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FACTORS AFFECTING THE STRESS AND INFLUENCE OF STRESS INDICATORS ON LEVEL OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRESS AMONG THE WOMEN EMPLOYEES IN IT SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

Occupational stress and workplace health have become issues of great concern over the last decade, both internationally and nationally. Given the value of work in this society, the amount of time spent at work and the current changes that are affecting the nature of work, it is not surprising that work stress appears to be increasing. There is increasing evidence that physical health too, is adversely affected by repetitive work and dehumanizing environment such as the paced assembly line. Stress can arise from isolation or from conflict. In the latter case, it can stem from rejection by co-workers, or from perceived discrimination. The data and information is collected from 300 women employees through pre-tested, structured interview schedule by adopting multi-stage random technique. The results indicate that the majority of women employees belong to the age group of 26-30 years and more than one third of the women employees are B.E.(IT) graduates. The results show that about two-third of women employees belong to the monthly income group of Rs. 25001- 30000 and the majority of women employees are married and about more than one-third of women employees have the total experience of 2-4 years followed by less than two years (29.33 per cent), 4-6 years (25.00 per cent) and more than six years (6.67 per cent). The factor analysis shows that there are eleven independent groups of dimensions are extracted which account for a total of 81.55 per cent of variations and these factors are grouped into constraints, comfortability, efficiency, competitiveness, clarity, dignity, response, environment, adoptability, planning and diversity. The regression analysis indicates that excessive use of alcohol or other substances, confusing, depression, disharmony with colleagues excessive grooming and stiffness are positively influencing the stress levels in the organization among the women employees in IT sector. It is also suggested that effective use of individual and organizational strategies may reduce the possibilities of stress among women employees. At the organizational level, pre and post departure training, language training cross-cultural training are needed to be implemented and they should be regularly monitored. At the individual level, women employees should be supported by the family and friends.

KEYWORDS

Factor Analysis, Occupational Stress, Regression, Stress Indicators.

INTRODUCTION

Occupational stress and workplace health have become issues of great concern over the last decade, both internationally and nationally. Given the value of work in this society, the amount of time spent at work and the current changes that are affecting the nature of work, it is not surprising that work stress appears to be increasing. As a result of the rapidly changing global economy, organizations now operate in cultures of increased speed, efficiency and competition. Consequently, economic imperatives and the need to retain competitive advantage have resulted in restructuring and uncertainty. For instance, workforces are constantly being downsized, small organizations are merging or being subsumed by larger more competitive organizations and change is the only constant.

These changes to the nature of work, together with definitional changes in the legislation, have paved the way for an alarming rise in claims that are associated with chronic stress in the workplace. In previous years, stress claims are mostly associated with the experience of a traumatic and/or life threatening event, such as violence, injury or a critical incident of some kind. In recent years, however, the number of claims has been steadily increasing and the reported cause for these claims has moved away from traumatic stress to chronic conditions. This type of stress creates enormous costs, both financially and in human-terms, although the costs are difficult to quantify as a result of misleading statistics, unreported instances, staff turnover and inconsistent recording.

A great deal of work has been done to elucidate the connection of specific job conditions to physical and/or mental health. The poor mental health was directly related to unpleasant work conditions such as the necessity to work fast, the exertion of great physical effort and inconvenient working hours. There is increasing evidence that physical health too, is adversely affected by repetitive work and dehumanizing environment such as the paced assembly line. Stress can arise from isolation or from conflict. In the latter case, it can stem from rejection by co-workers, or from perceived discrimination. Contact with the public can also create stress, especially when it involves prejudice, hostility, or physical danger. With this background, the present paper was attempted to identify the factors affecting the stress and influence of stress indicators on levels of organizational stress among the women employees in IT sector in Chennai.

METHODOLOGY

Among the different service sectors, IT sector in Chennai is purposively selected for the present study. The IT companies in Chennai are randomly selected and the women employees in the IT companies are also randomly selected. Thus, the sector and study area is purposively selected followed by companies and women employees have been selected randomly by adopting multi-stage random sampling techniques. The data and information is collected from women employees through pre-tested, structured interview schedule by direct interview method. The data and information have been collected from 300 women employees of IT companies and pertain to the year 2010-2011.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

The frequency and percentage analysis were carried out to understand the socio-economic characteristics of women employees. In order to identify the factors affecting the stress among the women employees, the factor analysis has been employed with principal component extraction with varimax rotation. The factor analysis can be expressed as:

$$Z_{ij} = a_1 f_{1j} + a_2 f_{2j} + \dots + a_m f_{mj} + e_{ij}$$

Where as,

Z^j = Stress Factors

a = Factor Loadings

f = Factor Score

e = Residual term accounting for Errors or other Source of Variation.

