

A Study on Employee Burnout in IT Sector

(With special reference to IT companies in Bangalore District of Karnataka State)

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we study and analyze results from the survey conducted to find out burnout of Employees in IT. We identify the main reasons which contribute to Employees Burnout in IT Sector and also identify solutions to prevent it. We analyze the results, and found that Burning out of employees is creating serious problems for employees as well as the organization as a whole.

Key Words:-Burnout, Stress, Salary, IT, Job, Work Life, Balance, Rewards, Work pressure, jobless

INTRODUCTION

Work stress is the most prevalent health problems these days .Burnout is often used to characterize a reaction to prolonged work stress, especially feeling of emotional exhaustion, which are believed to be the core of burnout. Employees experiencing burnout often feel like they have lost control and an employee that is sick of the workplace may experience exhaustion and even illness. Burnout can be described as “the extinction of motivation or incentive, especially where one’s devotion to cause a relationship fails to produce the desired results,” and is a stress related state. Burnout has a wide range of possible symptoms as well as causes. Symptoms include, but are not limited to, powerlessness, hopelessness, detachment, irritability, despair, apathy, frustration, feeling trapped, isolated, detached, emotional exhaustion and cynicism. Some countries keep statistics on burnout. In Germany, where burnout is covered by some insurance policies, 5% of the population between 25 and 45 years of age are being treated for burnout. In the Netherlands, roughly 10% of the workforce is burned out at any given time, with teachers and primary care health professionals most burned out. Statistics are not complete in the USA for various reasons of data privacy

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Burning out of employee is creating serious problems for employees as well as organization as a whole. The main impact of employee burnout is low productivity, poor employee morale and high employee turnover cost .So this will negatively affect not only the employees, organization and industry but also the society as each and every employee is a part of the society. Employees who become burnout victims are especially harmful to organizations because such people create

a ripple effect, spreading burnout to their subordinates. Unfortunately for the friends and family of an employee who has reached this stage, the cynical and uncaring attitudes that develops towards co-workers, boss, or subordinates may having a negative effect on all of the person's social interactions. Despite the high percentage of managers concerned with the problem of burnout within the IT workers in their organizations, research has not sufficiently demonstrated the correlates of burnout in this population. It is reasonable to assume that if IT managers were able to predict burnout, they would be able to take action to prevent it. In addition, the present research effort addresses limitations of existing burnout literature. Specifically, although Seth et al. (1999) investigated correlates of burnout of IT workers, very few factors were considered. Other research of burnout of IT workers is relatively scarce. In addition, though several studies in areas outside IT explore possible antecedents of burnout (Fogarty, Singh, Rhoads, & Moore, 2000; Yashwant Advani, Jagdale, Kumar Garg, & Kumar, 2005), a study is to examine and assess the main reasons for stress depression and burnout of employees in IT sector has not been created. The present study aims to fill these gaps.

PRESENT IT ENVIROMENT

Industry experts indicate that most organizations do not have a solid understanding of what is involved in IT work or in advancing an IT career (McGee, 2006) Consideration of the current IT environment might reveal those factors that are most relevant to IT professionals. The current IT environment is characterized by rapid change and increased globalization. Outsourcing and downsizing are two terms used frequently in discussions about the IT industry. The movement of IT jobs to offshore sites has continued unabated since the late 1980s (Ho, Ang, & Straub, 2003). In one survey, when asked to identify significant factors in their workplace environment, more than half of IT workers identified budget cuts and increased workload and more than a third identified permanent layoffs and salary and hiring freezes (King, 2004) For example, layoffs may be referred to as “position rate of cynicism toward top management (King, 2004), and cynicism is one of migrations”, and outsourcing may be called “global sourcing.” The result is a reported growing the components of burnout. In their book *The Truth about Burnout: How Organizations Cause Personal Stress and What to Do About It*, Maslach and Leiter (1997) directly link between globalization and worker burnout. The authors posit that even the possibility of an organization moving jobs out of the country (off-shoring) puts pressure on the workers that remain and is damaging to the community of the workplace.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive in nature since the number of IT organizations which are in different operations cannot be estimated around Bangalore city which is infinite. So this research takes in to account of only leading multinational IT organizations. The main purpose of this study is to examine and assess the main reasons for stress and depression of employees in IT sector. Stratified sampling methods will be used.

