

A Study on Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction of IT Employees with Special Reference to Ernakulam District

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Introduction¹

The Indian IT industry has been steering the growth of the Indian economy in the past decade unlike any other industry by generating jobs, pushing up exports, increasing FDI, creating wealth, thereby boosting the forex reserves and also by other visible and invisible ways. This sterling performance of the IT industry was largely on account of its human resources. This industry has also been much affected by the pervasive forces of globalization and by the persistent growth of information technology. These changes have in turn affected the way firms compete and specifically the way they are managed. The increased complexity of global competition have exerted tremendous pressure on workers and thus imposed considerable stress on them. Thus, occupational stress becomes a common problem faced by employees in many organizations today. It affects employee's mental and physical health and in the long run affects company's performance. This study attempts to identify the sources of stress and its prevalence among employees in the IT industry in Ernakulam district. In this study the researcher also made an attempt to study the impact of flexitime on employee stress reduction.

Conceptual Frame Work

A. Stress

Nowadays as a consequence people at work are exposed to high quantitative as well as qualitative demands and hard competition due to global economy, decrease in production, downsizing and increased demands for efficiency, employees are expected to produce more and more and experience of stress due to Over stimulation have become a serious problem. Due to the technological changes, especially in organizations, as there is restricting rules and regulations formal communication is based on hierarchical systems, which directly affects employee's proper adjustment with occupational environment. Stress is a dynamic phenomenon and its impact on individuals may vary from person to person.

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B. Occupational Stress

The relationship between man and work has attracted the attention of philosopher's scientists and novelists. A major part of man's life is spend in work and work is a social reality and social expectations to which people seem to confirm with the growing complexities of the society, it may appear that work is simply a means of earning a living . Work serves many other functions for an individual that people was continue to work even if they are not pressed by economic needs. Work in this regard is potential source of need gratification. (Pestonjee 1991)

In 1992, UN report labeled occupational stress as the "20th century disease" and after a few years WHO said that occupational stress had become a "world wide epidemic". This is based on the fact that occupational stress is an important contributor at many health problems including psychological, physiological and behavioral problems.

Schuler (1980), agreed that stress is in organizations is important occupational health problem and new research knowledge about stress is needed within the field of organizational behavior. Behr and Newman (1978), deliver occupational stress as "a condition arising from the interaction of people and their job and characterized by changes deviate from their normal functions.

Job stress (occupational stress) results from a variety of extreme or toxic conditions created within or associated with job environment. Such conditions include job qualities, organizational roles and responsibilities. For people, and organizational structuring and climate and office politics (Behr and Newman1976, Beehr and Schuler, 1980,Briet et.al 1981;Coper anMarshall,1976;Ivancevich and Matteson,1980;Schuler,1980).

We have all been affected at one time or another by work related stress. In fact, It is virtually impossible to avoid stress. Although stress can provide us with energy and motivation, too much stress can have a very negative impact on employees and employee alike. Workplace stress is becoming an increasing concern in workplaces. It is defined as the harmful physical and emotional response that can happen when there is a conflict between demands on a person and the amount of control the person has over meeting these demands. Basically,

workplace stress occurs when the demands of the job and the working environment on a person exceed their capacity to meet them.

Fear of job redundancy, layoffs due to an uncertain economy, increased demand for overtime due to staff cutbacks can all act as negative stressors. People who start to feel the 'pressure to perform' find that they experience an increasing effort to meet rising expectations with no increase in job satisfaction. The relentless requirement to work at optimum performance takes its toll in job satisfaction, employee turnover, reduced efficiency, illness and even death. Absenteeism, illness, alcoholism, poor decision making, indifference, lack of motivation and creativity are all by-products of an overstressed workplace. In addition, stress that the person is experiencing at home (marital difficulties, financial problems) can make its way into workplace, affecting their ability to perform.

