



STUDY ON WORK CONDITIONS AND OCCUPATIONAL PRESSURES AMONG IT SECTOR EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

The present study examines work conditions and occupational pressures among Information Technology (IT) sector employees in Kerala, with a focus on understanding workplace stressors and their implications for employee well-being. A descriptive research design was employed, and primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire from a sample of 380 IT employees selected using convenience sampling, comprising 205 females and 175 males. The study identified key workplace stressors such as excessive workload, frequent work beyond official hours, tight deadlines, pressure to achieve unrealistic targets, job insecurity, and communication gaps within organizations. Findings revealed that a majority of employees experience high work demands and extended working hours, contributing to occupational stress, although a considerable proportion reported receiving adequate organizational support and maintaining a moderately positive perception of the work environment. The study concludes that despite supportive organizational practices, IT employees continue to face significant psychological and occupational pressures, highlighting the need for improved work-life balance strategies and stress management interventions.

KEYWORDS: IT sector employees, occupational stress, work-life balance, workload pressure, organizational support

INTRODUCTION

The IT sector has played a vital role in promoting economic development, enhancing global connectivity, strengthening digital infrastructure and generating large-scale employment opportunities. In India, especially in regions such as Kerala, the rapid growth of the IT industry has reshaped the career aspirations and professional culture of the younger population. At the same time, these technologically driven work environments have increasingly subjected employees to continuous occupational stress, emotional strain, mental overload and psychological burnout. Contemporary work culture in the IT industry is increasingly marked by extended screen time, multitasking demands, sustained cognitive involvement, rapid handling of information, strict deadlines, organizational expectations, and the need for continuous adaptation to evolving technologies. IT employees frequently remain mentally engaged with work even beyond official working hours through smartphones, virtual meetings, emails, and other digital communication platforms. This persistent occupational involvement often limits adequate emotional relaxation and physical recovery. As a result, many professionals gradually experience psychological problems such as anxiety, mental fatigue, emotional exhaustion, sleep-related difficulties, irritability, social withdrawal and occupational burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

Occupational stress among IT professionals has emerged as an important issue in the fields of psychology, occupational health, and organizational studies. Traditional occupational systems were largely based on physical activity and interaction with the natural environment, whereas contemporary technology-oriented professions mainly involve sustained cognitive demands, sedentary work patterns, and repetitive sensory exposure. Human beings historically evolved in environments characterized by physical movement, social collaboration, environmental variation, and active sensory engagement. In contrast, modern occupational lifestyles often minimize these experiences because of prolonged indoor working conditions, continuous technological involvement, and reduced bodily activity. According to evolutionary psychology, this imbalance between human evolutionary adaptations and present-day lifestyles may increase the risk of psychological imbalance and emotional distress (Nesse & Williams, 1995).



The changing nature of occupational culture in the modern era has considerably affected the psychological well-being of employees working across various professional domains. Advancements in technology, globalization, digital communication networks, and rising organizational competition have transformed not only workplace structures but also the ways individuals experience stress, social relationships, emotional regulation, and everyday life. Among present-day occupational settings, the Information Technology (IT) sector is recognized as one of the most intellectually demanding and technologically intensive work environments. While the industry has contributed significantly to economic development and career opportunities, it has also exposed employees to sustained mental involvement, continuous performance demands, and emotionally challenging work patterns.

Employees are often expected to remain accessible even after official working hours through emails, online meetings, messaging applications, and organizational communication platforms. These work patterns may limit opportunities for emotional restoration and contribute to increased psychological exhaustion. As a result, occupational stress has become increasingly prevalent among IT professionals. In modern technology-based workplaces, stress may emerge from various factors such as excessive workload, tight deadlines, unclear job roles, continuous technological changes, organizational expectations, job insecurity, and imbalance between work and personal life. Many employees remain under constant anticipatory pressure related to performance assessment and productivity requirements. Unlike temporary adaptive stress reactions, occupational stress in contemporary work environments often becomes chronic and prolonged, leading to emotional exhaustion and deterioration in mental well-being.