Tools for collection of Data: To study employee burnout in IT sector, quantitative research will be followed as descriptive information is required here. A well defined questionnaire consists of opinion of employees in IT sector regarding the reasons for employee burnout, job stress, their work is prepared and distributed personally and also through internet. Text books, journals and magazines are used for the preparation of questionnaire.

Framework of analysis: Percentage method will be used through the study as the data collected and analyzed in the study is of qualitative nature.

Size of Samples: In Software Technology Parks of India, Bangalore there are 1256 registered member companies. Bangalore's IT industry is divided into two main "clusters" Electronics City and Whitefield. New clusters in Bellandur and Challaghatta have emerged in the last few years along the Outer and Inner Ring Roads and in C. V. Raman Nagar near Old Madras Road. IT firms in Bangalore employ about 35% of India's pool of 10 lakh (1 million) IT professionals and account for the highest IT-related exports in the country. There are approximately 350000. To select survey Sample size below assumptions are taken Population Size is 350000 which is very large Margin of error (Confidence Interval) is +/- 5% ,Confidence level is 95% and Standard of Deviation is taken 0.5 Steps to calculate sample Size

1. Confidence level corresponds to a Z-score for 95% Z -Score = 1.96

2. Plug in Z-score, Standard of Deviation, and confidence interval into below equation:

Necessary Sample Size = $(Z\text{-score})^2 * StdDev * (1-StdDev) / (\text{margin of error})^2$

$((1.96)^2 * .5(.5)) / (.05)^2 = 384.1$ or 385 Respondents are needed.

SURVEY INTRODUCTION

The survey has been conducted among the employees of IT organizations in Bangalore .As it is stated that the minimum sample size should be of 385 respondents so on basis of those 500 forms has been distributed targeting small and big giants of IT organizations. This distribution has been done personally as well as online through internet. After the long procedure of distribution, filling and collecting back forms it is found that 436 respondents after excluding non fillers, double tickers, double writing etc. In these respondents **67.97 percent is male and 32.03 percent is female**. The important results of this survey according to the questions asked have been given below. Each point indicates the response to that particular question. There are 35 questions including the last matrix question. The report summarizes the below mentioned areas

SURVEY ANALYSIS

1. Analysis of the survey results shows that 60 % of people have chosen IT profession on their own interest and the next 24.6 % people has taken it on parent's guidance.

2. Analysis of the survey results shows that 62.39 % of people believe that their nature of job demands more hard work then any other job .Then 24.8 percent people believe that sometimes their job demands to work more harder .Only a merge 3.21 percent of people say that their job never demands to work harder then any other job.

3. Analysis of the survey results shows that 49.77 % employees find their job interesting only sometimes and only 24.54 % employees finds it interesting often

4. Analysis of the survey results shows that 58.49 % of people sometimes get proper recognition in contrast to 18.35 % people always getting recognition. Employee's mental satisfaction lies in the job satisfaction, which they get from proper reorganization of their effort.

5. Analysis of the survey results shows that almost 47.25 % often feel stress when they deal with serious projects and 24.08 % employees sometimes feel stress while dealing with serious projects .Only 1.83 % employees never feel stress this number is very low and shows stress of burnout.

6. Analysis of the survey results shows that almost 44.27 % of employees do not have flexibility to influence their working conditions. Only 24.77 % employees believe that sometimes they can influence their working condition

7. Analysis of the survey results on work timing indicates that 40.83 % of employees are working for 10 – 12 hours a day, which is alarming. Only 32.8 percent of people are working 9-10 hours a day. Analysis shows that only 2.98 % of employees are enjoying working life with 7-8 hours of work per day .This extra work load and long working hour's triggers the burnout factor.

8. Analysis of the survey results indicates that 43.35 % of employees often think or worry about their job when they are actually not working and 33.94 percent of people sometimes think about job while not working .The survey points out very distinctively that due to work pressure and stress related to the job given employees are not able to concentrate on their personal life or leisure time .This is very alarming that more then 80 percent of people are some or other time worried about their work when actually they are not working. This leads to stress and in long term it happens to be burnout.