C. Job satisfaction

Despite its wide usage in scientific research, as well as in everyday life, there is still no general agreement regarding what job satisfaction is. In fact there is no final definition on what job represents. Therefore before a definition on job satisfaction can be given, the nature and importance of work as a universal human activity must be considered. Different authors have different approaches towards defining job satisfaction. Some of the most commonly cited definitions on job satisfaction are analyzed in the text that follows.

Hoppock defined job satisfaction as any combination of psychological, physiological and environmental circumstances that cause a person truthfully to say I am satisfied with my job (Hoppock, 1935). According to this approach although job satisfaction is under the influence of many external factors, it remains something internal that has to do with the way how the employee feels. That is job satisfaction presents a set of factors that cause a feeling of satisfaction. Vroom in his definition on job satisfaction focuses on the role of the employee in the workplace. Thus he defines job satisfaction as affective orientations on the part of individuals toward work roles which they are presently occupying (Vroom, 1964). One of the most often cited definitions on job satisfaction is the one given by Specter according to him, job satisfaction has to do with the way how people feel about their job and its various aspects. It has to do with the extent to which people like or dislike their job. That's why job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction can appear in any given work situation.

D. Flexi-time

Flexitime (flexi-time) is a scheduling option that allows workers to select their starting and quitting times within limits established by management. There are generally core hours when all employees

must be present. Although starting and quitting times vary, employees are required to work a standard number of hours within a given time period. There are several variations on the use of flexitime such as fixed starting and quitting times that vary daily, variations in the length of day with required core hours, and variations in the length of day without mandatory core hours. Some flexitime programs allow workers to bank hours for the future.

Statement of the Problem

The present study focuses on the occupational stress and job satisfaction of employees. Descriptive research design is adopted and universe is the IT employees of the software industries in Ernakulam District. The researcher adopted stratified random sampling technique and sample size was confirmed to 600. 23 IT companies in Ernakulam district were selected and primary data was collected by administering structured tools like Occupational Stress Inventory and Job Satisfaction survey. Researcher also analyzes the impact of flexi time as a stress reduction tool. Hence the researcher has selected a study on occupational stress and job satisfaction of IT employees in Ernakulam district.

Relevance of the Study

With the expansion of technology, more people have accepted technology related areas as their working field. Studies prove that the work related stress is comparatively more in these fields because of fear of job redundancy, layoffs due to uncertain economy, and increased demands for overtime due to staff cutbacks. Economic factors that employees are facing in the 21st century have been linked to increased stress levels. Researchers and social commentators have pointed out that the computer and communications revolutions have made companies more efficient and productive than ever before. This boon in productivity however has caused higher expectations and greater competition, putting more stress on the employees. Stress is a fact of everyday life and in fact studies indicate that mild levels of stress actually facilitate efficiency probably because they help us to mobilize our energy and resource and motivate us to do our best. But today's changing and competitive environment, stress level increasing both with the workers and the managers. Though the pay offered is more, employees find it difficult to manage the stress faced by them. Stress should not be too high or too low. An optimum level of stress is beneficial. Too low and too high stress reduces productivity and increases pressure to the management. As human beings are put in hectic conditions at times, stress is an unavoidable consequence. Stress level is increasing both with the workers and the managers. In this context, "A study on occupational stress of IT employees with reference to Ernakulam District

aims to analyze the factors influencing stress and the ways and means to overcome.

Job stress is known as work stress or occupational stress. It is defined as the experience of negative emotional situation. Amy (2009) identified these negative symptoms as frustration, worry, anxiety, depression and many work related issues. Job stress can result in psychological, physical and behavioral consequences for individuals. These unfavorable outcomes are quite costly to individuals and organizations, as well. According to Pawar and Rathod (2007) also revealed that the most important determinants of stress are job insecurity and less autonomy.

