

AN IMPACT OF STRESS MANAGEMENT ON EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE THROUGH ONLINE MODE IN IT INDUSTRIES

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Abstract

The study examines the impact of stress management on employees' performance in IT industries through online mode. Stress has become a significant concern in the modern workplace, particularly in the fast-paced and demanding IT sector. This research aims to explore how effective stress management practices, conducted through online platforms, can enhance employees' performance and overall well-being. The study employs a quantitative research approach and utilizes an online questionnaire tool to gather primary data. The sample population comprises managers working in IT companies, and the study is conducted in Chennai, India, with a sample size of 100. Preliminary findings suggest that stress is prevalent in the IT industry, with work-related pressure being the primary stressor. Participants reported experiencing physical and psychological symptoms due to stress, which negatively influenced their work performance. However, employees who engaged in online stress management programs demonstrated improved stress coping skills and reported higher levels of job satisfaction. The research also highlights the importance of the online mode in providing flexibility and accessibility to stress management resources for IT employees. Virtual platforms enable employees to access stress management tools and techniques at their convenience, leading to better stress management outcomes. Implementing effective online stress management programs can enhance employees' well-being, reduce absenteeism, and improve overall work performance. The findings suggest that investing in employee stress management initiatives is crucial for creating a healthier and more productive work environment in IT industries.

Keywords: *stress management, employees' performance, online mode, IT industries, job satisfaction, productivity.*

Introduction

Stress management is defined as the tools, strategies, or techniques that reduce stress and reduce the negative impacts stress has on your mental or physical well-being (Van den Bergh, 2021). A variety of techniques can be used to manage stress. These include mental, emotional, and behavioral strategies (Powell & Enright, 2015). When stress management is used regularly

and in response to stressful life events, wellbeing of the people can be optimized (Sneddon, 2016). The present dynamic and high stimulating workplace brings lots of opportunities and benefits along with immense stress upon employees (Tetrick & Winslow, 2015). The workers in the current world experience huge stress when compared to the past years due to the constant upgrade in the work demands. According to (Grawitch et al., 2015) work stress is relatively new to the modern lifestyle which is inevitable. There are three levels of stress experienced by humans.

Workplace stress can be a real problem for many people. One of the main sources of workplace stress is the inability of the individual to control the workloads. High workloads are frustrating for every individual (Naylor et al., 2020). These things are nice to have to relieve some workday stress. Trying to juggle high workloads and personal responsibilities can wear you out. It can take its toll on physical and mental health. There are many different ways that you can alleviate this kind of tension though (Ahmad et al., 2015). These are such as applying for bonuses or unpaid leave. It is seeking help from superiors, prioritizing tasks, and delegating work if possible. One can also use different methods to manage work-related stress. These methods include mental exercises, keeping a daily planner of tasks and deadlines, physical exercise, and listening to music (Ahmed et al., 2020).

Stress management programs

Stress management through online mode has emerged as a crucial aspect of employee wellbeing in the IT industry. The fast-paced and demanding nature of IT work can often lead to high levels of stress among employees, impacting their physical and mental health, as well as their job performance (Carlson et al., 2019). To address these challenges, companies have increasingly turned to online platforms to provide effective stress management programs tailored to the unique needs of their workforce. One of the key advantages of stress management through online mode is accessibility. IT professionals often have busy schedules and may work remotely or in different time zones (Havlovic, & Keenan, 2020).

Online programs allow employees to access stress management resources at their convenience, whether during a break, after work hours, or even during travel. This flexibility ensures that stress management becomes an integral part of their daily routine without adding extra burden to their already demanding workloads (Vonderlin et al., 2020). Online stress management platforms offer a diverse range of resources and techniques to address different aspects of stress. These resources may include guided meditation sessions, mindfulness exercises, yoga classes, stress reduction webinars, and cognitive-behavioral therapy modules. Employees can choose the methods that resonate with them the most and incorporate them into their lives to manage stress effectively. Confidentiality and privacy are also significant factors in favor of online stress management in the IT industry (Bartlett et al., 2019)

