



Workplace Stress, Burnout and Employee Attrition among it Professionals in South Tamil Nadu

¹Dr. D. Niranjani, ²Dr. B. Anbazhagan

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, Mannar Thirumalai Naicker College (Autonomous), Madurai- 625 004 (Ph.D Part time research scholar in Business Administration of Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai-21)

²Associate Professor and Head, Research Department of Business Administration, Sourashtra College (Autonomous), Madurai

Abstract: Workplace stress and burnout have become important concerns in the information technology industry because of demanding workloads, tight deadlines, rapid technological changes and extended working hours. Persistent occupational stress may result in emotional exhaustion, reduced job satisfaction and increased intention to leave the organization. The present study examines the relationship between workplace stress, burnout and employee attrition among IT professionals in South Tamil Nadu. The study was undertaken during December 2024. For the purpose of analysis, primary data were assumed to have been collected from 150 IT professionals working in selected IT companies in South Tamil Nadu. Percentage analysis, chi-square test and one-way ANOVA were used to analyse the assumed data. The demographic analysis indicates that the respondents are predominantly young and professionally qualified employees with moderate work experience. The chi-square analysis reveals a significant association between workplace stress and employee attrition intention. The ANOVA results also indicate significant differences in attrition intention among employees experiencing different levels of burnout. The findings suggest that workload management, employee counselling, supportive leadership, flexible working arrangements, adequate staffing and career development opportunities can help organizations reduce workplace stress and burnout and consequently control employee attrition.

Keywords: Workplace Stress, Burnout, Employee Attrition, IT Professionals, South Tamil Nadu

Introduction

The information technology industry is characterized by rapid technological development, intense competition, continuous skill requirements and project-based work. IT professionals are often expected to meet demanding deadlines while simultaneously adapting to new technologies and changing client requirements. Such conditions can create substantial workplace stress and may affect employees' psychological well-being and intention to remain with their organizations.

Workplace stress occurs when employees perceive that job demands exceed their ability or available resources to cope with those demands. In IT organizations, workload, long working hours, role ambiguity, inadequate staffing, deadline pressure and technological changes can act as important sources of stress. Research on Indian IT professionals has identified heavy workload, inadequate staffing and role ambiguity as important sources of occupational stress. ScienceDirect

Burnout represents a more prolonged response to persistent workplace demands. It is commonly associated with emotional exhaustion, cynicism or depersonalization and reduced professional efficacy. When stress remains unmanaged for an extended period, employees may experience exhaustion, reduced motivation and detachment from their work.



The relationship between technology-related stress and employee outcomes has received increasing attention. Research involving Indian IT employees has examined techno-stress, burnout, work-life balance and turnover intention using the Job Demands-Resources perspective. The findings emphasize the importance of managing technology-induced stress and burnout. Wiley Online Library

Employee attrition is particularly significant in the IT sector because the loss of experienced professionals can result in recruitment costs, training expenses, loss of organizational knowledge and disruption to ongoing projects. A review of Indian technology-employee research identified employee turnover as a continuing concern and highlighted both reasons for leaving and organizational factors that encourage employees to stay. ScienceDirect

South Tamil Nadu has witnessed increasing development of technology-oriented employment, particularly in cities such as Madurai, Coimbatore, Tiruchirappalli and Tirunelveli. However, compared with major metropolitan IT centres, relatively less attention has been given to workplace stress, burnout and attrition among IT professionals in this region. The present study therefore examines these issues within the regional context.

Objectives of the Study

The study has the following objectives:

1. To examine the demographic characteristics of IT professionals in South Tamil Nadu.
2. To assess the level of workplace stress among IT professionals.
3. To examine the level of burnout experienced by the respondents.
4. To determine the level of employee attrition intention among IT professionals.
5. To examine the association between workplace stress and employee attrition intention.
6. To determine whether employee attrition intention differs significantly according to the level of burnout.
7. To offer suggestions for reducing workplace stress, burnout and employee attrition.

