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EFFECTS OF MOTIVATION, STRESS AND COMPENSATION BENEFITS ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN IT PROFESSIONALS

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Abstract

People are the most important asset and organizational success comes from managing people effectively. With a highly driven performance and result oriented culture in IT industry, continual innovation of technologies and development of the human resources has become the prime concern. - Performance assessment in IT industry is not setting goals and targets, closely followed by supervision, - but is a product of competency development and empowerment. Motivating employees to perform better is the best way to ensure that employees put the maximum effort to achieve the results within the stipulated time. Organisational performance is the accumulated result of deliverables at each level and every supervisor has to ensure on continuous performance improvement whereby making performance a daily commitment. In this paper, an attempt has been made to identify the relationship between the factors like motivation, compensation benefits, job stress and performance of the IT employees of Bangalore, India. This research has adopted an exploratory approach by collecting primary data from 584 employees. The regression model created suggests a relationship between compensation benefits, motivation, stress and job performance. The model indicates a positive impact of compensation and motivation on performance, while stress has a significant negative impact.

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Introduction:-

Most of the Managers in the IT sector are well versed in strategic implications of the knowledge- impelled, information-grounded and service-oriented economy. They recognize flexibility, speed and continuous improvement to be the rules of the game. They pretty much know that skilled and motivated people are backbone to achieve these characteristic features of the thriving business.

Despite the cognizance of the reality, a decade of organizational restructuring, reengineering and layoffs have produced employees, who are dissatisfied, disengaged more than feeling empowered. Furthermore, most managers hardly focus on the issues of employees motivation and capability. A wide chasm is, therefore, prevalent between theory and practice causing loss of human capital, if not misuse and wastage. Eventually, high attrition rate set in, that which is always a challenge in the IT companies. Many reports highlight the attrition rate to hover between 15% and 20% (Mohapatra, 2015). Overcoming these challenges, spin the discussion towards compensation solutions that attract and retain qualified employees that being the key concern across organizations. Consequently, several organizations use merit-based pay systems to reward and retain high-performing employees. Furthermore, organizations have recognized employee motivation to be a significant element that influences the success of an organization. As matter of fact, Kreitner and Kinicki (2004) points out motivation to be "those psychological processes that cause the arousal, direction and persistence of voluntary actions that are goal directed." Motivation

arises out of intrinsic and extrinsic factors that in combination results in employees committed to the organisation. Incentives, rewards and recognitions are considered as the chief factors that influences the employee motivation. The employees who are motivated through intrinsic factors engage in their work purposefully and consider work as enjoyable and satisfactory (Vansteenkiste, 2005).

Among the IT professionals, stress has been identified as a crucial factor that affects the productivity and turnover of the employees resulting in increase in related costs (Sethi, et al., 2004). On an average, software developers were found to work for more than 40 hours per week in India (Sharma, et al. 2006), while nearly half of them work at least for six hours on Saturdays and Sundays, and 70% of them work even while sick (King, 1995). Such long working hours increase the stress levels, thus affect productivity. In conjunction with working for long hours, IT professionals constantly face an unstable and uncertain environment (Scholarios & Marks, 2004). The difference in the time between the Indian workers and their counterparts in the US and Europe compels employees to work in night shifts. Software professionals are expected to hold team meetings and work-related activities that necessitates employees to be flexible and adopt an increased fluid approach to time (Teagarden, Meyer & Jones, 2008). Further, the employees are required to travel extensively outside the country due to project-based assignments that have unpredictable workloads and difficult to achieve deadlines without technical glitches (Mathew, 2007). The rapid advancement in technology that occurs at quick pace makes the skill obsolete fast, hence the software professionals will have to focus on updating their skills frequently, which warrants additional training hours (Armstrong, Riemenschneider, Allen & Reid, 2007). These factors culminate in stress for the employees, who look out for options to switch jobs or change career path. On the other hand, employees confront stress in the form of obstacle, opportunity, constraints or demand in relation what one expects and the outcome of which is either uncertain, negative, or vital (Robbins, 2001).