In order to examine the influence of stress indicators on levels of organizational stress of women employees, the multiple linear regression analysis by Ordinary Least Square (OLS) estimation has been applied. The functional form of multiple liner regression model is given below:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_i X_i + e$$

Where,

Y = Level of Organizational Stress

X_i = Stress Indicators

i = 1 to 20

α = Intercept

β_i = Partial Regression Coefficients

e = Random Error or Stochastic Disturbance Term

The α and β_i are the coefficients which are to be calculated through Ordinary Least Square (OLS) estimation.

The Likert five point scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree) was used to measure the stress dimensions and stress indicators.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN EMPLOYEES

The socio-economic characteristics of consumers of green products were analyzed and the results are presented in **Table 1**. The results indicate that the majority of women employees (60.00 per cent) belong to the age group of 26-30 years followed by 31-35 years (23.00 per cent), 21-25 years (13.33 per cent) and more than 35 years (3.67 per cent). It is apparent that more than one third of the women employees (34.66 per cent) are B.E.(IT) followed by B.E.(CS)(24.00 per cent), M.C.A.(16.67 per cent), M.B.A.(14.00 per cent) and the other educational qualifications are varying from M.Sc.(IT)(6.67 per cent) to M.Tech(CS)(0.67 per cent).

The results show that about 65.33 per cent of women employees earn monthly income of Rs. 25001- 30000 followed by less than Rs. 25000 (18.67 per cent), Rs. 30001-35000(11.00 per cent) and more than Rs. 35000 (5.00 per cent). The results indicate that about 90.67 per cent of the women employees are married, while the rest of 9.33 per cent are married and about 39.00 per cent of the women employees have the total experience of 2-4 years followed by less than two years (29.33 per cent), 4-6 years (25.00 per cent) and more than six years (6.67 per cent).

TABLE – 1: SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN EMPLOYEES

Particulars	Respondents(N=300)		Particulars	Respondents(N=300)	
	Number	Per Cent		Number	Per Cent
Age(Years)			Educational Qualification		
21-25 Years	40	13.33	B.E.(CS)	72	24.00
26-30 Years	180	60.00	B.E.(IT)	104	34.66
31-35 Years	69	23.00	B.Tech(CS)	4	1.33
>35	11	3.67	M.Tech(CS)	2	0.67
Marital Status			M.E.	6	2.00
Married	272	90.67	M.B.A.	42	14.00
Unmarried	28	9.33	M.C.A.	50	16.67
			M.Sc.(IT)	20	6.67
Working Experience			Monthly Income(Rs.)		
< 2	88	29.33	< 25000	56	18.67
2 - 4	117	39.00	25001-30000	196	65.33
4- 6	75	25.00	30001-35000	33	11.00
> 6	20	6.67	> 35000	15	5.00

FACTORS AFFECTING THE STRESS AMONG THE WOMEN EMPLOYEES

In order to identify the factors affecting the stress among the women employees, the factor analysis has been employed. The principal component method of factor analysis was carried out with Eigen value greater than one through varimax rotation and the results obtained through rotated component matrix are presented in **Table 2**.

There are eleven independent groups of dimensions are extracted which account for a total of 81.55 per cent of variations on the 50 stress dimensions. The each of eleven factors contribute 11.15 per cent, 9.98 per cent, 8.64 per cent, 8.02 per cent, 7.96 per cent, 7.64 per cent, 6.98 per cent, 6.54 per cent, 5.92 per cent, 4.78 per cent and 3.94 per cent respectively.



