

# Employee Attitude Towards Stress and Absenteeism

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The primary aim of this research is to identify the key factors contributing to stress and absenteeism among employees in IT companies located in Pune and to examine how these factors impact overall employee performance. The prevalence of stress and absenteeism in the workplace is on the rise, and responsible corporate organizations must take action by providing assistance and support. Our team specializes in this specific area, offering practical strategies to address issues like stress, anxiety, depression, changes in work-life circumstances, work-life balance, and the impact of employee relocation within Pune. (NIOSH Work Organization and Stress Related Disorders: In the document: "According to the United States National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), work organization and stress-related disorders are of significant concern (NIOSH Work , 2004) Reducing absenteeism can be a significant step in cutting down on business costs. Due to intense competition, companies can no longer afford to tolerate unnecessary absenteeism as they might have in the past. Consequently, many companies are focusing on eliminating or, at the very least, reducing excessive absenteeism. The pressure to meet targets and deadlines not only affects top-level management but also extends to employees across all levels. If stress management concerns are not promptly and adequately addressed, it can lead to decreased productivity among both workers and executives, adding to the burdens management faces.

**Keywords:** Stress, employee, absenteeism, attitude, IT Companies

## **1. Introduction**

In the dynamic and competitive landscape of the Information Technology (IT) sector, the well-being and performance of employees play a pivotal role in the success of companies. This research endeavors to unravel the intricate web of factors contributing to stress and absenteeism among employees in IT companies situated in Pune, shedding light on the broader implications these issues may have on overall organizational performance.

The escalating prevalence of stress and absenteeism in the contemporary workplace has become a matter of paramount concern. As underscored by the United States National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), work organization and stress-related disorders have emerged as significant challenges (NIOSH Work, 2014) [1]. The repercussions of unaddressed stress are profound, affecting not only the mental and physical health of employees but also permeating through the fabric of organizational efficiency.

The context of Pune, a vibrant hub of IT activity, adds a unique dimension to our investigation. The competitive nature of the industry places immense pressure on employees at all levels, from executives to frontline workers. Consequently, the urgency to meet stringent targets and deadlines becomes an omnipresent stressor. This not only poses a threat to individual well-being but also has cascading effects on organizational productivity.

Furthermore, as companies grapple with the imperative of reducing costs and enhancing efficiency, the toll of unnecessary absenteeism cannot be overlooked. In a landscape where every resource is invaluable, companies can ill-afford the luxury of tolerating excessive absenteeism. This research seeks to identify actionable strategies for responsible corporate entities in Pune to address stress, anxiety, depression, and challenges related to work-life balance, including the impact of employee relocation.

## **2. Objectives**

1. To identify the main reasons of stress among Employee in IT Companies.
2. To examine how stress impacts their job performance.
3. To study the employee attitude on stress and absenteeism in IT Companies.
4. To depict the effects of absenteeism on the growth of the IT Companies.
5. Suggesting measures to minimize absenteeism to certain extent.
6. To assess the various elements influencing employees' job performance within the organization.
7. To assess measures aimed at mitigating job-related stress in order to lower the rate of employee absenteeism in IT companies.

## **3. Scope**

This study aims to center on the primary challenges arising from occupational stress and how it affects employee absenteeism. The research carries particular significance for employees seeking to alleviate their own job-related stress and protect themselves from a range of health issues. Additionally, it provides valuable insights for management on reducing absenteeism rates, thereby improving overall organizational performance.

Every IT employee was requested to indicate the count of days within the recent month when their mental well-being, involving stress, depression, and emotional difficulties, was below par. The employed adults in the IT sector who acknowledged undergoing a minimum of 15 days of mental health challenges in the month prior (NIOSH Worker Health Chartbook, , 2016) [4].

**Hypothesis:**

H1: There is a significant relationship between the respondent's marital status and stress existing in IT Companies.

H2: There is a significant relationship between gender and stress and absenteeism.

H3: There is a significant difference in days absent between older employees and younger employees.

## **4. Research Methodology**

The objective of this study is to investigate employee attitudes regarding stress and absenteeism. The fundamental purpose of this research is to provide precise information to assist in decision-making. Research can be described as the methodical and unbiased approach to collecting, documenting, and evaluating data to support business decision-making.

**SAMPLE** - This study was conducted with a sample size of 50 respondents. Sampling is limited to the employees of IT Companies, in Pune. The respondents mainly belong to Pune. The selection of respondents was done based on convenience sampling (non-probability).

