HANDLING STRESS IN THE WORKPLACE AND ITS RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

Dr. N. Premavathy*
N. Mohamed Rafiq**

Abstract

It may seem that there"s nothing an employee can do about stress. In fact, a better and strong stress management is possible if employees have everything under their control. Stress management starts with identifying the sources of stress in your organization. The study is an attempt to explore the influence of three factors namely, job stress on job satisfaction and job future/advancement among IT employees working in IT Industry. Thorough understandings of literature helps to comprehend that there was a significant relationship between marital status and job stress, pay of an employee and job stress and also reveals significant relationships of job stress with job satisfaction, the attitude of management towards employees, promotion ability of employees and leadership traits of managers. The study reveals that IT employees are prone to moderate levels of job stress and some sources of stress are unavoidable.

Keywords: Job stress, Stress Management Techniques and IT Employees

*Reader & HOD Of Commerce ,Department Of Commerce,Queen Mary's College, Chennai
**Ph.D Research Scholar, Dept .of Commerce,Manonmaniam Sundaranar University,Tamil Nadu,

Introduction

Stress management refers to the wide spectrum of techniques and psychotherapies aimed at controlling a person's levels of stress, especially chronic stress, usually for the purpose of improving everyday functioning. Job Stress also known as workplace stress is a prevalent and dearly problem seen in today's workplace. About one-third of workers world-wide report high levels of stress. Three-quarters of employees believe that worker has more on-the-job stress than a generation ago.

It is generally perceived that job satisfaction is directly correlated with the mental well-being of the employees. Job stress on the other hand is the main cause of problems not only in a person's professional life but also in his or her personal life. A stress filled employee makes wrong decisions and has a negative relationship with co-workers. Some signs of a stressed employee at work are reduced productivity, mistakes, low quality work and absenteeism. On the other hand, a satisfied employee is a vital pre-requisite for a healthy company.

The IT sector is one such sector which seems heavily affected by job stress resulting in employee turnover. The IT sector is a dynamic industry where enormous changes have been occurring as seen in the last decade and these changes have occurred at a rapid speed. With change comes stress inevitably. A trend too is seen in the age group of 25 – 40 years with a majority of IT employees because this age group can withstand dynamic changes taking place at the workplace.

Stress management starts with identifying the sources of stress in employee's life. True sources of stress aren't always obvious, and it's all too easy to overlook their own stress-inducing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

Stress control and Management has become an important aspect of human resources management. Stress generally created due to some dissatisfaction among the human beings. Stress conditions are found normally in every organization which affects the efficiency of

human productivity. Many reasons have been found out by psychologists for accumulation of stress in human body which is turning out into several harmful diseases in long run. Stress conditions not only affect individual person and also extensively it affects their family. Stress is generally a psychological effect which affects the human body and reduces the efficiency of the body.

Review of literature

Researchers at Harvard (2013) have documented what has long been known anecdotally: that deep breathing has a positive impact on stress. The more you take a moment to breathe, the less stress you'll feel. Hans Selye (2013) reveals that stress, in addition to being itself, was also the cause of itself, and the result of itself.

Sulaksha (2012) found that the workplace should be seen as a place which facilitates employees' social interactions with other colleagues on professional and domestic matters. This is especially important for high pressure jobs like the IT sector where employees spend long hours away from home and it is sometimes necessary to reduce the monotony of work. Research shows social support reduces the negative effects of stressful situations.

Razavi, Reza Hamid and Emamgholizadeh, Saeid and Emami, Mostafa(2012), conducted a study on stress and the results also demonstrated that there was no significant difference between the opinions of male and female managers about the level of workforce productivity and stress management being put in practice in the before-mentioned Industrial Park. And finally the results indicate that the level of workforce productivity and stress management being put in practice in the before-mentioned Industrial Park is not under the influence of any of Individual characteristics of managers (e.g. Age, Education Level, Job Title, Employment Background and Employment Status).

Christiana, Beulah Viji (2009), Stress in the workplace is an increasingly hot topic, as employers are placed with the greater responsibility of handling stressed staff.

Employees are subjected to a greater degree of stress while they try to enhance their human competencies in order to have an edge in the highly competing global scenario. Organizations concentrate on increasing productivity. Technology allows us to do things faster and on a much larger scale, but it also raises expectations of a rapid response and the availability of individuals to interact to meet business needs. This provides both opportunities and challenges for HR to influence how an organization makes best use of its human and organizational capital, without jeopardizing employee well-being and a sense of fairness or "Organizational justice".