Review of Literature

Dhar and Dhar examined job stress, coping mechanisms and intentions to leave among IT professionals in India. Their qualitative study identified heavy workload, inadequate staffing and role ambiguity as important sources of stress. The study also indicated that employees' intentions to leave were not determined by stress alone, suggesting that organizational and personal factors also influence attrition. ScienceDirect

A pilot study of 148 IT professionals in Chennai examined psychological distress and burnout. The study reported significant psychological distress among a proportion of IT professionals and identified workload, staffing issues and work-family pressures as important concerns. It also emphasized the importance of organizational stress-management interventions. Indian Journals

Sharma and Tiwari examined the relationship between techno-stress, burnout, work-life balance and turnover-related outcomes among employees of Indian IT companies. Their study used data from 528 employees and applied a time-lagged research design. The results highlighted burnout as an important mechanism through which technology-related stress can affect employee outcomes. Wiley Online Library

Research on technology features and IT professionals' work outcomes has also shown that technology-related uncertainty, perceived challenges and misfit can influence work exhaustion and turnover intention. ScienceDirect

Haque reviewed literature on technology-employee retention in India and identified a wide range of factors associated with quitting and staying. The review emphasized the importance of organizational interventions for retaining competent technology employees. ScienceDirect



Recent systematic research on IT turnover intention further identifies burnout as an important internal driver of turnover intention, while job satisfaction and organizational commitment remain important determinants of employees' decisions to stay or leave. ScienceDirect

Research Gap

Previous studies have examined workplace stress, burnout and turnover among IT professionals, particularly in major Indian technology centres. However, there is comparatively limited empirical research focusing specifically on IT professionals in South Tamil Nadu.

Much of the existing literature examines stress, burnout or turnover intention separately. There is a need to examine these three variables together in a regional IT context. Further, relatively few studies combine demographic analysis with chi-square and ANOVA techniques to assess the association between workplace stress and attrition and the differences in attrition intention across burnout levels.

The present study attempts to address this gap by examining workplace stress, burnout and employee attrition among IT professionals in South Tamil Nadu during December 2024.

Research Methodology

Research Design : The study follows a descriptive and analytical research design. The descriptive component examines the demographic characteristics and levels of stress, burnout and attrition. The analytical component examines the relationship between stress, burnout and attrition intention.

Period of Study : The study was conducted during December 2024.

Area of Study : The study covers selected IT companies operating in South Tamil Nadu, particularly organizations located in major technology and employment centres.

Sample Size : For the purpose of the assumed analysis, a sample of 150 IT professionals was considered.

Sampling Technique : A convenience sampling method was assumed because respondents were selected based on their accessibility and willingness to participate.

Sources of Data

Primary data were assumed to have been collected using a structured questionnaire. Secondary information was obtained from books, journals and published research studies relating to occupational stress, burnout and employee turnover.

Measurement Scale : Workplace stress, burnout and attrition intention were measured using statements based on a five-point Likert scale:

1 – Strongly Disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – Neutral; 4 – Agree; 5 – Strongly Agree.

Statistical Tools

The following tools were used:

- Percentage analysis
- Chi-square test
- One-way ANOVA

Analysis and Interpretation

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	91	60.67
	Female	59	39.33
Age	Below 25 years	39	26.00
	25–35 years	65	43.33
	36–45 years	31	20.67
	Above 45 years	15	10.00
Educational Qualification	Undergraduate	42	28.00
	Postgraduate	76	50.67
	Professional/Technical	27	18.00
	Others	5	3.33
Work Experience	Below 2 years	38	25.33
	2–5 years	62	41.34
	6–10 years	32	21.33
	Above 10 years	18	12.00
Monthly Income	Below ₹25,000	21	14.00
	₹25,001–₹50,000	57	38.00
	₹50,001–₹75,000	41	27.33
	₹75,001–₹1,00,000	21	14.00
	Above ₹1,00,000	10	6.67
Designation	Technical/Software Executive	53	35.33
	Senior Executive/Developer	43	28.67
	Team Leader	29	19.33
	Manager	17	11.34
	Others	8	5.33

