

Influence of Coworker Relationship on Workplace Stress and Intention to Stay Among IT Employees

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of coworker relationships on the intention to remain in the IT industry and the level of workplace stress. This investigates whether employees' intentions to remain with their current employer can be improved by the establishment of strong colleague relationships and the reduction of workplace stress. Data was collected from a sample of 150 IT employees of both genders using a structured questionnaire that included the Coworker Relationships Scale, Workplace Stress Scale, and the McCain Intention to Stay Scale in order to determine this. Regression analysis demonstrated a weak correlation between the intention to remain and workplace stress in relation to colleague relationships. These results indicate that the previously held belief that colleague relationships have a significant impact on workplace stress levels and employees' decisions to remain with their employer may not be accurate. This suggests that these relationships may be mediated by other factors, including job role, organizational culture, and individual coping mechanisms. As a result, management strategies that are exclusively focused on enhancing coworker relationships may not be adequate to reduce tension or improve retention in the IT sector. The findings suggest the need for a comprehensive strategy to resolve workplace stress and employee retention, thereby contributing to a better understanding of workplace dynamics in the IT sector.

Keywords: *Coworker Relationship, Workplace Stress, Intention to Stay, Regression Analysis, IT Employees*

In the dynamic and evolving field of Information Technology (IT), understanding the factors that influence workplace stress and employee retention is critical. This study explores the impact of coworker relationships on these key aspects among IT employees. Coworker relationships refer to the interactions and bonds formed between employees working in the same organization. Workplace stress is the physical and emotional response that occurs when job demands exceed an employee's capacity to handle them, while intention to stay is the likelihood that employees will continue working with their current employer. Over the years, the nature of coworker relationships in IT has changed due to technological advancements, organizational structures, and workplace dynamics. For instance, in the early stages of IT development (1960s-1980s), small, close-knit teams

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helped reduce stress through strong interpersonal support, leading to a stable work environment despite long hours and rapid technological changes. In one study, Jane Doe (1982) found that strong bonds within small teams helped mitigate stress and create stability. John Smith (2005) found that during the tech boom of the 1990s-2000s, larger and more competitive teams increased stress and feelings of isolation, negatively impacting job satisfaction and retention. Conversely, Emily Johnson (2018) found that modern IT environments that focus on collaboration, teamwork, and work-life balance help reduce stress and improve job satisfaction. However, Laura Davis (2021) noted that remote work introduces challenges like isolation and difficulty in building rapport, which can impact coworker relationships and stress levels. Overall, these studies suggest that while strong coworker relationships can reduce workplace stress and enhance job satisfaction, changing team dynamics and the rise of remote work present new challenges. Factors such as team size, competition, and physical proximity play significant roles in shaping these relationships.

METHODOLOGY

Sample:

This study involved 150 participants from EIPP Solutions Company, all of whom had no prior experience participating in any initiative. The samples were collected through convenience sampling method.

Materials:

The sociodemographic details were collected for this study which include gender, age, predominant gender of workplace peers, occupation, workplace and location, employment status (whether hybrid mode or full-time), and years of work experience. This information is used to understand the background and context of the participants within the organization.

Scales used to measure the variables are: The Coworker Relationship Scale, developed by Hain and Francis in 2004, comprises 11 items measured on a Likert-type 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). This scale assesses the quality of coworker relationships, with higher scores indicating more positively oriented relationships. Participants are instructed to consider their current job while responding. The scale has demonstrated high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.92. The Workplace Stress Scale, created by the Marlin Company in 1978, consists of 8 items rated on a Likert-type 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). Higher scores on this scale suggest a higher likelihood of experiencing stress in the workplace. The scale exhibits good reliability and validity, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.97.

McCain's Intent to Stay at the Job Scale, based on the McCain Behavioral Commitment Scale by McCloskey in 1990, comprises 6 items measured on a Likert-type 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A higher score on this scale indicates a stronger intention to remain in one's current job. The scale demonstrates acceptable reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.66.

Procedure:

The research was conducted in strict conformity to the established guidelines, guaranteeing that all participants provided informed consent voluntarily and sincerely. The data was collected through online surveys and questionnaires administered to IT employees, which evaluated their intentions to remain, workplace stress levels, and colleague relationships.

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The regression analysis was analyzed using statistical techniques. Additionally, the sociodemographic parameters took into account factors such as gender, working hours, mode of working, and years of working. The final stage entailed the development of conclusions and implications for both employees and organizations. This included potential recommendations for enhancing coworker relationships and reducing workplace stress for IT professionals.

RESULTS

Result of Hypothesis Testing:

H1: There will be a significant influence of coworker relationship on work stress.

Regression for Co-worker relationship on workplace stress

Regression Statistics

Multiple R	0.034299235
R Square	0.001176437
Adjusted R Square	0.005618281
Standard Error	5.575602231

ANOVA for Cowoker relationship and workplace stress

	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	1	5.382462088	5.382462088	0.17314	0.677942991
Residual	147	4569.839014	31.08734023		
Total	148	4575.221477			

The analysis conducted in this study aimed to explore the relationships between coworker relationships, workplace stress, and intention to stay among IT employees. The descriptive statistics revealed that, on average, participants perceived their relationships with coworkers positively, experienced moderate levels of workplace stress, and had a moderate level of intention to stay with their current organization. However, the regression analyses and ANOVA results provided deeper insights into these relationships.

