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A Study on Stress Management among the BPO Employees in Chennai City

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Abstract:
Stress can be defined as a reaction to a stimulus that disturbs our mental balance. It is has its existence in everybody's life now a days. Stress refers to the strain from the conflict between our external environment and us, leading to emotional and physical pressure. Stress can't be avoidable, but one can learn how to manage it. People experiences stress in different ways and for different reasons. The reaction is based on our perception of an event or situation. Work place stress leads to adverse conditions. Job stress includes various biological reactions that may lead ultimately to compromised health. Job stress can be defined as the unhealthy physical and emotional responses that occur when job requirements do not match the worker's capabilities, resources, and needs. In modern world, BPO task is rapidly growing day by day in Business based on their client. The number of employees in these organizations has been increased. In this situation employees must boost up their energy and role in these organizations. And they confused to perform in their role which leads to stress, strain, and nervousness to the employee. Stress Management can enable employee to improve their own response to stress and enable the organization to reduce workplace stressors. The present study is explanatory in nature. Ms- Excel was used to list and store the data. Percentage analysis method was used to analyse and interpret the results and achieves research objectives. An attempt is made in this paper is to study the causes of stress among BPO employees. The present paper also analyses the level of stress on BPO employees.

1. Introduction

Stress refers to the strain from the conflict between our external environment and us, leading to emotional and physical pressure. Most of the employees are experiencing stress at work. Stress can be recognized as a valid health and safety issue at work. Most of the employees are put under pressure to handle situations that are not life-threatening but nevertheless provoke stress signals. These can lead to a number of unpleasant and debilitating feelings and symptoms, such as headache, backache, stomach upsets, anxiety attacks and lethargy. Not prevention of stress leads to lack of productivity, burn-out and long-term illness.

Most of the employers are turning towards Stress Management to handle these problems. Stress Management can enable employee to improve their own response to stress and enable the organization to reduce workplace stressors. Stress Management helps at preventing and reducing stress for both the individual employee and the organizations or companies.

2. Workplace Stress

Work place stress occurs when there is poor match between job demands and the capabilities, resources or needs of the worker. It is a harmful physical and emotional response. These conditions may result poor work performance or even injury. Job stress also includes with numbers of biological reactions that may lead ultimately to compromised health, such as cardiovascular disease. About one-third of the workers reports high level of stress. One- quarter of employees view their jobs as the number one stressor in their lives. Three – quarters of employees believe the worker has more on the job stress than a generation ago. The major cause of turnover in organizations is Stress today.

3. Statement of the Problem

Today most of the employees are experiencing stress at work. Balancing of work and life became difficult for every employee in any sector. More and more employees are turning towards Stress Management to tackle stress problems. Stress Management can enable employees to improve their own response to stress and enable the organization to reduce workplace stressors. The present problem is the study on stress management among BPO employees in Chennai city.

4. Objectives of the Study
1. To study the reasons of stress among employees.
2. To analyse the level of stress on employees.
3. To study the impact of stress on employee health and productivity of the organization.
4. To study the effectives of the stress management programme opted by the BPO companies.

5. Literature Review
A sample of the studied has been conducted on the impact of the stress on the job satisfaction among the employees (Beehr and Newman, 1978). Spector (2004) studied that long working hours in the organization increase the stress among the employees and in this situation; they can reduce their stress level by making conversation with their peers and family members.

Dayo Akintayo (2012) found that working environment is significantly related to workers morale and also working environment is significantly correlated with perceived workers productivity.

Tamizharasi and Dr. Uma Rani (2014),it is been concluded that as the competitive environment, technological advancements, HR Practices, economic development, social developments are taking place day by day. Consequently, every employee is expected to work for long hours, perform multiple jobs, available for 24 hours in seven days. These reasons give a mentally as well as physical problems to the employees. When these problems increase, then it gives a pressure, strain, anxiety, tension, trauma to the employees and ultimately the productivity of the employee's decreases. More ever women get high stress than men.

6. Stress Management
Stress management is the need of the hour. Stress management refers to the wide spectrum of techniques and psychotherapies aimed at controlling a person's levels of stress, especially chronic stress, usually for the purpose of improving everyday functioning.

Sometimes stress is normal and even it is useful. Stress also helps if somebody needs to work hard or react quickly.

There is a great need to figure out what causes stress for an employee. Everyone feels and responds to stress in different ways.Tracking stress can help to find out what is causing stress and how much stress one can feel. Then one can take steps to reduce the stress or handle it in a better way.

7. Causes of Stress at Work-Place
Stress has its presence all over the world. Sources of stress are known as Stressors, which makes people worried or anxious. The following are the causes of stress of employees in working place.