The main aim of the current study is to study the critical factors that significantly influence the performance of an employee in the IT organization. The study focused on exploring how employee compensation, motivation and stress affect employee performance. The research objectives of this study were (i) to study the effect of compensation benefits, motivation and stress on performance of the employee, (ii) to determine the extent of the impact of compensation on motivation, and (iii) to identify the influence of stress on employee motivation.

Review of Literature:-

The performance of an employee in the organization is driven intrinsic and extrinsic factors including compensation, motivation and stress. Further, these factors also interact with each other to produce adverse or favourable response in the employees.

Danish and Usman (2010) observed that a statistically significant and favorable association was found to influence rewards and motivation, indicating that modifying the rewards extended to employees would result in a parallel modification in job satisfaction and motivation. On the other hand, regular and special salary increases, fringe benefits, incentives, bonuses, and other payments result in elevated employee morale and hence higher motivation. Namasivayam, Miao, and Zhao (2007) found that direct compensation facilitates the association between indirect compensation and the performance of the organization.

The information available on employee compensation in the IT industry in the Indian context is limited. Few studies have assessed satisfaction among IT employees in Bangalore using a sociological approach (Nanjamari 2013; Majeed and Hundekar, 2012). Umer and Naseem (2011) investigated the influence of different components such as career growth, managerial support, work setting and work life balance on retaining the employee.

Barling et al. (2004) opines that due to changes in the workplace environment, employees feel overloaded causing workplace stress. Unless the employees are able to connect the work demands with their capabilities to meet them, they feel stressed out.

Long-term consequences include adverse effects to general and mental welfare. Studies conducted over extended periods of time substantiate the fact that stressful work circumstances are related to elevated levels of depression, psychological disorders and other indications of torment (Leitner, 1993; Parkes, Menham, & Rabenau, 1994; Schonfeld, 1992). Beehr, Jex, Stacy, and Murray (2000) determined that job-related stressors can predict both the performance of employees and the psychosomatic effect of the stressors on them.

From a cognitive perspective, according to Tubre and Collins (2000), both lack of information and overload of information may cause role stress. Contrariwise, from a motivational perspective, it is understood that role stress can weaken motivation to perform better. By conducting a meta-analysis, Jackson and Schuler (1985) confirmed a negative relationship between role stress and job performance, which they explained from cognitive and motivational dimension of stress.

There is a dearth of research to understand the relationship between compensation, performance, motivation and stress, especially among the IT sector employees in the Indian context. This study therefore intends to bridge the gap in the existing literature by exploring the factors that affect employee performance and understanding the relationship between employee compensation and employee performance.

Research Objectives:-

The objectives of the research are to explore the relationship between the employee compensation and motivation and stress and to investigate the level of impact compensation, motivation and stress has on performance.

Hypothesis Testing:-

The hypotheses that were derived for this study based on the research objectives included

- **H1:** Increase in compensation can strengthen the level of motivation among employees
- **H2:** Compensation plays a significant role in the minimization of stress levels in employees.
- **H3:** Satisfaction with compensation significantly enhances employee performance.
- **H4:** Work stress and employee performance are inversely proportional.
- **H5:** Employee motivation plays a significant role in increasing employee performance.

Research Methodology:-

The research was designed to ascertain if motivational factors, compensation benefits had any significant positive impact on the performance of the employees. The role of stress on performance was also studied for its effect in order to investigate the possible changes these factors could bring to the employee welfare in the organizations. This study adopted a positivise approach and used deductive analytical methods proposed by various researchers to optimize the advantages of the analysis (Easterby-Smith, 2002).

Quantitative research methodology was used for the present investigation. The population consisted of individuals who were employed in IT companies in Bangalore, Karnataka, India. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data related to employee demographics and their perceptions with regard to compensation, motivation and stress. Multiple-choice questions and five point Likert scale were used depending on the required outcome. A sample of 584 respondents, each of managers and executives, was selected for the study based on their willingness and ability to provide the required information. The study considered respondents currently working in development, production, testing, or in HR, marketing in the IT industry in Bangalore. Two participant types were chosen, namely Employees and Managers. Employees working as executives in ITES, BPO, or any other Non-IT industry were not selected for the study. The final sample included 295 employees and 289 managers giving a response rate close to 50%. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS v21) were used to analyze the data gathered from the questionnaire.