Research in occupational psychology indicates that long-term workplace stress can substantially influence emotional functioning, cognitive efficiency, and physiological regulation. Employees working in highly demanding technological settings often report problems such as anxiety, irritability, mental fatigue, sleep disturbances, reduced concentration, emotional exhaustion, and burnout. Burnout is especially relevant in the IT sector because employees are frequently required to maintain continuous cognitive engagement with limited opportunities for physical activity or emotional recovery. Emotional exhaustion, which is considered a major component of burnout, may progressively decrease motivation, social involvement, and psychological resilience.

Another significant concern related to contemporary work culture is the imbalance between professional and personal life. The growth of digital technology has gradually weakened the distinction between work and personal spaces. Employees frequently remain mentally occupied with job-related responsibilities even beyond official working hours. This ongoing cognitive involvement may disrupt emotional recovery and reduce meaningful family and social interaction. Many professionals find it difficult to psychologically disconnect from work because modern technological systems enable continuous accessibility and communication. Over a period of time, such patterns may lead to chronic mental exhaustion and emotional imbalance.

Sleep-related problems have also emerged as a significant issue among IT professionals. Extended screen exposure, irregular work schedules, and continuous cognitive stimulation may disturb circadian rhythms and negatively influence sleep quality. Sleep is essential for emotional regulation, autonomic restoration, attentional performance, and psychological resilience. Consequently, insufficient or poor-quality sleep may increase vulnerability to stress, irritability, anxiety, and mental fatigue. Many employees working in technologically demanding occupational environments often experience difficulty achieving mental relaxation even during designated periods of rest.

Contemporary occupational lifestyles may also limit opportunities for meaningful interpersonal relationships and social interaction. Although technological systems have enhanced the speed and efficiency of communication, much of workplace interaction has become task-focused and digitally mediated. However, human emotional regulation largely depends upon interpersonal connection, emotional attunement, and a sense of social belonging. Consequently, many individuals working in highly digital work environments may experience emotional loneliness despite being continuously connected through online platforms. This form of emotional disconnection may contribute to psychological distress and diminished psychological well-being.

The sedentary characteristics of modern technology-driven work environments also have a significant impact on mental health. Human beings originally evolved in conditions that involved regular movement and active interaction with their surroundings. In contrast, many IT professionals spend long hours seated in front of digital screens with minimal physical activity. Such reduced movement may lead not only to physical discomfort but also to emotional



fatigue and attentional depletion. Physical activity plays a crucial role in autonomic nervous system regulation, emotional stability, and stress management.

Environmental conditions within technology-oriented workplaces may also influence emotional well-being. Repetitive indoor environments characterized by artificial lighting, technological sounds, and limited sensory diversity can contribute to attentional fatigue and emotional exhaustion. Research in environmental psychology indicates that exposure to natural surroundings and varied sensory experiences may promote emotional restoration and recovery from stress. However, many contemporary occupational routines offer very limited opportunities for interaction with restorative natural environments.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Robert Karasek's Job Demand-Control Model (1979) proposed that occupational stress becomes especially severe when employees face high work demands along with limited decision-making authority. Individuals working in highly demanding environments with little control over their work processes are therefore more likely to experience emotional exhaustion and psychological fatigue. This model continues to hold strong relevance in modern technology-based workplaces, where employees often encounter constant pressure to sustain productivity while adjusting to rapidly evolving systems and organizational expectations.

Srinivasan & Kumar (2014) examined stress management practices among software employees in Chennai. Their study revealed that most organizational wellness programmes mainly emphasized productivity improvement rather than emotional regulation or psychological restoration. The findings also indicated that employees felt the need for interventions that encourage relaxation, emotional well-being and stress reduction beyond traditional workplace counselling methods.