TABLE – 2: FACTOR ANALYSIS FOR STRESS FACTORS

Stress Dimensions	Rotated Factors Loadings on										
	Factor-I	Factor-II	Factor-III	Factor-IV	Factor-V	Factor-VI	Factor-VII	Factor-VIII	Factor-IX	Factor-X	Factor-XI
Poor physical working conditions		.58									
Work overload			.68								
Time pressures	.51										
Health and safety workplace								-.63			
Taking my work home						.54					
Role ambiguity					.75						
Role conflict			.61								
Job Responsibility							.55				
Unsupportive Management				-.54							
The Work Itself					.69						
Over promotion									.66		
Under promotion										.54	
Lack of job security	-.58										
Promotion policies				-.56							
Lousy Feedback							.64				
Poor relations with boss							-.58				
Poor relations with subordinates							.53				
Poor relations with colleagues		.55									
Difficulties in delegating responsibility						.60					
Interpersonal relationship among employees		.53									
Little or no participation in decision-making	.56										
Inadequate staffing or budget										.58	
Office politics								.69			
Lack of effective consultation							-.60				
Insufficient salary	-.52										
Increased levels of competition				-.54							
Technological development			.52								
New forms of organization and product development											.58
Drive for greater cost-effectiveness			-.67								
Conducive environment										.67	
Changes within organization									-.51		
Layoffs	0.57										
Reward systems				.61							
Insufficient training						.55					
Ill treatment						.60					
Poor fit between abilities and skills needed to perform job effectively									.59		
Pressure to work longer hours			.63								
Lack of information		-.51									
Lack of collaboration	.60										
Bullying and harassment					.59						
Work/life conflict	.58										
Family problems	.60										
Personal problems	.52										
Financial difficulties					-.68						
Social problems	-.56										
Reduction in time spend with family											.52
Inadequate child care			-.55								
Low interaction with family members					-.57						
Irritation to family members						-.64					
Poor interpersonal communication with family members		.58									
Eigen Value	3.30	2.25	2.06	1.75	1.70	1.65	1.58	1.49	1.33	1.24	1.04
% of Variance	11.15	9.98	8.64	8.02	7.96	7.64	6.98	6.54	5.92	4.78	3.94
Cumulative Variance(%)	11.15	21.13	29.77	37.79	45.75	53.39	60.37	66.91	72.83	77.61	81.55
Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient	0.92										

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
 Rotation converged in 21 iterations.

Factor-I: From the table, it is inferred that out of 50 stress variables, ten variables have their high, relatively tightly grouped factor loadings on factor-I.

This factor consists of:

- Time pressures (0.51)
- Lack of job security(-0.58)
- Little or no participation in decision-making(0.56)
- Insufficient salary(-0.52)
- Layoffs(0.57)
- Lack of collaboration(0.60)
- Work/life conflict(0.58)
- Family problems(0.60)
- Personal problems(0.52)
- Social problems(-0.56)

This factor is named as “**CONSTRAINTS**”

Factor-II: is formed with:

- Poor physical working conditions (0.58)
- Poor relations with colleagues (0.55)
- Interpersonal relationship among employees (0.53)
- Lack of information (-0.51)
- Poor interpersonal communication with family members(0.58)

These variables are named as “**COMFORTABILITY**”.

Factor-III: This factor includes:

- Work overload (0.68)
- Technological development (0.52)
- Drive for greater cost-effectiveness (-0.67)
- Pressure to work longer hours (0.63)
- Inadequate child care(-0.55)

These three variables are named as “**EFFICIENCY**”.

Factor-IV: This factor is formed with:

- Role conflict (0.61)
- Unsupportive Management (-0.54)
- Promotion policies (-0.56)
- Increased levels of competition(-0.54)
- Reward systems(0.61)

This factor is named as “**COMPETITIVENESS**”.

Factor-V: This factor includes:

- Role ambiguity (0.75)
- The Work Itself (0.69)
- Bullying and harassment (0.59)
- Financial difficulties(-0.68)
- Low interaction with family members(-0.57)

The factor is named as “**CLARITY**”.

Factor-VI: This factor is formed with

- Taking my work home (0.54)
- Difficulties in delegating responsibility (0.60)
- Insufficient training (0.55)
- Ill treatment(0.60)
- Irritation to family members(-0.64)

The factor is named as “**DIGNITY**”.

Factor-VII: This factor includes:

- Job Responsibility(0.55)
- Lousy Feedback (0.64)
- Poor relations with boss (-0.58)
- Poor relations with subordinates(0.53)
- Lack of effective consultation(-0.60)

The factor is named as “**RESPONSE**”.

Factor-VIII: This factor includes:

- Health and safety workplace (-0.63)
- Office politics (0.69)

The factor is named as “**ENVIRONMENT**”.

Factor-IX: This factor is formed with

- Over promotion (0.66)
- Changes within organization (-0.51)
- Poor fit between abilities and skills needed to perform job effectively (-0.59)

The factor is named as “**ADAPTABILITY**”.

Factor-X: This factor includes:

- Under promotion (0.54)
- Inadequate staffing or budget (0.58)
- Conducive environment(0.67)

The factor is named as “**PLANNING**”.

Factor-XI: This factor is formed with

- New forms of organization and product development(0.58)
- Reduction in time spend with family (0.52)

The factor is named as “**DIVERSITY**”.