Even though lot of studies were conducted to establish the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction in many sectors, too little amount of studies were conducted in relation to Kerala State particularly IT companies in Ernakulam district. As information technology is a service industry employees' job satisfaction is very much important to deal with the customer effectively and positively. Companies are doing what can do to differentiate the company from other competitor and one of the most effective ways of achieving success is to serve customers with friendly, dedicated and well-motivated work force. Thus, it is very critical that the employees in the service sector to have high level of job satisfaction to create satisfied customer. In this moment, the study is undertaken to concentrate on specific area that related to job stress and its influence on job satisfaction of IT employees

In the pursuit of reducing stress, improving performance, increasing productivity, reducing costs and enhancing profitability in the workplace, organisations have been evolving new ways and means to build psychological relationship with employees. Work -life balance (Flexi Time) is a common challenge throughout the industrialized world. Employees all over the world are facing challenges how to balance work and personal life (Ramachandra Aryasri & Suman Babu S, 2007). So there is also a need to apply a stress reduction mechanism and here comes the role of flexi time that does not add any cost to the employer but adds many benefits to the bottom line like improved retention, increased performance apart from reduction of employee stress. In this context "A study on occupational stress and job satisfaction of IT employees with special reference to Ernakulam district" aims to analyze the factors influencing stress and the relationship with job satisfaction and suggest flexi time as a means to overcome occupational stress.

Scope of the Study

On the background of global economic recession this topic has much relevance. Job redundancy, job failures, dropouts are very common terms in Indian IT industry today. Night shifts, 24/7 work timings,

work pressure etc made the IT field more complex. Here the investigator tries to throw light on the dimensions of stress, the nature and extent of stress and suggesting some measures for overcoming this.

This kind of pressure is there for both men and women but still is true that women to cope with practical problems of balancing work at home and office in our social and family set-up. A study shows that high salaries and social status associated with the IT sector has attracted many to take up these jobs, but suffer on account of various factors like late working hours. Covering 150 women in the IT sector and 50 others in allied areas, the study found that long working hours at the desk and job related pressure creates a lot of physical discomfort and mental tension (Kerala State Women's Commission, 2010). Earlier academic literature has looked extensively at IT sector, but mainly from the perspective of how it grew, how it has leveraged existing economic resources, how it has developed and fine-tuned the model of outsourcing, and how structures of labor laws, economic incentives, historical conditions, and labor mobility have helped the industry grow. Very few though have looked at IT employees, in particular job satisfaction. Thus, the present study focuses on the job stress and job satisfaction of IT employees.

Research studies have widely discussed about the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction. The work done in this regard covers broad range of disciplines like IT Sector, but less attention is paid to IT Employees with respect to job satisfaction and job stress. The developing country like India, where literacy rate is very high, resources are high, information technology at its top, even though lot of studies were conducted to establish the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction in many sectors, too little amount of studies were conducted in relation to Kerala State particularly IT companies in Ernakulam district. As information technology is a service industry employees' job satisfaction is very much important to deal with the customer effectively and positively. Companies are doing what can do to differentiate the company from other competitor and one of the most effective ways of achieving success is to serve customers with friendly, dedicated and well-motivated work force. Thus, it is very critical that the employees in the service sector to have high level of job satisfaction to create satisfied customer.

Because of the changing socio-demographics of the workforce, organizations both in public and private industries are competing to attract and retain employees. Organizations need to find the most qualified individuals to work for them. Attracting and retaining employees are becoming important for organizations to achieve their goals and objectives. The recruitment and selection process has also been affected by the changes in workforce demographics. Legislations and policies have affected different

organizational processes particularly the recruitment and selection. Organizations need to give equal opportunities for people regardless of their age, cultural background, and gender among other things. Because of increased female participation in the workforce there are more two-paycheck or dual career families. This in turn has created enormous pressures for flexibility in work arrangements to cope with family needs. It has also led to more employee reluctance to relocate for job advancement and to the need for better child-care arrangements. As a result, many firms are forced to make geographic relocation less of a requirement for career mobility. Flexible work arrangements are also becoming an important trend.

Hence, the study is undertaken to concentrate on specific area that related to job stress and it to job stress and its influence on job satisfaction of IT employees and suggesting flexi time as an employee retention and stress reduction tool.

