Understanding Work-Related Stress, Job Conditions, Work Culture and Workaholism Phenomenon as Predictors of HR Crisis: An Empirical Study of the Indian IT Sector

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ABSTRACT

Workaholism, in recent years, has taken a regular behaviour pattern among professionals. While self-negligence is assumed as a hallmark of workaholism, empirical data in this case stands to be both narrow and paradoxical. It seems that the uprising economy and the fierce market competition have prompted organizations in rewarding those employees whom they find are keen in working hard for a career. The modern developments like high speed data connections add more to this belief, as this makes possible for the employees who would like to work at any place and at any given point of time. These day-to-day advancements may likely kindle employees to work long hours. Some employees work exceptionally for long hours with passion, just for the fun of it. However, working stretched hours might be an indication of work obsession: an irrepressible liking for work. To further understand the impact of such situation, this study has made a modest effort in exploring the relationship between workaholism, perceived work-related stress, different job conditions and intensifying anxiety among IT professionals in Delhi/NCR. The sampling procedure for the study was purposive. Result of the study found workaholism to be imperative in explicating work culture and work conditions as predictors of stress and anxiety at work. Moreover, the study would prove helpful to academia and industry professionals to understand the workaholic behaviour of the IT professionals in the new phase of globalization and economic boom.

KEYWORDS

HR Crisis, IT Professionals, Job Conditions, Work-Related Stress, Workaholism

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INTRODUCTION

With the fast leap of technology innovation and competitiveness, the leisure and comfort among today’s employees have also improved. A new 24/7 economy has freed the old work environment paradigm, as never before. As an aftermath, an interminable transformation in working pattern is evidently noticeable. With globalization and the pace of technology change in society, the modern economy organizations have become indeed exceptionally demanding. This also has augmented the need for growth, followed with frequent breakdowns among working employees.

Number of studies (Estes & Wang, 2008; Hooks & Hicks, 2002) have shown that working conditions have changed expeditiously. Ambiguity of clear role expectations at work is high and the balance between work and personal being has become vaguer (Srikanth & Jomon, 2013). Stress rates at work have upsurge in the past decade resulting in psychiatric health problems and turning down of work productivity. It is also evident from numerous reports that a high level of perceived stress at work is related to low level of satisfaction with job and poor mental condition (Dhabhar, et al., 2010). Researches have also reported significant associations between occupational stress, anger, work-family conflict and psychological and physical health. Henceforth, a great deal of attention is being given to the issues of work-related stress and health (Schaufeli, et al., 2008) which is often discussed in daily conversations.

STRESS

Stress, over the years, has been defined in diverse ways. Formerly, it was regarded as some kind of pressure from the environment which later on turned into strain within the individual (Shimazu & Schaufeli, 2007). An extreme mode of stress can hinder productivity and impact one’s physical and mental health. It can also threaten the individuals as well as organisations from attainment of goals.

How is Stress Caused?

The workplace is an imperative cause for both demands of job and pressures triggering stress. The factors related to workplace stress cited are dearth of managerial support, low inter-personal relations, demanding job, workplace viciousness, lack of flexibility, low self-esteem and being workaholic (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), which further results in HR Crisis (Pandey & Sharma, 2014). HR crisis maybe defined as an unstable state of affairs occurring in the organisation resulting in drain or loss of personnel, deterioration of morale, inadequate development of human resources, lack of succession plans and managerial inappropriateness leading to a multiple unhealthy consequences in an organisation.

Few researchers have tried establishing relatedness between personality types with stress prone-ness. One that includes being persistent and highly involved in work was studied by Caplan & Jones (1975). It acted as a catalyst of workload and ambiguity of role resulting further into anxiety, depression and antipathy. Role ambiguity was found to be positively associated with anxiety, depression, and antipathy, whereas workload was found to be positively associated with anxiety only. Research has furthermore revealed that these individuals who are mostly in a perpetual struggle mode to get things done in the least amount of time will undergo more stress than individuals who rarely have an urge to succeed. Adding to these personality types, there is another vital personality attribute that has come forth to make pace with the demand of the dynamic economy is “workaholism”. This popular corporate buzz word has also created hype among scholars across the world. The emphasis of lately, has been on understanding the diverse aspects that constitute workaholism. For the non-professionals,
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