

ABSTRACT

•This study analyzes the causes of stress and its impact on absenteeism among IT employees in Ireland and India. It also examines various coping strategies adopted by IT employees in Ireland and India. The study also analyzes the impact of stress management intervention on stress among employees of IT companies in both countries.

•The study was conducted among 109 employees working in the IT sector in India and Ireland using survey in the form of self-administered questionnaires and found a) **Factors intrinsic to the job** b) **Organizational structure and climate** and c) **Role of the employee in the organization** as the major causes of stress among the IT employees in both countries. The study also found that more of the respondents did not have any access to stress management interventions, and that Stress did not have any significant impact on absenteeism.

INTRODUCTION

•“Stress in the workplace occurs when employees try to cope with the duties, responsibilities and other forms of pressure associated with their jobs, but encounter difficulties, anxiety and worry in trying to manage them.” (Stranks 2005, cited in Mesko 2013 pp 53-45).”

•Work stress occurs in all sectors, especially in IT as it is competitive highly target driven and result oriented so IT employees are highly pressurized at work.(Uma Devi 2011)

•Limited studies on stress in the IT sector. Most studies on stress in the work- place related stress are in different sectors.

Earlier Research on Stress and Stressor Identified

- Landy and Trumbo (1976) job insecurity, excessive competition, hazardous working conditions, task demands, long unusual working hours.
- Ivancevich and Matteson (1980) physical environment, role and career development, relationships, organisational structure, climate job characteristics.
- Sumner, DeCotis and DeNisi (1994) personal characteristics, structural organizational characteristics, procedural organizational characteristics, role characteristics.

Aim of this Research

- 1) To analyze the causes of stress and its impact on productivity and absenteeism among employees of in the IT Sector in India and Ireland.
- 2) To analyze stress reduction/management techniques being used in IT companies in both countries.
- 3) To serve as a possible source for future research on the subject.

Research Questions

- 1) What do employees in IT companies in India and Ireland today identify as stress in their life?
- 2) How do IT employees in both countries currently cope with stress including the various personal and organizational coping strategies?
- 3) What effect does a stress management intervention have on employee-stress among members of a team within the workplace in IT companies in both countries?

Hypotheses:

- 1) There is stress in the lives of IT employees in India and Ireland.
- 2) Some employees have access/means to cope/manage stress, while others do not.
- 3) Stress management intervention has an effect on the lives of employees and the way they deal with stress and which in turn has an impact on productivity and absenteeism.

METHODOLOGY

•**Applied Research** has been used for this study. The aim of an applied research is to improve understanding of a particular business or management problem.

•**Positivist philosophy** has been adopted for this study.

•**Quantitative approach** has been adopted for this study. Quantitative research is usually associated with **deductive approach** where focus is on using data to test theory which is the case in this particular study.

•**The Survey Strategy** in the form of self-administered questionnaires has been adopted in this dissertation.

•**Research Choice**; the choice for this particular study is mono-methods.

•**Cross Sectional Time Horizon** has been used for this study.

•Primary Data was **collected** by surveys using self-administered online questionnaires which was modelled on Cooper's stress questionnaire which was sent out to IT employees in India and Ireland.. Survey Monkey was the chosen platform to prepare and send out the questionnaires. 109 responses were received, which has met the requirement for a valid quantitative data analysis. The data was then analyzed using SPSS. Secondary Data such as books, academic journals, online resources etc. was also used in this study

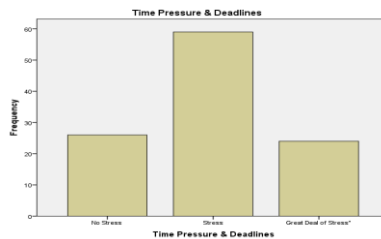
•Quantitative and Qualitative data have been used for this study, since the questionnaire contains both open-ended and close ended questions, based on the nature of the research question.

RESULTS

Two major stressors identified from this study are:

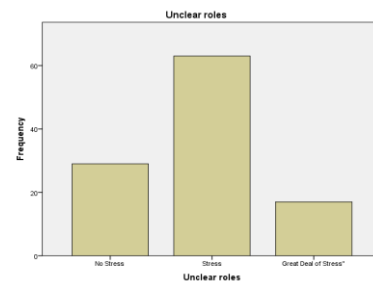
•Time Pressure and Deadlines:

54% of the respondents reported it as a source of stress. 22% of the respondents mentioned it as a great deal of stress and 23.9% of the participants reported not being under stress as a result of time pressures and deadlines.



•Unclear Roles:

57.8 % of the participants felt that unclear roles or role ambiguity was a source of stress for them. 15.6% felt that was a source of great deal of stress for them and 26.6% of the respondents felt it was not a source of stress for them.



DISCUSSION

•76% of the participants identified time pressures and deadlines as causing some form of stress. i.e. either stress or great deal of stress, which supports the views of Arnold (1990) and Fox (1993).

•73% of the respondents identified unclear roles or role ambiguity as a source of stress (stress or great deal of stress) Rinzo , House and Litzman (1970) and Hendrix (1985), Cummins (1990) had also identified role ambiguity as a source of stress, and therefore we can find that the above finding is in agreement with the findings with the earlier studies mentioned.

•The principle stressors present among IT employees in India and Ireland identified from this survey can be categorized as a) **factors intrinsic to the job** (Time Pressures) , b) **Organizational structure and climate** (Attitude of Boss/Management,) and c)**Role of the employee in the organization** (Unclear Roles). Thus we can see that there is stress among IT employees in India and Ireland and we can find the different stressors prevalent among the IT employees, hence the findings of research question one **supports the proposed research hypothesis**.

•In spite of strong arguments in favour of stress management interventions in organizations especially in light of reports of increased stress levels in the literature, 73% of the respondents in this study reported that there was no stress management techniques adopted in their organization. This is something that needs to be looked into urgently by top management in IT companies in order to reduce stress levels in their organizations thereby increasing productivity. Therefore, the impact of Stress Managements Intervention on productivity and absenteeism is uncertain .Hence we can find that it is the findings of research question two **supports the proposed research hypothesis** and that the findings of research question three is inconclusive.

•78% of the respondents never took leave for a stress related cause. Therefore the findings of this particular study show that stress does not have an impact on absenteeism this is contrary to the findings of Arnold and Randall (2010) Mesko (2012) and Hutchinson (2013) who found a link between stress and absenteeism.

CONCLUSIONS

•Stress is a reality that needs to be addressed by both the IT organizations and the individual to create and maintain a healthier, productive staff and working environment.

•Stress is likely to increase as international competition increases as result of globalization .Globalization of the economy presents a new challenge in understanding and preventing stress in the workplace.

•It is imperative for managers to initiate action to extenuate stressors in the workplace for improving employee well being .It is also necessary that these interventions be integrated within the structural context of and psychological frame.

•Stress can cause further problems in the IT sector in if not monitored continuously and stress levels can increase if it is not addressed. Effective Stress Management should be more out of concern of the welfare of the employee rather than just an introduction of measures to counter effects and causes of stress.

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•(Please refer dissertation for complete Bibliography)