

Research Paper

## Hypercompetitiveness, Perfectionism and Job Satisfaction among Information Technology Professionals

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### ABSTRACT

Our economy relies on the IT sector to grow enormously and provide millions of jobs, making it the backbone of the global economy. Companies within an industry demonstrating constant and swift development, innovation, and a quickly changing environment affect employee attitudes and wellbeing. The study focused on hypercompetitiveness, perfectionism, and job satisfaction among IT employees. The sample consists of 129 IT professionals working all over India of age between 20 to 40. Hypercompetitiveness, perfectionism, and job satisfaction were measured using the HAS, FMPS, and IJS scales, respectively. Statistics like Spearman's correlation, Mann-Whitney U test, and independent sample t test were used for analysis. The results showed that hypercompetitiveness and perfectionism are positively correlated, whereas hypercompetitiveness and job satisfaction are negatively correlated. Perfection and job satisfaction showed no significant correlation. On analysing the gender difference, it was found men tend to exhibit more hypercompetitiveness compared to women. Perfectionism and job satisfaction showed no gender difference. This study provides a better understanding of employee attitude and wellbeing.

**Keywords:** *Hypercompetitiveness, Perfectionism, Job Satisfaction*

The information technology (IT) industry is vital to the 21st century, which is technology-driven. India has even gained attention as a knowledge economy on a global level because of its impressive IT sector. This industry has a conspicuous impact on improving the productivity of almost every other sector of the economy, and it also has huge potential for further accelerating growth and economic development. Information Technology has not only contributed to the economic development of the country, but it has also made governance more efficient and responsive. About 35 IT cities in India contribute to the country's expanding GDP. Leading IT centres are found in over 35 locations across 16 states in India. Main IT cities are Bangalore, Hyderabad, Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata, Lucknow, Pune, Delhi, Chandigarh, Kochi, Ahmedabad and Thiruvananthapuram (Keswani, 2023). Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, HCL Technologies, Wipro Limited, Redington India Ltd. and Tech Mahindra Ltd. are the main IT industries in India (R, 2023).

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Innovation and competition are two major pillars in the information technology (IT) industry (Chen et al., 2021). According to Wang et al., (2018) competition is considered the most important means of survival for individuals, institutions, and society. It is even believed to be a part of human nature, and competition both with the environment and among species is how humans evolve. Due to its significance, competition has drawn the attention of academics from a wide range of disciplines, including psychology, management, economics, and politics. Yet human competitiveness is more complex than we would like to believe. Individuals with strong trait competition may need to exhibit competitive behaviour, whereas others with low trait competition may not need to do so. In an organization, a rapidly changing environment can embed a competitive attitude in employees.

Perfectionism Competition might strongly affect individual effort and performance. Especially in work settings, individual efforts will be affected by perfectionism and well-being such as job satisfaction can be affected by this competitive attitude. According to Frost et al., (1990) perfectionism in general was viewed as having high standards of performance accompanied by overly critical evaluations of one's own behaviour. Perfectionism was also viewed as either underlying or related to several other psychological disorders.

While some level of perfectionism can be beneficial, as it can motivate individuals to achieve their goals, excessive perfectionism can lead to a host of negative outcomes, such as anxiety, depression, burnout, and impaired social functioning. Several studies have revealed a connection between perfectionism and a variety of psychological issues, including emotional discomfort, depression, anxiety disorders, and suicide (Khawaja & Armstrong, 2005). The causes of perfectionism are complex and multifaceted. Despite the negative consequences of perfectionism, some individuals may view their perfectionistic tendencies as adaptive and beneficial.

Job satisfaction is an important construct in the fields of organizational behaviour and human resource management. It refers to the degree to which employees feel content with their job and the various aspects associated with it. Job satisfaction is defined as the level of contentment employees feel with their job. This goes beyond their daily duties to cover satisfaction with team members or managers, satisfaction with organizational policies, and the impact of their job on employees' personal lives

### *Need and Significance*

Information technology is one of the fastest growing fields. As it is growing fast, competitive behaviour may rise. Competition might strongly affect individuals' performance and well-being. Perfectionism at work and the satisfaction of employees are doubtful. This can have a serious impact on mental health.

In a previous study conducted on a sample of 226 Russian University students, it was found that students high in perfectionism reported significantly higher levels of contrastive upward social comparisons, envy, hypercompetitiveness and depression than those low in perfectionism. Envy and social comparison orientation partially mediated a relationship between perfectionism and depression (Garanian et al., 2018). Similar studies have not been conducted in any workplace or in an Indian scenario.

