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Globalization and Stress among Computer Professionals

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Abstract

Globalization is a name for the process of increasing the connectivity and interdependence of the world's markets and businesses. This process has speeded up dramatically in the last two decades as technological advances make it easier for people to travel, communicate, and do business internationally. Globalization creates competition in the market and a 'survival of the fittest' situation. Due to global nature of the businesses, people of developing countries too can obtain gainful employment opportunities. One of the most visible positive effects of globalization in India is the flow of foreign capital. A lot of companies have directly invested in India, by starting production units in India, but there are some negative effects also. Globalization has led to exploitation of labor, Job insecurity; bad aspects of foreign cultures are affecting the local cultures through TV and the Internet.

Globalization brings better gainful employment opportunity, handsome salary, employees who are more competent they get better job opportunity and salary also. On the level of multi-national companies they want only proficiency of their employees. To achieve this goal they change their employee when they are not satisfied with their work. They want high demand for performance of their employees, consequently, stress seen in many professionals also. Stress at work is a relatively new phenomenon of modern lifestyle. The nature of work has gone through drastic changes over the last century and it is still changing at whirlwind speed. With change comes stress, inevitably. Professional stress or job stress poses a threat to physical health. Work related stress in the life of organized workers, consequently, affects the health of organizations.

Job stress is a chronic disease caused by conditions in the workplace that negatively affect an individual's performance and/or overall well-being of his body and mind. Job stress may be caused by a complex set of reasons: i.e. job Insecurity, high demand for performance, technology, workplace culture etc. Physical stress arises as a result of our body response to physical stressor like work, noise, an illness, exercise etc while psychological effects of stress may occur when our mind perceives an inability to cope with a "challenge" of some kind. Typical psychological symptoms of job stress can be: Insomnia, loss of mental concentration, anxiety, stress, absenteeism, depression, substance abuse, extreme anger and frustration, family conflict; physical illnesses such as heart disease, migraine, headaches, stomach problems, and back problems. When these professionals (especially computer) get project they ignore everything like food, sleep, entertainment etc. They only think how to do this project very efficiently and within time. The Government of India Ministry of labor (act 1948) gives their decision that no adult worker shall be required or allowed to work in a factory for more than forty eight hours in any week. Employees work for a multinational company more than forty eight hours in a week. Their physical and mental health suffers.

The respondents were 50 computer professionals worked in a company during last five years. Respondent's age was 30 to 40 years of age. The result shows that computer professionals who worked in their company for 5 to 8 years they show high correlation with dissatisfaction. Stress was significantly predicted by unpredictable working hours and work pressure and job satisfaction.

Keywords: Job Stress, working hours, work pressure, job satisfaction

1. Introduction

Globalization brings open market economic policy. Everyone can do business all over the world, everyone can take job everywhere in the world. Therefore working atmosphere is very competitive. Employee and employer are also very demanding. This paper is focuses only on computer professionals. In India, sharper brain has always read science in which prominent branch is computer. Foreign companies are also interested to give job to Indian computer experts that is why job opportunity has increases in computer branch. Most of the students wanted to take computer as a subject. When they get job in foreign companies, they are increasing their greed. MNC's pay them handsome salary packages and incentives time to time. When a computer professional get more and more he ignores his health and family.

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The consequences are blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes and so on, in very early age. The condition is very alarming; their effecting working life span is very short. In India, we have adopted the concept of welfare state; in which the state plays a key role in protection and promotion of the economic and social well being of its citizens. It is based on the principles of equality of opportunity equitable distribution of wealth, and public responsibility for those unable to avail themselves of the minimal provisions for a good life.

One of the salient features of the Indian constitution is the effort to establish a welfare state. Article 39 (a) spells that all citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood, Article 43 enjoins that the state shall endeavor to secure to all workers work, a living wage and conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of living. When these computer professionals get urgent project they ignore their sleep, they work at night shift. In our constitution labor act said, "No adult worker shall be required or allowed to work in a factory for more than forty eight hours in any week". Labor Ministry has said on night shift, "where a worker in a factory works on a shift which extends beyond midnight. Our sleep is very necessary because when we sleep our brain become totally inactive. Sleep serves psychological function such as building efficient learning and memory processes. Quit the sleep is very harmful for these people. If these conditions are persist what will be our efficient work force. This is very serious question which has to be answered.

1.1 Literature Review

Chandra Mohan *et al.* has also found in his study of "Stress level among software professionals in the city of Chennai" that long working hours, work pressure, erotic food intervals, anxiety were found to be the reasons affecting personal health.

