Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry (TOJQI)

Volume 12, Issue 3, July 2021:3540- 3555

Research Article

Job Stress and Recovery Experience Measures among IT Employees during Covid-19 Pandemic

Sreedisha A.K.[1], Vidhya Vinayachandran[2]

Abstract

The primary goal of the study is to establish a link between job stress and the need for recovery experience measures among Information Technology employees during covid-19 pandemic period. The study is quantitative and descriptive research design is used for the study. First hand data was collected from 250 Information Technology employees using the questionnaire. Information Technology employees from 5 taluks in Bangalore Urban district are considered as the sampling frame. Cluster sampling and simple random sampling were used for the study. Collected data was analyzed using mean, standard deviation, correlation and linear regression. One of the study's main results is that there is an association between job stress and the need for recovery experience measures among Information Technology employees during covid-19 pandemic period. Regarding the suggestion, Information Technology companies should promote recovery experience measures for their employees to reduce the job stress during work from home imposed during covid-19 pandemic period.

Key words: *job stress, recovery experience measures, job stressors, covid-19 pandemic*

[1] Research scholar, Department of Commerce and Management, School of Arts and Sciences, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Kochi campus, sreedishaak3@gmail.com

[2] Dr., Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce and Management, School of Arts and Sciences, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Kochi campus, vidhyavinayachandran@asas.kh.amrita.edu

Introduction

The World Health Organization has designated the covid-19 virus to be a pandemic (WHO, 2020). Covid-19 pandemic has seriously affected the world wide economy and almost all sectors, Information Technology sector is one among them. As everything has two sides, the

impact of Covid-19 on Information Technology industry has positive and negative effects. While considering the positive part, the use of information technology has increased during lockdown period. The major focus should be given on the negative impact of Covid-19 pandemic on information technology employees. The Information Technology companies lost the opportunities to deal with international dealers due to the nationwide lockdown restrictions implemented by the various governments. With the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, Information Technology companies opted for work from home. Work from has created extra burden to the workers during this pandemic period because of workload and difficulty in balancing work life and personal life.

Covid-19 pandemic and work from home is creating job stress among Information Technology employees (Hayes, Priestly and Ray, 2020). Job stress is defined by National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH, 2014) as the state in which an employee is not able to balance between the conditions of job requirements with his skills, capabilities and needs. Job stress deteriorates the mental happiness and well-being of employees and mentally sickened employees will show negative attitude towards their life. It will increase the risk mental and physical health issues. Information Technology related technical issues, maintaining workspace with family and family distractions are affecting mental wellbeing (Marimuthu and Vasudevan, 2020). The study find outs the critical factors or stressors which are leading to job stress during covid-19 pandemic period. Stress recovery is important that then only the employees will become happy and energetic. They can manage their work life and personal life together and can maintain better relationships. So, the present study is finding the need for using recovery experience measures as a coping strategy against job stress amongst Information Technology employees.

Job stress and Recovery experience measures

Stress is a common phenomenon which was started when human beings developed on the Earth. At the earlier stages, human beings had faced stress relating to the fulfillment of their basic needs. Technological development has changed the world tremendously. Busy life style of people increased their stress level. Hectic job, time management, work pressure, hard deadlines, competition, grievances and lack of motivation are some of the grounds for stress in professional life. Balancing personal life and professional life, personal life problems, financial problems, anxiety and ill health are remarkable causes for personal life stress. Omolara (2008) stated job stress as the situation in which worst psychological and physical

reactions happened on an individual due to the inability for coping with the demands made on him. The major aspects regarding the job stress are time stressors, anxiety stressors, role expectation conflict stressors, work life balance stressors and co-worker support stressors (Shukla and Srivastava, 2016) and covid-19 pandemic stressors. According to Meijman and Mulder (1998), recovery means the technique of reducing stress and strain reflections due to job stressors. Fritz and Crain (2016) defined recovery experiences as the feeling of happiness and satisfaction while performing activities like exercise, reading poems, yoga, meditation, sports and learning activities. The major recovery experience measures which help for slowdown from job stress are psychological detachment from work during off job time, relaxation during off job time, mastery experiences during off job time and control during off job time (Sonnentag and Fritz, 2007).