## **5. Data Processing**

1. Analysis was done using licensed SPSS version 22 (licensed to JSSAHER).
2. MS-EXCEL was used to prepare pie-charts and graphs and MS-WORD was used to prepare or write the whole project report.
3. Categorical data was analyzed using the Chi-Square Test for inferential statistical tests. Chi-Square Test is used to reach a conclusion or to test the hypothesis.

**Data Analysis & Interpretation:** Classification and tabulation are processes that convert the raw data gathered from questionnaires into valuable information. This is achieved by structuring and aggregating the individual pieces of data found in each questionnaire, including observations and responses, into coherent and systematic statistics that can be employed to arrange and examine the data:

1. Basic data organization through the use of tally marks.
2. Determining the percentage of responses.
3. The formula employed is (number of responses / total responses) \* 100.
4. Limitations of the study:
5. The scope of the research might be relatively small, and confined to a specific geographical region.
6. Respondents may have constraints on their time availability.
7. There is a possibility of respondents providing biased information.
8. Since only one area was surveyed, the findings may not reflect the comprehensive perspective across various fields.
9. It is conceivable that some respondents might furnish inaccurate information.

## **6. Data Analysis:**

1. The provided pie chart displays the distribution of respondents' ages. It's evident that the largest portion, accounting for 40% of the total, falls within the 20-30 age range. Following that, 26% of respondents are aged between 30-40, while 18% fall into the 40-50 age category. Lastly, 16% of the respondents are in the age group above 50. This information reveals the age demographics of the surveyed population.

2. According to the provided chart, it is evident that the majority of respondents, comprising 70% of the total, are married. In contrast, the remaining 30% of respondents are unmarried. This data highlights the marital status distribution within the surveyed group, with a significant majority being married while a minority is unmarried.
3. Based on the information presented in the chart, it is clear that the majority of respondents, specifically 86% of them, are female. In contrast, a smaller proportion, constituting 14% of the total, represents male respondents. This data highlights a significant gender imbalance within the surveyed group, with a significantly higher number of female respondents compared to male respondents.
4. This data provides insight into the extent of stress-related leave among the surveyed individuals. It suggests that a significant portion took 2 or 3 holidays, while a smaller but notable percentage took even more than 3 holidays in a month to manage job-related stress.
5. Chermis (2013) [5] discusses the critical role of addressing issues related to staff burnout and job stress in the human service industry. While our study did not explicitly explore the human service industry, the insights from Chermis align with the notion that workplace stress is a multifaceted challenge, with various factors contributing to employees' perceptions of stress. This underscores the importance of comprehensive strategies to address stressors beyond interpersonal relationships.
6. Workload: A significant portion, accounting for 44% of the respondents, identified workload as the major cause of stress in their jobs. This indicates that a substantial number of individuals feel overwhelmed by the amount of work they have to handle.
7. Daily Changes in Work Schedules: Approximately 26% of the respondents agreed that daily changes in work schedules are a source of stress for them. This suggests that irregular or unpredictable work hours can be a significant stressor for this portion of the workforce.
8. Excessive Organizational Rules: About 22% of the respondents indicated that excessive organizational rules contribute to their job-related stress. This implies that strict or complex rules and regulations within their workplace can be burdensome and stressful.
9. Interpersonal Relationships: Only a small minority, comprising 8% of the respondents, identified interpersonal relationships as a cause of stress in their jobs. This suggests that relatively few individuals attribute their to issues with colleagues or workplace relationships.

In summary, the data shows that workload is the most prevalent source of stress among the respondents, followed by daily schedule changes and excessive organizational rules. Interpersonal relationships are cited by a relatively small percentage of respondents as a cause of job-related stress.

According to the information provided in the pie chart, it is evident that a significant majority, accounting for 70% of the respondents, experience irritation when they are unable to take tea and lunch breaks during work. In contrast, a smaller portion, constituting 30% of the respondents, do not share this sentiment and are not bothered by the lack of breaks. This data highlights that a substantial proportion of those surveyed value and are affected by the availability of tea and lunch breaks during their workday, finding their absence to be a source of irritation.

## **7. Hypothesis Testing**

### **H1: There is significant relationship between the respondent's marital status and stress existing in IT Companies.**

The data shows that out of the respondents, 70 are married, while 30 are unmarried. An analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between marital status and stress in IT companies. The chi-square value obtained was 8, which exceeds the critical table value of 3.841 at a 5% significance level.

