting intentions and absenteeism of the employees.

Variables
To assess the effect of work stress on employee absenteeism and quitting intentions, job demand, job control, career opportunities, job support and job benefit are taken as independent variables. Absenteeism and quitting intention due to work stress are taken as dependent variable.

Model Specification
Model 1:
$ABit = \beta0+ \beta1(JDit)+ \beta2(JCit)+ \beta3(COit)+ \beta4(JSit)+ \beta5(JBit)+ \varepsilon$

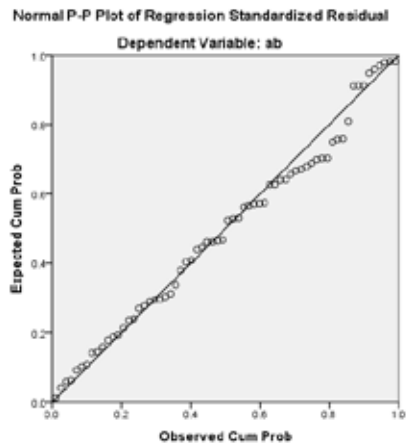
AB = Employee Absenteeism
JD = Job Demand
JC= Job Control
CO= Career Opportunity
JS= Job Support
JB= Job Benefit
ε = corresponds to error term

Model 2:
$\mathbf{QI_{it}} = \beta_0+ \beta_1(JD_{it})+ \beta_2(JC_{it})+ \beta_3(CO_{it})+ \beta_4(JS_{it})+ \beta_5(JB_{it})+ \varepsilon$

QI= Quitting Intentions
JD = Job Demand
JC= Job Control
CO= Career Opportunity
JS= Job Support
JB= Job Benefit
ε = corresponds to error term

Data Analysis & Discussion

Analysis of Model 1:



The normal probability plot of residual roughly follows a straight line so it does not violate the assumption of normality.

Model Summaryb

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.561a	.315	.267	4.28817

a. Predictors: (Constant), jb, jd, js, co, jc
b. Dependent Variable: ab

ANOVAa

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	600.735	5	120.147	6.534	.000b
	Residual	1305.577	71	18.388		
	Total	1906.312	76			

a. Dependent Variable: ab
b. Predictors: (Constant), jb, jd, js, co, jc

P value of F test is less than 0.05 so, the regression model is significant.

The result6 indicates that, the R square value is 0.315; this means that our model explains 31.5 per cent of variance in absenteeism due to work stress.

Coefficientsa

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	10.683	2.746		3.890	.000
	jd	.364	.083	.501	4.387	.000
	jc	-.124	.154	-.111	-.807	.423
	co	-.259	.160	-.201	-1.624	.109
	js	.038	.049	.089	.773	.442
	jb	-.220	.092	-.297	-2.392	.019

a. Dependent Variable: ab

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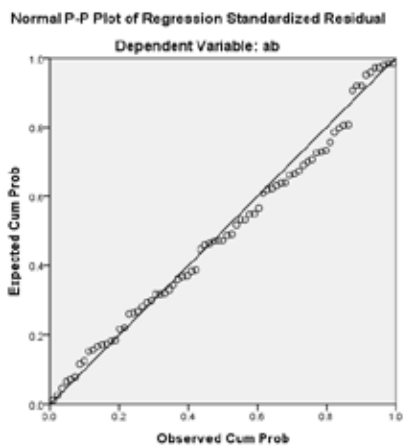
Job demand and job benefit are making unique contribution to the prediction of dependent variable employee absenteeismbecause the p value for these variables is less than 0.05.

Absenteeism will increase if job demand increases and will decrease if job control, career opportunities and job benefit is increased. If job demand increases by 1 unit than absenteeism will increase by 0.364.

In this model job demand has Beta coefficient 0.501. This means that job demand variable makes the strongest unique contribution to explaining the absenteeism.

Analysis of Model 2:



The normal probability plot of residual roughly follows a straight line so it does not violate the assumption of normality.

Model Summaryb

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.526a	.277	.226	5.17220

a. Predictors: (Constant), jb, jd, js, co, jc
b. Dependent Variable: qi

ANOVAa

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	726.709	5	145.342	5.433	.000b
	Residual	1899.369	71	26.752		
	Total	2626.078	76			

a. Dependent Variable: qi
b. Predictors: (Constant), jb, jd, js, co, jc

P value of F test is less than 0.05 so, the regression model is significant.

The result indicates that, the R square value is 0.277; this means that our model explains 27.7 per cent of variance in quitting intentions due to work stress.

Coefficientsa

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	16.045	3.312		4.844	.000
	Jd	.371	.100	.435	3.708	.000
	Jc	-.088	.186	-.067	-.473	.638
	Co	-.377	.193	-.249	-1.957	.054
	Js	-.023	.059	-.047	-.398	.692
	Jb	-.250	.111	-.288	-2.261	.027

a. Dependent Variable: qi

Job demand and job benefit are making unique contribution to the prediction of dependent variable employee quitting intentions because the p value for these variables is less than 0.05.

Quitting intentions will increase if job demand increases and will decrease if job control, career opportunities, job support and job benefit is increased. If job demand increases by 1 unit than quitting intentions will increase by 0.371.

In this model job demand has Beta coefficient 0.435. This means that job demand variable makes the strongest unique contribution to explaining the quitting intention.

Limitations and further scope of research

The study highlights the effect of work stress in IT and E-commerce sector, thus providing a valuable insight for future studies in recognizing the uniqueness of each occupation and of occupation-specific work stress interventions. With the limitation of time and recourses the number of respondents that could be considered for study is relatively less.

In addition, we examined only five work related factors. There are other work behaviours and factors which may exert influences on employees, leading to work stress. Future studies should enlarge the scope of other work stressors and behaviours influencing the employee's intention of absenteeism and quitting.

Further, there are many demographic variables such as age, gender, education, occupation, etc, which have effect on work stress, which are not included in the study.

Suggestions and recommendations

There are a lot of strategies that can be applied when talking about managing organizational stress, such as:early prevention and elimination of work related problems that can produce stress;change work demands; ensure that employees have the necessary knowledge and abilities to perform effectively their jobs;improve constantly the technique used at work;ensure a proper work environment;offer employees a stress management training in order to teach them ways of overcoming stress; managing employee work-life balance.

Conclusion

We conclude that work stress does not have a major effect on employee absenteeism and quitting intentions. Numeric verification and statistical analysis shows that variance in absenteeism and quitting intention is 31% and 28% respectively. This also indicated that, employees apart from

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absenteeism and quitting intentions show's other behaviour to express their work stress.

Out of all the variables of work stress, job demand contributes highest to the level of work stress in e-commerce and IT professionals. It is also observed that, if there is increase in job control, job benefit, job support and better career opportunities, than it can help in reducing the work stress leading to less absenteeism and quitting intentions.

Moreover, our research have become male centric as 70% of the respondents are male, thus reducing the effect of work life balance as part of work stress.

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