

A Structural Equation Model on Job Stress and Productivity in Multi Sectors

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Abstract—Currently we are living in a cynical world where everybody wants to earn more. And for that, everybody runs more. Sometimes this extra running is at the expense of our health. It's not only physical but also mental that goes for a toss and Stress is the primary reason for unsatisfactory performance in today's dynamic workplace. Stress at work can result from a number of causes like workload, role ambiguity, job insecurity and the imbalance between work and family life. The study investigates the relationship between job stress and productivity by utilizing the Structural Equation Model (SEM) on data from four sectors namely IT, Hospital, Bank and Educational institutions. A questionnaire is used to collect data consisting of a variety of domains like stressor (job pressure, role stress, uppers, organization Structure), outcome (productivity, job performance) and some demographic variables. Factor analysis is used to validate the model through both Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor and Analysis (CFA). In addition, to improve the quality of the predictive model, machine learning techniques like Linear Regression, Random Forest, and Gradient Boosting Machine with cross-validation have been employed on stress and performance. The model will then help to identify the various factors that cause stress and on the basis of that, an organization can take necessary actions to reduce that stress and improve performance.

Keywords: Job Stress, Productivity, Structural Equation Modelling, Machine Learning, Work-Life Balance, Organizational Support.

I. INTRODUCTION

In India many people are engaged in different industries such as IT, healthcare, banking and education as well as manufacturing and more. The IT industry is a growing sector in India providing many job opportunities for men and women. While business growth brings many positive changes, there can also be a negative consequences for employees increased stress in the workplace [2],[10]. Due to factors such as pressure to meet deadlines, heavy workload, unclear roles or lack of management support, employees and the business as a whole are put under pressure [1],[4],[8].

Stress in workplace can reduce productivity, increase absenteeism and lower performance by failure to meet work objectives [2],[3]. Factors that contribute to work stress include workload, job demands, colleagues (i.e. conflict, bullying), Organisational change and work schedules. Lack of recognition or rewards, unemployment and underemployment are also associated with work related stress [8],[10].

Previous studies on job stress and productivity have been largely sector specific and/or focused on specific employee groups; this study aims to undertake an intersectoral investigation of the relationship between job stress and productivity using novel modelling (SEM) and machine learning approaches [2],[6],[9].

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Bharathi and Gupta (2017) have done research on 'job stress and productivity of women employees in the IT sector.' The present research is related to the problems faced by women employees in the IT industry. The survey method is used in the present study. The sample size is 92 employees in the IT industry. The data is collected by using an organized questionnaire method. The results of the present study show that job stress is related to workload, role confusion, job insecurity, and lack of organizational support. The results of the present study show that when stress is more in the workplace, the performance of employees in the job is reduced. The results of the present study show that reducing stress in the workplace and providing support will improve the productivity of women employees in the IT sector[1].

Shalini and Brindha(2018) studied on job stress which is increasing rapidly in women employees in the IT industry. The present scenario of women employees in the IT industry is discussed in the paper. The present study is based on the survey of the level of stress and the causes of stress in women employees in IT organizations in Coimbatore city. The present study is based on 243 women employees in the IT sector in Coimbatore city using the questionnaire method. The present study is based on different statistical methods such as descriptive statistics, correlation, chi-square test, and factor analysis to find the cause of stress in women employees in the IT sector in Coimbatore city. The results of the present study show that rotating shifts, heavy workload, pressure from superiors, working conditions, problems with superiors cause stress in women employees in the IT sector in Coimbatore city. Further, the study reveals that most of the women employees in the IT industry are suffering from a high level of stress, and the most important reasons for that are workload and inability to maintain work-life balance. The study reveals that the stress experienced in the workplace affects family life and may lead to certain health problems, such as feeling tired all the time, severe back pain, etc. Therefore, the study highlights the need for stress management and work-life balance for women employees in the IT industry[4].