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However, the relationship between hypercompetitiveness, perfectionism and job satisfaction among IT professionals has not been established in any study to my limited knowledge. This study contributes to business practices by offering significant suggestions to aid in a more in-depth understanding of the workplace environment and employee behaviour. The study will be helpful to improve the work environment to make it efficient by controlling the competitive attitude, if it is needed to be controlled. This study may be the first step in understanding the attitudes of IT employees, as they play a prominent role in the development of the nation.

### METHODOLOGY

#### *Aim*

The study intends to investigate the difference among information technology professionals with respect to the three variables, namely Hypercompetitiveness, Perfectionism and Job Satisfaction, and thus entitled “Hypercompetitiveness, Perfectionism and Job Satisfaction among Information Technology Professionals.”

#### *Specific Objectives*

The objectives of the study are as followed

- To find out the relationship between Hypercompetitiveness and Perfectionism among IT professionals.
- To find out the relationship between hypercompetitiveness and job satisfaction among IT professionals.
- To find out the relationship between perfectionism and job satisfaction among IT professionals.
- To find out whether there is a significant difference between hypercompetitiveness among male and female IT professionals.
- To find out whether there is a significant difference between perfectionism among male and female IT professionals
- To find out whether there is a significant difference between job satisfaction among male and female IT professionals.

#### *Hypotheses*

To meet the objectives of the study the following hypothesis has been put forward.

- H01: There is no relationship between hypercompetitiveness and perfectionism among information technology professionals.
- H02: There is no relationship between perfectionism and job satisfaction among information technology professionals
- H03: There is no relationship between hypercompetitiveness and job satisfaction among information technology professionals
- H04: There is no difference in hypercompetitiveness among male and female information technology professionals.
- H05: There is no difference in perfectionism among male and female information technology professionals.
- H06: There is no difference in job satisfaction among male and female information technology professionals.

#### *Variables*

- **Independent variable:** Hypercompetitiveness, Perfectionism and job satisfaction

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- **Dependent Variable:** IT professionals

### *Sample*

The population of the study consists of IT employees working all over India. The participants of the study consist of 129 IT employees. Samples were collected using convenience sampling method. Convenient sampling is used as it selects respondents based on their ease of access and closeness to the researcher. The participants of the study will be IT employees of both office going and work from home. The study included both males and females of age 20 to 40. The samples for the study will be collected from IT professionals all over India using google forms.

### *Hypercompetitive Attitude Scale (HAS)*

Hypercompetitive attitude scale was developed by Ryckman et al. (1990). This scale is a 26-item instrument designed to measure hypercompetitiveness.

The following instructions are given: please read each of the statements very carefully so that you understand what is being asked. Then ask yourself how true the statement is as it applies to you. Rate your answer to that statement on the 5-point scale and record your answer in the space to the left of the item. The HAS is scored on a 5-point scale with the total score being a sum of all item scores. The items 3, 5, 6, 10,13, 15, 16, 18-20, 24-26 are reverse-scored. Higher scores indicate stronger hypercompetitive attitudes. The HAS has excellent internal consistency, with an alpha of .91. The HAS has good concurrent and construct validity.

In the present study the internal consistency of the scale was found to be 0.719.

### *Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (FMPS)*

FMPS was developed by Frost et al. (1990). The scale consists of 35-item instrument designed to measure the several components of perfectionism. Participants circle the number that best corresponds to their agreement with each item.

The 35 items comprise six factors: concern over mistakes (CM, items 9, 10, 13, 14, 18, 21, 23, 25, 34); personal standards (PS, items 4, 6, 12, 16, 19, 24, 30); parental expectations (PE, items 1, 11, 15, 20, 26); parental criticism (PC, items 3, 5, 22, 35); doubts about actions (D, items 17, 28, 32, 33); and organization (O, items 2, 7, 8, 27, 29, 31). The subscale and total scores are derived simply by summing individual item scores with higher scores suggesting greater amounts of perfectionism. The FMPS has good to excellent reliability, with alphas that range from .77 to .93 for the subscales. The alpha for the total scale was .90. The FMPS has good concurrent validity.

In the present study the internal consistency of the scale was found to be 0.908.

