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Health Issues and Challenges Faced by Employees Engaged in Software Industries in Chennai

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In this paper the various health issues faced by employees working in software companies in Chennai has been discussed. It is very important for the employees to be in good health and sound condition. To perform their jobs. Though employees are in good job roles and designation they have a lack of health due to which they may be unable to perform their duties. Employees who are having more experience are considered to have health issues such as stress,depression , eyes and backbone problems when compared to the freshers or new joinees. Health issues which are found out in the initial stage can be treated and they can react accordingly. Unhealthy food habits have caused obesity and insomnia in employees working in software companies. Depending on the shift jobs which they work for. Proper scheduled food habits and counselling may lead to healthy work life and employee engagement in software industries.

Keywords: Stress, Depression, Back Pain, Employees, Software company.

The enormous increase in multinational companies and software companies in Chennai have also created health issues of employees in software industry. Especially due to the long working hours in the organization people undergo stress. They are affected psychologically and personally. Employees get health problems such as stress due to anxiety disorder, vision problems such as dry eye syndrome, wrist problems like carpal tunnel syndrome, insomnia, shoulder pain, blood pressure, obesity, diabetics, deep vein thrombosis, cardio vascular diesases. There is a occupational health concern which has been addressed by many experts that many employees face stress, depression and backbone pain. Employees working with software companies have a chance of getting easily affected by depression and stress as they work in computer for long working hours and they are isolated from the society. They also get fibromyalgia pain from stress. They have a wrist problems like carpal tunnel syndrome due to long working hours in computer. Software professionals are expected to work for long working hours to complete their targets and they are given additional responsibilities in their respective job roles. They tend to get back pain in young age. The implications of health gradually affects their professional life they tend to forget certain things not able to concentrate in work life. Stress and depression are closely associated as the symptoms for back pain, joints pain, digestion problems, sleeping habits, loss of weight or gaining weight are the same. This article highlights the health issues and work life balance among employees working in software companies in Chennai.

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Objective of the study

To study the health issues faced by employees in software companies with regard to

working hours and their perception towards Work - Life Balance factors in software industry.

Literature Review

Laiba Dar *et al* (2011) revealed in their study that the association of demographic variables and explored factors of stress is determined by chi-square analysis and it's found that all the factors are associated with age, gender, qualification, designation and salary. All the above factors are associated with demographic variables. T-test is conducted to find out the difference between the stress scores of male and female faculty members from their study we can observe that male posses more stress bearing capacity than females. The burden of stress is also vary on the nature and position of the job.

MS Darshan *et al* (2013) in their study have explained that it is unique as three different factors i.e., professional stress in IT professionals, risk for developing depression and harmful alcohol use were screened and association among them were studied. Since the interview sample contains professionals from various companies from different cities, it can be considered that the study sample was representative of IT professionals from across India. Our study showed that 51.2% of the software engineers are professionally stressed and are at 10 times higher risk for developing depression. Among software engineers we found that harmful alcohol use was much higher in professionally stressed and in those at risk for developing depression compared with their counterparts. India being a forerunner in IT segment, its continuing growth largely depends on its employees' mental and physical health. Such higher rates of professional stress, risk for developing depression and harmful alcohol use among software engineers could hinder the progress of IT development and also significantly increase the incidence of psychiatric disorders. Preventive strategies like training in stress management, frequent screening to identify professional stress and depression at the initial stages and addressing these issues adequately might help the IT professionals cope with their profession better without affecting their lifestyle and health.

Sekar Babu Hariram *et al*(2013) have concluded that nearly three fourths of the computer professionals complain from some computer-related health problems from many surveys conducted in the recent years. This is a significant proportion and denotes that the occupational health of the people working in the computer field should be emphasized as a field of concern in public health. This review alarms the software professionals about the various diseases they are prone to get due to their work pressure, change of life style and change in the circadian having by affecting their health. Hence it will be educative to enlighten the precautionary steps in the form of regular medical checkup, need for physical and mental relaxation to avoid afore said complications. This review can form a base for a detailed study to screen the type of disease they are prone to get according to their years of service in the form of a project which will protect the health of software employees.

Geeta Kumari *et al*(2014) have mentioned in their study that 93% of employees from 35 -39 age group felt high level of stress impact on mind followed by 91% from the age group of 30 -34 and 80% from the rest age groups. Stress on mind causes Depressions, Anger, Irritability, Mood swings, Lack of self-confidence etc. which leads to vulnerable effect on individual. When asked that do they feel that they are constantly under pressure going from one deadline to another, 52% of the employees said always, 31% of the employees said often while 17% of the employees said sometimes. When asked that do they feel that they have lost or losing a sense of control in their life and that the balance they need is gone, 53% of the employees said always, 29% of the employees said often while 18% of the employees said sometimes. When asked about how they feel while working in the organization, the answers were unexpected. Only 26% of the people were feeling satisfied or great and rest were just working as if they were no other options. Remaining 74% were frustrated, depressed or unable to concentrate.

