

# THE IMPACT OF STRESS ON WOMEN IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) INDUSTRY: A STUDY ON EFFECTIVE COPING STRATEGIES

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## ABSTRACT

*In today's work environment, stress has become a widespread problem, especially in the demanding IT sector. Female employees in this industry experience unique stressors due to gender-related issues like work-life balance and workplace discrimination. To achieve this, a quantitative data collection method will be employed, and the study will focus on women in the IT sector in a major metropolitan area who have reported experiencing high levels of stress. The data will be collected using questionnaires, which will gather information on the types of stress they encounter, coping mechanisms used, and the efficacy of different stress management techniques.*

*The study will provide valuable insights into the specific stressors faced by women employees in the IT sector and the effectiveness of different stress management techniques. The results will be analyzed to identify common themes and patterns, which will be used to develop recommendations for workplace interventions and policies aimed at reducing stress among women employees in the IT sector. The findings of this study will contribute to the growing body of research on workplace stress and provide practical guidance for employers seeking to support the mental health and wellbeing of their female employees.*

**Keywords:** *Stress, IT sector, Coping strategies, Work-life balance.*

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## INTRODUCTION

### WHAT IS STRESS?

**S** stands for sorrow.

**T** stands for tension.

**R** stands for rivalry.

**E** stands for emotional outburst.

**S** stands for success phobia.

**S** stands for exit suspense.

Stress is a pervasive and significant problem in the modern workplace, and the information technology (IT) sector is no exception. Despite the increasing awareness of workplace stress, there is limited research focused specifically on women employees in the IT sector.

Stress is a prevalent issue in the modern workplace, and it can have a significant impact on an employee's mental and physical health. The information technology (IT) sector is known for its fast-paced and demanding work environment, with high expectations for productivity, long hours, and a culture of constant connectivity.

It's completely normal to experience stress. Whether it's related to work, family, decisions, or your future, stress can be both physical and mental. Major life events like illness, the death of a loved one, a change in responsibilities or expectations at work, and job promotions or loss can all contribute to stress. However, even smaller daily events can also be stressful, although they may not be as apparent to us. Over time, the cumulative impact of these small stressors can add up and have a big impact.

In response to these stresses, your body automatically increases blood pressure, heart rate, respiration, metabolism, and blood flow to your muscles. This is meant to help your body react quickly and effectively to high-pressure situations. It's worth noting that stress can also be positive. You need a certain amount of stress to perform at your best at work. The key to managing stress is to determine the right amount that will give you energy, ambition, and enthusiasm, as opposed to the wrong amount that can harm your health and well-being.

## IMPORTANT STRESSORS

Stressor – A stressor is any event or stimulus that causes an individual to experience stress.

### For example

- 1) Internal stressor originates inside the body such as fever, pregnancy, menopause, emotion etc...
- 2) External stressors originates outside the individual for example physical stressors, biological stressors, social stressors etc.

While each person is different and has different events and issues that cause stress, there are some issues that almost universally affect people. These are the stressors you most want to understand and take measures to prevent.

- Feeling out of control
- Feeling direction-less
- Failing to keep commitments
- More commitments than time
- Change, especially changes you didn't initiate or institute

Stress can cause physical, emotional and behavioral problems, which can affect your health, energy, well-being, mental alertness and personal and professional relationships. It can also cause defensiveness, lack of motivation, difficulty concentrating, accidents, reduced productivity and interpersonal conflict. Too much stress can cause minor problems such as sleep-loss, irritability, backaches or headaches and can also contribute to potentially life-threatening diseases such as high blood pressure and heart disease. During stressful times or situations, people often blame themselves for being weak or for their inability "to handle it". Often managers in organizations and they expect an immediate return to total productivity after a stressful event.

### In the case of stress levels:

**TOO LITTLE:** Too little stress is not good. This might mean that you are not really getting involved with life, avoiding all pressure (called under-stress).

