

# Occupational Stress among IT Professionals in Coimbatore

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## ABOUT THE STUDY

Stress is the debilitating effects caused by constant pressure both at work and home are a modern phenomenon. However, stress or atleast temporary stress, is a very necessary part of our life. One important function of short term stress is to channel our resources to deal with challenging or even life threatening situations. Stress is a common problem that affects almost all of us at same point in our lives. Stress is the body's reaction to a change that requires a physical, mental or emotional adjustment or response. Stress can come from any situation or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, nervous, or even anxious. Stress is caused by an existing stress-causing factor or stressor. Stress is defined as an organism's total response to environmental demands or pressures. When stress was first studied in the 1950s, the term was used to denote both the causes and the experienced effects of these pressures. More recently, however, the word stressor has been used for the stimulus that provokes a stress response. One recurrent disagreement among researchers concerns the definition of stress in humans. Stress in humans results from interactions between persons and their environment that are perceived as straining or exceeding their adaptive capacities and threatening their well-being. The element of perception indicates that human stress responses reflect differences in personality, as well as differences in physical strength or general health.

Stress is the way that you feel when pressure is placed on you. A little bit of pressure can be productive, give you motivation, and help you to perform better at something. However, too much pressure or prolonged pressure can lead to stress, which is unhealthy for the mind and body.

**Cary Copper, et.al (2005)** conducted a study on the "Experience of work-related stress across occupations". The aim of the study was to compare the experience of occupational stress across a large and diverse set of occupations. Three stress related variables (psychological well being, physical health and job satisfaction) are discussed and comparisons are made between 26 different occupations on each of the measures. The result obtained was that the relationship between physical and psychological stress and job satisfaction is present at an occupational level, propositions are presented that are aimed at clarifying the dynamics of burnout, including

determinants of and interrelationships among the three burnout components.

**Claire Teo and Lea Waters, (1998)**, in their study on "The role of human resource practices in reducing occupational stress and strain", indicate that human resource (HR) practices did not reduce the source of stress (role overload and responsibility) within the workplace. However, there was a direct negative relationship between HR practices and interpersonal strain. In particular, family-examination of vocational strain showed that it was negatively associated with SMIs and job training. In addition, organizational commitment mediated the relationship between HR practices and vocational strain. It was concluded that HR practices may be effective as part of a symptom – directed approach to stress intervention and that further replication of these results in both Asian and Western samples is required.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Occupational stress is a real phenomenon and it is associated with job satisfaction level of a worker in any place. Some important factors associated with their stress are over work load, working condition, role conflict, role ambiguity, relationship between managers and employees, relationship with family members, lack of experience in understanding and executing procedures, lack of sense of belonging among the employees. Other than this, the employees find lack of availability and associability in department, lack of objectivity, multiple roles, lack of office space and time. From this point of view we can find that the employees of this specific sector are facing lot of stress in their respective organizations. All these factors effect their physical, mental, social circumstances. It makes the employees ineffective and inefficient in their functional roles. This made the researcher to opt for the study "A Study on Level of Stress among IT Professional working in Coimbatore". Through this, the researcher attempted to highlight the work stress faced by the employees.

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Occupational stress is a part of the IT profession because of the increasing burnout and stress experience many problems like job dissatisfaction and lack of social support. The difficulties in the work place may lead to stressful situations for the employees may also create problems in their family and social relationship. Hence, it is important to

make a study on job stress among the IT professionals in Coimbatore.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the work stress level of the employees (individual stress) among IT Professionals and to analyse the effect of stress on job performance and personal growth..
- To assess the superiors and workers coordination to overcome the stress level prevailing in the organization.
- To study whether the personal variables influence the level of stress of the respondents.
- To offer suggestions to minimize the stress of the employees.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is the description, explanation and justification of various methods of continuing research. Research design is a logical and systematic plan prepared for directing research study. The research design used for the study is descriptive and diagnostic research design. Descriptive research design is used as it helps to describe the personal profile of the respondents like age, sex, income etc. and diagnostic research

design is adopted because the study attempts to find whether the personal profile of the respondents will make any influence on the attitude towards society, attitude towards family, economic status and the level of stress among employees of Information Technology Industry in Coimbatore. The selection of samples from the given population is called sampling. Sampling is the act, process, or technique of selecting a suitable sample, or a representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population. Stratified random sampling technique is adopted to conduct the study. In stratified random sampling, the strata are formed based on members' shared attributes or characteristics. A random sample from each stratum is taken in a number proportional to the stratum's size when compared to the population. It was decided to conduct the study among the employees working in BPO sector in Coimbatore City. The sample size was restricted to 150 employees and was selected based on stratified sampling Technique. The statistical tools used are Simple Percentage Method, Weighted Average Method and Chi-Square Test.

