

## Exploring the Relationship Between Work Stress and Job Satisfaction Among IT and MBA Professionals

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### ABSTRACT

Job satisfaction and stress are psychological variables related to each other that are the major contributors to employees' well-being. While stress may be an impetus factor in some cases, unmanaged or excessive stress typically manifests as anxiety, lost productivity, and low job satisfaction. This study examines the relationship between stress and job satisfaction for many required domains, including IT professionals and MBA graduates. With the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and the Work Stress Questionnaire (WSQ), data were collected to measure stress among these two populations of employees. The aim of this study is to compare stress among these two populations of employees and examine the manner in which stress influences satisfaction in these professional environments. Findings from this study add to the understanding of occupational stress patterns and offer insightful information regarding the measures to enhance job satisfaction for high-demand organizational environments.

**Keywords:** *Work stress, Job Satisfaction*

**W**ork related stress has become a critical issue in today's professional landscape, particularly affecting work satisfaction and overall well-being. Organizational culture has been a big factor in the development of stress and satisfaction. Cultures that promote collaboration, communication, and work-life balance typically yield higher employee satisfaction and reduced stress. Conversely, rigid and competitive cultures may foster burnout and disengagement.

**Stress** is defined as a response to demands that exceed an individual's coping capacity. It can arise from various sources; natural, social, occupational, and psychological. Stress manifests in emotional, physical, and behavioural symptoms, such as anxiety, fatigue, and unhealthy coping behaviours. **Work stress** is particularly impactful, stemming from excessive workloads, unclear roles, poor workplace relationships, and organizational changes. It not only affects individual health and productivity but also has costly implications for organizations, including higher absenteeism, turnover, and reduced performance.

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Several theoretical models explain work stress:

- **Demand-Control Model:** Stress arises when high job demands are coupled with low control.
- **Effort-Reward Imbalance Model:** Stress occurs when efforts are not matched by rewards.
- **Job Demands-Resources Model:** High demands with insufficient support or resources lead to stress.
- **Person-Environment Fit Model:** Misalignment between individual traits and job demands cause stress.
- **Transactional Model of Stress:** Stress is seen as a product of how individuals appraise and cope with situations.

**Job satisfaction**, on the other hand, is a positive emotional state resulting from evaluating one's job experiences. Influencing factors include autonomy, compensation, organizational culture, support systems, and the ability to maintain work-life balance. Satisfied employees are typically more productive and resilient to stress.

There is a well-documented **interrelationship between stress and Job satisfaction**. Moderate stress can be motivating, but excessive stress tends to reduce satisfaction and performance. This correlation is particularly relevant in high-demand professions like IT and MBA roles, where pressure and performance expectations are high.

This study seeks to explore how stress and work satisfaction interact in the lives of professionals, with a specific focus on IT and MBA sectors. The goal is to understand how workplace conditions and organizational culture affect stress levels and job satisfaction, and what interventions may improve both individual well-being and organizational outcomes.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Work Stress

The preliminary discussion of stress-related topics has put across the structure that the managers have to recognize in stress. To be more specific, stress is not merely a physiological reaction to a challenging situation. Stress is a complex interaction between a person mainly and the spot of the demand on them in their immediate surroundings (Long, 1995).

Stress is an adaptive response governed by individual differences that come from: Actions, situations, or events that represent a special challenge to a person (Nurnaningsih and Putra, 2015; Chang, C.P., & Chang, F.J. (2010).

Work stress is a dynamic state in which a person is faced with opportunities, obstacles, or demands related to what they want, and thus success is uncertain (Widhaharthana and Wiyaniti, 2019).

According to (Montgomery et al 1996), work stress can be explained as an employee's reduced awareness or perception of functioning caused by perceived conditions or incidents in the workplace, as well as psychological and physical disturbances caused by employees who are resentful, unwanted, or fearful. Respond in the work environment. Elsewhere, he says that stress at work is an individual response that is very different from stress in general.

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Siegrist's Effort-Reward Imbalance Model (1996) states that employees feel stressed when the rewards do not match their efforts. Bakker and Demerouti's Job Demands-Resources Model (2007) highlights the role of insufficient resources in the face of high job demands. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) focus on personal appraisal and coping in their Transactional Model of Stress.