### *Index of Job Satisfaction (IJS)*

IJS was developed by Pike and Hudson (1997) developed this scale. It is a 25-item instrument. The following instructions are given: The IJS scale is designed to measure the way you feel about your job or place of employment. It is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. Answer each item as carefully and as accurately as you can.

The IJS is scored by first reverse-scoring items listed at the bottom of the instrument (items 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 15, 18, 19, 21, 22), summing these and the remaining scores, subtracting the number of completed items, multiplying this figure by 100, and dividing by the number of items completed times 6. This will produce a range from 0 to 100 with higher scores indicating greater magnitude or degree of job satisfaction. The IJS has excellent internal consistency with an alpha of .94. The IJS has been investigated with regard to content,

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construct, and factorial validity. It nearly always achieves validity coefficients of .60 or greater.

In the present study the internal consistency of the scale was found to be 0.839.

### *Procedure*

The participants were IT professionals and were selected following the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The study used a convenient sampling technique where the online survey link was disseminated across multiple social networks. They were sent an online survey through google forms. The initial recipients of the link were also encouraged to forward the survey to their contacts. The survey began by describing briefly the nature of the study and assurance were given that their responses will remain confidential. All respondents were provided informed consent to participate in the study. Upon their informed consent, participants were then directed to fill in the socio-demographic details, followed by a questionnaire in the next section. The responses of the participant were tabulated and coded into an excel spreadsheet for ease of analysis. The participation was on a voluntary basis and did not receive any financial reward. For participants who found it difficult to follow the questionnaire, the researcher provided assistance.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The findings of the current study are presented in this chapter. The results of the statistical tests used is discussed in the light of the hypothesis tested. The aim of the study was to find the relationship between hypercompetitiveness, perfectionism and job satisfaction among IT professionals. The study also aimed to find the difference in hypercompetitiveness, perfectionism and job satisfaction among males and females.

*Table 1 Sociodemographic characteristics of participants at baseline*

<b>Baseline Characteristic</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Gender		
Male	61	47.3
Female	68	52.7
Experience		
Less than 1 year	62	48.1
1-5 years	50	38.8
5-10 years	13	10.1
More than 10 years	4	3.1
Salary		
Less than 10000	6	4.7
10000-20000	35	27.1
20000-50000	67	51.9
More than 50000	21	16.3
Mode of work		
Work from home	41	31.8
Office going	88	68.2
Socio-economic status		
Upper	9	7.0
Middle	117	90.7
Lower	3	2.3
Marital status		
Married	25	19.4
Unmarried	104	80.6

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Baseline Characteristic	N	%
Family type		
Joint family	19	14.7
Nuclear family	104	80.6
Living alone	6	4.7
Residence		
Urban	21	16.3
Semi urban	52	40.3
Rural	56	43.4

The baseline characteristics of the participant are shown in Table 4.1. The respondents consist of 47.3% (N =61) males and 52.7% (N=68) females. On analysing the data, it was found that the majority of the participants in the study had less than one year of experience (48.1%). More than 50% of the participants have an average salary of 20,000–50,000. Also, the sample consists of more office-going employees (N=88) than employees who work from home(N=41) and the majority have middle socio-economic status (90.8%) living in nuclear families (80.6%). The majority of participants live in semi-urban (40.3%) and rural areas (43.4%).

**Table 2 Mean and standard deviation of the variables hypercompetitiveness, perfectionism and job satisfaction**

Variable	n	M	SD
Hypercompetitiveness	129	109.22	12.35
Perfectionism	129	105.85	19.67
Job satisfaction	129	57.76	11.83

Table 4.2 indicates the mean and standard deviation of the variables hypercompetitiveness, perfectionism and job satisfaction among IT professionals. Mean of hypercompetitiveness is 109.22 and standard deviation is 12.35. The maximum possible score in hypercompetitiveness is 130. The mean score indicates that the extent of hypercompetitiveness is low among IT professionals.

Mean of perfectionism is 105.85 and standard deviation is 19.67. The maximum possible score in perfectionism is 175. The mean score indicates that the extent of perfectionism is low among IT professionals.

Mean of job satisfaction is 57.76 and standard deviation is 11.83. The maximum possible score in job satisfaction is 100. The mean score indicates that the extent of job satisfaction is low among IT professionals.