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

### Demographics of the Respondents

Sl. No.	Demographics	Respondents	Percentage
<b>1.</b>	<b>Age</b>		
	Below 20 years	22	18
	21 to 30 years	8	7
	31 to 40 years	63	52
	41 to 50 years	14	12
	Above 50 years	13	11

Sl. No.	Demographics	Respondents	Percentage
<b>2.</b>	<b>Sex</b>		
	Male	87	73
	Female	33	27
<b>3.</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>		
	Married	87	72
	Unmarried	33	28
<b>4.</b>	<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
	School Education	33	28
	ITI	9	8
	Diploma	16	13
	Under Graduate	16	13
	Post Graduate	42	35
	Others	4	3
<b>5.</b>	<b>Experience</b>		
	Below 5 years	38	32

	5 to 10 years	23	19
	10 to 15 years	21	18
	15 to 20 years	24	20
	Above 20 years	14	11
<b>6.</b>	<b>Earning Members</b>		
	One	48	40
	Two	40	33
	Three	14	12
	More than three	18	15
<b>7.</b>	<b>Monthly Income</b>		
	Less than Rs.8000	23	18
	Rs.8000 to 15000	51	43
	Rs.15000 to 20000	18	15
	Rs.20000 to 25000	14	12
	More than Rs.25000	14	12

**Source : Primary Data**

- It is clear that 52% of the respondents are between the age 31 and 40 years
- It is clear that majority (73%) of the respondents are male
- It is evident that majority (72%) of the respondents are married
- It is understood that most (35%) of the respondents are post graduates
- It is clear that as high as 32% of the respondents have experience below 5 years
- It is evident that less than half (40%) of the respondents have only one member in their family
- It is understood that maximum (43%) of the respondents have a monthly income between Rs.8000 and 15000 per month

**Opinion on Job as stressful**

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Agree	1	1
Agree	10	8
Neutral	29	24
Disagree	19	16
Strongly Disagree	61	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

More than half (51%) of the respondents strongly disagree that they have stress in their job, 24% of the respondents do not have any opinion, 16% of the respondents disagree that they have stress in

their job, 8% of the respondents agree and the remaining 1% of the respondents strongly agree that they have stress in their job.

**Experience stress very often**

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Agree	17	14
Neutral	5	4
Disagree	35	29
Strongly Disagree	63	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

More than half (53%) of the respondents strongly disagree that they often experience stress in their job, 29% of the respondents disagree to the same,

14% of the respondents agree and the remaining 4% of the respondents do not have any opinion towards often experiencing stress in their job.

**Occupational Stress has a negative impact on performance**

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Agree	11	9
Neutral	60	50
Disagree	15	12
Strongly Disagree	34	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

It is understood that half (50%) of the respondents had neutral opinion towards having negative impact on their performance due to stress, 29% of the respondents strongly disagree, 12% of the

respondents disagree and the remaining 9% of the respondents agree that they have stress that has a negative impact on their performance.

**Opinion on self-confidence**

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	15	12
No	105	88
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

It is understood that majority (88%) of the respondents do not have self confidence in their job

and 12% of the respondents have self confidence in their job.

**Opinion on able to adapt to changes**

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	12	10
No	108	90
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

Majority (90%) of the respondents are not capable to adapt to changes and 10% of the respondents are capable to adapt to changes.

**Opinion about aggression**

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	48	40
No	72	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

It is evident that most (60%) of the respondents do not show any aggression while working and 40% of the respondents feel aggressive while on job.

**Opinion about competitiveness**

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	46	38
No	74	62
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

It is clear that most (62%) of the respondents do not have much competitiveness when working and 38% of the respondents have competitiveness in their job.

**Able to share feelings with boss/colleagues**

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Agree	2	2
Neutral	70	58
Disagree	46	38
Strongly Disagree	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

More than half (58%) of the respondents do not have any opinion towards sharing their feeling with their boss / colleagues, 38% of the respondents disagree to the same, 2% of the respondents agree and the remaining 2% of the respondents strongly disagree that they share their feelings with their boss / colleagues.