7.1. Work Timing
Working in night shifts for long hours makes employees feel stress. Especially, in BPO sector the geographical time difference with the US and the UK gives Indian industry one of the biggest advantages to remain a dominant player.

7.2. Workload
Working for long and odd hours without breaks one may get feel stress. Particularly in induction training programs of the freshers make them feel stress if they don't have sufficient breaks during the training programme.

7.3. Repetitive Nature of Work
Another important reason or stress is Monotony. Possible solutions can be hiring retired personnel or housewives, since these groups with more experience tend to get frustrated the least. Since other innovative measures can be periodic job rotation.

7.4. Insufficient Holidays
Insufficient holidays may cause stress to the employees. Particularly, in BPO sector companies do not observe Indian holidays. Employees have to work on Indian holidays also which leads stress to the employees.

7.5. Pressure to Perform on Metrics
Companies like BPO'S, while they following quantifiable business metrics to attract customers they measure performance metric of employees for every action which may cause to stress.

7.6. Travel Time
Long hours of travelling to reach office may causes stress to the employees.

7.7. Overtime
In spite most companies encourage overtime with incentives, this can be a major cause for stress. Initially, fresher's who are willing overtime for making more money feel stressed once they are into it and performing. Overtime, along with long working hours and travel time, is turning out to be a potent combination, causing stresses.

8. Research Design

The present study is explanatory in nature. 100 questionnaires distributed to the employees of various nationalized BPO situated in Chennai. The number of responses collected after consistent follow-up was 88. Books, journals and internet websites were used as a source of secondary data. Ms- Excel was used to list and store the data. Percentage analysis method was used to analyse and interpret the results and achieves research objectives.

9. Findings and Conclusion

A large number of the employees fear with the fact that lack quality in their work puts stress on them. It is found that maximum number of employees in BPO remains in stress. 52% of the employees feel that they are overloaded with work. 64% of the employees feel tensed due to their non-achievement of target work. 38% of the employees accepted that they will obey the order of their boss by sacrificing their important domestic functions which indicates fear and stress among employees. 28% of the employees feel stress due to their family related problems. It means such employees feel greater level of stress as compared to other employees. Half of the employees accepted that there is conflict among the employees. It is a concern for top management. Only 45% of the employees feel that strategies used by BPO Companies to manage stress of employees are effective. Majority of the employees try to find solution to relieve them from stress. 61% of the employees practice YOGA or other ways to relieve them self from stress, majority of the employees balance in their social life.

10. Suggestions

Most of the employees feel that they experience the stress at work. BPO industry should concentrate on managing stress and where the company is lacking for doing the same. Employees of the BPO should be made free from not only fear of quality of performance but also from other type of fear generating in their minds. Counseling and Guidance, quality consciousness awareness programs, psychological support should be provided to the employees. The concept of working for five days in a week can be implemented in BPO, so that the employees can give more time to themselves and their family and discharge other social responsibilities. BPO's should arrange recreation facilities, YOGA camps, meditation camps, entertaining programs etc. The working environment should be safer. Work should be decentralised in the BPO Companies. Friendly environment from colleagues and especially boss should be ensured by the BPO companies. Employees should try to give quality output rather than fear from it in term of work.

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APPENDIX SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

S.No	Statement of the Questions	Responses of Respondents in %		
		Yes	**No**	**Can't Say**
1	Do you satisfy with the performance you give at your work place?	100	-	-
2	Are you feared about the quality of your performance?	74	19	7
3	Do you work more than 8 hours?	85	15	-
4	Do you feel stress sometimes?	60	20	20
5	Is workload the reason of your stress?	52	43	5
6	Do you get tensed at non achievement of your target?	64	12	24
7	Do you worry about your colleagues' opinion about you?	42	53	5
8	Is there any effect of work on your health?	65	33	2
9	Do you plan your before doing?	85	9	6
10	Do you discuss the problems with your spouse or friends or any other persons close to you?	68	25	7
11	You have an important function at your home and if your boss asks for over time, will you agree?	38	30	32
12	Is there any conflict among employees?	50	30	20
13	Is the conflict resolved in time?	88	5	7
14	Do employees support each other?	88	8	4
15	Is your social life balanced?	66	24	10
16	Are you stressed because of your family problem?	28	62	10
17	Do you try to find any solution for the problem of your stress?	88	6	6
18	(IF YES) Do you practice Yoga or use any Therapy for reducing stress?	61	31	8
19	Do you regularly spend time on entertainment?	65	25	10
20	Are the strategies effective that are used by your BPO to manage stress of employees?	45	21	34