

The Relationship between Stress and Job Performance among IT Professionals in Jaffna District

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Abstract

The modern-day businesses heavily depend on Information Technologies and systems. It leads to expanded job roles, increased the work demands and over pressures of Information Technology professionals. This study intended to find out the relationship between stress and job performance among IT professionals in Jaffna district. Snowball sampling technique was used and data were collected from 88 respondents by using E-Questionnaires through electronic media. Correlation analysis was done to carry out the study. The findings of the study revealed that stress is negatively co related ($r = - 0.6917$) with job performance of IT Professionals. The paper concludes with recommendations for further research.

Keywords: Stress, Job Performance, IT Professionals, Jaffna

Introduction

Jobs in the IT field are Characterized by long working period, minimum social interaction, night shift, Job insecurity, upgradation of new technology time bounded projects, work environment, and continuous visual focusing the monitors are leads for occupational stress (Siva Kumar et al., 2011)

To make the best use of people as a variable resource of the organization, attention must be given to the relationship between staff and the nature and content of their jobs. The work organization and the design of jobs can have a significant effect on staff. In this connection, the level of stress is also an important factor that may have impact on the employee's behavior. Stress is a complex and dynamic concept. This means that undesirable level of stress affects overall performance of the organization. Further, from the employees' point of view employee's stress is caused by not only organization but also their family such as family problem, death of the family member etc.

In order to get the work done effectively, organization or manager should properly manage the level of stress of employees. There is no single level of stress that is optimal for all people. Positive stress adds anticipation and excitement to life, and we all thrive under a certain amount of stress. Our goal is not to eliminate stress, but to learn how to manage it and how to use it to help us. Therefore, it is very important for both individual and organization to manage the stress to its optimal level.

The impact of stress on organizational performance is not less dramatic. Many executives feel they could make better decisions and perform more effectively if they worked under less stress. Stress has also been linked to absenteeism, turnover, and industrial accidents. In a new development, many workers are suing companies for compensation payments for emotional and physical illnesses traced to their jobs and winning.

For our research, the one of the most important factor “the stress” is taken and to know how it affects the job performance. In order to conduct this study effectively, IT professionals of Jaffna district are selected.

Research Problem

In the present days, many of the students prefer Jobs in IT industries where one can have secured job for a decent salary package. It not only decides the social and living status of an individual but it aid to enhance the economic growth of any nation. Such an industry is now being troubled by occupational stress. Therefore, IT companies should take necessary steps to overcome such stresses from the minds of the employees to improve the job performance. The major objective of the researchers is to submit a research that would benefit the society of software professionals, software companies and indirectly to nation.

Research Question

Is there any negative relationship between Stress and Job Performance?

Objective of the Study

To identify possible relationship between Stress Level and Job Performance.

Significance of the Research

The study can be important particularly for two crowds of stake holders namely the organizations who after knowing the occupational stress motivators, can implement appropriate strategies to reduce the stress level thereby improving the employee’s job performance and the employees who after being aware can take right steps to reduce their own stress saving themselves from variety of health-related issues and also help management to implement the stress management strategies

Literature Review

Stress

Sager (1991) defined job stress as a psychological state perceived by individuals when faced with demands, constraints, and opportunities that have important but uncertain outcomes.

Antecedents of stress

The antecedents of stress, or the so-called stressors, affecting today’s employees are summarized in Figure 1. As shown, these causes come from both outside and inside the organization and from the groups that employees are influenced by and from employees themselves.

Job performance

Job performance is an activity which enables a person to successfully complete his tasks and duties, assigned to him, when an individual is subject to utilize the available resources under normal constraints (Aasia et al., 2012)

Theoretical Framework

Munir and Islam (2011) tested the relationship is found to be negative between other stressors and job performance. Imrab et al. (2013) found that stress is responsible for decreasing the performance of bank employees. Ahmed & Ramzan (2013) too found a negative correlation between stress and job performance. Dishinger (2003) suggested that different aspects of

employee job performances that are likely to be affected by stress. The studies conducted in western countries have shown occupational Stress Inducers are negatively related to well-being and job satisfaction of employees (Robertson et al., 1990). Rubina et al. (2008) found a negative relationship between job stress and job performance. Stress has significant impact on company and people performance and it terribly affects health of employees (Shah et al, 2012). Aasia et al. (2011) found no significant relationship exist between job stress and employee performance.