Kulkarni (2016) conducted a study on occupational stress among female IT employees in Pune. The results showed that multitasking responsibilities, role conflict, organizational demands and the challenge of balancing professional and family duties significantly increased emotional stress. The study further emphasized the role of social support and emotional coping strategies in minimizing occupational strain.

Sharma & Devi (2017) carried out a study among software professionals in Hyderabad to investigate the effect of work-life imbalance on emotional well-being. The study found that constant digital connectivity and long working hours limited opportunities for family interaction, leisure activities and emotional recovery. Employees with poor work-life balance were reported to experience higher levels of stress, sleep disturbances and emotional irritability.

Varghese & Pillai (2017) investigated the effect of nature exposure and recreational activities on stress reduction among urban professionals in Kerala. Although research on environmental and lifestyle factors related to occupational mental health is relatively limited in the Indian context, their study indicated that interaction with natural environments and participation in outdoor activities had a positive impact on emotional relaxation and psychological well-being.

Menon (2018) carried out a mindfulness-based stress reduction study among corporate employees and found notable improvements in emotional regulation, attentional functioning and stress resilience after the intervention. The participants showed lower emotional reactivity and enhanced psychological well-being through consistent mindfulness practice. Research focusing on mindfulness and stress reduction in Indian occupational settings has therefore received growing attention in recent years.

Nair & Babu (2018) examined burnout among IT employees in Kerala. Their findings showed that emotional exhaustion and mental fatigue were widely experienced by employees working in technology-driven occupational settings. The researchers observed that prolonged cognitive involvement and constant organizational pressure played a major role in increasing burnout symptoms and psychological stress.

Thomas & Joseph (2019) conducted a study among IT professionals in Kochi to examine the association between workplace stress and sleep quality. The findings indicated that extended screen exposure, irregular work schedules, and excessive cognitive stimulation adversely affected sleep patterns and emotional functioning. Employees with poor sleep quality were also found to experience higher anxiety, emotional irritability, and decreased attentional stability.



George and Mathew (2020) investigated emotional exhaustion and interpersonal functioning among IT employees in Kerala. The study found that technology-mediated communication limited opportunities for meaningful social interaction and emotional support in the workplace. Employees who experienced emotional loneliness were also found to report higher levels of stress and psychological fatigue.

Abraham (2021) examined the psychosocial impact of remote work among IT professionals during the post-pandemic period. The study revealed that remote working conditions contributed to greater social isolation, unclear work-life boundaries, and extended digital engagement. Employees commonly experienced emotional exhaustion, lower motivation, attentional overload, and reduced interpersonal connectedness.

Chen et al. (2022) reported that the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, as a major emergency event, significantly affected employees' psychological well-being and negatively influenced their work performance. The study focused on understanding the relationship between work stress, mental health, and employee performance, while also exploring strategies to reduce the adverse effects of occupational stress.

Pangarkar et al. (2023) examined the complex relationship between job stress and mental health among individuals working in high-stress occupations. Recognizing that workplace demands have a significant influence on employees' health and well-being, the study adopted a comprehensive approach to understand how occupational pressures affect mental health over time.

Karakitsiou et al. (2025) highlighted that remote work is continuously reshaping organizational structures as well as employees' work experiences, creating conditions that may either support or negatively affect mental health and overall well-being. These changing work environments influence stress levels, resilience, and burnout within increasingly digital and flexible occupational settings.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To study work conditions and work Pressures on IT Sector Employees.

Research Design

In the present study descriptive research designs were employed to effectively achieve the research objectives.

Sampling Design & Sample Size

In the present study, convenience sampling was employed to collect data from employees working in IT sector in Kerala. The total sample size comprised 380 respondents. Out of the total sample, 205 respondents are female and 175 are male candidate.

Methods of Data Collection

Primary Data: In the present study, primary data were collected from employees working in the IT sector in Kerala using a structured questionnaire.

