JOB HOPPING OF WOMEN IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

The IT industry is one of the largest employers of women. Women professionals in IT industry are also accused of job - hopping between projects. The present paper elaborates the reasons behind women employee job hopping in IT industry. Major factors for job hopping of women were found to be exhaustive working schedules, family life conflict, maternity or parenting issues, advancement or networking issues.

INTRODUCTION

Women professionals in IT industry are also accused of job - hopping between projects. Job hopping problems are specifically related to software professionals and more prevalent among the women. The IT industry is one of the largest employers of women and has seen a significant increase in the number of women making a mark. Going is smooth from the fresher to the team leader and project leader stage. It was found that the percentage of women employees in IT companies gradually dropped at higher levels. More importantly, women were not in the right pipeline for promotion as very few percent had responsibility for profit and loss or revenue generation -- the posts that lead to the very top. Most of them were at the lower levels of management.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. The main objective of this paper is to determine the reasons behind the Job hopping of women in IT industry.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Khatri noted (1998): "……. job-hopping which is the most serious HR problem may be attributed more to poor recruitment and selection practices than to the tight professional market." Despite over 1500 studies in the turnover literature (Shaw et. al, 1998), job-hopping has been mentioned in only a few studies in previous research with heavy contentions over recruitment and selection, and there has been no attempt to develop a measure for this important construct.

Voluntary women turnover is a major problem for IT companies in many countries such as Hong Kong, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan (Barnett, 1995; Chang, 1996; Syrett, 1994). Researchers are unanimous in their view that job-hopping had become so rampant in IT companies in many countries that it had become a culture (Asia Pacific Management News, 1997).

In Singapore, reports in popular press highlight the costs and disruptions associated with job-hopping which continue unabated, and companies continue to call for help with this pressing issue4. In fact, there is a deep concern at the national level that job-hopping is adversely affecting competitiveness (Chang, 1996; The Straits Times, 1996).

The definition of job-hopping has two parts. First, people switch jobs because they have an itch to try out new things or simply because it is fun doing so.

Ghiselli (1974) was the first to document a concept similar to job-hopping which he termed as „hobo syndrome". He defined the hobo syndrome as „the periodic itch to move from a job in one place to some other job in some other place".

AIJRRLSJM   **VOLUME 1, ISSUE 8 (2016, SEPT)**   **(ISSN-2455-6602) ONLINE**

ANVESHANA'S INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN REGIONAL STUDIES, LAW, SOCIAL SCIENCES, JOURNALISM AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Ghiselli (1974) argued that this wanderlust is derived from instinctive impulses and does not seem to result from organized logical thought, but rather from the internal impulsiveness of individuals. The second part of job-hopping consists of social influences or turnover culture.

Abelson (1993) defined turnover culture as the shared cognition by organizational members that influence their decisions regarding job movement. Turnover culture makes hopping from one job to the other an acceptable behavior. If an employee has not changed his or her job for a long time, he or she feels increasing pressure to do so because of social influences/turnover culture. If one scans through the literature concerning what influences people to leave, three sets of independent factors: demographic, controllable, and uncontrollable emerge responsible for job hopping.

Kelly Steenackers ,Marie-Anne Guerry (2016);Determinats of job hopping: an empirical study in Belgium. Through an empirical analysis, the authors show that age is negatively related to the job-hop frequency. Gender moderates this relationship. Therefore, the analysis supports the view that young women tend to job-hop significantly more than young men, but as they age, women are significantly more likely than men to remain within the same company. Furthermore, the authors find that the educational level has no influence on the job-hop behavior, indicating that having more job alternatives does not necessarily result in actual job-hop behavior. Both the sector and the size of the organization are found not to be significantly related to the job-hop frequency.

Sarah Leidner , Simon M. Smith (2013) "Keeping potential job-hoppers' feet on the ground: Well trained workers stay loyal to their employer". The paper claims that job-hopping may be more of a problem in urban than in rural areas, among lower-paid employees and among people working in fast-growing economies. This paper aims to explain that job-hopping has become more common in recent years, partly because of globalization, greater short-termism, shortened product life-cycles and growing and vanishing markets.

JOB HOPPING

Definition: To change jobs frequently, especially as a means of quick financial gain or career advancement.

It was found that, for an overwhelming percentage of women professionals, family, health and maternity aspects clearly figured on top of the list as the most important reason for women not advancing at the same rate as men in IT industry. Dedicated young programmers never hesitated at the idea of working until 2.am in the morning, surviving on sandwiches and pizza and sleeping on the floors of their offices. For women with family responsibilities this pace of work and long hours of work was very frustrating. Women identified long working hours as the major constraint in the organization for effective job performance.

Another important factor that affects women's advancement in hierarchy was the lack of networking which male colleagues have in plenty. On reasons for job hopping, respondents felt money was one of the main reasons for job hopping, followed by perceived growth which is never achieved according to one respondent. However, some of the respondents felt that job hopping was bad.

Three aspects that did not receive much attention from IT companies across the industry were the crèche, work from home and company transportation that left the women professionals highly dissatisfied, indicating that companies did not have family friendly policies which help women balance their family and work life. Not even a single IT organization provided crèche facility to their employees with little kids or even had an approved list of crèches which could be used by their employees. Lack of appropriate child care facilities distracted the attention of employees in performing optimally.

Another area that received the attention of the women professionals was their demand for work from home. IT organizations did provide this facility to their senior members and encouraged them to avail of this

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facility. Many IT companies were grappling with the idea as this relates to security issue and client acceptance.

Work environment was one factor, which received an overwhelming response from both women and men. Air conditioned atmosphere, hygienic conditions, cubicle space, and above all this was the freedom of action, merit based advancement, opportunity to assume responsibility, all of which comprised of the work environment enabled women to perform their job well in the IT industry.

Traditional work schedules can cause problems for employees with children. Long hours of work prevent women IT professionals from spending enough time with their families. If the workday starts too early or ends too late, it leaves little time for them and does not allow quality time with their families. All this will leave the women stressed and frustrated. Although flexi-time was not the organizational policy for most of the IT companies that participated in this research, women seemed to manage their time and work through the informal arrangement with the cooperation of their colleagues.

Role conflicts and role overload seem to be common feature for women who perform multiple roles. Large majority of the women still do a good amount of household chores, both before they leave home and after returning from work in the evening. Even in joint families, where the parents or in-laws take responsibility for running the house, women needed to still take care of family matters and provide maternal attention, care and solace, comfort and nurturance to the children.

CONCLUSION

Women in IT industry were likely to job hop when they persistently feel dissatisfied with their jobs when they are emotionally exhausted. Strangely, they are not likely to job hop even if they perceive they have poor organizational support.

Analysis indicates that women were not satisfied with the type of assignments they handled, salary, training opportunities they got, the delegation of powers they had, indicating that they were conspicuously absent from decision making. They perceived that there was no role clarity. They were also not happy with assessment of performance, nor reward for performance. They were not consciously encouraged and mentored to grab opportunities. Women felt excluded from meetings, and limits were put on their ability to network and contribution.

In short, more effort should be done to reduce job hopping women employees by taking in consideration the many factors like better recruitment effort, review job content, compensation practices, leadership and supervision, equality of work and pay policies, career planning and development, alternative work schedule, working conditions, non-work factors, team building, centralization, organization communication and commitment, counseling leavers, flexible Working hours, compressed work week, employee involvement, policies for turnover, and recognitions. Women employees' retention is a must for every IT organization.

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