Operational definition of key terms

A. Stress

Stress has been defined in a number of ways, but one of the leading and most useful definitions was presented by McGrath (1970) who defined "stress as a substantial imbalance between environmental demand and response capability of the organism" (p.17)

Lazarus and Folk man define psychology stress as "a particular relationship between person and the environmental is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his order well being". Quick and Quick (1984) observed "A stressful situation develops if the valued beliefs and behavior of the individual are suppressed and suggest these interpersonal group pressure can cause various psychological behavioral disorder.

Schuler (1988) defines stress as "A dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity constrained or demand related to what he or she desires and or which the outcome is perceived to be either uncertain or important."

B. IT employees

In this research employee means one who is employed in the IT enabled services for salary or on a contract basis by a business house or by government. MC Millen (1992)

C. Occupational Stress

According to Beehr and New man (1978) occupational stress as" a condition arising from the interaction of people and their occupation and characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning.

D. Job satisfaction

Hoppock defined job satisfaction as any combination of psychological, physiological and environmental

circumstances that cause a person truthfully to say I am satisfied with my job.

F. Flexi time

Flexitime (flexi-time) is defined as a scheduling option that allows workers to select their starting and quitting times within limits established by management. There are generally core hours when all employees must be present. Although starting and quitting times vary, employee are required to work a standard number of hours within a given time period (Avery and Zabel 2001).

Review of Literature

The literature has suggested that there is stress in every field of life especially in the workplace, the factors may be individual, organizational, extra organizational and cultural, environmental and emotional. However every organization should identify the causes of stress and coping strategies. Yoga, meditation, exercise are helpful physical tools to control stress. There are *organizational* approaches like goal setting, selection and placement, improved communication, participative decision making, building team work, personal wellness programme and *individual* approaches like time management, assertiveness, physiological fitness, social support network etc for reducing stress. But stress is a mental condition so solutions should have a psychological base, i.e. autonomy, job security integrity, adaptability

Conflict, support are predictors of stress. In this study it is proved that autonomy have an inverse relationship with stress. They are considered as job characteristics variable. Literatures also suggested that there are other practical stress reduced mechanisms like flexi-time or work Life balance. Here the investigator analyses the impact of flexi-time and suggest it as a stress reduction mechanism. Reduced related stress outcomes due to work life balance practices have been observed in many research studies (Johnson, 1995). Reduction in worker stress from conflicts between work and family roles (White, et al 2003).

Objectives of the Study

Main Objectives

1. To analyze the dimensions of occupational stress and job satisfaction among employees.
2. To find out the relationship between level of stress and job satisfaction
3. To find out the significant impact of flexi time in reducing employee stress.
4. To analyze the significance of flexi time as a job satisfaction tool.
5. To analyze the influence of autonomy, the job characteristics variable on occupational stress.

Sub Objectives

1. To find out the effect of socio demographic variables on occupational stress and job satisfaction
2. To assess the difference in the stress level and job satisfaction on the basis of level of management, type of company and nature of job.
3. To find out the correlation between stress and job satisfaction
4. To test the significance of difference among respondents towards applying flexi time as a stress reduction mechanism.
5. To test whether there is any significant difference between variables of occupational stress and job satisfaction classified on the basis of hobbies as a stress reduction mechanism
6. To examine and analyze the influence of flexitime on employee recruitment, retention tool

Research Question

1. To analyze the impact of the variables relating to occupational stress and job satisfaction
2. To examine the impact of flexi time in reducing employees' stress

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no significant difference in the level of stress classified on the basis of gender, age, marital status, educational status and employment of spouse of the respondents.
2. There is no significant difference in the level of job satisfaction classified on the basis of gender, age, marital status, educational status and employment of spouse of the respondents.
3. There is no significant difference in the level of stress classified on the basis of sub scales of the stress.
4. There exists no significant difference in the level of stress classified on the basis the level of management.
5. There is no significant difference among variables classified on the basis of level of management on the variable job satisfaction.
6. There is no significant difference between employee's classifieds on the basis of type of company.
7. There is no significant difference between employees classified on the basis of type of company on the variable job satisfaction.
8. There is no positive correlation between occupational stress and job satisfaction.
9. There is no significant difference among respondents towards applying flexi time as a stress reduction mechanism.
10. There is significant impact of flexi time in reducing employee stress.