**TOO MUCH:** Too much stress is not good. It will stop you performing well and might make you ill (called over-stress).

**JUST RIGHT:** Some stress can be good. Sometimes we need a little bit of pressure to motivate us to do things that we have been avoiding, or to increase our performance (called healthy stress).

## COPING STRATEGY

A coping strategy (coping mechanism) is a natural or learned way of responding to a changing environment or specific problem or situation.

- 1) Identify the possible cause of stress
- 2) Develop good rapport with others
- 3) Do one thing at a time
- 4) Balance the life activities with work and play, family and friends and time for herself.
- 5) Exercise body every day or at least four times a week (sports, yoga, dancing or walking)
- 6) Meditate to promote relaxation
- 7) Relax body regularly through a systematic method of tensing and relaxing all muscles
- 8) Understand and accept what you can and what you cannot do or be.
- 9) Assume a more positive attitude toward irritating and frustrating situations or events
- 10) Determine to enjoy selected stressors as a challenge
- 11) Accept loved support from others, their encouragement and suggestion, be willing to receive help
- 12) Organize life with priorities so that you will accomplish what must be done at the right time
- 13) Develop healthy social relationship
- 14) Practice coping statement

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Paul, J., & Arora, M. (2019).** A study on stress management techniques among women employees in IT industry. *International Journal of Research in Management, Economics and Commerce*, 9(2), 105-109.

The study found that IT women employees faced stress due to job insecurity, long working hours, and a lack of work-life balance. The study recommended stress management techniques such as relaxation techniques, time management, and goal setting.

**According to Bhattacharyya and Mukhopadhyay (2018)** – This study provides an overview of Occupational stress and coping strategies among female IT professionals in India. The authors found that women in the IT sector are susceptible to stress due to factors such as Long working hours, Work overload, Time management and coping strategies also included in the study to suggest some more relaxation techniques.

**Srivastava, S., & Singh, A. (2018).** A study on work-life balance and stress management among women employees in IT sector. *International Journal of Advance Research and Innovative Ideas in Education*, 4(2), 35-39.

In a study conducted by srivastava and singh, it was found that female employees in the IT sector faced challenges in maintaining work – life balance due to factors such as extended working hours, excessive workload and insufficient support from their family members. The study also identifies several strategies that these women employees used to manage their stress levels, including effective time management, delegation of tasks and setting priorities.

**S. C. Rastogi and V. Rastogi (2017)** – Work Stress and Job Satisfaction among IT Professionals in Bangalore: A Study – This study examined the relationship between work stress and job satisfaction among IT professionals in Bangalore. The study found that high levels of work stress negatively impacted job satisfaction among IT professionals.

**Jain, A., & Bansal, D. (2017).** A study of occupational stress and coping strategies among women employees in IT industry. *Journal of Management Research*, 17(2), 59-69.

According to Jain and Bansal, the IT industry's female employees faced considerable occupational stress due to factors such as excessive work pressure, ambiguous job roles and inadequate supervisor support. The study also identified various coping strategies that these women employees used, including problem – focused coping, emotion – focused coping and seeking social support.

**Anusha, R., & Gurunathan, D. (2016).** A study on stress management among women employees in IT sector. *International Journal of Management and Applied Science*, 2(7), 35-38.

According to Anusha and Gurunathan's research, women working in the IT sector experience significant stress levels caused by heavy workloads, work – related pressure, and long working hours. The study suggests that IT companies should implement stress management programs and flexible working arrangements as a solution to reducing stress among female employees.

**Sangeetha, N., & Ramachandran, S. (2016).** A study on occupational stress and coping mechanisms among women employees in IT industry. *International Journal of Scientific Research*, 5(4), 86-89.

This study found that IT women employees faced occupational stress due to a lack of work-life balance, interpersonal conflicts, and job insecurity. Coping mechanisms identified included social support, physical exercise, and relaxation techniques.