The internal reliability and consistency of the measuring research instrument was tested by evaluating the Cronbach's alpha coefficients. Reliability analysis checks to what extent the measurements are error-free thus producing consistent results. According to DeVellis (2003) and Kline (2005), a Cronbach's alpha value of more than 0.6 is suggested for high internal consistency. In the present research, Cronbach's alpha value for Compensation benefits was 0.752 for 24 items; Employee motivation, 0.713 for 19 items; Stress, 0.611 for 11 items and Performance, 0.62 for 25 items.

Results:-

A majority of the employees and the managers who participated in the survey were male (68.1%), married (54.9%) and had <10 years of overall work experience (73.6%) and they had been in the current job for 2-9 years (63.4%) working in the IT services (37.6%) with an annual salary of <9 lacs (74.5%).

Influence between compensation benefits and stress on motivation:-

The results of simple linear regression performed to analyze the relationship between compensation benefits and motivation revealed that compensation benefits with a mean value of 3.37 ± 0.44 had a positive influence on motivation. Compensation benefits contributed to 19% of the variation observed in motivation with an F value of 68.576 and $p = 0.000$ (Table 1). The unstandardized beta value of 0.45 indicates that increase in compensation increases the motivation of the employees (Table 2).

On the contrary, stress had a negative impact on the motivation and contributed to 5.6% of the variation in motivation and was highly significant ($p=0.000$) (Table 1). The unstandardized beta coefficient of stress was -0.253 indicating a negative impact at $p = 0.000$ (Table 2). Thus, stress acts as a deterrent on the employee motivation level.

Table 1: Model Summary for influence of Compensation and Stress on motivation level of employees.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
Compensation	.435 ^a	.190	.187	.33954	.190	68.576	1	293	.000
Stress	.236 ^a	.056	.052	.36654	.056	17.260	1	293	.000

Table 2: Coefficients for influence of Compensation and Stress on motivation level of employees.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
Compensation	(Constant)	1.764	.186		9.464	.000
	Compensation	.450	.054	.435	8.281	.000
Stress	(Constant)	4.004	.171		23.414	.000
	Stress	-.253	.061	-.236	-4.155	.000

Influence of Performance and Motivation / compensation:-

The results showed that a motivated employee performs well. The R^2 value of 39.3% suggests a higher significant impact on performance ($p=0.000$) (Table 3). This relationship was positive and significant (unstandardized B = 0.844; $p = 0.000$) (Table 4). A similar relationship was found among the IT employees between compensation and performance, although the influence was lesser compared to motivation, with R^2 value of 4.2% but was significant at $p = 0.001$.

On the other hand, stress proved to have a negative impact on the performance, where only 2.2% of the variation in performance could be explained by stress. However, the influence was found to be significant at $p=0.013$ ($F=6.192$) (Table 3). The negative influence was characterized by $b = -0.232$ at $p = 0.013$ (Table 4).

Table 3: Model Summary for influence of Motivation, Compensation and Stress on Performance.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
Motivation	.627 ^a	.393	.391	.39978	.393	179.118	1	277	.000
Compensation	.205 ^a	.042	.039	.50208	.042	12.177	1	277	.001
Stress	.148 ^a	.022	.018	.50736	.022	6.192	1	277	.013

Table 4: Coefficients for influence of Motivation, Compensation and Stress on Performance.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.669	.210		3.183	.002
	Motivation	.844	.063	.627	13.384	.000
2	(Constant)	2.480	.284		8.739	.000
	Compensation	.291	.083	.205	3.490	.001
3	(Constant)	4.105	.259		15.857	.000
	Stress	-.232	.093	-.148	-2.488	.013

Relationship between employee demographics and motivation and performance:-

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted on the effect of demographic details such as Line business gender, relationship status, income, Total work experience, Work experience in present company and Salary on employee motivation. These factors were found to have a significant (p=.001) influence on employee motivation (Table 5). Employee demographics contributed to 7.4% variance in motivation (Table 6). It had an F change value of 3.808, which was significant at p = 0.001. Line business, Relationship status, and Work experience in current company had a positive significant impact on employee motivation, while Gender and Total work experience though had a negative influence was insignificant.

