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A Study on Stress Management among IT Professionals in Palakkad District

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Abstract: *One of the most dynamic and quickly changing industries in the modern global economy is information technology (IT). It has a big impact on how modern society has developed, influencing how people connect, communicate, and work. However, there are difficulties associated with working in the IT sector. High levels of mental alertness, ongoing education, lengthy workdays, strict deadlines, and the capacity to adjust to rapid technology advancements are all requirements of the job. IT workers frequently experience stress as a result of these expectations. The body's reaction to any pressure or difficulty is stress. It is a normal response to challenging or dangerous circumstances, but if it persists over time, it can cause major physical and mental health issues. A certain amount of stress can boost motivation and performance, but too much or poorly handled stress can have the opposite impact. Unrealistic project deadlines, employment instability brought on by automation or outsourcing, high customer expectations, and the ongoing strain to keep up with technology improvements are just a few of the particular stressors that IT workers frequently deal with. Stress no longer only affects high-level executives or certain tasks in today's fast-paced workplace; it now impacts workers at all levels. Both short-term stressors, like project deadline pressure, and long-term stressors, such burnout or a lack of work-life balance, can affect IT workers. Additional factors that can impact stress levels include organizational culture, workload, interpersonal connections at work, and personal responsibilities.*

Key Words: *IT industry, stress management, work life balance.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In order to maintain both individual health and organizational effectiveness, stress management is crucial. It includes a variety of methods and approaches used to regulate an individual's stress level. These consist of time management, physical activity, mindfulness, therapy, and establishing a wholesome workplace. Stress management, when done well, enhances mental health, job happiness, and general quality of life. Thus, this study aims to determine the level and causes of stress experienced by IT workers, gauge their knowledge of and adherence to stress-reduction strategies, and analyze the part employers play in encouraging mental health. Additionally, the study will offer suggestions for how people and organizations can manage stress and foster a more encouraging work environment. This study aims to provide important insights into fostering psychological resilience and improving the general quality of life in the IT business by comprehending how stress appears in the lives of IT professionals and identifying the coping mechanisms they employ.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In recent years, stress has become a normal and inevitable aspect of life, particularly in the rapidly expanding IT industry. Long hours, rapid technological adoption, and consistent performance under duress are all requirements of the job. IT workers' stress levels have increased as a result of these demands.Stress is mostly caused by a heavy workload, a lack of job stability, deadline pressure, and a poor work-life balance. The situation has gotten worse due to the transition to remote employment and rising customer expectations. High levels of stress have a detrimental impact on workers' productivity, job happiness, and health. High attrition rates and burnout have also been caused by inadequate stress management techniques, poor communication, and a lack of managerial support. Effective stress management is now essential for maintaining the productivity and well-being of IT workers.

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Professionals are experiencing higher levels of work stress as a result of the IT industry's fast-paced, technologically advanced environment. This study is important because it attempts to investigate the causes, effects, and coping strategies associated with stress in IT professionals, a demographic that is especially at risk because of long workdays, high performance standards, and ongoing technical advancements. For both individuals and companies, it is essential to comprehend stress management in this field. The study offers information on practical stress-reduction strategies that IT workers may use to improve their mental health, output, and job satisfaction. To lower employee burnout, absenteeism, and turnover rates, employers may find the data useful in creating stronger workplace policies, support networks, and wellness initiatives.

4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Globalization and digitalization have significantly altered employee expectations, work cultures, and lifestyles. Because it is so competitive and dynamic, the IT industry must constantly adapt to new developments in technology, customer needs, and international standards. The workplace for IT workers has changed as a result of these developments, requiring high output, ongoing education, and flexibility with new tools and systems. IT workers in the Palakkad area are required to handle demanding work schedules, long hours, and pressure from their jobs in this difficult situation, frequently at the expense of their personal and physical well-being. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the stress levels of IT experts employed by various companies in the Palakkad area, as well as to determine the reasons behind and coping mechanisms they employ.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To understand various stress faced by IT employees in their profession.
- To understand the impact of stress on health and behaviour.
- To identify the factors affecting stress in IT professionals.
- To know various methods and techniques used by them to handle their stress.
- To suggest ways to manage stress.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Methodology is a method of solving problems systematically. It is based on primary data and secondary data collected mainly from books, internet and previous studies. It involves gathering data using statistical techniques, interpretation and drawing conclusion about the research data.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is conducted among IT professionals in Palakkad district. The study is descriptive in nature. Descriptive research is used to get information regarding the current status of the phenomenon and to describe what already exists.

SOURCE OF DATA

Primary data

The collection of primary data has been made through the issue of questionnaire in the online mode by the use of Google doc feature and thereby its collection as well, in the same manner.

Secondary data

The secondary data was collected from journals, magazines and internet.

SAMPLE DESIGN

The sample chose consist of 100 respondents who are located in Palakkad district .
The sampling technique used in the study is convenience sampling.

TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

1) Questionnaire
2) Books, website, journals

TOOLS FOR DATA PRESENTATION

1) Graphs
2) Tables
3) Diagrams

TOOLS FOR DATA ANALYSIS

In this study the collected data were analysed by using tables, graphs, diagrams, ONE WAY ANOVA and Chi-square tests and necessary interpretations.

HYPOTHESIS

H0: There is no significant association between gender and level of stress
H0: There is no significant association between age and level of stress
H0: There is no significant association between level of stress and coping strategies

7. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Hamdulay, N. A. (2024). The current study examines the different elements that lead to organizational stress in the personal and professional lives of IT professionals. It then looks into the factors that lead to high levels of stress among new hires in the IT sector as well as the effects of stress on the team members of IT professionals in the industry. The study also gauges how satisfied an IT professional is with stress management sessions. The benefits and drawbacks of stress management seminars or sessions have also been emphasized. A sample of 100 respondents was gathered for this study only from the Mumbai region's IT sector. The results demonstrate the impact of stress management workshops or sessions on IT professionals as well as the substantial influence of demographic determinants of stress among these professionals.

Gunasheela and Jeyabharathy (2024) examined how stress is becoming more and more common in contemporary life, pointing out that it is becoming an inevitable part of life. Their research highlighted how stress fosters creativity and adaptation in addition to posing difficulties. People in a variety of industries are impacted by stress, which is defined as a state of emotional or mental tension brought on by adverse circumstances. Their study focused specifically on IT workers, who, as the results indicate, endure elevated stress levels as a result of several work-related problems.

Iswarya, V. S., Babima, M., Muhila, M. G., & Dhaneesh, R. (2024) This study aims to investigate the effects of stress management intervention strategies on enhancing IT professionals' well-being at work. There are two phases to the suggested task: The first stage is to gather information from employees of a company using a prepared questionnaire. 142 The suggested hypothesis forms the basis of the questionnaire's design, which was used to gather data from managers and supervisors of the four IT companies that were chosen. In the second step, SEM, descriptive statistics, F-test, and correlation analysis are used to evaluate the collected data.

Latha Soundarraj, P., Pelleti, S., John, E. P., Gadgil, A. A., Sehrawat, A., & Yadav, L. K. (2024) declare that one of India's fastest-growing industries is information technology. But the IT services sector has grown more competitive and needs to contend with issues including global operations, service improvements, and technological breakthroughs. Employees that are unable to keep up with the fast pace are under a lot of stress due to these changing demands. According to the study, if stress is not adequately managed, it frequently results in burnout, decreased productivity, and a drop in job satisfaction.

Channa, A., Sharma, A., & Bajpai, A. (2023) stress that competent and trustworthy talent is essential for success in the fast-paced, cutthroat business world of today. Budgetary restrictions restrict the scope of such activities, which increases workplace pressure even while employers are encouraged to develop their recruitment techniques. According to their findings, workers frequently encounter irrational expectations, which can cause stress and feelings of inadequacy, particularly for recent hires attempting to establish themselves in high-performance settings

8. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION.

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION
TABLE 1

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
UG	62	62
PG	38	38
Total	100	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation:

Out of the total respondents, majority have the UG qualification thereby forming 62% of the tota l population while only 38% respondents have acquired the PG qualification.

WORK EXPERIENCE

TABLE 2

Experience	Frequency	Percentage
0-5 years	48	48
6-10 years	20	20
11-15 years	22	22
Above 15	16	16
Total	100	100

(Source: Primary Data).

Interpretation:

From the above table 48% of respondents have 0-5 Years of experience, 20% of respondents have 6-10 years of experience , 22% of respondents have 11-15 years of experience and remaining 16% respondents have above 15 years experience . Majority (48%) of respondents have 0-5 Years of experience.

ANNUAL GROSS SALARY

TABLE 3

Annual gross salary	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 lakh	34	34
5-10 lakh	30	30
10-15 lakh	28	28
15 lakh and above	8	8
Total	100	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation:

From the above table 34% of respondents annual salary is between 1-5 lakh, 30% of respondents annual salary is between 5-10 lakh, 28 % of respondents are between 10-15 lakh and remaining 8% of respondents annual salary is 15 lakh and above. Majority of the respondents (34%) annual salary is between 1-5 lakh.

KIND OF STRESS THEY SUFFER IN THEIR JOB

TABLE 4

Stress	Frequency	Percentage
Physical	44	44
Psychological	30	30
Behavioral	26	26
Total	100	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation:

From the above table 44% of respondents suffer physical stress, 30% of respondents suffer psychological stress and remaining 26 % of respondents suffer behavioral stress. Majority of the respondents (44%) suffer physical stress.