Literature review

Different previous studies show that covid-19 pandemic has affected the world and the present study is mainly focusing on the job stress of Information Technology employees during work from home in this covid-19 pandemic period. And the study is finding the need for recovery experience measures as a coping strategy against job stress. Hayes, Priestly and Ray (2020) conducted a study focuses on the association between stress, job related burnout and remote working due to covid-19 pandemic. The study reveals that the stress level of employees get increased during work from home. The study conducted by Bhumika (2020) aims to examine the link between work-life balance and emotional exhaustion faced by employees during mandatorily work from home. The study revealed that during lockdown and work from home employees were not able to maintain work life balance especially women. Future studies can be conducted in a particular industry for a clear understanding regarding the work from home challenges.

Sonnentag (2018) made a study to understand the paradoxical link between job stressors and recovery-enhancing processes. The study's main findings demonstrate that when stressor levels are high, special attention should be paid to the recovery process. Future research should focus on more in-depth aspects of the recovery process. And future study can be conducted to find the relationship between various types of job stressors and recovery experience outcomes. The present study conducted by the researcher focuses on this research gap. Hahn, Binnewies, Sonnentag and Mojza (2011) found out that after the recovery training

program, participants has high psychological detachment, relaxation and control. Training participants' recovery - related self - efficacy and sleep quality had improved. Future study can be conducted to find out if recovery experience measures have implications for other outcomes. Sonnentag and Fritz (2007) focused on how individuals unwind from work during leisure time. The major recovery experiences include psychological detachment during of job time, relaxation during off job time, mastery experiences during off job time and control during leisure time. Future research can be conducted to find the need for using recovery experience measures as a coping strategy against job stress.

Aim of the study

1. To find the relationship between job stress and the need for recovery experience measures among Information Technology employees during covid-19 pandemic period

2. To find the impact on job stressors on information technology employees during covid-19 pandemic period

Hypotheses for the study

1. **H0:** There is no relationship between job stress and the need for recovery experience measures among Information Technology employees during covid-19 pandemic period

2. **H0:** (a) Time stressors (b) Anxiety stressors (c) Role expectation conflict stressors (d) Work life balance stressors (e) Co-worker support stressors (f) Covid-19 pandemic stressors has no impact on job stress of Information Technology employees during covid-19 pandemic

Research methodology

The descriptive research design is used for the study and Information Technology professionals in Bangalore Urban district are chosen as the sampling frame. Regarding the sample size, 250 Information Technology employees are considered. 250 employees are selected as per the Cochran's formula (Cochran, 1963). Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire. Regarding the sampling techniques, at first cluster sampling is used to divide the Bangalore Urban district into five taluks. Then simple random sampling is used for the selection of samples randomly from these taluks. The participants for the study include Information Technology employees from Bangalore Urban district. Bangalore Urban district consists of 5 taluks and from each taluk 50 Information Technology employees who are doing work from home are considered for the study. Table 1 shows the number of participants according to taluks.

Table 1.

Number of participants

TALUK	TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Bangalore North (Bengaluru)	50
Bangalore South (Kangeri)	50
Bangalore East (Krishnaraja Pura)	50
Anekal	50
Yelahanka	50
Total	250

(Source: Primary data)

Data collection tools

For the study, a well-designed questionnaire is being produced. The questionnaire consists of questions regarding job stress and recovery experience measures. Shukla and Srivastava's dimensions for job stress such as time stressors, anxiety stressors, role expectation conflict stressors, work life balance stressors and co-worker support stressors were considered as a basis for the study (Shukla and Srivastava, 2016). Covid-19 pandemic stressors were used for used for the study as it is very relevant in this present context. In the case of questions regarding recovery experience measures, psychological detachment from work during off job time, relaxation during off job time, mastery experiences and control were considered as a basis (Sonnentag and Bayer, 2007).

Tools used for data analysis

The major tools used for the data analysis include mean, standard deviation, correlation and linear regression.

Data analysis and findings

Reliability checking

Reliability of questionnaire is checked through using cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951). Table 2 shows the average Cronbach's alpha of the subscales or dimensions of the job stress

scale. This table shows the overall internal consistency or Cronbach's alpha of overall subscales of job stress scale and it is 0.857 which shows higher internal consistency reliability. Table 3 shows the average Cronbach's alpha of the subscales or dimensions of the recovery experience measures scale. This table shows the overall internal consistency or Cronbach's alpha of overall subscales of recovery experience measures scale and it is 0.756 which shows higher internal consistency reliability.

Table 2.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the dimensions of job stress

Sub scales of job stress	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
Time stressors	4	0.856
Anxiety stressors	6	0.861
Role expectation conflict stressors	4	0.856
Work life balance stressors	4	0.858
Co-worker support stressors	4	0.855
Covid-19 pandemic stressors	5	0.857
Mean	4.5	0.857

(Source: Primary data)

Table 3.