9. Analysis of the survey results indicates that 36.7 % of employees (M/F) keep their children with their spouse whereas 24.08 % keeps them with in-laws and 24.31 percent keeps them with their parents. Alarmingly 7.57 % allow children to be with their servants whereas 7.34 percent prefer crèche. This report shows that the employees suffer dual stress one for family and another for job given. The most sufferers are their children

10. Analysis of the survey results indicates that employees get very less time to be with their family Around 30.5 percent of employees get only 4-5 hours a day to spend with family where as 22.71% spend 3-4 hrs .Alarmingly 18.12 % spend less 2-3 hours respectively. We can summarize that 80 percent of employees do not get more then 5 hours for their family, for whom they work so hard.

11. Analysis of the survey results indicates that 47.02 % employees often miss their relaxing time , where as 28.9 % sometimes miss their leisure time .In this way we can say that according to survey more then 85 percent of employees are recorded as sufferers and their work life balance is hampered.

12. Analysis of the survey results on whether employees feel tired or depressed because of work indicates that 42.66 % of employees sometimes feel tired and depressed where as 37.39 % employees always feels tired or depressed because of work. This analysis indicates that 85 % of employees are suffering from it. This is a vital indication of stress related burnout.

13. Analysis of the survey results shows that 55.1% employees goes for an entertainment and 24.3 % of employees go for dance or music to manage their stress.

14. The IT employees apart from getting their pay cheques also get facilities like counseling services, health programs and transportation etc. Analysis of the survey results indicates that 33.04 % of employees enjoy exercising facilities and 27.58 % of employees receive health programs which helps them to deal with their stress related problems.

15. We say that we work for our families, but analysis of the survey results indicates that the work life balance of IT employees is affected in many ways. Long working hours and shift work affects 58.35 % of employees.16.92 % employees stay long due to meetings and trainings after office hour's .So we can say that these all factors contribute to employee burnout problems. Please find details in Figure: 6.

16. Analysis of the survey results indicates that 71.46 % of employees take help of technologies like cell phones /laptops etc to maintain work and family commitments and 10.57% support from colleagues to maintain their work life balance.

17. Analysis of the survey results on employees suffering from any stress related diseases is alarming. It shows that 28.46 % of employees suffer from diabetes and 25.77 % are obese .Around 20.96 % suffers from frequent headaches and 9.23 % suffers from hypertension. So we can say that more then 80 % of employees are victims of stress related diseases.

18. In every IT organization refreshment drinks and snacks are given to the employees free of cost, like coffee machine or cold drink machines kept in each floor for the use of the employees. There are also food items available at cafeteria in each office sometimes free and sometimes paid. Survey analysis shows that 63.3 % of employees have their refreshments twice a day and 19.04 % have it thrice a day. This shows that more then 70 % of employees run shortage of time in long working hours due to work pressure.

19. The job satisfaction provides motivation and gives mental relaxation to employees. Survey results indicate that 59.4 % employees seeks for an award, certificate or gift from the organization in reorganization of their efforts and 17.89 % seeks increment in pay and benefits

20. The fear of loosing job is a stressful insecurity .IT environment in which layoffs, downsizing, closers, mergers and acquisitions happen frequently. The survey shows an alarming result as 36.93 % sometimes feel fear of losing job where as 26.83% often feel so .Alarmingly 16.51 % always feel the fear of loosing job. So we can see that more then 75 percent of employee's fear job loss .This is a major cause of burnout. Please find details in Figure: 7.

21. Accidents at workplaces in most cases, occurs through the fault of companies that do not meet safety standards and do not act preemptively. Work accidents are a reality, and this year alone hundreds of people have died as a result. Here in the survey it is shown that 36.01 % of employees seldom or very rarely face any accidents and 32.8 % of employees never faced accidents so far which is very good .So we can summarize that more then 55 percent of employees had already faced some or other form of work accidents. This shows that more then 40 percent of employers and employees are not properly conscious about the work accidents.

