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Effects of Landscape Contact on Employees' Occupational Stress Level: With Reference to Information Technology Sector in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Work related stress had been earlier concerned as a primary problem in developed countries, but now it has become a growing issue in developing countries. Sri Lanka is a developing country which is emerging as a global IT Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) destination listed in 11th rank among top 50 outsourcing global countries. Information Technology (IT) sector establishments have been fronting in facing occupational stress. Because, IT employees are highly target driven and highly pressured on outcomes. Also, the wide spread soundless problem called stress which had triggered acute dysfunctions, illnesses and other irritations according to directed attention, which is a part of Attention Restoration Theory (ART). Landscape contact while working hours has been found to promote psychological health and to reduce occupational stress based on Stress Reduction Theory (SRT). It is another theory which emphasises that green spaces have restful effects on a person who has experienced stress. Based on both theories a self-administered Landscape Contact Questionnaire (LCQ) has been prepared based on Likert scale to find interrelationship between landscape contact level and occupational stress level. Landscape contact level was divided as direct landscape contact and indirect landscape contact. Occupational stress was assessed by measuring happiness and sadness factors of their job roles. In and around Nawam Mawatha, Colombo-02 area was selected for case study because of Beira Lake landscape, and surrounding has several IT establishments. Totally 50 respondents from various IT organisations participated in the survey. Outcomes of the study showed negative association between landscape contact and stress. Significant occupational stress reduction was identified from the respondents who had more direct contact with the landscape than others, whereas more indirect landscape contact and no any landscape contact respondents experienced more stress respectively. Therefore, the workplace environments should incorporate designed or natural landscapes to enhance the psychological wellbeing of the employees.

Keywords: IT sector, Occupational stress, Landscape contact