**Shift work brings stress**

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Agree	1	1
Neutral	21	17
Disagree	93	78
Strongly Disagree	5	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

Majority (78%) of the respondents disagree that shift work brings stress in their life, 17% of the respondents opined neutral, 4% of the respondents strongly disagree and the remaining 1% of the respondent agree that shift work brings stress in their life.

**Intellectual / Technical demands of a job are the source of stress**

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Agree	3	3
Agree	2	2
Neutral	7	6
Disagree	92	77
Strongly Disagree	16	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

Majority (77%) of the respondents disagree that intellectual / technical demands of a job are the source of stress, 12% of the respondents strongly disagree, 6% of the respondents do not have any opinion, 3% of the respondents strongly agree and 2% of the respondents agree that intellectual / technical demands of the job are the source of stress.

**Work assigned is monotonous**

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Agree	3	3
Agree	8	7
Disagree	87	73
Strongly Disagree	22	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

It is evident that majority (73%) of the respondents disagree that work assigned to them are monotonous, 17% of the respondents strongly disagree, 7% of the respondents agree and the remaining 3% of the respondents strongly disagree that work assigned to them are monotonous.

**Interruption makes it difficulty to complete all work**

Opinion	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Agree	7	6
Neutral	95	79
Disagree	16	13
Strongly Disagree	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

It is clear that majority (79%) of the respondents had neutral opinion towards interruption makes it difficulty to complete all work on time, 13% of the respondents disagree, 6% of the respondents agree and the remaining 2% of the respondents strongly disagree that the interruption during work makes it difficult complete the work on time.

**WEIGHTED MEAN**  
**Best Possible Sources To Overcome Occupational Stress**

Attributes	Rank-1	Rank-2	Rank-3	Rank-4	Rank-5	Rank-6	Rank-7	Wtd. Mean	Rank
<b>Prayer</b>	25	23	29	20	9	6	8	4.88	<b>1</b>
<b>Laugh</b>	23	26	17	24	15	6	9	4.70	<b>3</b>
<b>Listening to Music</b>	5	15	19	19	25	24	13	3.60	<b>5</b>
<b>Share with Colleagues</b>	3	3	7	13	18	20	56	2.30	<b>7</b>
<b>Moving from the Places</b>	7	14	8	21	13	43	14	3.30	<b>6</b>
<b>Meditation</b>	30	18	17	9	24	11	11	4.53	<b>4</b>
<b>Exercise</b>	27	22	23	14	16	11	7	4.74	<b>2</b>

It is clear that majority weighted mean was (4.88) rated by the respondents towards prayer as the best possible sources to overcome occupational stress, 2<sup>nd</sup> rank was rated by the respondents towards exercise, 3<sup>rd</sup> position was achieved by laugh, 4<sup>th</sup> by meditation, 5<sup>th</sup> position by listening to music, 6<sup>th</sup> moving from the places and finally the 7<sup>th</sup> rank was achieved by sharing with colleagues.

**CHI-SQUARE TEST**

**Relationship between Age of the Respondents and Occupational Stress has a negative impact on performance**

Age of the Respondents	Occupational Stress has a negative impact on performance				Total
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Below 20 years	1	11	7	3	22
21 to 30 years	1	4	1	2	8
31 to 40 years	7	24	4	28	63
41 to 50 years	0	12	2	0	14
Above 50 years	2	9	1	1	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>120</b>

**Result**

**Chi-Square Value : 31.172**  
**Degree of Freedom : 12**

**Table Value** : 12.592  
**Result** : Significant

The result of the chi-square test reveals that the calculated chi-square value (31.172) is more than the table chi-square value (12.592) at 5% level of significance and therefore, the relationship between Age of the Respondents and Occupational Stress has a negative impact on performance is significant. Thus the hypothesis is that the relationship between the two factors holds good. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

#### Relationship between Sex of the Respondents and Confident of succeeding in the job

Sex of the Respondents	Confident of succeeding in the job			Total
	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Male	34	50	3	87
Female	18	12	3	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>120</b>

#### Result

**Chi-Square Value** : 4.907  
**Degree of Freedom** : 2  
**Table Value** : 5.991  
**Result** : Not Significant

The result of the chi-square test reveals that the calculated chi-square value (4.907) is less than the table chi-square value (5.991) at 5% level of significance and therefore, the relationship between Sex of the Respondents and Confident of succeeding in the job is not significant. Thus the hypothesis is that the relationship between the two factors does not hold good. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