Cronbach's alpha of the dimensions of recovery experience measures

Sub scales of recovery experience measures	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
Psychological detachment from work during off job time	4	0.738
Relaxation during off job time	4	0.768
Mastery experiences during off job time	4	0.784
Control during off job time	4	0.740
Mean	4.0	0.756

(Source: Primary data)

Descriptive statistics of dimensions of job stress and recovery experience measures

The mean and standard deviation of dimensions of job stress and recovery experience measures are shown in table 4. Out of the dimensions of job stress, anxiety stressors got a maximum score (x = 19.79, SD = 5.04) and followed by the work life balance stressors (x =

13.82, SD = 3.45). The least score was for the dimension co-worker support stressors (x = 10.88, SD = 3.58). From the dimensions of recovery experience measures, mastery experiences during off job time has got a maximum score (x = 11.08, SD = 3.80). And the dimension relaxation during off job time has scored the least score (x = 7.67, SD = 3.26).

Table 4.

Descriptive statistics of dimensions of job stress and recovery experience measures

	DIMENSIONS	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
JOB STRESS	Time stressors	11.78	3.58
	Anxiety stressors	19.79	5.04
	Role expectation conflict stressors	13.19	3.76
	Work life balance stressors	13.82	3.45
	Co-worker support stressors	10.88	3.58
	Covid-19 pandemic stressors	13.24	4.43
RECOVERY EXPERIENCE MEASURES	Psychological detachment from work during off job time	7.82	3.27
	Relaxation during off job time	7.67	3.26
	Mastery experiences during off job time	11.08	3.80
	Control during off job time	8.23	3.29

(Source: Primary data)

Hypothesis – 1

For testing the relationship between job stress and the need for recovery experience measures among Information Technology employees during covid-19 pandemic period the researcher has used correlation and linear regression.

H0: There is no relationship between job stress and the need for recovery experience measures among Information Technology employees during covid-19 pandemic period

Table 5.

Correlation between recovery experience measures and job stress

		Recovery experience measures	Job stress
Recovery experience measures	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 250	.559 .000 250
Job stress	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.559 .000 250	1 250

(Source: Primary data)

The table 5 shows that the significant value ($p < .001$) is less than 0.05 so null hypothesis must be rejected and alternative hypothesis must be accepted. There is an association among job stress and the need for recovery experience measures among Information Technology employees during covid-19 pandemic period. Correlation coefficient value ($r = .559$) indicates a positive correlation between recovery experience measures and employees' job stress. When the job stress increases, the need for recovery experience measures get increases.

Table 6.

Anova[b]

Model		Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression Residual Total	3046.380 6713.766 9760.147	1 248 249	3046.380 22.529	135.218	.000[a]
a. Predictors: (Constant), Job stress b. Dependent Variable: Recovery experience measures						

(Source: Primary data)

Table 7.

Model summary

				Std.	Change Statistics				
			Adjusted	Error of	R				

Model	R	R Square	R Square	the Estimate	Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.559[a]	.312	.310	4.747	.312	135.218	1	248	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), Job stress									

(Source: Primary data)

Table 8.

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	22.525	1.061		21.226	.000			
	Job stress	.343	.029	.559	11.628	.000	.559	.559	.559
a. Dependent Variable: Recovery experience measures									

(Source: Primary data)

From the table 6, the regression model has successfully predicted the need for recovery experience measures ($F(1,248) = 135.22$, $p < .001$). From the table 7, the model has 31.2% variances in recovery experience measures scores. Respondents' need for recovery experience measures was predicted by the level of job stress ($\beta = .56$, $t = 11.63$, $p < .001$) in the table 8. For every increase in 1 unit of job stress, the need for recovery experience measures get increased by 56 units.

Hypothesis - 2

H0: (a) Time stressors (b) Anxiety stressors (c) Role expectation conflict stressors (d) Work life balance stressors (e) Co-worker support stressors (f) Covid-19 pandemic stressors has no impact on job stress of Information Technology employees during covid-19 pandemic

For testing the impact of time related stressors, anxiety related stressors, role expectation conflict stressors, work life balance stressors, co-worker support stressors and covid-19 pandemic stressors on job stress of Information Technology employees during covid-19 pandemic, correlation and linear regression is used.

Table 9.