Table 5: Model Summary for the influence of demographics of the employees on motivation level.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.271 ^a	.074	.054	.36620	.074	3.808	6	288	.001

Table 6: Coefficients for the influence of demographics of the employees on motivation level.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.925	.134		21.907	.000
	Line of Business	.035	.017	.130	2.124	.035
	Gender	-.084	.048	-.104	-1.752	.081
	Relationship status	.140	.046	.185	3.015	.003
	Work experience	-.051	.056	-.119	-.910	.363
	Work experience in current company	.063	.028	.166	2.269	.024
	Salary	.048	.031	.192	1.581	.115

A weak influence of the demographic factors was felt Performance with only 4.9% variation explained by these factors in performance (p=0.013) (Table 7). Gender had a significant negative impact on the performance (unstandardized b = -0.157; p = 0.02).while Experience in the present company had significant positive impact (unstandardized b = 0.082; p = 0.037) (Table 8).

Table 7: Model Summary for demographic factors and performance.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.222 ^a	.049	.028	.50475	.049	2.354	6	272	.031

Table 8: Coefficients for demographic factors and performance.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.554	.187		18.988	.000
	Line of Business	-.018	.023	-.049	-.765	.445
	Gender	-.157	.067	-.144	-2.339	.020
	Relationship status	.001	.066	.001	.014	.989
	Work experience	-.071	.079	-.125	-.900	.369
	Work experience in current company	.082	.039	.161	2.093	.037
	Salary	.044	.044	.130	1.009	.314

In Table 9, the indices were presented to indicate the relative strength of individual predictors in Motivation and Performance. The bivariate correlation between the predictor variables of line of business, gender, relationship status, total work experience, and Work experience in the present company was conducted. The relationship status and Work experience in the present company in was found to have a significant positive relationship with motivation, while only Work experience in the present company had significant relationship with performance ($p < .05$).

Table 9: Correlation between the demographic factors and Motivation and Performance.

	Pearsons Correlation with respect to Motivation	Pearsons Correlation with respect to Performance
Motivation_AVG	1.000	1.000
Line of Business	.067	-.074
Gender	-.078	-.130
Relationship status	0.13*	-.019
Work experience	.063	.096
Work experience in current company	0.15*	0.166*
Salary	.072	.094

Discussion:-

India is a principal hub for the information technology (IT) industry and accounts for about half of the global revenue in this industry segment. Furthermore, a large number of Indians (about 10 million) work in varied jobs in the IT industry. India has gained several benefits due to the IT industry, including the transformation of its global image and the energizing of the higher education sectors due to the need for resources that are highly qualified. Being a fast-growing industry, the Indian IT industry is characterized by cost competitiveness (ibef.org, 2015), hence makes stringent demands on its employees while paying them enviable compensation packages.

The demographic characteristics of the employees and managers who participated in the current study were found to correspond with the overall employee population across the IT industry. For instance, the majority of the workforce is male. Most of the employees had <10 years of overall work experience as did the managers. This corresponds to the findings by Bhatnagar (2006) who observed that employees in the IT industry start working when they are in their early twenties fresh from college and are frequently still in their twenties or early thirties when they progress to managerial roles. Furthermore, the majority of both employees and managers had been in their current jobs for 2-9 years and 6-9 years, respectively, demonstrating the high tendency among IT employees to switch jobs frequently. The annual salary reported by the majority of employees was <9 lacs, whereas the annual salary reported by the majority of the managers was >7 lacs. This demonstrates the large increase in salary when employees move into managerial roles.

This study has shown that compensation benefits as well as motivation to have a positive and significant impact on the employee's performance. Thus, low income earned by the employee results in lower motivation level to perform

better. Although increasing the compensation benefits may not be directly proportional to the increase in performance and productivity, but the employees often relate the performance to compensation benefits and lack of motivation to work when it is not adequate. As pointed out by Kreitner and Kinicki (2004), it is either an inner drive or an external inducement or the combination of both that makes an individual behave in a specific way. Compensation benefits thus act as an external inducement to keep a person motivated to perform better. On the other hand, Vansteenkiste (2005) belief that those motivated through intrinsic factors enjoy their work also carries substantial truth. Confirming Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs, the fulfillment of financial needs has become the basic concern before the employees can be motivated through increased job responsibilities, challenging work assignments, etc. (Kiruja and Elegwa, 2013). However, Ullah, et al. (2014) believed that both financial and non-financial motivation should be provided to employees to derive increased productivity. Some of the IT companies adopt the method of providing fringe benefits to the employees in the form of movie tickets, holiday packages, etc. to motivate the employees. Kwak & Lee (2009) reported that fringe benefits do not promote good performance of firms. However, it is worthwhile to study this aspect in relation to its support on increasing the performance.