**N. Gupta and R. Mittal (2015)** – Stress and Coping among Information Technology Professionals in Bangalore – This study examined the levels of stress and coping strategies among IT professionals in Bangalore. The study found that IT professionals used a range of coping strategies to deal with work stress, including physical exercise, relaxation techniques, and social support.

A study by **Jamal (2010)** found that job stress has a significant negative impact on job satisfaction, which in turn affects employee performance. The study also found that women employees in the IT sector experience higher levels of job stress than their male counterparts.

A study by **Herring (2009)** examined the impact of gender on work experiences in the IT sector. The study found that women face challenges related to workplace culture, work-life balance, and discrimination. Women also reported less access to mentoring and networking opportunities, which can limit their career advancement.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the reasons behind stress among women employees in IT industry.
2. To determine the factors that contributes to the levels of stress experienced by women employees working in IT industry.
3. To recommend ways of managing stress at different levels.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study is descriptive in nature and intended to find causes of stress and coping strategy of the respondent's.

### Population and Sample size

The population comprises of women employees. The total sample size for the study is 132.

### Sampling Technique

Purposive and Snowball sampling technique has been used for this study.

**Data collection**

The structured questionnaire method was used to collect primary data and secondary data has been collected from various sources as search engines, magazines, journals etc.

**PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS****TABLE NAME:** Demographic profile of the respondents

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Demographic profile of the respondents</b>	<b>No. of. Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1.	<b>Age</b>		
	Below 25	98	74.24
	25-35	34	25.75
	35-45		
	Above 45		
2.	<b>Qualification</b>		
	Diploma		
	UG	75	56.81
	PG	51	38.63
	Others	06	4.54
3.	<b>Marital status</b>		
	Married	17	12.87
	Unmarried	115	87.12
4.	<b>Experience</b>		
	Above 20 years		
	11-15 years	09	6.81
	16-20 years		
	06-10 years	11	8.33
Less than 5 years	112	84.84	



### Chi-square Test

1) Null hypothesis (H0): There is no association between experience and very long working hours.

Alternative hypothesis (H1): There is an association between experience and very long working hours.

### EXPERIENCE \* VERY LONG WORKING HOURS Crosstabulation

			VERY LONG WORKING HOURS					Total
			Always	Often	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	
EXPERIENCE	11 - 15 years	Count	0	0	0	4	0	4
		Expected Count	.8	1.0	.7	1.0	.5	4.0
	06 - 10 years	Count	0	0	1	1	4	6
		Expected Count	1.3	1.5	1.0	1.5	.7	6.0
	less than 5 years	Count	28	34	21	27	12	122
		Expected Count	25.9	31.4	20.3	29.6	14.8	122.0
Total	Count	28	34	22	32	16	132	
	Expected Count	28.0	34.0	22.0	32.0	16.0	132.0	

### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	31.344 <sup>a</sup>	8	<.001
Likelihood Ratio	25.415	8	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.425	1	.004
N of Valid Cases	132		

a. 10 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .48.

Interpretation: It is inferred that calculated value 31.344 is greater than the table value 15.507. Hence H1 is accepted.

Inference: There is an association between experience and very long working hours.

- 2) Null hypothesis(H<sub>0</sub>): There is no association between age and very long working hours.

Alternative hypothesis(H<sub>1</sub>): There is an association between age and very long working hours.

### AGE \* VERY LONG WORKING HOURS Crosstabulation

			VERY LONG WORKING HOURS					Total
			Always	Often	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	
AGE	Below 25	Count	24	26	19	27	12	108
		Expected Count	22.9	27.8	18.0	26.2	13.1	108.0
	25 - 35	Count	4	8	3	5	4	24
		Expected Count	5.1	6.2	4.0	5.8	2.9	24.0
Total		Count	28	34	22	32	16	132
		Expected Count	28.0	34.0	22.0	32.0	16.0	132.0

### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.885 <sup>a</sup>	4	.757
Likelihood Ratio	1.848	4	.764
Linear-by-Linear Association	.084	1	.772
N of Valid Cases	132		

a. 2 cells (20.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.91.