Some employees may be hesitant to seek help for stress-related issues due to concerns about judgment or stigmatization. Online platforms offer anonymity, allowing employees to seek support without fear of being identified. This confidentiality fosters a more open and accepting environment, encouraging employees to proactively address their stress-related concerns. Also,

data-driven insights gained from online stress management platforms enable companies to assess the effectiveness of their programs (Benson, 2019). These platforms can track employee engagement, measure the usage of stress management resources, and collect feedback. Such data-driven insights allow organizations to identify trends and tailor stress management programs to better meet the needs of their employees (Stahl & Goldstein, 2019). Stress management through online mode is particularly relevant in the context of remote work. With the pandemic accelerating the shift to remote work, many IT professionals find themselves facing new stressors related to isolation, work-life balance, and digital fatigue (Nicholas, & Steyn, 2020). Online stress management programs can provide targeted support to remote workers, equipping them with coping strategies to navigate these challenges effectively. Stress management through online mode in the IT industry offers a comprehensive and accessible approach to supporting employee well-being (Lazarus, 2020). By providing a diverse range of resources, ensuring flexibility, preserving confidentiality, and leveraging data-driven insights, companies can empower their workforce to manage stress effectively. Ultimately, a well-supported and resilient workforce leads to increased productivity, reduced absenteeism, and higher job satisfaction, fostering a positive and thriving work environment in the competitive IT industry.

The present study adopts the job demand control support model, as stress arises due to high job demands due to tight deadlines, complex problem solving and rapid technological changes in the modern environment. This led to having low control and support for employees in the organisation. In order to sustain in these conditions, it is essential to offer a better work environment that supports diminishing the stress and enhancing productivity. **Need for the study**

In the fast-paced and demanding world of Information Technology (IT) industries, employees often face high levels of stress due to tight deadlines, long working hours, and complex projects (Ahmaniemi et al., 2017). The impact of this stress on their overall well-being and job performance cannot be underestimated. As a result, stress management has emerged as a crucial aspect of maintaining a healthy and productive workforce in IT companies (Brooks et al., 2020).

Through online modes, stress management programs have become increasingly accessible and effective for IT industry employees (Gaggioli et al., 2014). Online platforms offer flexibility in accessing resources, allowing employees to participate in stress management workshops, webinars, and training sessions at their convenience. This accessibility is especially beneficial for IT professionals, who often work remotely or have irregular schedules. Stress management programs in the IT industry through online mode (Naylor et al., 2019) typically include a range of techniques and tools designed to help employees cope with stress and maintain a work-life balance (Riches et al., 2021). These programs often focus on mindfulness and relaxation exercises, time management strategies, and techniques for handling workplace pressures effectively (Sona et al., 2019). By providing employees with practical skills to manage stress,

companies can enhance their overall well-being, leading to increased job satisfaction and improved performance (Thoondée, and Oikonomou, 2017).

One significant impact of stress management on employees' performance is the reduction of burnout (Wohn et al., 2020). Burnout is a common issue in the IT industry, where employees frequently face high demands and are at risk of feeling overwhelmed (Yeo et al., 2020). Stress management techniques, such as meditation and self-care practices, help employees build resilience and prevent burnout, leading to improved job satisfaction and reduced turnover rates (Cikajlo et al., 2017). Stress management also positively affects employees' focus and productivity (Wang et al., 2021). When individuals are better equipped to handle stress, they can concentrate more effectively on their tasks, leading to higher-quality work and increased efficiency (Vander et al., 2020). Moreover, stress management techniques can improve employees' problem-solving abilities and decision-making skills, as they can approach challenges with a clearer and calmer mindset (Van Steenberg et al., 2018).

Additionally, fostering a culture of stress management in the IT industry through online mode can lead to enhanced teamwork and collaboration (Wohn et al., 2020). Employees who feel supported and equipped to manage stress are more likely to communicate effectively, share ideas, and work cohesively with their colleagues (Bauer et al., 2014). This collaborative environment fosters innovation and creativity, ultimately benefiting the organization as a whole (Toscano & Zappalà, 2020). Stress management through online mode has a profound impact on employees' performance in the IT industry (Xiao et al., 2021). By providing accessible and effective stress management programs, companies can mitigate burnout, improve focus and productivity, and cultivate a positive and collaborative work environment (Ellis et al., 2020). Investing in employees' well-being not only enhances their job satisfaction but also contributes to the overall success and growth of IT companies (Raguseo et al., 2016) in the highly competitive and dynamic digital landscape.