#### Relationship between Marital Status of the Respondents and Work assigned is monotonous

Marital Status of the Respondents	Work assigned is monotonous				Total
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Married	3	5	62	17	87
Unmarried	0	3	25	5	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>120</b>

#### Result

**Chi-Square Value** : 1.857  
**Degree of Freedom** : 3  
**Table Value** : 7.815  
**Result** : Not Significant

The result of the chi-square test reveals that the calculated chi-square value (1.857) is less than the table chi-square value (7.815) at 5% level of significance and therefore, the relationship between Marital Status of the Respondents and Work assigned is monotonous is not significant. Thus the hypothesis is that the relationship between the two factors does not hold good. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

#### SUMMARY OF RESULTS

- It is clear that 52% of the respondents are between the age 31 and 40 years
- It is clear that majority (73%) of the respondents are male
- It is evident that majority (72%) of the respondents are married
- It is understood that most (35%) of the respondents are post graduates
- It is clear that as high as 32% of the respondents have experience below 5 years
- It is evident that less than half (40%) of the respondents have only one member in their family
- It is understood that maximum (43%) of the respondents have a monthly income between Rs.8000 and 15000 per month

- More than half (51%) of the respondents strongly disagree that they have stress in their job,
- More than half (53%) of the respondents strongly disagree that they often experience stress in their job,
- It is understood that half (50%) of the respondents had neutral opinion towards having negative impact on their performance due to stress, It is understood that majority (88%) of the respondents do not have self confidence in their job
- Majority (90%) of the respondents are not capable to adapt to changes
- It is evident that most (60%) of the respondents do not show any aggression while working
- It is clear that most (62%) of the respondents do not have much competitiveness when working
- It is understood that majority (74%) of the respondents have positive self image More than half (58%) of the respondents do not have any opinion towards sharing their feeling with their boss / colleagues Majority (78%) of the respondents disagree that shift work brings stress in their life
- Majority (77%) of the respondents disagree that intellectual / technical demands of a job are the source of stress
- It is evident that majority (73%) of the respondents disagree that work assigned to them are monotonous
- It is clear that majority (79%) of the respondents had neutral opinion towards interruption makes it difficulty to complete all work on time
- It is clear that majority weighted mean was (4.88) rated by the respondents towards prayer as the best possible sources to overcome occupational stress

#### VERIFICATION OF HYPOTHESIS

- The relationship between Age of the Respondents and Occupational Stress has a negative impact on performance is significant. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected.
- The relationship between Sex of the Respondents and Confident of succeeding in the job is not significant. Thus the null hypothesis is accepted.
- The relationship between Marital Status of the Respondents and Work assigned is monotonous is not significant. Thus the null hypothesis is accepted.

#### SUGGESTIONS

- Give importance to stress management for workers to suit their level.
- Use some relaxation method like Yoga, recreational facilities, etc. as they may enhance their psychological and physical health.
- Try to provide break between continuous hours of work for relaxation of employees.
- New methods like action model may be used to reduce stress.
- Training should be given to the workers of the organization to develop their interpersonal skills and emotional stability.
- Encourage the managers and supervisors to maintain and improve their psychological health and to counsel the workers to improve and maintain their health as well.
- To solve the problems, superiors may have cordial and frequent interaction with their subordinates.

#### CONCLUSION

Personality of employees and their level of stress is the main factor. Management/ HR department may pay due attention to improve the quality of work life in the organization by changing the procedures or approach towards them. Attitude differs from individual to individual and it has an impact on one's perception. The researcher hopes suggestions brought forward may be implemented by the IT Sector to improve the quality of work to overcome the stress among employees. The overtime and work load also affects their occupation and overall create high stress in this profession while compared with other manufacturing / production based industries. In case of job stress, minority respondents were more subjected to occupational stress. There are so many factors influencing the employees of visual business tool. One of the important things is that the earning from this profession is enough for maintaining their daily routine, however, the work is found to be routine, monotonous and boredom. The outcome of the study has also highlighted the fact that all the workers in all categories, both the male and female had equal job satisfaction as well as job stress that is the gender discrimination never influences the stress level of the employees. Hence, the study concludes that the relaxation techniques suggested for the IT industries will definitely help the employees to overcome their occupational stress.

#### REFERENCES

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