22. Extra curricular activities like cultural or sports days act as a stress buster. Survey results shows that 41.1% of employees sometimes have it and 31.19 % enjoys it seldom or very rarely. More then 5 percent says they never have it in their organization. This shows that organization's management is not paying attention to extracurricular activities of the employees

23. The survey analysis of customer dissatisfaction on the services offered by the employees indicates that 40.14 % of employees sometimes face problems due to customer dissatisfaction and 30.05 % seldom faces any problems. While 20.18 % of employees never faces any problem. So we can say that more then 80 % of employees some or other time faces this problem. This can be stressful in everyday life and leads to burnout.

24. As it is already seen that employee's work life is not properly balanced due to long working hours, night shifts, overtime, meetings. The survey analysis on problem in personal life due to long working hour indicates that 55.28 % of employees sometimes they face problems where as 21.1% often face problems So we can summarize that more then 75 % of employees every day goes through wear and tear between work and family. This is another cause for burnout.

25. The main problems which an employee faces while in night shifts is indicated in the survey which indicates that 34.63 % of employees seldom face any problems where as 25.23% faces it

sometimes and 21.1% faces it often. So altogether we can see that more than 75% faces problems while working in nightshifts. This can be counted as one of the reasons for burnout.

26. Human body is a biological clock, if it is changed frequently with night shifts employees suffer from health issues. Analysis of the survey result shows that 39.45% employees often face health problems due to night shifts, whereas 34.17% employees sometimes face it. So we can summarize that 80 percent of employees face health-related problems due to night shifts, which is very alarming.

27. According to the survey analysis it is found that 42.66% employees sometimes feel that the rewards can reduce job stress, whereas 31.65% believes that rewards can always reduce job stress.

28. According to survey analysis on organizational support to reduce job stress it is found that 62.84% employees always believe that organizational support can help to reduce job stress and 19.72% believes often.

29. According to survey analysis it is clear that 81% of the employees' first expectation from the organization is to get reorganization for their work.

30. According to survey analysis 30% agree that paycheck & benefits are the only acknowledgement they seek, whereas 36% of employees neither agree nor disagree to it and around 21.56% disagrees to it.

31. As per survey analysis 48.39% of employees agree that their paychecks and benefits are important, but they would also appreciate non-monetary rewards.

32. As per survey analysis on organization's current recognition program it is found that 35.5% of employees are not satisfied with their current reorganization program and around 27.5% employees are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with current recognition plan. Around 8% of employees strongly agree with organization's current recognition program.

33. Survey analysis indicates that 32% of employees believe that their current job is not providing adequate opportunity to be recognized, whereas 20% believes that their organization provides opportunity for recognition.

34. Survey analysis indicates that 40% employees strongly disagree to equal rewards, so it is clear that employees do not believe that all employees be equally rewarded.

35. Survey analysis indicates that 48% employees agree to reward when specific criteria is met. To summarize 70% people agree and strongly agree that employees should be rewarded for meeting specific criteria "above and beyond" normal duties.

CONCLUSION

Employee burnout has serious consequences for both Employee and Employer. Below mentioned steps taken by an organization may help to prevent burnout of its employees.

1. To build a friendly and cooperative environment in the organization and make job more interesting to the employees
2. Proper Employee recognition programs
3. Proper guidance and support while dealing with critical projects
4. Employees should play roles to influence and improve their working conditions
5. Organization should have a proper grievance mechanism
6. Employee/project ratio should be ideal
7. Flexible work times for the employees and work from home in time of need
8. Crèche facility for children's when employees are at work
9. Counseling of Employees for work life balance
10. Regular and compulsory health checkups and medication programs

11. Provision of free refreshments drinks and snacks in the workplace
12. Awards and gifts from the organization in appreciation of efforts
13. Job Security assurance and motivational programmes
14. Organizing extracurricular activities like annual day ,cultural day and birthday celebrations for the employees
15. Employees should have liberty of sharing their views with out any fear
16. Employee provision to take a sabbatical leaves and encouragement to pursue higher education
17. Holiday facilities with family so that employees can spend more time with your family
18. Special time provisions for working mothers
19. Organization should introduce provisions to do Yoga/meditation at work place.

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