Tejero,Seva, and Fadrilan-Camacho(2021) conducted a study on work-life balance and productivity before and during work-from-home (WFH) in the COVID-19 period: A preliminary perspective.

This study investigated the perceptions of 318 employees from 46 different organizations regarding their work-life balance and productivity before and during the WFH period in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak. An online survey was conducted to collect the data. A paired t-test and SEM were employed to analyze the data. The results revealed a significant decrease in work-life balance and a significant decrease in productivity level during WFH. Taking breaks from work in terms of mentally disconnecting from work and social support to manage work demands were positively related to healthy employees and their productivity. Importantly, managing stress, getting the appropriate support, and establishing a clear boundary between work and personal life were crucial to promote employees' productivity[6].

Mathur, Agarwal and Saxena (2024) has dealt the relationship between job stress, job satisfaction and job performance in IT sector. The study was carried on with 255 employees of Information Technology Department through the help of well-structured questionnaire schedule. The correlation co-efficient and simple and multiple regression co-efficient have been calculated to know the association and to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that there is negative relationship between stress and job satisfaction as well as between stress and job performance. On the other hand, there is positive association between job satisfaction and job performance. Most of the employees are facing moderate level of stress, though they are not fully satisfied with their job. It is affecting their efficiency to a great extent. Thus, the study generalizes that the organization must reduce stress level of employees and try to make them satisfied in order to enhance their performance[13].

Lavanya (2025) did a study on women empowerment through work-life balance practices in IT and ITES companies. A questionnaire survey was conducted among 504 women employees. The findings from the data analysis revealed through CFA and SEM that work-life balance practices at workplace are utilized by employees for their career growth and are significant for women empowerment. The findings further revealed that it is not adequate for organizations to have work-life balance practices, but it is also significant for employees to utilize these practices. Work-life balance practices also help women manage both work and personal life effectively. Overall, the study found that work-life balance practices are essential for women's career growth and empowerment[14].

Research Objectives

1. To identify the major factors causing job stress among employees.
2. To analyze the relationship between job stress and employee productivity.
3. To study how stress affects performance in different sectors.
4. To apply Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and machine learning techniques for analysis.
5. To compare stress and productivity across multiple sectors.
6. To provide suggestions to reduce stress and improve productivity.

Problem Statement

Many employees today suffer from job stress. This is partly because of the heavy workload and pressure to meet critical deadlines. Difficulty in separating their personal life from that at work can also cause employees stress. Many today are seeking work-life balance. Stress can affect employees performance and productivity. Stress at work can also render employees tired and less motivated. They may have a lot of trouble focusing on the work at hand and could even end up showing up to work late and miss important meetings. Stress at the workplace has become a serious issue for employees and organizations as it affects their productivity and overall performance. Although there were earlier studies on the issue, they were limited to particular sectors and do not present a comprehensive analysis of the issue across different work places. The paper examines the link between job stress and decreased productivity. It aims to help sectors identify the relationship between job stress and decreased employee productivity and provides organizations with ideas on how to combat job stress and improve workplace productivity.

Scope of the study

The aim of this research inquiry is to investigate the effect of job stress on the productivity of employees within diverse work sectors such as IT, Healthcare, Banking and Education. Both male and female employees are involved within this study, utilizing a self-report method to collect primary data. The study explores a variety of different stress factors affecting employees, specifically workload, job pressure and work-life balance and how these variables are perceived to affect the levels of productivity employees exhibit.

The analysis utilizes methodological tools of Structural Equation Modeling and machine learning techniques in order to maximize the quality of the findings. The study results may be invaluable to organizations who are experiencing stress within their workforce while attempting to enhance both employee performance as well as workplace well-being. The findings are, however, based exclusively on the collected data and not intended to generalize across all industries and situations.