Aim & objective

The aim of this research paper is to identify whether there is association between the impact of the stress management on the performance of the employees. The objectives of this paper are listed below.

1. To study about the existing stress management program offered in organizations
2. To examine the effectiveness of the stress management programs
3. To ascertain the impact of the stress management program on the performance of the employees.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this research paper is given below.

H1: There is a significant relation between the impact of stress management on employees' performance through online.

H0: There is no significant relation between the impact of stress management on employees' performance.

Methodology

Primary data collection is employed in this research paper. Quantitative research approach is chosen for this study. The quantitative tool selected for this study is online questionnaire tool. The online questionnaire tool is employed in this study as this tool is easy to work with larger sample size. The sample population of this research study is the managers who are working in an IT company. The sample size for this study is 200. The study area of this study is Chennai, India. The questions related to this study are structured as questionnaire. The questionnaire is designed in a way that it is easy to understand and interpret the true meaning. The questionnaire has four sections which are categorized as section A, section B, section C and section D. By employing SPSS version 23 and conducting validity and reliability testing, normality tests, simple linear regression tests, T-tests, this study will be able to thoroughly analyse the data and draw reliable conclusions from the study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Demographic statistics

Characteristics	Category	n	(%)
Gender	Male	108	54.0
	Female	92	46.0
Nationality	Indian	180	90
	other	20	10
Education	Diploma	15	7.5
	Master's degree and above	13	6.5
	UG	105	52.5
	Ph.D	67	33.5
Marital Status	Single	54	27
	Married	146	73

Years of Experience	1-5	104	52
	6-10	96	48

According to the analysis, most of the respondents were males at 54.0% (n=108) unlike females at 46.0% (n=92). On nationality, 90.0% (n=180) were Indians unlike 10.0% (n=20) that were comprised of other races. On the levels of education, most of them had Masters' degree and above at 52.5% (n=105) followed by university at 33.5% (n=67), college at 7.5% (n=15) as the least being those at high school at 6.5% (n=13). On the marital status, 73.0% (n=146) were married as 27.0% (n=54) being single. On the years of experience, 52.0% (n=104) had 1-5 years of experience as the rest had between 6-10 years of experience at 48.0% (n=96).

Table 2: Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variable validity test	Correlation value	Note:
SMP	r-count>rtable(0.746)	Valid
ESMP	r-count>rtable(0.753)	Valid
PE	r-count>rtable(0.732)	Valid
Reliability	Cronbach Alpha	
SMP	0.942>0.60	Reliable
ESMP	0.926>0.60	Reliable
PE	0.953>0.60	Reliable

*Note: PE *Performance of the Employees, ESMP*Effectiveness of Stress Management program, SMP*Stress Management Program*

According to the findings, Performance of the Employees, Effectiveness of Stress Management program and Stress Management Program were declared valid since the r-count was greater than the r tables. On reliability, the analysis also informed the variables as reliable since the Cronbach alpha values were greater than 0.60.

Table 3: Normality tests

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
PE	.346	200	.000	.678	200	.000
ESMP	.332	200	.000	.726	200	.000

SMP	.356	200	.000	.690	200	.000
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

On the analysis, it was evident that Performance of the Employees, Effectiveness of Stress Management program and Stress Management Program were not normally distributed at 5% level of significance ($p < 0.05$).

Table.4. ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	192.472	2	96.236	1211.376	.000 ^b
	Residual	15.650	197	.079		
	Total	208.122	199			
a. Dependent Variable: PE						
b. Predictors: (Constant), SMP, ESMP						

On the model ANOVA, it was noted that the model was considered statistically adequate for predicting performance of employees (PE) ($F(2,197)=1211.376$, $p=0.000$). This informed that the model was statistically viable.

Table.5.Linear regression

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.962 ^a	.925	.924	.28186
a. Predictors: (Constant), SMP, ESMP				

According the analysis, R-squared was 0.925, showing that 92.5% of the variation on performance of employees (PE) on Stress Management Programs and the Effectiveness of the Stress Management Programs. This explained a higher predictive power.