**Interpretation:** It is inferred that calculated value is 1.885 is less than the table value is 9.488. Hence H<sub>0</sub> is accepted.

**Inference:** There is no association between age and very long working hours.

- 3) Null hypothesis(H<sub>0</sub>): There is no association between experience and lack of self-confidence.

Alternative hypothesis(H<sub>1</sub>): There is an association between experience and lack of self-confidence.

**EXPERIENCE \* LACK OF SELF CONFIDENCE Crosstabulation**

			LACK OF SELF CONFIDENCE					Total
			Always	Often	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	
EXPERIENCE	11 - 15 years	Count	0	0	0	4	0	4
		Expected Count	.5	.5	.4	1.2	1.5	4.0
	06 - 10 years	Count	0	0	0	5	1	6
		Expected Count	.7	.7	.6	1.7	2.2	6.0
	less than 5 years	Count	16	16	14	29	47	122
		Expected Count	14.8	14.8	12.9	35.1	44.4	122.0
Total	Count	16	16	14	38	48	132	
	Expected Count	16.0	16.0	14.0	38.0	48.0	132.0	

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20.336 <sup>a</sup>	8	.009
Likelihood Ratio	20.597	8	.008
Linear-by-Linear Association	.690	1	.406
N of Valid Cases	132		

a. 10 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .42.

**Interpretation:** It is inferred that the calculated value is 20.336 is greater than the table value 15.507. Hence H1 is accepted.

**Inference:** There is an association between experience and lack of self-confidence.

- 4) Null hypothesis(H0): There is no association between education and more work load.



Alternative hypothesis(H1): There is an association between education and more work load.

### EDUCATION \* MORE WORK LOAD Crosstabulation

			MORE WORK LOAD					Total
			Always	Often	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	
EDUCATION	UG	Count	24	21	19	4	12	80
		Expected Count	20.6	18.8	16.4	9.7	14.5	80.0
	PG	Count	10	10	8	8	12	48
		Expected Count	12.4	11.3	9.8	5.8	8.7	48.0
	OTHERS	Count	0	0	0	4	0	4
		Expected Count	1.0	.9	.8	.5	.7	4.0
Total	Count	34	31	27	16	24	132	
	Expected Count	34.0	31.0	27.0	16.0	24.0	132.0	

### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	37.014 <sup>a</sup>	8	<.001
Likelihood Ratio	25.672	8	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.452	1	.006
N of Valid Cases	132		

a. 5 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .48.

Interpretation: It is inferred that calculated value 37.014 is greater than the table value 15.507. Hence H1 is accepted.

Inference: There is an association between education and more work load.

## FINDINGS FROM THE HYPOTHESIS

Chi-square test

- 1) There is an association between experience and very long working hours.
- 2) There is no association between age and very long working hours.
- 3) There is an association between experience and lack of self-confidence.
- 4) There is an association between education and more work load.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study of stress management with reference to women employees in the IT sector has revealed that workplace stress is a significant issue affecting the mental and physical health of women employees in this sector. The study has also identified coping strategies used by women employees in the IT sector to manage their stress levels, including exercise, mindfulness meditation, time management, social support, and taking regular breaks. Furthermore, the study has highlighted the importance of workplace support mechanisms, such as flexible working hours, access to counseling and mental health services, ergonomic workstations, and training on stress management techniques, in promoting a healthy and productive work environment.

The findings of the study have practical implications for employers seeking to support the mental health and well-being of their female employees in the IT sector. By implementing effective stress management policies and programs, employers can reduce workplace stress and create a healthier work environment. This, in turn, can lead to improved productivity, job satisfaction, and employee retention. The study's findings can inform the development of workplace interventions and policies aimed at reducing stress and promoting a healthier work environment for women employees in the IT sector.

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