11. There is no significant difference among respondents towards applying flexi time as a job satisfaction tool.
12. There is no significant difference between variables of occupational stress classified on the basis of hobbies as a stress reduction mechanism

Methodology**A. Tools used for Data collection**

1. Occupational Stress Inventory (OSI)
2. The Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS)
3. Flexi- time as Employee Recruitment and Retention Questionnaire
4. Flexi-time Stress Reduction Scale adopted from person-environment Fit model (PE fit Model)

B. Method adopted for the study

Normative survey method is adopted for the study. It is more relative than experimental studies because it investigates phenomena in their natural settings and it was help to determine the present trends and solve correct practical problems. It is concerned with the generalized statistics that result when data abstracted from a number of individual cases. It is essentially cross sectional.

C. Area of study and sampling technology

Sample is a small proportion of population selected for observation and analysis. By observing the characteristics of the sample one can make certain inferences about the characteristics of the population from which it is drawn. The actual method to be adopted is decided in terms of the constraints set by the requirements provided by the present study. The present study is confined to Ernakulam district in the state of Kerala. Stratified random sampling technique is used.

D. Population

Population consists of total employees working in 23 IT companies in Ernakulam district. There are 1200 employees working now in 23 companies selected.

E. Sampling design

The study is based on both the primary data and secondary data. Secondary data was collected from various research journals, books, magazines, websites related to the field of the study. Primary data was collected by administering a structured Occupational Stress Inventory and Job Satisfaction Survey, Flexi time questionnaire and Flexi time stress reduction scale to the junior level and middle level managers and executives of the sample companies.

23 IT companies in Ernakulam district are selected on the basis of probability sampling which is random in nature. A total of 600 samples included from 23 companies based on simple

random sampling. The sizes of each of junior level and middle level management and executives depend on the population of respective cadre of managers. Managerial personnel from, marketing, finance, tourism, insurance are included in the study. The sizes of each of the junior and middle level management depends on the population of respective cadre of managers. Managerial persons from Tourism Finance Marketing and Technical functions are included in the study.

A sample 144 were selected as the sample for administering flexi time questionnaire from employees of 10 IT companies who are under flexi-time arrangements. By contacting the organization, the researcher obtained the list of employees that work under flexi-time arrangements. The researcher seeks to gather information from this target population. The total number employees in IT companies that are working under flexi-time arrangements is 200. These employees were sent electronic mails informing them about the research and requesting their participation. Out of the 200, only 159 employees responded to the electronic mail. The researcher took out 15 respondents to participate in the validation of the research instrument. The remaining 144 employees formed the target sample of the survey in the third instrument or tool

F. Methodology and sampling design

The study is based on both the primary data and secondary data. Secondary data was collected from various research journals, books, magazines, websites related to the field of the study. Primary data was collected by administering a structured Occupational Stress Inventory to the junior level and middle level managers and executives of the sample companies.

Thirty IT companies in Ernakulam district are selected on the basis of non probability sampling which is non –random in nature. A total of 600 samples with 20 samples from each company had been included from 23 companies based on simple random sampling. The sizes of each of junior level and middle level management and executives depend on the population of respective cadre of managers. Managerial personnel from, marketing, finance, tourism, insurance are included in the study. 60% of the employees are from marketing field because they experience comparatively more stress. (Uma Devi, 2002).

Another tool used for the study was A-1.5 points Likert Scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree has been used to measure the statements in the Flexi time scale. The measures were adapted and Cronbach coefficient of reliability was computed for all dimensions to verify the internal consistency of the items (Flexitime and employee stress reduction) that constitute the dimension For flexi time and employee stress reduction scale, the number of items are 8 and the Cronbach alpha value is 0.947.

Frame Work of Analysis

The following tools were used to analyze and interpret the data collected from the respondents.

