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## Job stress, psychological empowerment, and job satisfaction among the IT employees in Coimbatore

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### Abstract

Psychological empowerment was defined from the perspective of individual employees which was characterized by a sense of perceived control, perceptions of competence, and internalization of the goals and objectives of the organization (Menon, S.T 1999) [9]. Psychological empowerment is a multi-faceted construct reflecting the different dimensions of being psychologically enabled, and is conceived of personal control, a proactive approach to life, and a critical understanding of the socio-political environment, which is rooted firmly in a social action framework. The role played by the software industry in the contemporary world aroused the need for understanding the relationship between job stress, psychological empowerment and job satisfaction with special reference to software industry. The tool for the study was a questionnaire comprising of twelve items on psychological empowerment, fifteen items on job stress and twenty items on job satisfaction on a five point scaling ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). Data was collected from a sample of 64 respondents from four software companies in Coimbatore. Being satisfied with the reliability of the research instrument the researcher carried out parson T-test, ANOVA, and regression to understand the relationship between Job stress, psychological empowerment and job satisfaction

**Keywords:** Competence, Job satisfaction, Job stress, Psychological empowerment, and Self-determination

### Introduction

*"An empowered organization is one in which individuals have the knowledge, skill, desire, and opportunity to personally succeed in a way that leads to collective organizational success."*

- Stephen Covey

Human resource is the most valuable asset of an organization. The employees are the repository of knowledge, skills and abilities that can't be imitated by the competitors. But in general, these Human Resources are the underutilized resource of an organization. And that's the main reason behind which all organizations like to empower the employees. But employees often are afraid of taking this responsibility. Empowerment gives the employees a degree of responsibility and authority. Empowerment encourages the employees to utilize their skills, abilities and creativity by accepting accountability for their work. Empowerment includes supervisors and employees working together to establish clear goals and expectations within agreed-upon boundaries.

There is a lot of empirical support stating the relationship between employee empowerment and work-related outcomes. (Liden *et al.*, 2000; Sparrowe, R.T 1994 [14]; Spreitzer, G.M 1995 [17]; Spreitzer *et al.*, 1997 [16]). The most related outcomes of employee empowerment are job satisfaction and job stress. Empowerment was expected to have both direct and indirect effects on satisfaction. Empowered employees should report greater job satisfaction than employees who were not empowered since they would have access to necessary resources and support to accomplish their work. In this study the author tried to identify the relationship psychological empowerment of employees which increase job satisfaction and reduce job stress.

Stress arises when individuals perceive that they cannot adequately cope with the demands being made on them or with threats to their wellbeing (Lazarus, 1966). Job stress is a condition arising from the interaction of people and their jobs and characterized by changes

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within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning (Beehr and Newman, 1997). There are three categories of potential stressors: environmental, organizational, and individual. Environmental factors include economic uncertainty, political uncertainty, and technological uncertainty. Organizational factors include task demands, role demands, interpersonal demands, organizational structure, organizational leadership, and organization’s life stage. Individual factors include family problems, economic problems and personality.

Psychological Empowerment is the experience of employees on empowerment at work. This empowerment focuses on the beliefs that employees have about their role in relation to the organization. Psychological empowerment had its roots in early work on employee alienation and quality of work life. Psychological empowerment has four components: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact. (Spreitzer, G.M 1995) [17].

Job satisfaction is defined as the feelings a person has about her or his job (Balzer, *et al.*, 1997; Spector, P.E 1997) [8, 15]. Job satisfaction is the degree to which an individual feels positively or negatively about various aspects of the job (Schermerhorn, J.R 1996) [12]. It describes the comfortable zone of an individual is with his or her job. The happier people are within their job, the more satisfied they are said to be. According to Loscocco, K.A and Roschelle, A.R (1991), the assumption of the definition is that people can balance their specific satisfactions and dissatisfactions to arrive at a general degree of satisfaction with their job.

**Literature Review**

Lynn Holdsworth and Susan Cartwright (2003) explored the relationship between stress, satisfaction and the four dimensions of psychological empowerment (meaning, impact, self-determination and competence) within a call centre. The occupational stress indicator and Spreitzer’s empowerment measure were used to collect data from a North West (UK) call centre. The study found the call centre agents were more stressed, less satisfied and reported poorer mental and physical health than the general working population. In addition the sample perceived themselves as less empowered than other workers in a traditional office environment.