Umoh, Amah, & Wokocha (2014) found that employee benefits were extensively associated with economic exchange and some substitutes and therefore inferred that employee benefits significantly affect continuance commitment. Therefore, benefit programs or plans could be created with flexibility to be changed according to the changing requirements and situations of society. These changes could be used to purposefully guide employee efforts to derive successful outcomes for themselves.

Earlier research reports have demonstrated stress as the source of burnout and turnover among the IT professionals and it has a impact on productivity and performance (Sethi, King, & Quick, 2004). The findings of this research confirm that stress has a negative impact on the performance. Most of the employees in this study reported to experience a high level of job stress. This kind of stress arises out of high work pressure combined with inadequate staff. As described by Cooper, Dewe, and O'Driscoll (2001), the employees go through 'role overload', which refers to imbalance between the time allowed for a given work to be completed and the amount of work to be done. The current study supports earlier findings that the role overload is related to more stress resulting in poor job performance (Cooper et al., 2001). A similar result was reported by Ahmed and Ramzan (2013) among the banking professionals. On the contrary, certain studies on jobs like accounting revealed that there was no relationship between job stress and performance (Chen, et al. 2006). However, IT industry being highly competitive, professionals working in this industry has been reported to go through a tremendous stress. IT industry is extremely dynamic with procedures and techniques change rapidly, resulting in the loss of ability of coping up with it by many employees, due to which physical illness and psychological disturbances have become commonplace. Jamal (1984) while studying the relationship between job stress and performance demonstrated that absenteeism, tardiness, and anticipated turnover was obtained as its output. Although he proposed professional and organization commitment to act as moderator of stress, it could only be partially fulfilled. Although stress could not be completely mitigated, organizations can attempt to redesign jobs to reduce workload for the employees thereby reducing stress. Role conflict and inadequate pay could be rectified by assessing the job description of the employees and employ an accurate performance measurement system to evaluate and reward the efforts of the employees. Further, stress can be managed through counseling by corporate medical professionals. Support from management in terms of organizational restructure could be taken advantage to reduce stress (Stamper & Johlke, 2003). The organizations could benefit by perceiving employees as part of the organizational family along with their issues and challenges as rightly pointed out by Rifkin (1996) employees do not leave their problem at the doorstep of the organization. While the employees are expected to take ownership of their job, so should the managers take ownership of at least some of the issues that employees face due to work-life balance. Training the managers may appear as an obvious solution; however, it comes at a cost that most organizations are unable to bear (Netemeyer, et al., 2005; Galinsky and Bond 1998). Implementing family-friendly programs would send signals to employees that management cares and supports work-life balance.

Conclusion:-

The current study investigated the influence of compensation benefits, employee motivation, and employee stress on employee performance in the IT industry. The study found that compensation benefits are positively related to performance, so also the motivation. On the other hand, stress had negative impact on the performance and reduced the motivation levels of employees. From the findings of the present study, it is concluded that workplace social support provided by the management, superiors and peers is necessary to reduce stress and keep the employees motivated thereby developing a healthy work environment. However, the notion of social support which includes the

pleasant relationship among employees, support from colleagues and superiors in resolving workplace problems, and supporting in times of personal problems (Le Blanc et al., 2000) needs to be further studied from IT professionals context, especially in relation to the Indian context. Further, establishing a reward system based on performance could enhance the motivation level of employees to be highly productive. The study also suggests that employees should be given adequate training after recruitment and build a continuous improvement plan that could help the employee to keep their skills updated in the demanding IT environment. It will be worthwhile to study the impact of stress on the wellbeing of IT professionals in India as it could help the framing of policies to take remedial steps to support them, though a few studies are available that discusses the general well being of IT professionals.

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