1. Percentage Analysis was used to analyze the personal details of respondents classified on the basis of
 - a) Age
 - b) Gender
 - c) Marital status
 - d) Income
 - e) Educational status
2. Mean and standard deviation - are used to analyze the nature and level of stress faced by the employees working in IT sector and for finding out stress level and job satisfaction level, the entire sample is divided into low stress, optimum stress, and high stress.
3. Weighted Average Analysis was used to test the use of flexi time as a recruitment, retention and stress reduction tool. Weighted average is performed using five rating score by assigning
 - a) For highly dissatisfied
 - b) For dissatisfied
 - c) For neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 - d) For satisfied
 - e) For highly satisfied
4. Chi-square analysis was used to study whether there is any association between two attributes namely socio demographic variables and stress and job satisfaction scores,
5. Karl Pearson's Co-efficient of correlation was used to find out the relationship between stress level and job satisfaction level
6. Karl Pearson's coefficient of determination was used to test flexi time have an impact on stress reduction
7. 't' Test was used in order to find out the significance of difference between the means of the pairs of sub samples of IT professionals classified on the basis of age, gender, marital status, income and type of job.
8. Anova is used to test the variability in the factors affecting stress across different groups such as gender, age, type of job, marital status, hobbies and income level.
9. Multiple regression analysis was carried down to test the predictors of stress.

Period of the study- The study pertains from 2011-2014. The reference period of the study was a period ranging 2013- to 2014.

Limitations of the study

Present study has the following limitations:-

1. Study is mainly based on primary data collected from field source. Hence study suffers from the inherent limitations of survey data.

2. Only employees working in Ernakulam District are included, others are excluded from study.
3. The hesitation on the part of respondent is a limitation.
4. Strict rules followed by organization restrict respondents to fill up the questionnaire.

Findings

I. Profile of the Respondents.

- a) Total sample of the study are 600 employees. Out of that 402(67%) are male and 198(33%) are female. Majority of the employees are male
- b) On the basis of levels of management employees are classified as Executives, Middle level managers and junior level managers. Executives consists of 209(35%), Middle level managers are 214(36%) and junior level are 177 (29%) of the total sample. There is almost an equal proportion of employees are on the basis of levels of management.
- c) According to type of company 489(81%) are from private company 52(8%) are from Govt. company, 59 (11%) are from foreign company. Majority of the employees are from private company. In IT field majority of the companies are in private sector.
- d) Based on age 534 employees in the category are of 21to30 years, 49 employees are in the age group of 31-40 years. Only 17 employees are in the age group of up to 20 years category. Majority of IT employees are in the category of 21 to 30 years.
- e) According to marital status 299(49.8%) are married and 301(50.2%) are single. Only 7 are in the category of married but single.
- f) Based on the educational status 236(39.3%) have technical qualification (B.Tech. and BSc Computer Science) 162(27%) have PG and above (MCA, M.Tech, MSc computer science)196(32.70%) have Degree(BSc, BCA) and 1% have plus two qualification. More employees have technical qualification.
- g) Out of the total sample 155(26%) have less than 10000 income group and 445(74%) have more than 10000 income group. Majority of the employees have 10000 more income group per month.

These are tested using simple percentage analysis.

- II. Gender is not a significant factor in the case of occupational stress and job satisfaction.
- III. Married and single have not almost equal level of stress .Comparatively single have high and medium level of stress. Married employees have less stress.
- IV. Single employees have more stress compared to married employees.

