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Affect of Adversity Quotient on the Occupational Stress of IT Managers in India

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Abstract

All people experience adversity during their lifetime. Dictionary defines adversity as a difficult or unlucky situation or event. Challenges, disappointments, sadness, despair and hopelessness are difficult parts of life, making people react in peculiar ways to get over these. Each person's happiness, growth and success depend largely on his or her responses to the difficulties of life. The science of resilience or the adversity quotient (AQ) is a measure of the capability of an individual in facing the difficult situations in life. Dr. Paul Stoltz coined the term Adversity Quotient in 1997 in his book '*Adversity Quotient: Turning Obstacles Into Opportunities*'¹. Stress is a result of an adverse or difficult or demanding situation which has psychological or emotional tension or pressure on an individual. Stress can be caused by a string of things, from physical like some threat or danger to emotional such as tension or worry at job or for family. Occupational stress is caused by unfavourable conditions at the work place. These conditions may be related to the organizational policies such as downsizing or re-designing leading to fear of job-loss, politics among the co-workers, excessive demanding supervisors, overload of work leading to burnout or lack of coordination among the teams causing bottlenecks and unnecessary delays. Such stress is even higher among the IT professionals, often leading to unpleasant and explosive situations. This research is an attempt to uncover if there exists any link among the Adversity Quotient and Occupational Stress of IT managers in India. Results indicate that there is a significant relationship between Adversity Quotient and Occupational Stress.

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Keywords: Adversity; Adversity Quotient; Stress; Occupational Stress; IT Professionals

1. Introduction

Organizations of today are very demanding as they require the workforce to manage time for multitasking in order to meet unrealistic deadlines in the cut throat competition. This intense pressure of performance is

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felt even more in the information technology industry as they deal with the ever changing and constantly evolving needs of global clientage. Information technological companies are infamous for their fast and tightly placed work schedules giving rise to highly stressful workers. IT companies have always been rated top among the most stressful organizations to work for. Apple, Intel, eBay, IBM, etc. have always been reported poorly in job stress. In India, IT industry got a tremendous boost after globalization and liberalization of Indian economy.

The government also chalked favorable policies to help the IT industry to grow resulting in placing India among the top of the growing IT industries in Asia Pacific region. The focus on revolutionizing IT industry has also paid huge dividends with IT contributing more than 10% to the GDP of India. But this growth came at a huge cost; that of Human Resources. Physical problems like wrist pains, slip disc, fatigue in eyes, headaches, etc. became common due to long hours of sitting in front of monitors. As other countries and organizations realized the potential of IT, many new players entered the arena thereby bringing in increased competition. This, coupled with the restive global economic and political environment, has put tremendous pressure on IT organizations to be efficient as well as cost effective. The ongoing scenario of recession has further added to the volatility in IT industry, resulting in increased job insecurity, wage cuts, improper working conditions and rapid obsolescence of skills thus making IT industry one of the most stressful industries to work in India. The more experienced you are in IT industry, the more stress you have to face as with the increase in responsibilities the deadline become stricter, the teams become bigger and tougher to manage and the clients become more demanding. But still we find IT managers who succeed despite facing insurmountable odds. While their colleagues break under the avalanche of rapid change, these individuals invariably rise, break the shackles and become successful. They see opportunity in every challenge and face hardships with resilience. This ability to bounce back after every adversity is what enhances their capability to climb up the ladder of the success.

1.1 Adversity Quotient

Adversity is a difficult situation or event that brings challenges in the lives of people. The reaction of individuals towards the adversity determines whether it will bring disappointment, sadness, despair and hopelessness or happiness, growth and success for them. Adversity quotient (AQ), also known as the science of resilience, attempts to measure the capability of an individual to handle adversities in life. Individuals having high adversity quotient continue to move forward successfully and keep rising in their life as they have the ability to endure considerable adversities. Adversity Quotient comprises of five different components called the CO2RE dimensions (fig.1).

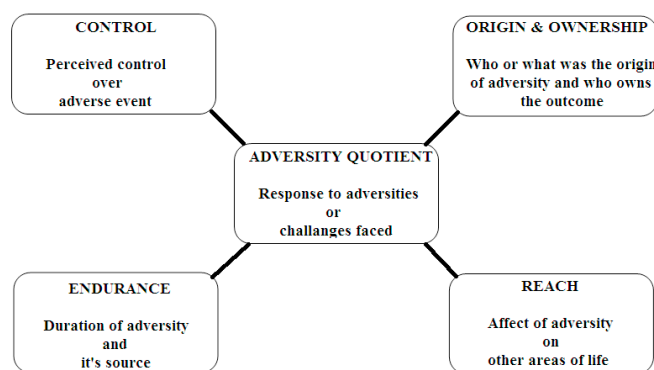


Fig.1 - The CO2RE dimensions of Adversity Quotient

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