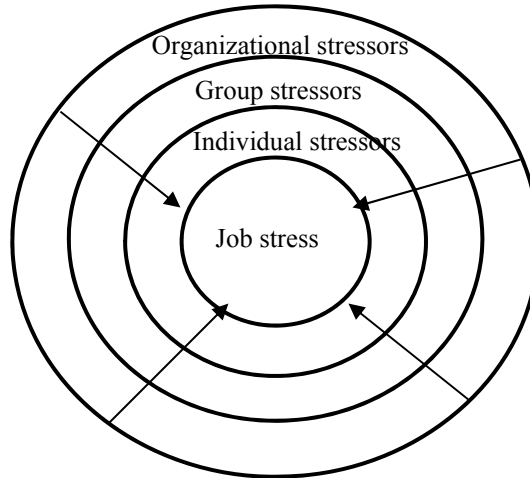


Figure 1: Categories of stressors

(Source: - Fred Luthans, organizational behaviour, 7th edition, page 299

Conceptualization

In this model relationship is assumed between stress and job performance. Based on the model shown in Figure 2, the following hypotheses were formulated.

Hypotheses

Based on the conceptual model the following hypotheses were developed for testing.

- H₁:** There will be a negative relationship between stress and job performance
- H_{1a}:** There will be a relationship between Job related factors of stress and job performance
- H_{1b}:** There will be a negative relationship between organizational factors of stress and job performance
- H_{1c}:** There will be a negative relationship between individual related factors of stress and job performance
- H₂:** There will be a negative relationship between age and stress
- H₃:** There will be a negative relationship between Experience and stress

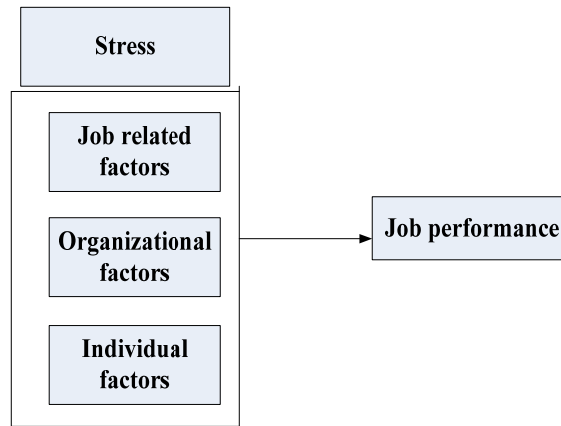


Figure 2: Coceptualization

Methodology

The study was conducted in Jaffna district. The sample for this study consisted of 88 employees drawn on the basis of snowball sampling. E-Questionnaires have been sent to 145 IT professionals in Jaffna district through Email as they are frequently involve with mails. In which 99 were returned. Out of 99 responses that were obtained 11 were found to be unusable due to either incomplete questionnaires or having sections with non-response items. Job Stress is measured using the questionnaire developed by Parker and DeCotiis (1983). Job performance is measured by the scale developed by Dubinsky and Mattson (1979), and was modified by Singh, Verbeke and Rhoads (1996). Correlation analysis is used to analysis the data.

Data Analysis

Presentation of data on determinant factors of stress

According to the Table 1, on job related factors moderate level stress is high that is 43% but on organizational factors and individual factors. Low-level stress is high that is 64% and 77% respectively.

Table 1: Different level of stress relate with stress determinant factors

Stress level	Job related factor		Organizational factors		Individual factor	
	No of employees	%	No of employees	%	No of employees	%
Low	34	39%	56	64%	68	77%
Moderate	38	43%	23	26%	7	8%
High	16	18%	9	10%	13	15%

Source: Survey data

Correlation analysis

Correlation values were graded roughly (Collis and Hussey, 2009)

- 0.90 to 0.99 (very high positive correlation)
- 0.70 to 0.89 (high positive correlation)
- 0.40 to 0.69 (medium positive correlation)
- to 0.39 (low positive correlation)
- to -0.39 (low negative correlation)
- 0.40 to -0.69 (medium negative correlation)
- 0.70 to -0.89 (high negative correlation)
- 0.90 to -0.99 (very high negative correlation)

Table 2 : Data analysis through correlation analysis

Hypothesis	Correlation	Sig	Result
H ₁ : There will be a negative relationship between stress and job performance	- 0.6917	Sig 2 tailed	Accepted
H _{1a} : There will be a relationship between Job related factors of stress and job performance	- 0.4049	Sig 2 tailed	Accepted
H _{1b} :There will be a negative relationship between organizational factors of stress and job performance	- 0.6001	Sig 2 tailed	Accepted
H _{1c} : There will be a negative relationship between individual related factors of stress and job performance	- 0.4730	Sig 2 tailed	Accepted
H ₂ : There will be a negative relationship between age and stress	- 0.0569	Sig 2 tailed	Accepted
H ₃ : There will be a negative relationship between Experience and stress	- 0.0343	Sig 2 tailed	Accepted

Source: Survey data

Job related factors Vs performance

Job related factors have lower negative relationship with performance than other variables. The correlation is – 0.4049. That is when stress with job related factors increase, performance of the employees will decline and vice-verse. Therefore, H_{1a} is accepted.