**Table 3 Relationship between the variables hypercompetitiveness, perfectionism and job satisfaction**

Variable	1	2	3
Hypercompetitiveness	-		
Perfectionism	.408**	-	
Job Satisfaction	-.378**	-.100	-

Note: \*\* $p < 0.01$

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Table 4.3 indicate the relationship between hypercompetitiveness, perfectionism and job satisfaction among IT professionals.

The hypothesis H01 represents that there is no relationship between hypercompetitiveness and perfectionism among IT professionals. Spearman's rank correlation was used to find the relationship. The results shows that there is a moderate positive correlation between hypercompetitiveness and perfectionism at 0.01 level of significance. This means that as hypercompetitiveness increases, perfectionism also tends to increase, and vice versa. In other words, IT professionals who exhibit higher levels of hypercompetitiveness are more likely to also exhibit higher levels of perfectionism, and those who exhibit lower levels of hypercompetitiveness are more likely to exhibit lower levels of perfectionism. The fact that studies does not discriminate between individuals who are extremely competent and successful and those who are perfectionistic is a significant flaw in it. These individuals tend to exhibit an extreme fear of failure (Frost et al., 1990). One possible explanation is that the IT industry is often characterized by fast-paced, high stress environments and constant drive for innovation may promote these traits that leads to fear of failure thus becoming hypercompetitive. Because of the hypercompetition individuals exhibit perfectionism.

The hypothesis H02 represents that there is no relationship between perfectionism and job satisfaction. The hypothesis is retained. The variables perfectionism and job satisfaction showed no relationship. One possible explanation is that perfectionism and job satisfaction may operate independently of each other in the context of IT professionals. It is possible that IT professionals can exhibit different levels of perfectionism without it having a direct impact on their overall job satisfaction. The characteristics of IT may explain the lack of correlation between perfectionism and job satisfaction. For example, the IT industry is known for its dynamic and rapidly changing nature, with high demands for innovation and constant learning. In such an environment, job satisfaction may be influenced by various factors such as work-life balance, organizational culture, career growth opportunities, and interpersonal relationships, which may not be directly related to perfectionism.

The hypothesis H03 represents that there is no relationship between hypercompetitiveness and job satisfaction. The study found a negative correlation between hypercompetitiveness and job satisfaction among IT professionals at 0.01 level of significance. This implies that as hypercompetitiveness increases, job satisfaction tends to decrease, and vice versa. In other words, IT professionals who exhibit higher levels of hypercompetitiveness are more likely to report lower levels of job satisfaction, and those who exhibit lower levels of hypercompetitiveness are more likely to report higher levels of job satisfaction. According to self-determination theory (SDT), individuals have three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy refers to the need for self-determination, competence refers to the need to feel capable and effective; and relatedness refers to the need for social connectedness and to feel that one belongs. SDT suggests that when these basic psychological needs are met, individuals experience greater well-being and job satisfaction. However, when these needs are not met, individuals may experience negative outcomes such as burnout and reduced job satisfaction (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017b). Thus, a possible explanation is that hypercompetitiveness focuses on outperforming others and achieving personal success, which could negatively affect work-life balance, job autonomy and positive relationships with coworkers.

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**Table 4 Independent sample t test for gender difference in hypercompetitiveness**

	<b>Gender</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>
Hypercompetitiveness	Male	61	113.10	10.84	3.522
	Female	68	105.75	12.66	

The hypothesis H04 states that there is no difference in hypercompetitiveness among males and females. There is a difference in the scores for males (M=113.09, SD=10.83) and female (M=105.75, SD=12.66) conditions.

The results indicate that males tend to exhibit more hypercompetitiveness compared to females. Here the null hypothesis (H04) is rejected. Similar results were obtained in the study conducted by Chan and Cheung (2020). This study reveals that males had much higher degrees of personal development competitiveness than females, as well as higher levels of hypercompetitiveness.

One possible explanation is that males showed higher assertiveness and a stronger thirst for power than females, whereas females may have repressed their narcissism since doing so may subject them to more social pressure than males. Women are supposed to be family carers, while men are expected to work in income-generating activities; they are seen as more traditional and modest than men (Chan & Cheung, 2020). This difference may consider factors like personal characteristics, such as individual personality traits (e.g., high need for achievement, low tolerance for failure), early socialization experiences (e.g., upbringing, family influence), and environmental factors (e.g., competitive work culture, performance-based rewards, pressure to excel in a male-dominated field).

