SHORT COMMUNICATION

A STUDY ON STRESS COPING STYLES ADOPTED BY WORKING WOMEN, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO IT-ITES INDUSTRIES IN BANGALORE, SOUTH INDIA

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Many women in India are drawn towards the IT-ITES industries due to relatively high wages and the opportunity to be part of an upscale, globalized work environment. At the same time, such employment presents women with new challenges alongside the opportunities. It uncovers how IT-ITES employment affects their lives, mainly as it relates to stress and the anxiety that Indian families and Indian society have towards working women, earning a good salary, and being exposed to western culture. Coping with such situations becomes very essential part of their living. Coping refers to the attitudes and behaviors that one uses to maintain ones emotional well-being and to adjust to the consequences of stress. To cope with stress can be exceedingly beneficial and in some situations, even life saving and some of these potential coping strategies that have shown to be quite beneficial include: social support, meditation, biofeedback and drugs. This study is an attempt to understand the stress coping styles adopted by women working in IT-ITES industries.

INTRODUCTION

The global expansion of software and IT enabled services has opened up new vistas for women. The major resource required by the software and services outsourcing in India is a steady supply of educated technical labor or 'knowledge workers'. The industry is considered to provide a good avenue for the employment of women, who have conventionally not opted for technical occupations, but have the essential knowledge base and flexibility to adjust themselves to the outsourcing industry. As UNCTAD Report (2002) demonstrated, software and IT-enabled services has broadened job prospects for women, who can now work from home (assuming adequate infrastructure and bandwidth are available) or in a data centre or tele-centre close to home. Women are joining the IT sector and their numbers are fast increasing. Women are now occupying a prominent position in the labor force. According to Nasscom, the focus on women by the IT-BPO industry is in part an acknowledgment of their growing role in India's economy. The Indian IT-BPO industry, in fact, has become synonymous with some truly pioneering work related to women employees, and the sector, more than other industries in India, has been launching initiatives designed to promote the interests of women in their workplace. Relatively high wages and the opportunity to be part of an upscale, globalized work environment draw many women in India to the IT-ITES industries.

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At the same time, such employment presents women with new challenges alongside the opportunities. It uncovers how IT-ITES employment affects their lives, mainly as it relates to stress and the anxiety that Indian families and Indian society have towards working women, earning a good salary, and being exposed to western culture.

Coping refers to the attitudes and behaviors that one uses to maintain ones emotional well-being and to adjust to the consequences of stress. To cope with stress can be exceedingly beneficial and in some situations, even life saving and some of these potential coping strategies that have shown to be quite beneficial include: social support, meditation, biofeedback and drugs. Coping refers to the behaviour that protects people from being psychologically harmed by problematic social experience, a behaviour that importantly mediates the impact that societies have on their members. The protective functions of coping behaviour can be exercised in three ways, by eliminating or moderating conditions giving rise to problems, by perceptually controlling the experience in a manner that neutralizes its problematic character and by keeping the emotional consequences of problems within manageable bounds (**Pearlin and Schoolar, 1978**). The most common typology of coping style (**Lazarus and Folkman, 1984**) includes problem-focused coping (which includes information seeking and problem solving) and emotion-focused coping (which involves expressing emotion and regulating emotions). These two factors are sometimes complemented by a third factor, appraisal-focused coping (whose components include

denial, acceptance, social comparison, redefinition and logical analysis). This study is an attempt to understand the stress coping styles adopted by women working in IT-ITES industries.

Research Design

The research design used for the study is descriptive design.

Research methodology

Universe of the study

The Universe of the study was two IT & ITES companies of Bangalore city.

Sampling frame, Sampling method and sampling size

Sampling frame included women working in two IT & ITES companies of Bangalore city. Simple Random sampling method was used to collect 30 samples.

Data collection: Sources and Tools

Primary data: Was collected by administering Coping Checklist (CCL) tool developed by Dr. Kiran Rao, Additional Professor, Department of Clinical Psychology, Nimhans, Bangalore

Secondary data: Was collected from the Journals, text books, published or unpublished thesis related to the topic.

Statistical Analysis:

The data was entered in MS-Excel and analyzed in SPSS (15).

RESULTS

Different coping styles adopted by the women entrepreneurs

The above table shows that among the different types of predominant coping styles, the problem solving method of coping style is the most widely used by the women employees.

Coping styles	Mean	SD	Rankings
Problem solving	0.558	± 0.19	1
Acceptance	0.534	± 0.42	2
Denial/blame	0.512	± 0.43	3
Social support	0.502	± 0.38	4
Religion/faith	0.452	± 0.28	5
Distraction positive	0.443	± 0.20	6
Distractive negative	0.436	± 0.40	7

The acceptance method of coping style is the second most widely used style by the women employees which is followed by denial/ blame style. Social support is the fourth largest style used by them, whereas religion/faith is the fifth   largest style used by them. Among the seven different predominant types of coping styles, distractive positive is preferred as sixth best and distractive negative method of coping style is used least by the women employees working in IT & ITES companies of Bangalore city. Among the different types of predominant

coping styles, the problem solving (M=0.558) method of coping style is the most widely used by the women employees. Distractive negative (M=0.436) method of coping style is used least by the women employees. In a study (**Upadhyaya and Havalappanavar, 2008**) it was observed that for women (mothers), most commonly used coping strategies are problem solving, religion–faith and denial-blame. Both women and men are employing the same degree of coping styles when facing difficulties and the most preferred copying style adopted by the NGO field workers is the Social Support method and the least preferred one is the distractive negative (**Raju, 2009**).

Conclusion

The researcher aimed at studying the coping styles adopted by women employees working in IT & ITES companies of Bangalore city. It is interesting to note that the women employees use problem solving method of coping quite widely and distractive negative method of coping, the least. These are considered as healthy ways of coping up in difficult situations.

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