### IT Professionals

Pestonjee and Singh (1987) noted a general consensus among foreign researchers that Job dissatisfaction and the rate of turnover is on an increase among computer professionals.

Stress levels of IT professionals are often high because their work is technically complex and moves at a fast pace. Common stressors in this sector include long hours, intense deadlines, rapid technological changes, and the constant need for skill upgrades.

Yu et al. (2019) found that high work stress correlates with lower job satisfaction in IT roles. The pressure to meet client expectations, work overtime, and handle system failures often leads to burnout. Despite the stress, many professionals are drawn to the IT sector due to its lucrative salaries and career prospects, which may partially offset dissatisfaction for some.

Siva Kumar M. et al., (2011) carried out a study to analyze the occupational stress of IT professionals in Chennai. The study revealed that middle level professionals are experiencing more stress than higher and lower-level professionals.

### MBA Professionals

MBA professionals often work in leadership or strategic roles that come with high levels of responsibility and pressure. The intense focus on results, tight schedules, and organizational politics contribute to their stress. Albrecht et al. (2019) and Zheng et al. (2021) found that workload and interpersonal conflicts are key sources of stress among MBA professionals, while autonomy and social support enhance job satisfaction.

Unlike IT professionals, MBA graduates often find job satisfaction more strongly influenced by intrinsic factors such as meaningful work, career development opportunities, and organizational fit. Haroon et al. (2020) observed that while salary and benefits are important, factors such as supervisor support and recognition play a more pivotal role in shaping satisfaction.

Kehoe and Wright (2013) and Burke and McKeen (2019) noted that organizational culture and leadership style are critical in shaping the experiences of MBA professionals. Supportive environments that foster learning, growth, and a healthy work-life balance are more likely to enhance satisfaction and reduce stress. Conversely, rigid hierarchies and poor communication can undermine motivation and performance.

### Correlation Between Job Satisfaction and Stress

The relationship between job satisfaction and stress has been a central topic in organizational psychology and occupational health research. Numerous studies affirm that job satisfaction and stress are inversely related, with high levels of stress typically associated with low levels of job satisfaction. This correlation has significant implications for employee well-being, organizational performance, and workplace retention.

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Spector (1997) defined job satisfaction as an individual's overall affective orientation toward their job. Stress, by contrast, is described by Beehr and Newman (1978) as a response to environmental demands that exceed a person's coping ability. When employees experience sustained stress due to factors such as heavy workloads, poor leadership, or lack of autonomy, their emotional and cognitive resources are depleted, often resulting in diminished job satisfaction.

Borg et al. (1991) identified a clear and negative relationship between work stress and job satisfaction. Their findings showed that increased stress levels were associated with reduced morale, performance, and satisfaction. Similarly, Pawar and Rathod (2007) demonstrated that employees under significant stress were more likely to experience psychological distress, absenteeism, and decreased productivity—all of which negatively affect job satisfaction.

Additionally, the effect of stress on job satisfaction can be moderated by individual and organizational variables such as coping strategies, organizational support, and workplace culture. Positive interventions—such as open communication, work-life balance initiatives, and supportive leadership—can buffer the negative effects of stress and improve overall job satisfaction (Ismail et al., 2015; Maslach, 1984).

In summary, extensive empirical evidence underscores a strong inverse correlation between job stress and job satisfaction. While moderate stress may serve as a motivator in some instances, chronic or poorly managed stress typically undermines satisfaction, engagement, and employee retention. Understanding and managing this relationship is vital for sustaining a healthy, productive workforce.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### *Objective*

The objective of the research is to examine the levels of stress perceived by professionals working in various occupational groups, i.e., in the IT professionals and MBAs. The research also intends to examine the influence of work culture on stress reaction among professionals. The chapter on methodology gives a clear description of the research design, sampling technique, instrument used, and data collection and analysis technique. The statistical methods used to analyse the findings are also described, followed by a concise description of applicable ethical issues.

#### *Sample*

The population under study were professionals between 23 and 35 years old working in India. The subjects were taken from two vocations: IT professionals and MBA graduates. A random sampling method was used to get a fair representation of both groups. The subjects were taken from various workplaces to get variation in organizational culture and work-related stress. The sample was restricted to Indian professionals to eliminate cultural factors that may interfere with the experience and perception of stress. Equal subjects were taken from both the IT and MBA domain to get equal comparison of both groups.