As a result, based on these findings, the null hypothesis is rejected. (See Table No. 1: Marital status and stress existing in IT Companies)

**Table No. 1:** Marital status and stress existing in IT Companies

Observed(O)	Expected(E)	O-E	(O-E) ^2	(O-E) ^2/E
35	25	10	100	4
15	25	-10	100	4
50				8

**Table No. 2:** Marital status and stress existing in IT Companies

Degree of Freedom(df)	1
Chi-Square(x) <sup>2</sup>	8
Table Value	3.841
A	0.05
(x) <sup>2</sup> >Table value	8>3.841

The chi-square value surpasses the table value in the survey results, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

There is a substantial correlation between the marital status of respondents and the stress levels within Cognizant Technology Solutions, as evidenced by the observation that the chi-square value of 8 surpasses the critical table value of 3.841 at a 5% level of significance. Consequently, based on these findings, we reject the null hypothesis. (See Table No. 2: Marital status and stress existing in IT Companies)

**H2: There is significant relationship between the gender and stress and absenteeism.**

Out of the total respondents, 43 are female, and 7 are male. An analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between gender and stress-related absenteeism. The obtained chi-square value of 25.92 exceeds the critical table value of 3.841 at a 5% significance level. Consequently, based on these results, the null hypothesis is rejected. (See Table No. 3: Relationship between the gender and stress and absenteeism)

**Table No. 3:** Relationship between the gender and stress and absenteeism

Observed(O)	Expected(E)	O-E	(O-E) ^2	(O-E) ^2/E
43	25	18	324	12.96
7	25	-18	324	12.96
50				25.92

**Table No. 4:** Relationship between the gender and stress and absenteeism

Degree of Freedom(df)	1
Chi-Square(x) <sup>2</sup>	25.92
Table Value	3.841
A	0.05
(x) <sup>2</sup> >Table value	25.92>3.841

The null hypothesis is rejected based on the survey results because the chi-square value is greater than the table value. (See Table No. 4: Relationship between the gender and stress and absenteeism)

## 8. Findings

1. **Age and Marital Status of Respondents:** Most respondents were in the age group of 20-30, and many were married. Research in various industries often shows that younger employees may experience stress due to the pressure to establish their careers, while marital status can influence stress levels i.e. married employees may have additional family-related responsibilities that contribute to stress.
2. **Frequency of Holidays Due to Job Stress:** A significant portion of respondents reported taking multiple holidays per month due to job stress. High absenteeism rates due to stress are a concern in many industries. Frequent absenteeism can lead to decreased productivity and increased costs for employers.
3. **Sources of Job Stress:** Respondents identified junior employees and colleagues as sources of stress, especially when senior employees become angry over non-compliance with their requests. Heavy workloads, changing work schedules, and excessive organizational rules were also mentioned. Workplace relationships and hierarchy often play a role in stress. Research in various industries suggests that conflicts with colleagues or superiors and excessive work demands are common stressors.
4. **Physical and Emotional Impact of Stress:** Many employees reported feeling physically and emotionally drained at the end of the day, and some mentioned becoming frustrated when things didn't go smoothly. Such physical and emotional symptoms are consistent with stress-related issues seen across industries. These symptoms can lead to absenteeism as employees may need time off to recover. [2] "Thomas, Colligan, and Higgins (2015) conducted a study on workplace stress, highlighting its impact on employees' efficiency and health. They found that job stress can lead to various physical and emotional issues (Thomas et al., 2015)
5. **Workplace Environment and Rules:** Daily changes in work schedules and excessive organizational rules were cited as causes of stress. Research indicates that work environments with rigid rules and frequent changes can increase stress levels and decrease job satisfaction. This is not unique to the IT industry. (Srivastava, 2014) [3] "An article titled 'Workplace Stress Greater for Women' (2013) reported on gender differences in workplace stress levels (Workplace Stress Greater for Women, 2013)."
6. **Impact on Absenteeism:** The findings suggest a potential link between job stress and absenteeism. High levels of stress have been associated with increased absenteeism in various industries. Absenteeism can result from employees needing time off to cope with stress or because they feel overwhelmed by their work environment. (Thomas & Colligan MSW, 2015)

In summary, while the specific findings relate to the IT industry, they align with broader patterns observed in various sectors. Stress and absenteeism are complex issues affected by a combination of factors, including workplace relationships, workload, and organizational policies. Addressing these issues requires industry-specific strategies but can also benefit from insights and solutions developed in other industries and regions where similar challenges are faced. (Srivastava, 2014) [6]

## 9. Suggestions

1. **Offer Vacation Days and Paid-Time Off** - Employee absenteeism is often a result of burnout, or employees feeling they need to take days off for personal obligations. By offering a fair amount of paid-time off and vacation days (maybe even unlimited?), you can help

employees feel happier about their work-life balance, and mentally recharge -- a win-win for them, and for your team's productivity.