Employees work on computer for an average of 2 to 7 hours. It is observed that most of the employees face problem related to eyes in this Educational Institute. From the data obtained with the help of questionnaire it is observed that here the employees face problem related to eyes and back more severely. Among the symptoms mentioned in the questionnaire, employees feel "pain or aching in wrists, forearms, elbows, neck, or back followed by discomfort" (42%) and "Dry, itchy, red

or sore eyes (Eye Strain)" (42%) more. Also the least faced problem is "Swelling or stiffness in the hand or wrist" (2%). The main factors judged by employees as cause of their problems at workplace are "Sitting in same posture for continuous long hours" (50%) and Awkward and poor posture (42.5%). Also most of employees identify "Sitting in same posture for continuous long hours" even at home as a cause of their problems (42.5%).A large number of employees (64.17%) of this company possesses knowledge of preventive measures of the problems under consideration. Further, almost 50% of employees of this company possess knowledge of various computer-accessories which can help in preventing the health problems under consideration. Among those possessing knowledge of these accessories (60 respondents ie, 50%), 46 know about Adjustable keyboard trays & Foot Rests and only 4 know about Task Lighting.

V. Padma *et al*(2015) have opined that the daily impact of IT on our lives continues unabated. As innovations and computer capacities increase this influence will continue to grow in the coming years at an increasing rate. As technology advances, there is also increased stress that is associated with it called as "technology stress." IT is here to stay. This brings extra pressure on people to adapt to new advancements and update their knowledge in their field.

Annual stress scoring has to be done and a score above 300 needs stress management program like yoga, meditation and other destressing activities like aerobics, dance etc., would prevent or reduce risk of disease due to stress in IT people which in turn will produce a healthy community.

To manage stress these people need to play sport, have a hobby or just have a good holiday. Stress score helps us to screen who would be prone to stress related physical illness and people with a score more than 300 are at risk of illness and care should be taken at the earliest to relive their stress. Healthy employees mean better performance by employee that in turn produce a healthy community. Annual stress scoring has to be done, and employees are having a score more than 300 should be involved in active anti stress management.

Methodology Participants and Settings

Participants and Settings: Participants of the study are employees working in software industries in Chennai. The sample size selected for this research purpose constituted of 200 respondents through structured questionnaire in the natural environment. Only 190 usable responses were received and the response rate was 95%. In this research, we used non-probability sampling by using its category of convenience sampling. It is done by Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT). The reason behind selecting convenience sampling was that because in this, the most easily accessible customers were chosen as subjects of research and it was the quickest, convenient and less expensive technique used.

Finding and Discussion

Mean differences between the Working Hours of respondents and their health issues work - Life Balance factors in software industry

The ANOVA is used to assess the presence of mean variations among different groups. Normally, this test is applied to know the existence of the differences between various groups' mean variation (more than two groups).

Table 1. Mean differences between the Working Hours of respondents and their perception towards Work - Life Balance factors in software industry

Factors	Up to 8 Hours	8 - 10 Hours	More than 10 Hours	F	Sig.
Depression and stress problem	2.1191[a]	2.2956[a]	3.9173[b]	7.859	.000
Back bone problem	2.0034[a]	2.3048[a]	3.7958[b]	3.682	.026

Source: Computed Primary Data
Note:
* denotes significant level at 5%
'a' denotes subset 1 , 'b' denotes subset 2

Null Hypothesis

H_{O12} - "There is no mean difference between the daily Working Hours of respondents and their perception towards health issues in software industry".

To test the null hypothesis, the F test is applied and the results are shown in the following table:

It is evident from the table, * since p value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level with regard to perception towards health issues in software industry. Hence there is a significant mean difference between the Working Hours of the respondents with regard to perception on factors of "depression & stress problem" and "backbone problem".

Post-hoc test

Based on Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT), the three categories of Experiences level of respondents are classified into two subsets. Subset 1 is "up to 8 Hours and 8 – 10 Hours" and Subset 2 is " More than 10 hours". The mean scores of subset 1 is higher than the mean score of subset 2.

Hence, it can be concluded that the respondents who are working "up to 10 hours" have face very less health issues such as depression & stress, back bone problems etc. but the employees who are working more than 10 hours are facing more health related problems such as . depression & stress, back bone problems etc

CONCLUSION

The employees who are working for long hours are prone to diseases and health issues like depression, stress and backbone problem. This can be be resolved by employees and employers when necessary measures are taken. The reason for stress can be reduced by giving breaks from long working hours. So that employees can relax themselves away from their work place for a certain time have a cup of tea or snacks and come back to their work place. Mind relaxation, regular exercise to keep body and mind active is considered to be the solutions. Also avoiding unhealthy habits such as smoking , alcohol also reduces stress for employees working in software companies. Spending quality time with family, friends and colleagues also relieves people from stress. Employees can be encouraged to express their talents which they are interested into and they can be given recognition. Healthy eating habits have been encouraged in some software companies by having food stalls. Also in software companies to encourage employees they have team outings or get together so that people get relaxed and to overcome stress they are asked to come along with family. Family friendly policies have been adopted by software companies so that employees feel more comfortable and have a healthy worklife.

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