Wang, Guangping and. Lee, Peggy D (2009) investigated the interactive effects of the psychological empowerment dimensions on job satisfaction. Using data collected from employees of multiple organizations, the authors find intriguing three-way interactions among the dimensions. Choice has a weak but negative effect on job satisfaction

when both competence and impact are high or low but has a strong positive effect when one of the two dimensions is low and the other is high. Impact has no effect on job satisfaction when choice and competence are both high and both low. The effect of impact is positive only when one of the two dimensions is high and the other is low. In addition, high levels of choice and competence reinforce the positive effect of meaning on job satisfaction.

Abd. Ghani1 *et al.*, (2009), examined the relationship between psychological empowerment and innovative behaviour as well as the impact of psychological empowerment on the behavioral outcome. This study was conducted with a sample of 312 lecturers from 25 private higher education institutions in three states in Malaysia. The results indicated that psychological empowerment had significant relationship with innovative behaviour and also found to be a significant predictor of innovative behavior.

**Objective of the Study**

The present study was aimed at studying the relationship between job stress, psychological empowerment and job satisfaction among the employees of IT industry.

**Research Methodology**

A convenience sample consisting of sixty four employees working in IT industry participated in the study. Questionnaires were administered the relationship between job stress, psychological empowerment and job satisfaction among the employees. The Psychological Empowerment Questionnaire (PEQ) (Spreitzer, 1995) [17] was used in this study. The scale contains three items for each of the four sub-dimensions of psychological empowerment. The respondents indicated the extent to which they agreed with each statement on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A higher score means a higher degree of psychological empowerment. Occupational Stress Index developed by Srivastava and Singh (1981) was used to assess the level of stress. The scale contains 15 items on a five-point scale. Minnesota satisfaction Questionnaire (short version) was used to assess job satisfaction. The collected data was analyzed with mean, standard deviation, t-test, ANOVA, correlation and regression.

**Results and Discussion**

This section presents the analysis of the data collected from the respondents. Table 1 provides the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

**Table 1:** Demographic characteristics of the respondents

S. No	Particulars	Groups	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
1.	Age	Less than 30	32	50.0	50.0
		Above 30	32	50.0	100.0
2.	Gender	Male	36	56.2	56.2
		Female	28	43.8	100.0
3.	Education	UG	28	43.8	43.8
		PG	36	56.2	100.0
4.	Experience	Below 5 years	22	34.4	34.4
		5-10 years	36	56.2	90.6
		Above 10 years	6	9.4	100.0
5.	Marital	Single	26	40.6	40.6
		Married	38	59.4	100.0
6.	Income	Less than 20000	8	12.5	12.5
		20000-30000	34	53.1	65.6
		Above 30000	22	34.4	100.0

Among the 64 respondents, 32 (50%) belong to less than 30 years age group; 32 (50%) belong to above 30 years of age group; 36 (56.2%) are male; 36 (56.2%) are post graduates; 36 (56.2%) belong to the 5-10 years of experience group; 38 (59.4%) are married; and 34 (53.1%) belong to 20000 -30000 of income group.

**Table 2:** Showing the Mean and Standard Deviation of research variables in different age groups

Age		Stress	PE	Job satisfaction
Less than 30	Mean	52.31	44.44	64.19
	N	32	32	32
	Std. Deviation	5.251	5.180	6.635
Above 30	Mean	47.38	49.25	68.88
	N	32	32	32
	Std. Deviation	6.632	5.685	8.047
Total	Mean	49.84	46.84	66.53
	N	64	64	64
	Std. Deviation	6.435	5.915	7.688

A high level of stress (Mean=52.31), and low levels of psychological empowerment (Mean=44.44), and job satisfaction (Mean=64.19) were observed among the respondents of less than 30 age group. A low level of stress (Mean=47.38), and a high level of psychological empowerment (Mean=49.25), and high level of job satisfaction (Mean=68.88) were seen among the respondents of above 30 age group.

**Table 3:** Showing the Mean and Standard Deviation of research variables in different gender groups

Gender		Stress	PE	Job satisfaction
Male	Mean	51.50	47.39	66.17
	N	36	36	36
	Std. Deviation	7.061	6.077	6.514
Female	Mean	47.71	46.14	67.00
	N	28	28	28
	Std. Deviation	4.860	5.733	9.084
Total	Mean	49.84	46.84	66.53
	N	64	64	64
	Std. Deviation	6.435	5.915	7.688

High levels of stress (Mean=51.50) and psychological empowerment (Mean=47.39), and a low level of job satisfaction (Mean=66.17) were observed among the male respondents. Low levels of stress (Mean=47.71) and psychological empowerment (Mean=46.14), and high level of job satisfaction (Mean=67.00) were seen among the female respondents.