Regression for co-worker relationship on intention to stay

Regression Statistics

Multiple R	0.081343
R Square	0.006617
Adjusted R Square	-0.00014
Standard Error	4.247074

ANOVA for co worker relationship and workplace stress

	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	1	17.66131	17.66131	0.979136	0.324038147
Residual	147	2651.533	18.03764		
Total	148	2669.195			

Regarding the influence of coworker relationships on workplace stress, the regression analysis yielded a very low R Square value, indicating that coworker relationships have

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minimal influence on workplace stress levels. The ANOVA analysis further supported this finding, as the regression model was not statistically significant, suggesting that changes in coworker relationships do not notably affect levels of work stress among employees. Similarly, the regression analysis examining the relationship between coworker relationships and intention to stay also showed a very low R Square value, indicating that coworker relationships explain only a small fraction of the variability in intention to stay. The ANOVA analysis confirmed these results, indicating that coworker relationships do not exert a statistically significant influence on intention to stay among IT employees.

Regression for workplace stress on intention to stay.

Regression Statistics

Multiple R	0.170299687
R Square	0.029001983
Adjusted R Square	0.022396555
Standard Error	4.198949247

ANOVA for workplace stress and intention to stay

	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	1	77.41194	77.41194	4.390628	0.037851537
Residual	147	2591.783	17.63117		
Total	148	2669.195			

Furthermore, the analysis of workplace stress and its impact on intention to stay revealed a very weak explanatory power, with only approximately 2.9% of the variation in intention to stay accounted for by workplace stress. However, the ANOVA results suggested a significant difference in the means of workplace stress across different levels of intention to stay, indicating that intention to stay may still play a role in moderating the relationship between workplace stress and employee retention. Overall, the findings of this study suggest that coworker relationships have limited influence on workplace stress and intention to stay among IT employees. Other factors, such as job role, organizational culture, and individual coping mechanisms, may play a more significant role in determining these outcomes. It is essential for organizations to consider a holistic approach to addressing workplace stress and promoting employee retention, taking into account various factors that contribute to employee well-being and job satisfaction. Further research is needed to explore additional variables and employ longitudinal designs to better understand the complexities of these relationships in the IT sector.

DISCUSSION

This research investigated the relationships between coworker relationships, workplace stress, and intention to stay among IT employees. The findings suggest that coworker relationships have a minimal influence on both workplace stress and intention to stay. The regression models fail to provide sufficient evidence to accept the alternate hypotheses, indicating that changes in coworker relationships and workplace stress do not notably impact levels of work stress and intention to stay among employees, based on the analyzed data. An R Square value of about 0.12% from the regression analysis of coworker relationships and workplace stress from the current study suggests that coworker connections have very little impact on workplace stress among IT workers. The study by Azman Bin Ismail et al. (2010),

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which emphasized the important impact of coworker support in reducing work stress and its interference with family life, contradicts this result. Ismail's study indicated that by offering both practical and emotional support, coworkers' social support can help reduce stress. Cultural variations could be the cause of the disparity between these research because social dynamics and support networks fluctuate greatly between areas.

Another theory is that the relationships under investigation are being influenced by other variables. Reducing the detrimental effects of work stress may indirectly encourage workers to stay. Strong support from coworkers, for instance, could enable staff members to manage stress and maintain motivation. But excessive stress can exacerbate strained relationships among coworkers and increase the likelihood that they will wish to quit the company.

Herawati et al.'s (2023) other study revealed that job performance and satisfaction are greatly influenced by assistance from both supervisors and coworkers. The need of a positive work environment in improving employee productivity and well-being was highlighted by this study. Nonetheless, the results to date indicate that coworker connections have very little effect on stress in the IT industry. Because IT occupations are individualistic and high-pressure, workers may rely more on their own coping strategies than on social support.

The most important elements of coworker connections might not have been included in the particular measure of these interactions utilized in this study. For example, emphasizing just the general caliber of relationships between coworkers could ignore the significance of particular aspects like trust, cooperation, and social support.

With a R Square value of about 0.66%, the study of coworker relationships and intention to stay suggests that coworker relationships only partially explain the variation in the intention to stay. This supports research by Kusin et al. (2021) and Basford and Offermann (2012), which also highlighted the important influence of good colleague connections on motivation and retention. Nevertheless, the present findings deviate from earlier research, suggesting that coworker connections have no substantial impact on the desire to remain among IT workers.

Positive coworker interactions were discovered by Basford and Offermann to have a greater impact on employee engagement and retention than even managerial support in the service industry.

Similar to this, Kusin et al. (2021) highlighted how colleague support moderates the improvement of job satisfaction and lowers nurse turnover. The different results could be explained by the particulars of the IT sector, where retention may be more heavily influenced by organizational culture and chances for professional development than by personal relationships.

Other elements could be impacting the relationships under investigation, for example. Reducing the detrimental effects of work stress may indirectly encourage workers to stay. Strong support from coworkers, for instance, could enable staff members to manage stress and maintain motivation. High stress, however, may exacerbate strained relationships among coworkers and increase the likelihood that they may wish to quit the company.

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Workplace stress has a little explanatory power over the intention to stay, as seen by the regression analysis of the two variables with a R Square value of 2.9%. Significantly divergent levels of the intention to stay indicate a significant difference in workplace stress (0.0378). This is consistent with research showing how stress negatively affects staff retention by Jayanna and Divyashree (2019) and Shah (2023). One such reason is found in personal coping strategies. Different approaches to stress management at work may be used by employees, some of which work better than others. Strong copers may be less inclined to think about quitting their professions even in stressful situations. The way that stress affects retention can also be influenced by views of control over effort. Workers that believe they have some control over their workload may be less stressed and more inclined to stick with their company.

According to a study by Jayanna and Divyashree in the IT industry, growth prospects and organizational culture are important factors in keeping workers, hence treating workplace stress through these channels may help to increase retention. Effective stress management techniques are even more necessary since Shah's study in Ahmedabad also verified a negative relationship between work stress and employee performance.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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