The Cronbach's alpha of the scale is 0.92 indicating that each measure demonstrated acceptable internal consistency.

STRESS LEVELS OF WOMEN EMPLOYEES

The stress levels of the women employees in IT sector were analyzed and the results are presented in **Table 3**.

TABLE – 3: STRESS LEVELS OF WOMEN EMPLOYEES

Stress Level	Frequency	Per Cent
Medium	59	19.67
High	176	58.66
Very High	65	21.67
Total	300	100.00

From the table, it is clear that out of about 58.66 per cent of women employees opine that they are facing high level of organizational stress followed by very high(21.67 per cent) and medium level(19.67 per cent).

INFLUENCE OF STRESS INDICATORS ON LEVELS OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRESS

In order to assess the influence of stress indicators on levels of organizational stress, the multiple linear regression by Ordinary Least Square (OLS) estimation and the results are presented in **Table 4**.

TABLE – 4: INFLUENCE OF STRESS INDICATORS ON LEVELS OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRESS-MULTIPLE REGRESSION

Stress Indicators	Regression Coefficients	t-value	Sig
Intercept	4.990**	4.653	0.01
Apathy(X ₁)	-0.005*	2.052	0.03
Depression(X ₂)	0.040*	2.062	0.02
Sleeplessness(X ₃)	-0.081	1.056	.098
Recurrent minor illnesses(X ₄)	-0.135	1.062	0.18
Disharmony with colleagues(X ₅)	0.028*	2.252	0.04
Decline in efficiency and productivity(X ₆)	-0.018*	2.145	0.03
Compulsive eating(X ₇)	-0.037	0.040	0.07
Excessive use of alcohol or other substances(X ₈)	0.021**	3.166	0.01
Smoking(X ₉)	0.109	0.051	0.16
Avoidance of meeting people(X ₁₀)	-0.086	0.047	0.13
Yawning(X ₁₁)	0.083	0.043	0.13
Stretching(X ₁₂)	-0.032*	2.249	0.03
Shaking(X ₁₃)	-0.042**	0.064	0.01
Confusing(X ₁₄)	0.038**	2.251	0.01
Excessive grooming(X ₁₅)	0.021*	2.343	0.01
Excessive thirst(X ₁₆)	0.051	0.046	0.08
Stiffness(X ₁₇)	0.013	2.043	0.02
Shivering(X ₁₈)	0.003	0.044	0.07
Mouthiness(X ₁₉)	0.047	0.047	0.08
Blinking(X ₂₀)	-0.097	0.041	0.167
R ²	0.68		
Adjusted R ²	0.62		
F	1.807		0.02
N	300		

Note: ** Significance at one per cent level

* Significance at five per cent level

The results indicate that the coefficient of multiple determination (R²) is 0.68 indicating the regression model is moderately fit. The results show that excessive use of alcohol or other substances and confusing are positively influencing the organizational stress level, while, shaking is negatively influencing the stress levels in organization at one per cent level of significance.

The results further indicates that depression, disharmony with colleagues excessive grooming and stiffness are positively influencing the stress levels in organization and apathy, decline in efficiency and productivity and stretching are negatively influencing the organizational stress level at five per cent level of significance.

CONCLUSION

The forgoing analysis indicates that the majority of women employees belong to the age group of 26-30 years and more than one third of the women employees are B.E.(IT) graduates. The results show that about two-third of women employees belong to the monthly income group of Rs. 25001- 30000 and the majority of women employees are married and about more than one-third of women employees have the total experience of 2-4 years followed by less than two years (29.33 per cent), 4-6 years (25.00 per cent) and more than six years (6.67 per cent).

The factor analysis show that there are eleven independent groups of dimensions are extracted which account for a total of 81.55 per cent of variations and these factors are grouped in to constraints, comfortability, efficiency, competitiveness, clarity, dignity, response, environment, adoptability, planning and diversity.

The regression analysis indicates that excessive use of alcohol or other substances, confusing, depression, disharmony with colleagues excessive grooming and stiffness are positively influencing the stress levels in the organization among the women employees in IT sector.

In order to reduce the stress at both work and life, proper work-life balance strategies should be adopted. The practices of Yoga and meditation should be practiced by women employees for balancing both work and family consequences besides proper mediation. It is also suggested that effective use of individual and organizational strategies may reduce the possibilities of stress among women employees. At the organizational level, pre and post departure training, language training cross-cultural training are needed to be implemented and they should be regularly monitored. At the individual level, women employees should be supported by the family and friends.

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