Fred Luthans(1995) defines Stress as an adaptive response towards external situation resulting in physical, psychological deviation and/or changing of behaviour among the members of an organization Stress will not happen instantaneously; instead it happens through a long process. Not all stress is negative. De Cenzo and Robbins (1999) stated that stress could be manifested both in negative and positive ways. Stress is said to be positive if it improves performance and is said to be negative if it hinders work performance.

Job satisfaction describes how content an individual is with his or her job. Job satisfaction is a very important attribute frequently measured by organizations. The most common way of measurement is the use of rating scales where employees report their reactions to jobs. Weiss (2002) has said that job satisfaction is an attitude and is made up of 3 components; affect (emotion), beliefs and behaviours. De Cenzo and Robbins (1999) have said that job satisfaction as a collection of positive and/or negative feelings that an individual holds towards his or her job. Another apt understanding of job satisfaction is by Drever (1964) who describes it as an end state of feeling .

Job satisfaction and job stress are related to an individual's long term career goals, to his future in the organization. Every employee seeks to rise in his or her career. Hence, job future or career advancement is seen as a determinant of job satisfaction. Technical competence in ITES-BPOemployees is not

enough. They also need to widen their portfolios of job roles, job skills and experiences.

Job Advancement can be challenging during periods of economic recession, company downsizing, and company restructuring. Job Advancement can also be challenging when there is keen competition for jobs in the field and if the employer tends to hire from outside the company.Further Job Advancement can be challenging when workplace issues are involved such as office politics, company politics, workplace attitudes personality differences between managers and employees and resistance to change (Robin Jacobs 2003).

Statement of the problem

The it employees in india are constantly facing changes due to the uncertainties in the global market as a result of which these employees are subjected to work stress. This study has been initiated to understand the influence of job stress at workplace and to understand the relaxation techniques to attain job satisfaction. The other aim is to assess the influence of demographic profile of the it employees on job stress.

Research objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are listed below: a. To study the stress management concepts. b. To explore the effects of stress at workplace and its relaxation techniques.
c. To offer and suggest tips to tame job stress.

Stresses in it industries
Information Technology industry is one of the largest industry growing industry in India. It is one of the most important industries which earn larger foreign exchange for India. In India, more than 10% of the population is employed in IT and IT related industries. Employees of IT industry are paid highly with monetary and non-monetary benefits. Stress affects more than 95% of employees of IT industry. Majority of the employees of IT industry faces the problem of stress and they become the victim of several diseases.

Employees of IT sector are serious victims of stress and they suffer from several diseases due to stress. IT employees though paid more and more but cannot lead a normal life due to their job environment becoming stressful. According to the recent survey taken by the famous Newspaper The Hindu, it was found that many of the IT employees are getting old age diseases like diabetes, Blood pressures in the young age. Stress Management for these employees require more attention by the Management by taking effective measures to manage their human resources against the stress so that their efficiency and productivity may be increased to achieve the target of the organization very easily.

There are some common symptoms of stress which are narrated as follows:

1. Blood pressure rises
2. Breathing becomes more rapid
3. Digestive system slows down
4. Heart rate (pulse) rises
5. Immune system goes down
6. Muscles become tense
7. Mood Swing
8. Headache
9. Regular body pain
10. Sleeplessness
11. Poor concentration

The various general reasons for creation of stress among the IT employees can be narrated as follows:

1) High Target
2) Project completion Time
3) Frequent Night Shifts
4) Seat Work and no physical activities
5) Continuous thinking
6) Pressure from seniors like project leaders, team leaders
7) Poor appetite

The IT sector in India has a younger workforce in the age group of 25-35 years. These younger people are techno-savvy, aware of market realities and opportunities and are career oriented. Factors like lack of career advancement, too much workload, employee morale, risks involved in decision making and organizational climate leads to stress among

them. It is also seen that most of the IT employees have high career aspirations and job expectations and are therefore ready to take risks.

The workforce in IT sector faces many challenges. The technological advancements in this sector come up in short span of time so these employees need frequent up gradation of their skills to remain marketable. The working conditions are quite stressful. The employees work long hours and cannot take leave when sick as fellow colleagues do not co-operate. These conditions lead to job stress which can influence job satisfaction and job future.