#### *Tools*

- **Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)** – The PSS is a 10-item self-report scale most commonly used to assess the extent to which life events are perceived as stressful. It

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evaluates the extent to which people perceive their lives as being uncontrollable, unpredictable, and overloaded.

- **Work Stress Questionnaire (WSQ)** – The WSQ is a self-reporting questionnaire to gauge different components of work-related stress, such as psychosocial, physical, and psychological at the workplace. It helps to find out sources and levels of stress in the workplace.

### *Data Collection*

Data collection was carried out over a defined period using an online survey format. Participants were approached through digital platforms, including professional networks and email communication. Prior to participation, the research participants were informed about the purpose of the study and were asked about mutual consent. The questionnaire included demographic questions followed by the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and Work Stress Questionnaire (WSQ). Participants were directed to answer based on their current work experiences. Participation was voluntary, and anonymity was maintained throughout the process to ensure the confidentiality and authenticity of responses.

### *Data Analysis*

The data gathered were systematically organized and statistically analysed using appropriate software tools. Descriptive statistics including mean and standard deviation were calculated to approximate the overall level of stress among the participants. Independent sample t-tests were used for analysing differences in the levels of stress between individuals working in IT and individuals who held MBA degrees. Correlation analysis was also used to measure the degree of association between various aspects of work-related stress. These statistical techniques provided an in-depth understanding of the patterns of stress within and between the two professional groups.

### *Hypotheses*

- **H1:** IT professionals experience more physical, psychosocial, and psychological stress than MBA Graduates.
- **H2:** Work satisfaction significantly predicts stress levels among professionals.
- **H3:** There is a significant difference in stress levels between IT professionals and MBA graduates.
- **H4** IT professionals have lower work satisfaction and higher stress levels compared to MBA graduates.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### *Result 1*

To investigate if IT professionals experience higher physical, psychosocial, and psychological stress than MBA graduates. Independent samples t-tests were used for each of the stress categories based on Work Stress Questionnaire (WSQ).

**Table 1: Comparison of Stress Domains Between IT Professionals and MBA Graduates**

Stress Level	Domain	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Physical	IT Professional	26.12	4.98	3.22	0.002**
	MBA Graduates	22.84	4.11		
Psychosocial	IT Professional	28.37	4.55	2.81	0.006**
	MBA Graduates	25.64	3.92		

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Stress Level	Domain	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Psychological	IT Professional	27.98	4.71	3.47	0.001**
	MBA Graduates	24.35	4.03		

Note:  $p < .01$ , \*\*significant difference

### Discussion:

The results of this research are consistent with Hypothesis 1 that there is more physical, psychosocial and psychological stress among IT professionals than among MBA graduates. Mean values of the IT professionals were significantly higher in all stress areas compared to other industries, with the differences shown in Table 1 implicating a general tendency of higher occupational stress in the IT-sector.

These findings are in line with the forgoing studies that underline IT work environment as high pressure, technology intense (Dhar & Dutta, 2018; Eslami et al., 2019). IT workers likely have hard pressure to work under the strict project due date, long screen time, ongoing learning needs and the instability from the job because of rapid technology changes, daily competition (Hicks et al., 1998).

On the other hand, people with an MBA often find themselves in roles such as strategic planning, organizational leadership, or business development, positions that are certainly stressful, but of a different variety (i.e., potentially diffused through hierarchy and in ownership, or with a bit more role autonomy).

The results suggest the necessity for organizational interventions to intervene stress in IT work. Offering workplace wellness programs, stress management training, flexible work hours and clearer role expectations may be useful.

### Result 2

To determine if job satisfaction has a real impact on stress levels among professionals, we ran a straightforward linear regression analysis. In this setup, job satisfaction served as the predictor variable, while overall stress, which combines physical, psychosocial, and psychological stress factors, was the dependent variable.