**Table 4:** Showing the Mean and Standard Deviation of research variables in different education groups

Education		Stress	PE	Job satisfaction
UG	Mean	52.57	46.29	64.29
	N	28	28	28
	Std. Deviation	6.675	5.583	5.676
PG	Mean	47.72	47.28	68.28
	N	36	36	36
	Std. Deviation	5.439	6.204	8.624
Total	Mean	49.84	46.84	66.53
	N	64	64	64
	Std. Deviation	6.435	5.915	7.688

A high level of stress (Mean=52.57), and low levels of psychological empowerment (Mean=46.29), and job satisfaction (Mean=64.29) were observed among the respondents of UG group. A low level of stress (Mean=47.72), and high levels of psychological empowerment (Mean=47.28) and job satisfaction (Mean=68.28) were seen among the respondents of PG group.

**Table 5:** Showing the Mean and Standard Deviation of research variables in different experience groups

Experience		Stress	PE	Job satisfaction
Below 5 years	Mean	52.45	45.36	65.45
	N	22	22	22
	Std. Deviation	5.990	5.794	6.653
5-10 years	Mean	49.61	46.06	64.83
	N	36	36	36
	Std. Deviation	6.058	4.478	5.283
Above 10 years	Mean	41.67	57.00	80.67
	N	6	6	6
	Std. Deviation	1.862	4.648	9.893
Total	Mean	49.84	46.84	66.53
	N	64	64	64
	Std. Deviation	6.435	5.915	7.688

A high level of stress (Mean=52.45), and a low level of psychological empowerment (Mean=45.36) were observed among the respondents of below 5 years experience group. A low level of stress (Mean=49.61), and high levels of psychological empowerment (Mean=57.00), and job satisfaction (Mean=80.67) were seen among the respondents of above 10 years of experience group.

**Table 6:** Showing the Mean and Standard Deviation of research variables in different income groups

Income		Stress	PE	Job satisfaction
Less than 20000	Mean	55.00	52.00	69.00
	N	8	8	8
	Std. Deviation	7.483	2.138	.000
20000-30000	Mean	50.18	46.47	66.35
	N	34	34	34
	Std. Deviation	6.191	6.964	8.556
Above 30000	Mean	47.45	45.55	65.91
	N	22	22	22
	Std. Deviation	5.387	3.888	7.715
Total	Mean	49.84	46.84	66.53
	N	64	64	64
	Std. Deviation	6.435	5.915	7.688

High levels of stress (Mean=55.00), psychological empowerment (Mean=52.00) and job satisfaction (Mean=69.00) were observed among the respondents of less than 20000 income group. Low levels of stress (Mean=47.45), psychological empowerment (Mean=45.55), and job satisfaction (Mean=65.91) were observed among the respondents of above 30000 income group.

**Table 7:** Results of t- test for equality of means among different age groups.

		t-test for Equality of Means						
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Stress	Equal variances assumed	3.302	62	.002	4.938	1.495	1.948	7.927
	Equal variances not assumed	3.302	58.904	.002	4.938	1.495	1.945	7.930
PE	Equal variances assumed	-3.539	62	.001	-4.812	1.360	-7.530	-2.095
	Equal variances not assumed	-3.539	61.471	.001	-4.812	1.360	-7.531	-2.094
Job satisfaction	Equal variances assumed	-2.542	62	.014	-4.688	1.844	-8.373	-1.002
	Equal variances not assumed	-2.542	59.828	.014	-4.688	1.844	-8.376	-.999

Results of the t-test revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in stress ( $t=3.302$  &  $p<.01$ ), psychological empowerment ( $t=3.539$  &  $p<.01$ ) and, job satisfaction ( $t=2.542$  &  $p<.05$ ) among the respondents of different age groups.