**Table 5 Difference in perfectionism among male and female(N=129)**

	<b>Group</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Sum of Ranks</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>p</b>
Gender	Male	61	70.44	4297.00	1742.00	.117
	Female	68	60.12	4088.00		

The hypothesis H05 represents that there is no difference in perfectionism among male and female. Mann-Whitney test indicated that the perfectionism was similar for male and female, U=1742, p=.117. The level of significance was 0.05%. So, the null hypothesis (H05) is retained.

Similar results were obtained in the study conducted by Stoeber and Stoeber (2009). The total dimensions of the perfectionism score in men and women did not significantly differ by gender. But in the student sample, women were less frequently perfectionists than men in their spelling, speech, and investments and purchases. Gender would not be a determining factor in perfectionism, as perfectionism may be influenced by various factors, such as personality, work environment, and organizational culture, that are not necessarily related to gender.

**Table 6 Difference in job satisfaction among male and female(N=129)**

	<b>Group</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>Sum of Ranks</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>P</b>
Gender	Male	61	60.82	3710.00	1819.00	.229
	Female	68	68.75	4675.00		



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The hypothesis H06 indicate that there is no difference in job satisfaction among males and females. Mann-Whitney test indicated that the job satisfaction was similar for male and female,  $U=1819$ ,  $p=.229$ . The level of significance was 0.05%. So null hypothesis (H06) is retained.

Similar results were found in the study by Mason (1995). Mason (1995) found that American women and men in management appear to not differ from one another in terms of their sources of job satisfaction. The findings point to a lack of support for socialisation theory in addition to support for social role theory and structural theory. Gender should not be an influencing factor, as individuals' experiences and perceptions of job satisfaction involve the effects of personality characteristics.

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

This chapter summarizes the current research. The study examined the relationship between hypercompetitiveness, perfectionism and job satisfaction among IT professionals. The difference based on gender were also examined.

#### *Implications*

Organizations in the IT industry should consider strategies to manage hypercompetitiveness and perfectionism in the workplace to reduce stress, burnout, and job dissatisfaction. Organizations need to be mindful of fostering a balanced work environment that encourages healthy competition while also promoting cooperation, collaboration, and teamwork among employees. Managers should reconsider hiring and selection process that's include personality characteristics.

Managers should promote knowledge sharing and co-worker relationships in order to reduce hypercompetitive attitude and to increase job satisfaction. Promoting a supportive organizational culture that values teamwork and collaboration, providing opportunities for skill development and growth, implementing fair performance evaluation systems, promoting work-life balance, and encouraging open communication and feedback among employees should be beneficial.

#### *Limitations*

- The study was conducted only among 129 IT professionals. The sample size is too small thus generalizability of findings is limited.
- The questionnaire for the study was given through online platform, thus there is a possibility for the responses to be biased.
- Variables were analyzed using self-report inventories so there is a chance of response biases. The participants may be given socially desirable answers rather than their true opinion.
- The participants are not randomly selected or recruited for the study the findings may be biased.
- The study examined only limited variables.
- Confounding variables are not examined, it may be difficult to determine whether the observed effects are due to the independent variable or to other factors that were not accounted for.
- Departments within the IT sector were not given importance. Analyzing competition with various department can provide insights to the managers.

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### *Scope for the Further Study*

Considering both the positive and negative aspects of hypercompetitiveness, and taking into account the unique characteristics of the IT industry and the diversity among IT professionals also be good. Further research may be needed to establish the cause-effect relationships of the variables hypercompetitiveness, perfectionism and job satisfaction among IT professionals. Examining potential moderators or mediators of the relationship between perfectionism and job satisfaction, and conducting longitudinal studies to better understand the temporal dynamics of these variables may can be used. The study may also emphasize the importance of considering the complexities of the IT industry and the multifaceted nature of job satisfaction when interpreting the results. The further research may can consider more demographic characteristics to better understand the complex relationship. More variables such as job burnout, psychological well-being can etc. can be added.

In conclusion, the study found a positive correlation between hypercompetitiveness and perfectionism whereas a negative correlation between hypercompetitiveness and job satisfaction. The results showed that men tend to exhibit more hypercompetitiveness. Therefore, it is crucial to develop strategies that promotes healthy competition as a way to improve job satisfaction.

### **CONCLUSION**

This chapter summarizes the current research. The study examined the relationship between hypercompetitiveness, perfectionism and job satisfaction among IT professionals. The difference based on gender were also examined.

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