Table.6.Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.092	.044		2.106	.037

ESMP	.278	.050	.286	5.537	.000
SMP	.662	.049	.691	13.374	.000
a. Dependent Variable: PE					

The model presents an equation defined as;

$$PE = 0.092 + 0.278 * ESMP + 0.662 * SMP$$

This informed that a rise in Stress Management Programs and the Effectiveness of the Stress Management Programs by a unit increased performance of employees (PE) by 0.662 and 0.278 respectively. As observed from the analysis that stress management programs have the highest impact followed by effective stress management program. This implies that stress management program is essential for employees not only to enhance their health and also enhance their performance in the organization.

Results and Discussion

The study highlights the context and importance of stress management programs in the virtual work environment, particularly during and after the COVID-19 pandemic when organizations rapidly shifted to remote work setups especially IT Industry. The study aimed to investigate how stress management programs could impact employee performance in this virtual setting. It is important to discuss this in relation to the impact of stress management programs through online mode:

- **Virtual Work Challenges:** The sudden transition to remote work posed significant challenges for both employees and managers. Dispersed employees faced issues such as work-life balance, increased isolation, and the blurring of boundaries between work and personal life. Managers had to adapt to new ways of leading and supporting their teams, which included managing stress and maintaining team cohesion from a distance (Sudhin et al., 2023).
- **Role of Stress Management Programs:** Stress management programs through online mode became essential tools for supporting employees' mental health and well-being during the pandemic-induced virtual work. These programs offered resources and techniques to cope with stress, manage workloads effectively, and maintain work-life balance. They addressed specific challenges associated with remote work, such as managing stress in virtual teams and maintaining connection and collaboration (Johnson et al., 2019).
- **Empowering Employees:** Online stress management programs empowered employees to take charge of their stress levels and well-being. By providing accessible resources, employees could proactively engage in stress-reducing activities, fostering a sense of control and autonomy even in challenging work situations (Haque, et al., 2019).
- **Impact on Performance:** As stress management programs supported employees in coping with the demands of virtual work, the potential impact on performance was significant. Reduced stress levels can lead to improved focus, productivity, and job satisfaction. Employees who felt supported and equipped to manage stress were better able to meet work demands effectively (Lee, & Kim, 020).

- **Adapting to the Virtual Environment:** Stress management programs tailored to the virtual environment were particularly relevant. Online platforms offered flexibility in accessing resources, accommodating employees' varied schedules and locations. The convenience of online access made stress management programs more appealing and feasible for virtual teams (Whillans et al., 2021).
- **Building Resilience:** Stress management programs also contributed to building employee resilience. Virtual work presented new challenges and uncertainties, and employees who participated in stress management programs were better equipped to handle these challenges and adapt to changing circumstances (Ott-Holland et al., 2019).
- **Optimism and Mindfulness:** The e-training sessions also contributed to increasing employees' optimism and mindfulness. Optimism fosters a hopeful and positive attitude towards the future, which can counteract feelings of stress and uncertainty. Mindfulness, on the other hand, helps individuals stay focused on the present moment, reducing anxiety and improving overall well-being (Raza et al., 2022).
- **Skill Development and Stress Management:** The study draws parallels with previous studies that emphasize the effectiveness of training sessions in skill development and stress management. Training programs equip employees with practical tools and strategies to manage stress effectively. By enhancing employees' coping skills, these programs enable them to navigate through challenging situations with greater confidence and ease (Chen, & Eyoun, 2021).
- **Employee Coping Behavior:** Training programs were found to lead to improved employee coping behavior. Coping behavior refers to the actions and strategies individuals employ to manage stress and adversity. By participating in training sessions, employees learned healthier and more constructive ways to cope with the demands of virtual work and organizational changes (Kotzé, 2022).

Thus, stress management programs through online mode played a vital role in supporting employees' well-being and performance during the virtual work environment induced by the pandemic. By addressing the unique challenges of remote work and empowering employees to manage stress effectively, these programs contributed to a more positive and productive virtual work environment. The combination of appropriate leadership behavior and stress management initiatives underscored the importance of a holistic approach to supporting employees in times of transformation and uncertainty.