Demographic Variable	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Total Respondents		150	100.00

The demographic profile indicates that 60.67 per cent of the respondents are male and 39.33 per cent are female. The largest age group is 25–35 years, accounting for 43.33 per cent. Half of the respondents possess postgraduate qualifications. Regarding experience, 41.34 per cent have 2–5 years of experience. The largest income category is ₹25,001–₹50,000 per month. Technical/software executives form the largest occupational group. Overall, the sample represents a relatively young and professionally qualified IT workforce.

Level of Workplace Stress

Table 2: Level of Workplace Stress

Level of Stress	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Low	28	18.67
Moderate	63	42.00
High	59	39.33
Total	150	100.00

The table indicates that 42.00 per cent of respondents experience moderate workplace stress, while 39.33 per cent experience high stress. Only 18.67 per cent report low stress. Thus, a substantial majority of employees experience moderate or high workplace stress.

Level of Burnout

Table 3: Level of Burnout

Level of Burnout	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Low	34	22.67
Moderate	69	46.00
High	47	31.33
Total	150	100.00

The findings show that 46.00 per cent of employees experience moderate burnout and 31.33 per cent experience high burnout. Only 22.67 per cent report low burnout. The results indicate that burnout is a considerable concern among the assumed respondents.

Employee Attrition Intention

Table 4: Level of Employee Attrition Intention

Attrition Intention	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Low	45	30.00
Moderate	61	40.67
High	44	29.33
Total	150	100.00

The table shows that 40.67 per cent of respondents have moderate attrition intention, while 29.33 per cent have high attrition intention. Thus, nearly 70 per cent of the respondents fall within the moderate-to-high attrition-intention categories.

Chi-Square Analysis

Association between Workplace Stress and Employee Attrition Intention

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant association between workplace stress and employee attrition intention.

H₁: There is a significant association between workplace stress and employee attrition intention.

Table 5: Chi-Square Test

Workplace Stress	Low Attrition	Moderate Attrition	High Attrition	Total
Low	17	9	2	28
Moderate	22	30	11	63
High	6	22	31	59
Total	45	61	44	150

Calculated χ^2 : 38.27

Degrees of freedom: 4

p-value: < 0.001

Level of significance: 5%

The calculated chi-square value of 38.27 is significant at the 5 per cent level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

It is concluded that there is a significant association between workplace stress and employee attrition intention. The table also reveals a clear pattern: respondents experiencing high workplace stress are more concentrated in the high-attrition category, whereas employees experiencing low stress are more likely to report low attrition intention.

This finding is consistent with previous research showing that workload, role-related stress and other workplace pressures can contribute to withdrawal and intentions to leave among IT professionals. ScienceDirect

One-Way ANOVA

Burnout and Employee Attrition Intention

To examine whether attrition intention differs according to burnout level, one-way ANOVA was applied.

Hypotheses

H₀: There is no significant difference in mean employee attrition intention among employees with different levels of burnout.

H₁: There is a significant difference in mean employee attrition intention among employees with different levels of burnout.

Table 6: ANOVA of Burnout Level and Employee Attrition Intention

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	p-value
Between Groups	214.86	2	107.43	18.72	0.000
Within Groups	843.91	147	5.74		
Total	1058.77	149			

The calculated F-value of 18.72 is significant at the 5 per cent level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a statistically significant difference in employee attrition intention among the three burnout groups.

Table 7: Mean Attrition Intention by Burnout Level

Burnout Level	Mean Attrition Intention
Low	2.41
Moderate	3.18
High	3.91

The mean scores demonstrate a progressive increase in attrition intention as burnout increases. Employees with low burnout have the lowest mean attrition intention of 2.41, while employees with high burnout have the highest mean score of 3.91. This indicates that employees experiencing greater burnout are more likely to consider leaving their organizations.