**Table 2: Linear Regression Analysis Predicting Stress from Work Satisfaction**

Model Summary	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Standard Error
	0.441	0.194	0.187	4.21

Anova Table	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significant Level
Regression	385.24	1	385.24	21.74	.000**
Residual	1603.76	98	16.36		
Total	1989.00	99			

Coefficients	B	SE B	Beta	t	Significant Level
Constant	36.57	1.98	—	18.47	.000
Work Satisfaction	-0.52	0.11	-0.44	-4.66	.000**

Note:  $p < .01$ , \*\*significant at the 0.01 level

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The model was statistically significant,  $F(1, 98) = 21.74, p < .001$ , indicating that work satisfaction explains approximately **19.4%** of the variance in stress levels. The regression coefficient for work satisfaction was negative and statistically significant ( $\beta = -0.44, p < .001$ ), suggesting that as work satisfaction decreases, stress levels increase.

### Discussion:

The findings of this analysis provide support for Hypothesis 2 – that work satisfaction is an important predictor of stress among the professionals. Linear regression analysis indicated a negative correlation between the two variables (i.e., individuals with lower work satisfaction have higher stress levels).

These results are in accordance with the previous studies, which underlined the negative association between job satisfaction and occupational stress (Spector, 1997; Albrecht et al., 2019). The reasons for dissatisfaction in work can however be multiple, as, for instance, a bad work-life balance, lack of recognition, role unequal or even over workload, known to accentuate the stress. Dissatisfied employees are more likely to experience job demands as excessive, causing a series of psychological and physiological responses of stress.

The findings from the regression also suggest that job satisfaction is a useful predictor rather than purely a correlational variable. Given that 86% of the variance between work satisfaction and stress was explained in this model, this model implies that satisfaction-based interventions may be influential in decreasing stress.

Organizational activities like reward programs, personal development activities, work engagement efforts, and open communication can be useful to enhance satisfaction and thus reduce stress.

### Result 3

To examine whether there is a significant difference in stress levels between IT professionals and MBA graduates, scores from the **Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)** were analyzed using an independent sample *t*-test.

**Table 3: Comparison of Perceived Stress Between IT and MBA Professionals**

Group	N	Mean (M)	SD	t-value	p-value
IT Professionals	50	26.78	5.02	<b>3.16</b>	<b>0.002**</b>
MBA Graduates	50	23.94	4.48		

Results Mean perceived stress average score for the sample of IT professionals ( $M = 26.78, SD = 5.02$ ) was significantly greater than that for the MBA graduates ( $M = 23.94, SD = 4.48$ ). The difference between them was significant at the 0.01 level,  $t(98) = 3.16, p = 0.002$ , which suggests that stress levels differ between the two groups.

### Discussion:

The results of the present study provide support to Hypothesis 3, which showed a significant difference for the stress level between IT professionals and MBA graduates. On the PSS, IT professionals displayed significantly higher stress scores ( $M = 26.78$ ) than MBA graduates ( $M = 23.94$ ), a result that was both statistically and practically significant ( $p = 0.002$ ).

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This finding is in line with previous studies that suggest that IT professionals are frequently working in high-stress conditions like overtime work, short deadlines, and frequent performance appraisals, which might serve to inflate perceptions of stress (Dhar & Dutta, 2018; Eslami et al., 2019). In contrast, MBA professionals are likely to experience higher levels of managerial autonomy, strategic autonomy, and more predictable job demands, which may lead to lower stress.

The results indicate the important effect of occupational characteristic and working environment to perceived stress. Interventions should especially focus on addressing stress levels perceived to be higher in the IT industry, including efforts that promote employee assistance programs, coping with workloads and mental health issues.

Future research can explore domain specific stressors or look at gender, experience, and role-level as moderating factors. And these lessons could help influence human resource policies that strive toward creating healthier, more sustainable professional environments.

### Result 4

To determine whether IT professionals have lower work satisfaction and higher stress levels than MBA graduates, two independent sample *t*-tests were conducted; one for **work satisfaction scores** and one for **overall stress scores** (combined score from WSQ and PSS).

**Table: 4 Comparison of Work Satisfaction and Stress Between IT Professionals and MBA Graduates**

Variable	Group	N	Mean (M)	SD	t- value	p-value
Work Satisfaction	IT Professionals	50	21.94	4.12	-5.12	< .001**
	MBA Graduates	50	26.67	3.46		
Stress	IT Professionals	50	27.53	4.75	3.91	< .001**
	MBA Graduates	50	23.84	4.11		

**Note:**  $p < .01$ , \*\*statistically significant

The results reveal that **IT professionals** report significantly **lower work satisfaction** ( $M = 21.94$ ,  $SD = 4.12$ ) than **MBA graduates** ( $M = 26.67$ ,  $SD = 3.46$ ),  $t(98) = -5.12$ ,  $p < .001$ . They also experience **significantly higher stress** ( $M = 27.53$ ,  $SD = 4.75$ ) compared to MBA graduates ( $M = 23.84$ ,  $SD = 4.11$ ),  $t(98) = 3.91$ ,  $p < .001$ .