LEVEL OF STRESS

TABLE 5

Level of stress	Frequency	Percentage
Mild	8	8
Moderate	32	32
Severe	36	36
Extreme	24	24
Total	100	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation:
From the above table 8% of the respondents have mild level of stress, 32% of respondents face moderate level of stress, 36% of respondents face sever stress and remaining 24% of respondents face extreme level of stress. Majority of the respondents (36%) face severe level of stress.

CHI-SQUARE TESTS:
Chi-square test -1

H0: There is no significant association between gender and level of stress
H1: There is a significant association between gender and level of stress

Table 6

Case Processing Summary						
	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Level of stress * Gender	100	100.0%	0	0.0%	100	100.0%

Table 7

Level of stress * Gender Cross tabulation				
Count				
		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Level of stress	Mild	4	4	8
	Moderate	14	18	32
	Severe	24	12	36
	Extreme	14	10	24
Total		56	44	100

Table 8

-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.781[a]	3	.286
Likelihood Ratio	3.805	3	.283
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.446	1	.229
N of Valid Cases	100		
a. 2 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.52.			

INTERPRETATION
P value is 3.52 which is more than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted . This indicates that there is no statistically significant association between Gender and level of stress.

ONE WAY ANOVA:
1.One way anova
H0: There is no significant association between age and level of stress
H1: There is a significant association between age and level of stress

Table 9

Descriptives								
Level of stress								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
20-30	50	2.4400	.86094	.12176	2.1953	2.6847	1.00	4.00

30-40	28	3.0714	.81325	.15369	2.7561	3.3868	2.00	4.00
above40	22	3.0909	.92113	.19639	2.6825	3.4993	1.00	4.00
Total	100	2.7600	.91143	.09114	2.5792	2.9408	1.00	4.00

Table 10

ANOVA					
Level of stress					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.245	2	5.122	6.901	.002
Within Groups	71.995	97	.742		
Total	82.240	99			

INTERPRETATION:
P value is 0.02, which is lesser than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected . This indicates that there is statistically significant association between age and level of stress.

2.one way anova
H0: There is no significant association between level of stress and coping strategies
H1: There is a significant association between level of stress and coping strategies

TABLE 11

Descriptives								
Level of stress								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
strongly agree	14	1.8571	.66299	.17719	1.4743	2.2399	1.00	3.00
agree	10	2.0000	.66667	.21082	1.5231	2.4769	1.00	3.00
neutral	38	3.0000	.80539	.13065	2.7353	3.2647	2.00	4.00
disagree	28	2.8571	1.07890	.20389	2.4388	3.2755	1.00	4.00
strongly disagree	10	3.2000	.42164	.13333	2.8984	3.5016	3.00	4.00
Total	100	2.7200	.94367	.09437	2.5328	2.9072	1.00	4.00

Table 12

ANOVA					
Level of stress					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	21.417	4	5.354	7.621	.000
Within Groups	66.743	95	.703		
Total	88.160	99			

INTERPRETATION:
P value is 0.001, which is lesser than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected . This indicates that there is statistically significant association between level of stress and stress management strategies

FINDINDS OF THE STUDY

- Most respondents were undergraduates (62%), while 38% held postgraduate qualifications.
- 48% of the employees had 0–5 years of work experience, suggesting many were early in their careers.
- 34% of respondents earned between 1–5 lakh annually, showing modest income level.

- 44% experienced physical stress due to work-related pressure.
- There is a significant association between age and level of stress.
- There is a significant association between gender and level of stress.

SUGGESTIONS OF THE STUDY

- Organisations should ensure a supportive work environment to help reduce employee stress levels.
- Proper workload distribution is necessary to avoid unmanageable pressure and burnout.
- IT companies should offer regular training and provide proper tools to help employees perform effectively.
- Salary packages should be revised based on skills, experience, and workload to improve job satisfaction.
- Steps should be taken to reduce job monotony by introducing job rotation or engaging tasks.
- Stress management programs and wellness initiatives should be regularly conducted at the workplace.
- Companies should encourage open communication to help employees share stress-related concerns.
- Conflict resolution workshops may help improve interpersonal relationships among co-workers.
- Work-life balance can be promoted through flexible work arrangements and regular break policies.
- Physical activities and mental health support should be encouraged among employees.
- Management should address the spill over of work stress into personal life by setting healthy boundaries.
- Regular employee feedback should be collected to identify and resolve stress-inducing factors.

CONCLUSION.

The IT employees studied under this project are not fully satisfied with their overall work conditions. The reasons for this dissatisfaction are linked to various factors contributing to occupational stress. Major issues include unmanageable workloads, lack of proper tools and training, poor salary satisfaction, long working hours, and insufficient support from management. The absence of stress management programs and limited work-life balance further adds to their stress levels. Most employees reported physical and mental strain, with many experiencing health issues like fatigue, headaches, and sleep disturbances. Stress was also found to impact their personal lives, with limited time for family and personal activities.

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