Analysis related to study work conditions and work pressures on IT sector employees

Table 1: Response related to study work conditions and work pressures on IT sector employees

S. No.	Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Your workload is excessive.	67 (17.63%)	164 (43.16%)	51 (13.42%)	67 (17.63%)	31 (8.16%)
2	You are required to work beyond official hours frequently.	113 (29.74%)	185 (48.68%)	11 (2.9%)	51 (13.42%)	20 (5.26%)
3	Tight deadlines increase your stress level.	57 (15%)	171 (45%)	38 (10%)	76 (20%)	38 (10%)
4	Your workplace environment is comfortable and healthy.	32 (8.42%)	143 (37.63%)	79 (20.79%)	79 (20.79%)	47 (12.37%)



5	Your experience pressure to achieve unrealistic targets.	62 (16.32%)	206 (54.21%)	48 (12.63%)	32 (8.42%)	32 (8.42%)
6	You feel job insecurity in your organization.	30 (7.89%)	117 (30.79%)	97 (25.53%)	92 (24.21%)	44 (11.58%)
7	Communication between employees and management is effective.	49 (12.9%)	116 (30.52%)	99 (26.05%)	83 (21.84%)	33 (8.69%)
8	You receive adequate support from your organization.	50 (13.16%)	148 (38.95%)	83 (21.84%)	66 (17.36%)	33 (8.69%)

FINDINGS

1. Excessive Workload: A majority of respondents i.e. 60.79% agreed that their workload is excessive, indicating that heavy work demands are a significant source of pressure in the IT sector. Only 25.79% disagreed with this statement, while 13.42% remained neutral.

2. Frequent Work beyond Official Hours: A substantial 78.42% of employees reported that they are frequently required to work beyond official working hours, highlighting overtime work as one of the most prominent workplace pressures. Only 18.68% disagreed with this view.

3. Stress Due to Tight Deadlines: About 60.00% of respondents acknowledged that tight deadlines increase their stress levels, reflecting the demanding and time-sensitive nature of IT projects. In contrast, 30.00% did not perceive deadlines as a major stress factor.

4. Comfortable and Healthy Work Environment: Nearly 46.05% of employees felt that their workplace environment is comfortable and healthy, while 33.16% expressed dissatisfaction with workplace conditions. Additionally, 20.79% remained neutral on this aspect.

5. Pressure to Achieve Unrealistic Targets: A significant 70.53% of respondents indicated that they experience pressure to achieve unrealistic targets, suggesting that performance expectations constitute a major occupational stressor in the IT industry. Only 16.84% disagreed with this perception.

6. Job Insecurity: Around 38.68% of employees reported experiencing job insecurity, while 35.79% felt secure in their jobs. Furthermore, 25.53% remained neutral, indicating uncertainty regarding employment stability among a considerable proportion of employees.

7. Effectiveness of Communication with Management: Approximately 43.42% of respondents believed that communication between employees and management is effective, whereas 30.53% perceived communication gaps within their organizations. A further 26.05% remained neutral.

8. Adequate Organizational Support: More than half of the respondents i.e. 52.11% agreed that they receive adequate support from their organizations in terms of guidance, resources, and assistance. However, 26.05% felt that organizational support was insufficient, while 21.84% expressed a neutral opinion.

CONCLUSION

A large proportion of respondents reported working beyond official hours and facing high expectations, indicating that work-related stress is a significant concern in the IT sector. Although nearly half of the employees perceived their work environment as comfortable and healthy, a notable percentage expressed dissatisfaction with workplace conditions. The study also highlights mixed perceptions regarding job security and organizational communication, suggesting the presence of uncertainty and communication gaps within some organizations. On a positive note, more than half of the respondents acknowledged receiving adequate organizational support, which may help mitigate workplace stress. The findings suggest that while IT organizations provide a reasonably supportive work environment, substantial challenges related to workload, time pressure and performance demands continue to affect employees' work experiences and well-being.

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