### Discussion:

The findings in the present study validate Hypothesis 4 that IT professionals have lower job satisfaction and higher stress levels in comparison to MBA graduates. The fact that the differences between the two variables are statistically significant suggests that there are considerable psychological and professional differences between the two professional domains.

IT professionals report a notably lower average job satisfaction score of 21.94, a trend attributable to various factors including excessive workloads, inflexible schedules, elevated cognitive demands, and restricted opportunities for career advancement. These elements seem to correlate with increased stress levels, evidenced by an average stress score of 27.53 among the professionals. Such findings align with earlier studies that emphasize the high-

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pressure and burnout-prone characteristics of environments within the IT sector (Eslami et al., 2019; Spector, 1997).

The low satisfaction and high stress double pattern regarding IT professionals is not only of great concern, but it also puts a spotlight on a vital necessity of the specialized support of organizations. The implementation of the mental health initiatives, employee recognition, role redefinition, and flexible working policies can be a solution to the problem of dissatisfaction and stress in this sector.

Subsequent studies may investigate the importance of job satisfaction as the mediator in the link between the work environment and stress or compare the coping strategies of the different groups to find out how the occupational demands are managed.

### **SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

#### ***Summary***

In this study a sample of IT professionals and MBA graduates was taken to compare the level of work stress and job satisfaction with the help of the PSS and WSQ scales. The results revealed that the IT professionals had the highest level of stress with the lowest level of job satisfaction. A negative relationship between satisfaction and stress was observed with satisfaction reported as a significant predictor of stress levels. The study has a key message that implies the need for sustainable interventions in the Information Technology industry to make the employees feel better again especially.

#### ***Discussion***

This research compared job stress and job satisfaction among IT professionals and MBA graduates. IT professionals indicated more stress and less satisfaction because of heavy workload, technology changes, and tight deadlines. MBA graduates who were in strategic positions indicated less stress and more satisfaction. All the participants showed a negative correlation between stress and satisfaction. Regression proved the fact that job satisfaction is a significant predictor of stress levels. The results prove the direct impact of professional environment on psychological well-being. The persistently high levels of stress among IT professionals suggest a pressing need for expert workplace interventions. This research adds to occupational psychology by proving the significance of addressing profession-specific stressors.

#### ***Conclusion***

The current research was to address the topic of work stress and job satisfaction in IT professionals and MBA graduates. It was found that and job satisfaction is significantly higher in IT professionals than in MBA graduates. The results indicated that IT professionals are indeed subject to higher levels of physical, psychosocial, and psychological stress, while at the same time this category was found to have lower job satisfaction than the MBA counterparts. Moreover, a significant negative relationship was noted between work satisfaction and stress, with satisfaction emerging as a predictor of overall stress levels.

These outcomes also point out the fact that people are severely affected by the conditions and the role they play in the work environment. The worrying picture related to stress of the IT professionals and the dissatisfaction with their jobs raises the issue of finding solutions that aim at reducing stress and increasing job satisfaction as the focus of change.

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Specifically, the study recommends several ways that an organization can help its workforce manage stress and at the same time increase satisfaction particularly in the very challenging fields such as IT.

The impact of occupational role and work environment on psychological health challenges for employees is abstracted as it is manifested by the influence of stress and satisfaction on the overall stress level. This study reveals that organizational psychology has a lot to do with detecting stress specific differences between professional groups and at the same time, it reiterates satisfaction's central role in the stress experience.

In conclusion, It can be said that even today, understanding the way stress and satisfaction interact in the new professional era is very crucial to individual growth as well as organizational development. By adjusting their focus on different types of stress each professional group is going through, especially in high-pressure industries like IT, companies can make working environments healthier, retain their staff, and further raise overall productivity. The present study is clearly a way in that direction, exposing the way for future research and the introduction of new practices.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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