A study from Pakistan also found that software professional's nature of job is highly time bound, client oriented and technology intensive. Many factors contribute towards stress is, change of technology, client interaction, fear of obsolescence, family support, long working hours, and work overload etc.

Khosrowpour and Culpan (1989) have published a stress-related study applied to individuals working in computer-related fields. In it, they remark: "Information processing professionals see change in technology as a pre-requisite for their existence, yet the speed of this change can have profound psychological and physiological effects". In their survey with 231 responses, "a large majority agreed with the statements that change in computer technology creates pressure". The authors conclude that "the men and women who plan, design, and monitor these systems have experienced greater technostress in their jobs and environments". Such techno-stress is not at all likely to disappear in the foreseeable future.

Rajeswari and Anantharaman (2003) have identified ten most important factors that are crucial in determining the job-related stress among professionals. These factors are: fear of obsolescence, individual and team interaction, client interaction, work-family interface, role overload, work

culture, technical propensity, family support towards career, workload, and technical propensity. Fear of obsolescence is the stress caused by changing technology when software developers feel stressed to learn newer technology along with their routine job. Software development is a process carried out in various teams and requires greater interaction among team members which creates pressure on one member to timely respond to the other member, and transfer the details of work to them. Work culture in software houses also causes stress because software professionals often work for longer hours than usual; they are supposed to work even on holidays during near-completion time of their projects. Role overload is another major stress factor among software developers because if a team member leaves during the project then other members are supposed to take over the responsibility of that person. Involving a new member in the team requires the training of that person and delays the project.

A report by the UK Health and Safety Executive (Cox and Ferguson, 1994) calls into the problem of stress at work, as well as advocating training for employees. The report identifies excessive periods of repetitive work, lack of management support, and over demanding work schedules as contributory causes of stress.

Ivancevich *et al.* (1983) proposes a model which first identifies work environment stress related to (i) job (time pressure, job scope, obsolescence) (ii) Role (ambiguity, conflict) (iii) Career (development) and (iv) organization (rewards, change, communication). Ivancevich *et al.* (1985) also found that pressure ultimately causes the stress that leads to different type of strain and finally hampers the performance of the employees. Stress not just affects the efficiency of the employees, but also causes ailment and other physical or emotional problems as well (Singh 2003). As scholarly study by Abraham Maslow (1943) also suggested that food sleep are physiological needs the fulfillment of these primary needs are very necessary. In his hierarchical model he explained that these biological drives are closely related to biological maintenance. These drives are first step for hierarchical model.

Manshor, Fontaine and Chong Siong Choy (2003) in their study examined the sources of occupational stress among Malaysian managers working in multinational companies (MNC's). It was found that workloads, working conditions and relationship at work were the main concern of the managers that lead to stress at the work place. The results also indicated that certain demographic variables do influence the level of stress among managers.

Chandraiah *et al.* (2003) has found in his study that job become less satisfying under excessive stress and their expected intrinsic and extrinsic needs are not fulfilled. Rajeswari and Anantharaman (2005) found that IT professionals have long work hours with different time zones, total team work, task to be completed on deadline with perfection as per client needs, which requires interpersonal, technical, and organizational. These characteristics lead to occupational stress and work exhaustion.

Kulkarni (2006) found that rapid change of the modern working life is associated with increasing demands of

learning new skills, need to adopted to new types of work, pressure of higher productivity and quality of work, time pressure and hectic jobs are increasing stress among the workforce. Further he added that privatization and globalization has ignited mergers, acquisitions and precarious employment has critically affected the domestic industry. Jain *et al.* (2007) found the results of the study also confirmed the assumption that high age group managers as well as high age group engineers were equally satisfied with their jobs and the study revealed the same findings when low age group managers and low age group engineers were compared on their job satisfaction level.

Problem

- (1) To study the stressful work condition of computer professionals.
- (2) To study various predictors of stress for computer professionals.

2. Method

2.1 Definition of Variables

Stress: Stress means a person’s reaction to his or her inability to cope with a certain tense event or situation. It includes perceived workload, lack of job satisfaction, health problem and unpredictable working hours.

Perceived workload: Here perceived workload means time pressure, high responsibilities, treated unfairly, disturbances in job condition.

Lack of job satisfaction: Lack of job satisfaction is related to worker’s abilities interest and skill were used, his work prospectus, satisfaction related to people who worked with them.

Health problem: Health problems means psychological and physical health and anxiety related to job.