- V. Both married and single have almost same in the case of job satisfaction and there existed significant difference among the 4 groups based on their educational status in the variable occupational stress
- VI. Majority of the employees are single.
- VII. Spouse employed have more stress compared to spouse unemployed employees
- VIII. In the case of total score of stress and job satisfaction, the mean scores of below 10000 have less occupant ional stress and job satisfaction compared to the income group of 10000 and above.
- IX. Among the selected occupational stress variables perceived status (4.68) has the highest value followed by interpersonal relations (3.902).Role conflict (3.96) and quantitative overload (3.48). Promotions (1.624), rigid rules (1.717), transfer policy (1.827), problem court (1.985) are less stressful variable.
- X. Out of the total sample 214 consists of middle level employees, 209 consists of executives and 177 consists of junior level employees. All categories have moderate level of stress The overall stress of middle level (93%) and junior level (95.50%) are medium. Executives have slight (8.60%) high level of stress.
- XI. Role conflict(0.03),promotions(0.04), perceived status (0.005),grievance redressal (0.05), inadequate pay (0.05) are significant .It means that there is a significant difference between occupational stress experienced by employees classified on the basis of level of management on the above mentioned sub variables.
- XII. There is no significant difference among 3 groups of employees based on level of management (executives, middle and junior level) on the variable job satisfaction
- XIII. There existed significant difference among the 3groups based on their type of company (Govt., private and foreign) on the variable occupational stress.
- XIV. There is significant difference between employees classified on the basis of type of company regarding occupational stress on the total stress scores and the variables, autonomy, group pressure, interpersonal relations, problem court, promotions, victimization, alienation, perceived status, strong working condition, emergency situation, grievance redressed , rigid rules, transfer policy.
- XV. Transfer policy does not have significant difference between employees classified on the basis of nature of job.
- XVI. There exists a positive correlation between the stress score and job satisfaction score. The correlation is .021 that is low positive assumed that the when the job satisfaction increases stress also increases, even if job

- satisfaction increases stress will not decrease. But there is a tendency to be negative.
- XVII. Flexi-time has a significant impact on the total stress reduction of employees. But taking into account different variables, the significance is more or less not the same. The factors are discussed here below; Even though considering the variable there is no significant difference but by taking into account the total score, flexi-time has an impact on stress reduction.
- XVIII. There is a positive correlation between Employee Stress Reduction and Flexi-time ($r=0.689$, $p=0.000$) and is found to be statistically highly significant.
- XIX. Employees working under flexi-time have less job satisfaction than employees not working under flexi-time.
- XX. There existed no significant difference among the 6 categories of hobbies relating to total scores of occupational stress. By analyzing the 22 variables relating to occupational stress specifically majority of the factors (quantitative overload, qualitative overload, lack of participation, group pressure, interpersonal relations, promotion, job security, alienation, strong working condition, grievance redressed, rigid rules, transfer policy, schedule working time, work pressure at home) have significant difference. It is assumed that hobbies have significant impact on reducing stress.
- XXI. Flexi-time is a recruitment tool that aids in the attraction and recruitment of a more diverse talent and people. Majority of the respondents (4.76 weighted mean) acknowledge and strongly agree to the observation that flexi-time is an effective recruitment tool as it allows organizations to attract a more diverse workforce.
- XXII. Respondents also reported of significant reduction in stress since they availed flexi-time arrangements, the researcher recorded 3.51-weighted average.
- XXIII. In terms of retention, majority of the respondents stated that one of the reasons why they left their previous jobs is because of the lack of flexi-time schemes. It is evident that flexi-time is an important factor in employee turnover. The researcher has collected a weighted mean of 4.15 with the respondents agreeing that the lack of flexi-time schemes in their previous organization had an impact in their decision to leave. The respondents also stated as shown by a 4.25-weighted mean, that one of the factors that compelled them to apply at IT companies because of the organization's flexi-time schemes.
- XXIII. Respondents also reported of significant reduction in stress since they availed flexi-time arrangements, the researcher recorded 3.51-weighted average. The 3.73-weighted

mean reveals that employees feel empowered and in control of their job through flexi-time. Flexi-time is also connected to employee performance. The respondents stated that flexi-time makes them feel trusted and valued, thus motivating them to perform (4.15-weighted mean).

The stress are inversely related to Autonomy (Beta= -0.441) and positively related to conflict (Beta=0.229), to job security (Beta=0.320), Strong working condition (Beta=0.218) and support (Beta=0.161). Beta value closest to one would present the strongest correlation. In this study, Beta for stress relationship with autonomy is negative, which implies that as autonomy increases, stress would be reduced. Other predictors however, have lower correlation with stress.