The result is consistent with research identifying burnout as an important factor associated with turnover intention among IT employees. Wiley Online Library

Major Findings

The major findings of the study are:



1. Male respondents constitute 60.67 per cent of the sample, while female respondents account for 39.33 per cent.
2. The largest age group is 25–35 years, accounting for 43.33 per cent of respondents.
3. Postgraduates constitute 50.67 per cent of the respondents.
4. Employees with 2–5 years of experience form the largest experience category at 41.34 per cent.
5. About 42.00 per cent of respondents experience moderate workplace stress, while 39.33 per cent experience high stress.
6. Nearly one-third of the respondents, 31.33 per cent, experience high burnout.
7. About 29.33 per cent of respondents have high employee attrition intention.
8. The chi-square analysis demonstrates a significant association between workplace stress and employee attrition intention.
9. Employees experiencing high workplace stress are more likely to report high attrition intention.
10. The ANOVA result indicates a significant difference in attrition intention across different burnout levels.
11. Attrition intention increases progressively from the low-burnout group to the high-burnout group.
12. The findings indicate that managing workplace stress and burnout should form an important part of employee-retention strategies in IT organizations.

Suggestions

Workload Management

IT companies should regularly evaluate employee workloads and distribute assignments according to available manpower. Excessive workloads and unrealistic deadlines should be minimized.

Adequate Staffing

Organizations should maintain appropriate staffing levels, particularly during major projects. Inadequate staffing can increase workload and contribute to employee stress.

Flexible Working Arrangements

Where operationally possible, flexible working hours and hybrid-working arrangements can help employees manage professional and personal responsibilities more effectively.

Employee Counselling

Organizations should provide confidential counselling and employee-assistance programmes for employees experiencing prolonged stress, exhaustion or work-related difficulties.

Supportive Leadership

Managers should maintain regular communication with employees, understand their difficulties and provide appropriate support. Supportive leadership can help employees cope with demanding work situations.

Burnout Prevention

Organizations should identify early signs of burnout, including persistent exhaustion, declining motivation, absenteeism and reduced performance. Preventive interventions should be introduced before burnout becomes severe.



Career Development

Training, certification programmes, mentoring and career advancement opportunities should be provided to employees. A clear career path may reduce the desire to seek alternative employment.

Recognition and Rewards

Employee achievements should be recognized through appropriate monetary and non-monetary rewards. Recognition can improve morale and strengthen employees' relationship with the organization.

Work-Life Balance

Organizations should avoid unnecessary after-hours communication and excessive working hours. Employees should be encouraged to take appropriate breaks and leave.

Periodic Employee Surveys

IT organizations should conduct periodic stress and employee-engagement surveys to identify emerging problems. Early intervention may help reduce attrition.

Conclusion

The study examines workplace stress, burnout and employee attrition among IT professionals in South Tamil Nadu during December 2024. The assumed findings indicate that workplace stress and burnout are important concerns among IT professionals. A considerable proportion of respondents experience moderate or high levels of stress and burnout.

The chi-square analysis establishes a significant association between workplace stress and employee attrition intention. Employees experiencing high workplace stress demonstrate a greater tendency towards high attrition intention. The ANOVA results further show that attrition intention differs significantly according to the level of burnout, with the highest attrition intention observed among employees experiencing high burnout.

The findings highlight that employee attrition is not merely a consequence of compensation or career opportunities. Psychological well-being and working conditions also play an important role. This is particularly relevant in the IT sector, where demanding projects, technological changes and continuous performance expectations can create sustained pressure. Existing Indian IT research similarly identifies stress, workload, burnout and organizational factors as important issues in employee retention. ScienceDirect

IT organizations in South Tamil Nadu should therefore adopt a comprehensive employee-well-being approach that combines workload management, adequate staffing, supportive leadership, flexible work practices, counselling, career development and recognition. Effective management of workplace stress and burnout can contribute to improved employee well-being, stronger organizational performance and reduced employee attrition.

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