Unpredicted working hours: Unpredicted working hours means unsociable working hours; sufficient time for personal life, unsociable deadlines, and time bound targets.

2.2 Samples: The respondents were 50 computer professionals worked in a company during last five years. Respondent’s age was 30 to 40 years of age. The representative sample was taken to complete the sample size. The inclusion criteria for subjects to be considered for the study were the subject should be working in the current job for past 5 years. From each group subjects were taken randomly. Data has been taken from Hyderabad IT companies Oracle, Accenture, 4Soft, Satyam Computers.

2.3 Measures: The first part of the survey questionnaire consisted of items related to background of these respondents i.e. gender, age, educational level and work experience. In addition, the following scale was developed. Self-Assessment Questionnaire: In order to tap the stress of computer professionals, a scale of stress assessment items was developed. This scale was adopted from the Bristol Stress and Health Study (1998) test of stress. Each item was followed by a four point response scale ranging from 1=often to 4=never. Lower score indicated the higher level of stress.

2.4 Procedure: In order to ascertain communicability and appropriateness of the questionnaire pilot test was administered individually on 8 respondents who are selected from a renowned computer companies because the final sample was to be drawn from these groups. Another purpose of the pilot study was to examine the clarity and effectiveness of the instructions and discriminability of items of the questionnaire. The respondents were approached by e-mail. The investigator took prior permission from respective organization for doing the study. Respondents were explained the purpose of the study and were assured about the confidentiality of the information shared. They were administered a pre-designed pre tested structured questionnaire covering details like age, working hours, experience etc.

3. Result and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to conduct a survey about how computer professionals feel stress in their working conditions. The result shows that computer professionals who worked in their company for 5 to 8 years they show high correlation with dissatisfaction. The correlation is .80 which is very high. This result shows that professionals who worked 5 to 8 years in these companies, they lost their satisfaction. There is no change in my work condition, this feeling become the cause of dissatisfaction. The employees feel that his abilities, interest and skills were not properly used.

Table 1: Inter correlation of stress variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Serving year	-						
Promotion in years	.01	-					
Average hour week workload	.43	.38	-				
Job dissatisfaction	.25	.61**	.52	-			
Health problem	.37	.62**	.58	.43	-		
Unpredictable working hours	.10	.52	.42	.50	.37	-	
	.33	.32	.49	.39	.37	.31	-

**p>.01

The result shows in table-1 that work pressure is positively correlated with promotion. The reason may be when a professional got promotion he feels more work pressure than before. His responsibilities become very high. He becomes the victim of job disturbances and he is suffering from time pressure also.

3.1 Stress as Predicted by Psychological and Demographic Variables

Stress was significantly predicted by unpredictable working hours and work pressure and job satisfaction (Table-2). Of the significant predictors the unique contribution of unpredictable working hours in predicting stress was the greatest.

Table 2: Stepwise Regression Analysis showing R² R² Change and F change for criterion variables on stress

Predictators	R ²	R ² change	F change
Working hours	.13	.13	24**
Work pressure	.16	.03	4*
Job satisfaction	.19	.03	5*

**p>.01, *p>.05

3.2 Suggestions

- (1) Our government should say to these MNC's don't forget about human capacities. There are some physical limits to do work and earn. Government should think sensitively about these computer experts who are very expensive also. Foreign companies have more money and we have huge working population. This relationship is not unequal. Government should never accept their unjustified demands. They should respect human abilities.
- (2) Improving channels of communication, sharing information and greater feedback on performance to develop one's sense of identity in the system.
- (3) Giving greater assurance to management and support to reduce psychological burden.
- (4) Facilitating greater interrelationship among individuals to build positive relationships.
- (5) Using demographic information to identify stress prone person.
- (6) Introducing yoga for these experts.

4. Conclusions

In summary, this study examined the level of job stress, their impact on the software professionals and the ways that they had found out to deal with it. The researcher found out that the software professionals are going through huge amount of occupational stress. The job of the software professionals is a tedious business and a difficult task for all involved. As projects came as nearer and nearer to completion, work, work-life is full of meetings, dis-organization, overtime and stress. Even the standard day for a good professional is found to be full of heavy thinking, problem solving, frustrating compilation errors, and the like.

The commitment of the organization itself and the involvement of both workers and management and government also could to be crucial for the success of stress management activities. From this study, it can be concluded that immediate attention for the organization should take. There seems to be a need for establishing a framework within which employers and employee representatives can work together to prevent, identify and combat stress at work.

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