Details regarding Tenability of the Hypothesis

Discussion of Results

In this context, the present study utilized the univariate (mean, SD, weighted average analysis, and bi-variate (t test, ANOVA, correlation) statistical tools. There were 22 factors which were identified which may influence different levels of stress, but the responses to majority of these factors showed a significant difference. It is observed that female employees are more exposed to stress as they have more responsibilities in family. The study also revealed that employees have a moderate level of stress. That is good also. With mild level of stress we can face challenges, In IT organisation there are no high level of stress, That fact is also a good one and another important thing is that even if the job is satisfied the stress level does not decrease and there is a slight positive correlation between occupational stress and job satisfaction. The stress aspect also positively related with the socio-demographic variables. But the stress level has been drastically decreasing these days because of the use of advanced technology in IT companies. However each organisation should create a positive and supportive organisational climate/ethos, an effective approach to management, good communication and sense of collegiality among staff, whole organisational policies in place on a number of issues, and adequate facilities and resources. Findings from this study indicate the importance of these factors in the Ernakulam context, pointing to potential ways to improve levels of job satisfaction and reduce occupational stress levels among IT employees; the implications of the study findings for policy and practice are considered in the next section.

Recommendations for Reducing Occupational Stress

1. Organize a Stress Management Program that focuses on different leave categories of employees at all hierarchical levels.

2. Take adequate steps to redesign jobs, which are taxing to employees' abilities and capacities.
3. Adequate role clarification to be made whenever necessary to eliminate role ambiguity.
4. Introduce more job oriented training programs, which improve employee's skill and their confidence to work effectively.
5. Encourage open channel of communication to deal work related stress.
6. Undertake stress audit at all levels in the organization to identify stress area improving conditions of job and alleviating job stress.
7. Introduce 'Pranayam' (Brain Stilling and control of Vital Force) as a holistic managerial strategy to deal with occupational strategy.

Conclusion

This study is an attempt to test quantum of occupational stress among IT employees in Ernakulam District and whether the job satisfaction is a remedy for solving occupational stress. Many researchers have been pointed out that job satisfaction may reduce the quantum of stress. But the study is an exception for that. The job satisfaction is not a tool for reducing occupational stress. Even if the job is satisfied employees are stressed due to job related pressure. So this a humble attempt on the part of the research to present an alternative technique for the same. Here investigator test whether the flexi time arrangement to reduce occupational stress. This is not a complete medicine for the illness and it will not be universally applicable. It was concluded that job stress influences the job satisfaction of IT employees. It is also concluded that the demographic variables do influence the level of job stress and job satisfaction of employees. The findings and implications of the study for enhancing employee satisfaction are discussed and future research directions are pointed out.

This study is a guide to the society and organisation to aware the stress employees are facing. It is the time to frame new policies and practices on the part of the organisation and give enough freedom to the employees to express themselves and make them free to share their problems with the authorities. Guidance and counseling can be organized for employees improving the relationship with organisation if they have good relationship the occupational stress automatically disappeared.

Scope for Further Research

For future studies, researchers may opt to focus on the importance of flexi-time in motivating employees and how flexi-time affects work satisfaction in the public sector. This can be helpful in building the employee retention literature in the public sector. Moreover, flexi-time as recruitment

and retention tool can also be a significant study in the private sector, particularly small and medium-sized organizations. It is hoped that the present study may be supplemented by a series of studies related to occupational stress based on the findings given here. Investigator offer the following further research.

1. The present study takes into account flexi time as a stress reduction mechanism. It can be extended to other programmers.
2. Similar study can be conducted at other organizations.
3. Study can be repeated with large sample to verify its reliability.
4. The same or similar study can be conducted to test the effectiveness of some other components of occupational stress and job satisfaction.
5. A case study can be conducted to find out reason for occupational stress.
6. A comparative study can be conducted between two industries regarding occupational stress.