Past studies found that stress is a part of regular life and its elimination is unavoidable. It's difficult to eliminate stress, and it would not be possible to do so. In its place, the employees may be orientated to learn relaxation technique and other techniques to handle stress so that the employees may have control over job stress which leads job satisfaction.

Handling stress in the workplace

Stress can affect physical and mental health, work productivity, and personal lives.A certain amount of stress helps us get the job done under pressure and gives us energy.Management can proactively manage the risks of stress by telling staff about the personal costs effects and risks that result from stress in the workplace.The IT sector is concerned with outsourcing of critical but non-core business process or functions of an organization to external vendors for long periods of time on a set of predefined performance metrics. Today more and more organizations are recognizing the practical and enhanced value of externally delegating processes as opposed to doing them in house. The IT sector in India caters to the global economy primarily as a provider of low-end services. This very feature has shaped the nature of employment that has been created in this sector. Mobility, flexibility and employee relationship management are the three major characteristics of employment in this industry. The third characteristic of this sector is the employee relationship management in which a

lot of emphasis is given to attracting, developing and retaining workforce.

Stress can be reduced and controlled among the workers and employees through an effective stress management by the employers of the organizations. Effective stress management can relieve the members from stress conditions and thereby increase the efficiency and productivity of the employees. Stress controlled through effective stress management can help the organization to achieve its objectives easily through utilization of valuable human resources.

Suggestion &conclusion

Employees can learn to manage stress and lead happier, healthier lives. Here are some suggestions to help you keep stress at haven:

1. Keep a positive attitude with hope.
2. Accept that there are events that you cannot control in your organization.
3. Be self-confident instead of destructive.
4. Learn and practice relaxation techniques; try meditation, yoga, or tai-chi other cultural techniques.
5. Exercise regularly in order to fight stress better when it is fit.
6. Eat healthy, well-balanced meals on time.
7. Learn to manage your time more efficiently and effectively.
8. Set limits appropriately and say no to requests that would create stress in your life.
9. Make time for hobbies and interests.

It is being recognized that job stress is a major detriment to work performance of IT employees. These employees live in a much faster paced world and experience job stress in their lives as they balance the demands of their work and home lives. The need is for a change in the lifestyles of these employees. While liberalization of the Indian Economy has expanded opportunity for employment and additional incomes in the IT sector, these changes maybe at the cost of employees being stressed out too often.

The best way to cope with unhealthy stress is to recognize when one's stress levels are

building. While we often think of stress as the result of external events, the events themselves are not necessarily stressful. It is the way in which each individual interprets and reacts to an event that produces stress. Employees vary significantly in the type of events they experience as stressful and this is seen in their responses to those events.

References – bibliography
1. David A. Decenzo, Stephen P. Robbins (1999) Human Resource Management , John Wiley & Sons Inc. U.K.
2. Drever, James (1964) A dictionary of psychology , Penguin Books, New York.
3. Fred Luthans (1995) Organizational Behavior , 7th Ed.McGraw-Hill College.
4. Martins, J. (2005) Organisational Behaviour and Management London: Thomson.
5. M. Coetzee & M. De Villiers (2007) Sources of job stress, work engagement and career orientations of employees in a South African Financial institution.
6. Roy Payne, J. Graham Jones (1987) Social class and re-employment: Changes in health and perceived financial circumstances , Journal of Organizational Behavior Volume 8, Issue2, pages 175–184, April 1987.
7. RobinJacobs(2003) Job Advancement Strategies,PortlandCommunity College – Portland.
8. Stamps, Paula L. and Piedmonte, Eugene B. (1986) Nurses and work satisfaction: An index for measurement Health Administration Press Perspectives (Ann Arbor, Mich.)
9. Weiss (2002) Europe Wakes Up to Aging , Sci. Aging Knowl. Environ. 4 December 2002. Vol. 2002, Issue 48, p. Ns10.
10. http://www. huffingtonpost.com/2013/ 12/24/holiday-stress-busters_n_4494518.html
11. Razavi, Reza Hamid and Emamgholizadeh, Saeid and Emami, Mostafa, A Survey of the Relationship between Stress Management and Workforce Productivity of One of Iran's Industrial Parks (July 6, 2012). Elixir Human Res. Mgmt. 48 (2012) 9371-9378 .
12. Christiana, Beulah Viji, Impact of Stress Management on Human Competencies (July 23, 2009). Asia Pacific Journal of Management, Forthcoming.