**Table 8:** Showing the results of t- test of research variables and Gender

		t-test for Equality of Means						
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Stress	Equal variances assumed	2.424	62	.018	3.786	1.562	.663	6.908
	Equal variances not assumed	2.536	61.193	.014	3.786	1.493	.801	6.771
PE	Equal variances assumed	.834	62	.408	1.246	1.494	-1.741	4.233
	Equal variances not assumed	.840	59.662	.404	1.246	1.483	-1.721	4.213
Job satisfaction	Equal variances assumed	-.427	62	.671	-.833	1.950	-4.731	3.065
	Equal variances not assumed	-.410	47.102	.683	-.833	2.031	-4.919	3.253

Results of the t-test revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in stress ( $t=2.424$  &  $p<.05$ ) among the respondents of different gender groups.

**Table 9:** Showing the results of t- test of research variables and Education

		t-test for Equality of Means						
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Stress	Equal variances assumed	3.203	62	.002	4.849	1.514	1.823	7.875
	Equal variances not assumed	3.122	51.492	.003	4.849	1.553	1.732	7.967
PE	Equal variances assumed	-.663	62	.510	-.992	1.497	-3.985	2.001
	Equal variances not assumed	-.672	60.626	.504	-.992	1.477	-3.947	1.962
Job satisfaction	Equal variances assumed	-2.117	62	.038	-3.992	1.886	-7.762	-.222
	Equal variances not assumed	-2.226	60.509	.030	-3.992	1.793	-7.579	-.405

Results of the t-test revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in stress ( $t=3.203$  &  $p<.01$ ), and job satisfaction ( $t=2.117$  &  $p<.05$ ) among the respondents of different education groups.

**Table 10:** Showing the results of ANOVA test of research variables and experience.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Stress	Between Groups	553.094	2	276.547	8.208	.001
	Within Groups	2055.343	61	33.694		
	Total	2608.438	63			
PE	Between Groups	689.458	2	344.729	13.880	.000
	Within Groups	1514.980	61	24.836		
	Total	2204.438	63			
Job Satisfaction	Between Groups	1328.150	2	664.075	16.908	.000
	Within Groups	2395.788	61	39.275		
	Total	3723.938	63			

Results indicated that there was a significant difference in stress (F=8.208 & p<.01), psychological empowerment (F=13.880 & p<.01), and job satisfaction (F=16.908 & p<.01) among the respondents of different experience groups

**Table 11:** Showing the results of ANOVA test of research variables and Income.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Stress	Between Groups	342.042	2	171.021	4.603	.014
	Within Groups	2266.396	61	37.154		
	Total	2608.438	63			
PE	Between Groups	254.512	2	127.256	3.981	.024
	Within Groups	1949.925	61	31.966		
	Total	2204.438	63			
Job Satisfaction	Between Groups	58.355	2	29.177	.486	.618
	Within Groups	3665.583	61	60.092		
	Total	3723.937	63			

Results indicated that there was a significant difference in stress (F=4.603 & p<.01), and psychological empowerment (F=3.981 & p<.05) among the respondents of different experience groups.

**Table 12:** Regression analysis with job satisfaction as dependent variable

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.506 <sup>a</sup>	.256	.244	6.685
a. Predictors: (Constant), PE				

ANOVA <sup>b</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	952.854	1	952.854	21.319	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	2771.084	62	44.695		
	Total	3723.938	63			

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	35.734	6.722		5.316	.000
	PE	.657	.142	.506	4.617	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), Psychological Empowerment						
b. Dependent Variable: job satisfaction						

Regression analysis was conducted to investigate the relationship between psychological empowerment and job satisfaction. F-Test was statistically significant, which means that the model was statistically significant. The R-Squared is 0.256 which means that approximately 25% of the variance of job satisfaction was explained by the predictor variable, that is, psychological empowerment.

**Conclusion**

Psychological empowerment is a multi-faceted construct reflecting the different dimensions of being psychologically enabled. The present study was aimed at studying the relationship between job stress, psychological empowerment and job satisfaction among the employees of IT industry. A convenience sample consisting of sixty four employees working in IT industry participated in the study. Questionnaires were administered the relationship between

job stress, psychological empowerment and job satisfaction among the employees. The collected data was analyzed with mean, standard deviation, t-test, ANOVA, correlation and regression. Results revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in stress, psychological empowerment, and job satisfaction among the respondents of different age groups. Results indicated that there was a significant difference in stress, psychological empowerment, and job satisfaction among the respondents of different experience groups and also among the different income groups. Approximately twenty five per cent of the variance of job satisfaction was explained by the psychological empowerment.

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