2. **Consider Flexible Hours** - Offering a remote option could significantly decrease employee absenteeism, as ironic as it might sound. Working from home enables your employees to take care of sick kids, run errands, or let the electrician in without taking a full day off from work.
3. **Implement a Wellness Program** - A wellness program can help IT Companies mitigate health-related absences, while simultaneously lowering health care costs and reducing employee stress. Additionally, a wellness program can help improve morale and workplace culture, and even increase productivity.
4. **A workplace culture** - By taking steps to create a workplace culture that prioritizes health and wellness, you're able to decrease unhealthy habits that lead to employee absenteeism. For instance, if an employee is able to mitigate stress during your office's lunchtime yoga, she might be less likely to let that stress build up and lead to bigger problems down the road.
5. **Improve Workplace Morale** - IT companies can boost employee morale by organizing team-building activities, fostering friendly competition among departments, and arranging community service outings. Providing chances for employees to interact with their colleagues and instilling a sense of pride and inspiration within their teams is crucial in addressing employee absenteeism. When an employee feels valued and acknowledged by their peers, they will be more motivated to attend work. ("Workplace Stress Greater for Women" , 2013)

## 10. Future Scope

**Employee Attitudes Towards Stress And Absenteeism** play a critical role in shaping the future prospects of any organization. While reducing absenteeism is undoubtedly important for maintaining productivity and operational efficiency, it's equally essential to focus on promoting employee engagement. In this detailed explanation, we'll explore why enhancing employee empowerment and improving workplace satisfaction go hand-in-hand with fostering long-term success within a company.

**Understanding Employee Engagement:** Employee engagement refers to the emotional commitment and connection that employees have with their jobs, colleagues, and the organization as a whole. Engaged employees are enthusiastic about their work, motivated to contribute their best, and feel a sense of ownership and loyalty towards the company.

**The Link between Employee Engagement and Performance:** Numerous studies have demonstrated a strong correlation between employee engagement and performance. Engaged employees tend to be more productive, innovative, and customer-focused. They are more likely to meet or exceed performance expectations and are less likely to be absent from work.

## 11. Factors Contributing to Employee Engagement

1. **Empowerment:** When employees feel that they have a say in decision-making processes and are trusted with responsibilities, they become more engaged. Empowerment boosts their sense of ownership and accountability.
2. **Workplace Satisfaction:** A satisfied workforce is more likely to be engaged. Factors like a positive work culture, work-life balance, recognition for achievements, and opportunities for growth contribute to workplace satisfaction.
3. **Effective Leadership:** Leaders who are supportive, communicative, and provide clear direction foster engagement among their teams.

4. **Reducing Absenteeism through Employee Engagement:** High levels of absenteeism can be indicative of disengagement and job dissatisfaction. When employees are engaged and satisfied with their work, they are more likely to show up consistently and contribute positively to the workplace. (Srivastava, 2014)
5. **Long-term Organizational Success:** Sustainable success for any company goes beyond short-term gains. To thrive in the long run, organizations need a committed and motivated workforce. Engaged employees are more likely to stay with the company, reducing turnover costs and the need for constant recruitment and training.

## **12. Practical Steps for Promoting Employee Engagement:**

1. **Open Communication:** Encourage two-way communication between employees and management, allowing employees to express concerns and ideas.
2. **Training and Development:** Invest in continuous learning and development opportunities to empower employees and help them grow in their roles.
3. **Recognition and Rewards:** Acknowledge and reward employees for their contributions, both big and small.
4. **Work-Life Balance:** Promote a healthy work-life balance by offering flexible work arrangements and supporting employees' personal well-being.

## **13. Conclusions**

In conclusion, focusing on employee engagement, empowerment, and workplace satisfaction is not just about mitigating absenteeism; it's a strategic imperative for long-term success. Engaged employees are the backbone of a thriving organization, and their commitment and performance significantly impact the bottom line. Therefore, forward-thinking companies should invest in initiatives that foster employee engagement, as it pays dividends in terms of performance, employee retention, and overall organizational health.

Job stress is a crucial factor affecting employees' working conditions and their engagement in their tasks. Employees without job stress tend to work more efficiently than those experiencing stress. Therefore, IT companies should create a healthy working environment with reduced job-related stress among their employees.

All employees working in IT companies report experiencing a high level of job stress. The primary causes of this stress are excessive workloads and inadequate work schedules. Furthermore, personal issues at home can negatively impact job performance and contribute to job-related stress.

The impact of job stress on the overall health of young employees is substantial. Some of them suffer from headaches, backaches, and irritability by the end of the day. Unfortunately, most organizations lack stress management programs. Many young employees believe that it is essential for organizations to implement stress management programs.

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