Individual factors Vs performance

Individual factors have moderate negative relationship with performance than other variables. The correlation is -0.473. Hypothesis (H_{1c}) is accepted. That is when stress with individual factors increase, performance of the employee will decline and vice-verse.

Organizational factors Vs performance

Organizational factors have high negative relationship with performance than other variables. The correlation is -0.6001. Hypothesis (H_{1b}) is accepted. When stress with organizational factors decrease, performance of the employee will increase and vice-verse.

Stress Vs performance

There is overall strong negative relationship between performance and stress. The correlation between average stress and performance is -0.6917. Hypothesis (H₁) is accepted.

Age Vs stress

The relationship between age and stress is very lower negative relationship. The correlation is -0.0569. From which it may be said age is less correlated with stress.

Experience Vs stress

The relationship between experience and stress is very lower negative relationship. The correlation is -0.0343. So, it can be said that experience is less correlated with stress.

Findings and Conclusion

Findings

IT professionals of Jaffna district experience great degree of stress that affects their job performance. Determinants of stress are viewed into three categories such as job related factors, organizational factors and individual factors. According to the analyzed data, it has been found that employees' stress is correlated with their job performance. The relationship between stress due to the job-related factors and employees' performance are negative (-0.4049). Most of the employees that is, 43% experience moderate level stress. By this, 50% on them has high level of performance than others. In respect of the organizational factors, 64% of employees experience low-level stress. There is also a negative relationship between stress due to this factor and performance (-0.6001). Furthermore, 77% of employees experience low-level stress due to the individual factors. The relationship between stress and performance is also negative (-0.473). That is, when stress due to individual factors increase employees' performance will decrease.

There is overall strong negative relationship between performance and stress and Hypotheses (H₂) is accepted. Other factors such as age and experience are less co related with employees' job stress. These have very little contribution on employees' stress. Therefore, IT professionals of Jaffna district mostly experience low level of stress due to organizational and individual factors. In turn they experience moderate level stress due to job related factors. Finally, we can conclude Stress and job performance are strongly co related.

Recommendations

Stress experienced by employees should be managed to improve their performance. Stress is not ultimately bad for individual employees or their organizational performance. In fact it is generally recognized that low levels of stress can even enhance job performance. Researches are also emerging that indicates that the level of difficulty and nature of the task being performed may affect the relationship between stress and performance. However, it is still safe to conclude that:

- The performance of many tasks is in fact strongly affected by stress.
- Performance usually drops off sharply when stress rises to high levels.

When there is no stress, job challenges are absent and perform tends to be low. As stress increases, performance tends to increase, because stress helps a person call up resources to meet job requirements. It is a healthy stimulus that encourages employees to respond to

challenges. Eventually stress reaches a plateau that corresponds approximately with a person's top day to day performance capability. At this point, additional stress tends to produce no more improvement. Finally, if stress becomes too great, performance begins to decline, because stress interferes with it. Here some suggestions are put forward to manage the employees' stress for enhancement of their performance.

The organization should create a supportive organizational climate. Unfortunately, the organizations today continue to be highly formalized with accompanying inflexible, impersonal climate. Therefore, the structure should be decentralized with participative decision-making and upward communication flows. The management of the organization should eliminate or reduce the conflict between employees and administrative officers. Employees should be allowed to get advice from their supervisor. Through this they will correctly perform their responsibilities and duties. Organization should have to expand the health maintenance programs supervisor training programs and stress reduction workshops. Organization should handle the problems and opportunities which are common to all employees. Motivation for employees should be granted without biased to perform their task. Develop and maintain personal relationship social support at work and away from work can help alleviate some of negative effects of stress. Relaxation in various forms can be thought of always of giving the body an appropriate factor to recover from stress.

Suggestions for Further Research

This research only covered only IT professionals in Jaffna district. Future researchers can consider bankers or employees from public sector organization. That is working conditions, administrative policies and structures may differ between these organizations. Therefore, stress experienced by employees may differ between these organizations.

Further three factors that determine the stress level of the employees only considered in this research, but there are so many factors that affect the stress level of the employees. Since these all factors were not considered. It may be said that this study may not be perfect one. Therefore, when further research in this field will be carried out that can represent the relationship between employees' stress and their performance perfectly.

Conclusion

The success of an organization depends on to what extent the employees behave in line with the goals of an organization. Organizations use different kinds of management techniques to achieve their goals. Every organization tries to reduce stress level of the employees because increase their performance. Every individual experience stress but this stress level differs between everyone. Stress experienced by the employees can have a greater impact on their job performance. Therefore, this stress should be managed properly by the management of the organization.

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