Correlation between dimensions of job stress and overall job stress

DIMENSIONS.	PEARSON CORRELATION.	SIG. (2-TAILED)	N
Time stressors	.764	.000	250
Anxiety stressors	.614	.000	250
Role expectation conflict stressors	.717	.000	250
Work life balance stressors	.728	.000	250
Co-worker support stressors	.319	.000	250
Covid-19 pandemic stressors	.692	.000	250

(Source: Primary data)

Table 9 shows the correlation between different factors of job stress and the overall job stress. Significant value ($p < .001$) is less than 0.05 for all the dimensions, so the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted. Time stressors, anxiety stressors, role expectation conflict stressors, work life balance stressors, co-worker support stressors and Covid-19 pandemic stressors has an impact on job stress of Information Technology employees during covid-19 pandemic. While considering the time stressors, co-efficient correlation, $r = .764$ and .728 is for work life balance stressors and .717 is for role expectation conflict stressors. Time stressors, work life balance stressors and role expectation conflict stressors have a strong positive correlation between job stress. While considering covid-19 pandemic stressors ($r = .692$) and anxiety stressors ($r = 614$), they have a positive correlation between job stress. Co-efficient correlation for co-worker support stressors is .319 and it indicates that there co-worker support and job stress has a weak positive correlation.

In the table 10 the regression model has successfully predicted job stress scores ($F (1,248) = 417.49$, $p < .001$). Table 11 shows that the model of time stressors and has 58.4% variance in job stress scores. Respondents' job stress was predicted by the level of time stressors in the table 12 ($\beta = .76$, $t = 20.42$, $p < .001$). For every increase in 1 unit of time stressors, job stress increased by 76 units. In the case of anxiety stressors, job stress scores has successfully predicted ($F (1,248) = 179.91$, $p < .001$). The model has 37.6% variance for job stress scores. Respondents' job stress was predicted by the level of anxiety stressors ($\beta = .76$, $t = 13.41$, $p < .001$). For every increase in 1 unit of anxiety stressors, job stress increased by 76 units. The

job stress score is predicted (F (1,248) = 316.09, p < .001) in the case of role expectation conflict stressors. Respondents' job stress was predicted by the level of role expectation conflict stressors (β = .71, t = 17.78, p < .001). For every increase in 1 unit of role expectation conflict, job stress increased by 71 units. While considering work life balance stressors, the regression model has successfully predicted job stress scores (F (1,248) = 335.44, p < .001). The model has 53% variance for job stress scores. Respondents' job stress was predicted by the level of work life balance stressors (β = .73, t = 18.32, p < .001). For every increase in 1 unit of work life balance stress, job stress increased by 73 units. The predicted job stress score in the case of co-worker support stressors is (F (1,248) = 269.95, p < .001). The model has 47.5% variance for job stress scores. Respondents' job stress was predicted by the level of co-worker support stressors (β = .67, t = 16.43, p < .001). For every increase in 1 unit of co-worker support stress, job stress increased by 67 units. And in the case of covid-19 pandemic stressors, the job stress score predicted is (F (1,248) = 274.04, p < .001). The model has 47.9% variance for job stress scores. Respondents' job stress was predicted by the level of covid-19 stressors (β = .69, t = 16.55, p < .001). For every increase in 1 unit of covid-19 stressors, job stress increased by 69 units.

Table 10

Anova[b]

Model		Sum of squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	21737.975	1	21737.975	417.487	.000[a1]
	Residual	15516.462	248	52.069		
	Total	37254.437	249			
2	Regression	14024.364	1	14024.364	179.907	.000[a2]
	Residual	23230.073	248	77.953		
	Total	37254.437	249			
3	Regression	19175.801	1	19175.801	316.085	.000[a3]
	Residual	18078.635	248	60.667		
	Total	37254.437	249			
4	Regression	19728.209	1	19728.209	335.440	.000[a4]
	Residual	17526.227	248	58.813		
	Total	37254.437	249			

5	Regression Residual Total	17707.312 19547.124 37254.437	1 248 249	17707.312 65.594	269.952	.000[a5]
6	Regression Residual Total	17846.970 19407.467 37254.437	1 248 249	17846.970 65.126	274.039	.000[a6]

a[1] - Predictors: (Constant), Time stressors; a[2] - Predictors: (Constant), Anxiety stressors; a[3] - Predictors: (Constant), Role expectation conflict stressors; a[4] - Predictors: (Constant), Work life balance stressors; a[5] - Predictors: (Constant), Co-worker support stressors; a[6] - Predictors: (Constant), Covid-19 pandemic stressors,

b. Dependent Variable: Job stress

(Source: Primary data)

Table 11.

Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.764[a1]	.584	.582	7.216	.584	417.487	1	248	.000
2	.764[a2]	.376	.374	8.829	.376	179.907	1	248	.000
3	.717[a3]	.515	.513	7.789	.515	316.085	1	248	.000
4	.728[a4]	.530	.528	7.669	.530	335.440	1	248	.000
5	.689[a5]	.475	.474	8.099	.475	269.952	1	248	.000
6	.692[a6]	.479	.477	8.070	.479	274.039	1	248	.000

a1 - Predictors: (Constant), Time stressors; a2 - Predictors: (Constant), Anxiety stressors; a3 - Predictors: (Constant), Role expectation conflict stressors; a4 - Predictors: (Constant), Work life balance stressors; a5 - Predictors: (Constant), Co-worker support stressors; a6 - Predictors: (Constant), Covid-19 pandemic stressors

(Source: Primary data)

Table 12.

Coefficients[a]

	Unstandardized	Standardized			Correlations

Model		Coefficients		Coefficients					
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	41.476	2.069		20.050	.000			
	Time stress	3.514	.172	.764	20.432	.000	.764	.764	.764
2	(Constant)	33.229	3.736		8.893	.000			
	Anxiety stress	2.486	.185	.764	13.413	.000	.764	.764	.764
3	(Constant)	45.161	2.169		20.826	.000			
	Role expectation conflict	2.861	.161	.717	17.779	.000	.717	.717	.717
4	(Constant)	49.089	1.897		25.875	.000			
	Work life balance	3.105	.170	.728	18.315	.000	.728	.728	.728
5	(Constant)	34.575	2.977		11.615	.000			
	Co-worker support	3.496	.213	.669	16.430	.000	.669	.669	.669
6	(Constant)	50.528	2.009		25.152	.000			
	Covid-19 pandemic stressors	2.444	.148	.692	16.554	.000	.692	.692	.692
a. Dependent Variable: Job stress									

(Source: Primary data)

Discussion and Recommendations for future study

According to the findings of the study, there is a link between job stress and the need for recovery experience measures among Information Technology employees during covid-19 pandemic period which indicates that when job stress increases the need for recovery experience measures for employees get increases. Recovery experience measures can be used for a coping strategy against job stress arises in the work from home during this pandemic period. There are several studies regarding the various job stressors and the present study

focused on the job stressors for Information Technology employees who are doing work from home during covid-19 pandemic and this study revealed that time stressors, anxiety stressors, role expectation conflict stressors, work life balance stressors, co-worker support stressors and Covid-19 stressors has an impact on job stress of Information Technology employees during covid-19 pandemic. It is found out that time stressors, work life balance stressors and role expectation conflict stressors has more impact on the Information Technology employees. During work from home employees are not able to maintain a time table for their daily life and time stressors plays a big role in this. They are not able to balance their work life along with their personal life and during work from home they are playing the dual role game that at the same time they want to act in family role as well as in work role. Co-worker support stressors have the least impact on job stress of Information Technology employees that they are able to maintain a rapport through various online platforms.

The present study focused on the need for using recovery experience measures as a coping strategy against job stress during covid-19 pandemic period. A future study can be carried out to determine the impact of the recovery experience measures on the mental wellbeing of employees. And the study is concentrated in Information Technology employees, further studies can be conducted by concentrating on other sectors. Future study can be conducted on focusing a large number of sample sizes.

Conclusion

Job stress is a serious issue which should be trimmed otherwise it will affect mentally and physically. Information Technology profession is stress bounded and eradication of complete job stress is not possible. But it should be trimmed to the minimum level. Employees' burden has been expanded as a result of the covid-19 pandemic that they were forced to work in a new atmosphere which is not familiar to them. Recovery experience measures can bring peace and mental happiness for Information Technology employees. Recovery experience measures mainly concentrate on off job time. Employees are seeking for proper working hours and a definite time schedule. If the working hours are more they are not able to get off job time. So the management should ensure that working hours are fixed and employees are getting sufficient off job time.

Statements of Ethics and Conflict of Interest

“I, as the Corresponding Author, declare and undertake that in the study titled as “Job Stress and Recovery Experience Measures among IT Employees during Covid-19 Pandemic”, scientific, ethical and citation rules were followed; Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry Journal Editorial Board has no responsibility for all ethical violations to be encountered, that all responsibility belongs to the author/s and that this study has not been sent to any other academic publication platform for evaluation."

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