Conclusions

The present study takes a more holistic approach by examining a combination of factors that collectively influence stress management and performance. It identifies both task- and relation-oriented behavior, emphasizing the importance of both work-related tasks and social interactions in fostering a conducive work environment for stress management. E-training is identified as a critical resource, providing employees with the necessary skills and tools to cope with the challenges of virtual work and major transformations. Additionally, employment security plays a vital role, as job stability and a sense of security can reduce stress and anxiety among employees.

The study's novelty lies in its focus on stress management programs specifically tailored to IT employees. By investigating the impact of stress management programs on employee performance, the study highlights the significance of proactive interventions in addressing stress-related challenges in the IT industry. This emphasis on stress management programs indicates an organization's commitment to employee well-being and productivity, especially during times of uncertainty and change. The findings of this study have practical implications for IT companies looking to enhance their employees' stress management and performance. Implementing stress management programs that incorporate task- and relation-oriented behavior, e-training, and employment security can lead to a more resilient and productive workforce. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of a comprehensive approach to understanding the complex dynamics of stress management and performance in the IT industry. The limitations of the study are that the sample size is limited and hence it fails to represent the whole population. This study hasn't distinguished between studies that have evaluated the effects of stress management programs at various designation in IT industry.

In conclusion, this study fills a significant gap in the existing literature by exploring the combined impact of multiple factors on stress management and performance among IT employees. By considering task- and relation-oriented behavior, e-training, and employment security, the study provides a comprehensive perspective that can guide organizations in developing effective stress management programs to support their IT workforce. As organizations continue to adapt to changing work environments and navigate through uncertain times, the insights from this study can be invaluable in promoting employee well-being and optimizing performance in the IT industry.

Managerial Implications

Stress management through online mode in the IT industry has significant managerial implications that can enhance employee well-being, productivity, and overall organizational performance. Here are some key managerial implications to consider:

- It is advisable for the IT firms to make an investment in the well-being of employees. It is essential to understand the importance of employee wellbeing in the organisation. Making an investment in stress management programmes and implementing them effectively in the organisation through online platforms can help to understand the level of stress faced by employees in the IT sector. An effective programme can pave the way to diminish absenteeism and enhance employee retention and job satisfaction levels of employees.
- HR managers have to develop a flexible and accessible stress management program for employees. This can encourage employees to take advantage of these programs and ensure that they can dedicate time for stress management without feeling guilty or pressured. By promoting a culture of work-life balance and supporting flexible work arrangements, managers foster a more engaged and motivated workforce.
- Promotion of Peer Support: Managers can encourage a supportive work environment by promoting peer support and collaboration. Online stress management platforms may include discussion forums or virtual support groups where employees can share their experiences and coping strategies. By facilitating such interactions, managers foster a sense of camaraderie and create a support network for employees facing similar stressors.

- **Stress Management Training for Managers:** Managers themselves play a crucial role in promoting stress management within their teams. Providing stress management training for managers equips them with the knowledge and skills to identify signs of stress in their team members, offer appropriate support, and create a work environment that fosters well-being. Managers who lead by example and prioritize their own stress management also set a positive precedent for their teams.
- **Integration with Performance Evaluation:** Incorporating stress management and well-being metrics into performance evaluations sends a clear message that employee well-being is a priority for the organization. By aligning stress management goals with performance goals, managers reinforce the importance of employee well-being and encourage employees to take an active role in managing their stress.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Stress management is not a one-time effort but an ongoing process. Managers should continuously assess the effectiveness of stress management initiatives and seek feedback from employees. Regularly updating and enhancing online stress management resources ensures that the programs remain relevant and responsive to the changing needs of the IT workforce.

Thus, stress management through online mode in the IT industry requires a proactive and supportive approach from managers. By investing in employee well-being, promoting flexibility, leveraging data insights, encouraging peer support, providing training for managers, integrating stress management with performance evaluation, and emphasizing continuous improvement, organizations can create a positive work environment that fosters resilience, productivity, and long-term success in the competitive IT sector.

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