III. METHODOLOGY

If In this research paper, we adopt a quantitative methodology by conducting a cross-sectional survey and employ Supervised machine learning algorithms in analyzing the relationship between job stress and employee productivity. The research follows a workflow that includes data collection, data cleansing and pre-processing, features engineering modelling and lastly, visualization.

The data was collected from employees of diverse organizational roles (including administrative / support roles) from various sectors including IT and allied domains. The survey received approximately 1,00,000 responses. The data set consists of various demographic parameters that include gender, department and job desegregation at the organization. These job designation were generalized into five major roles viz., manager, Senior, Junior, Intern and Staff. The sampled employees from a good representation of the sample universe and thereby facilitate an in-depth analysis on stress and its affect on productivity

A questionnaire incorporating a 5 point scale was the main method of data collection. The study utilize 15 items which formed twelve constructs that were organized into 2 dimensions: job stress and productivity. The dimension of job stress incorporated the following constructs: workload, role ambiguity, job security, gender discrimination, interpersonal relationships, resource deficiency, job satisfaction and organizational support. The dimension of productivity was comprised of the following constructs: time management, supervisor competence, remuneration and systems and procedures and role specified questions.

A. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Approach

In dealing with the complex relationship between job stress and productivity this study uses Structural Equation model (SEM). SEM allows for analysis for relationships between unobservable (latent) variables and observed variables.

The paper examines predictors of innovation using a self-assessment survey of start-ups. Two primary latent variables are considered.

Job Stress (latent variable) (Table 1)

Productivity (latent variable) (Table 2)

The latent variables cannot be observed directly and therefore need to be estimated based on several indicators derived from the actual questionnaire responses.

Construct	Questionnaire Items
Workload	Q1.I am able to reach the target within the specified time.
Role Ambiguity	Q2.Sufficient and clear information is provided to perform my tasks.
Job Security	Q3.I feel secure in my job
Gender Discrimination	Q4.Equal career growth opportunities are provided.
Interpersonal Relationships	Q5.Relationships at all levels are good.
Resource Constrains	Q6.Enough time is provided to complete tasks.
Job Satisfaction	Q7.I am satisfied with working conditions.
Organizational Support	Q8.Training is provided regularly.

Table.1 Job Stress Constraints

Construct	Questionnaire Items
Timings	Q1.I utilize time efficiently
Supervisor Competence	Q2.Supervisor motivates employees.
Compensation	Q3.I am satisfied with salary.
Systems & Procedures	Q4.Procedures ensure quality work.

Table.2 Productivity Constraints

Table.1 and Table.2 displays the constructs of job stress and productivity.

B. Latent and Observed Variables

One latent variable Job Stress is measured by eight observed variables: workload, role ambiguity, job security, gender discrimination, interpersonal relationship, resource constrains, job satisfaction and organizational support. These observed variables are defined by multiple item in questionnaire.

Using SEM framework. Observed variables are used as indicators of latent constructs.

C. Measurement Model

The measurement model in structural equation model specifies the relationship between the observed variables and the corresponding latent variables. In the measurement model, the constructs are linked to their corresponding latent variables through factor loadings, which quantify the degree to which the observed indicators measure the corresponding constructs.

Mathematically represented as

$$X = \Lambda_x \xi + \delta$$

$$Y = \Lambda_y \eta + \epsilon$$

X= observed variables for independent constructs

Y= observed variables for dependent constructs

Λ = factor loadings

ξ, η = latent variables

δ, ϵ = measurement errors

In this study:

The constructs related to stress are taken as indicators of the latent variable job stress.

Productivity-related constructs collectivity represent the latent variable “Productivity”

The model is set out to guarantee that the stress and productivity questionnaire measures the relevant theoretical constructs.

D. Structural Model

The structural model represents the relationships between the latent variables, this study particularly focuses on the relationship between job stress and employee productivity.

Mathematically represented as:

$$\eta = B\eta + \Gamma\xi + \zeta$$

η = dependent latent variable(Productivity)

ξ = independent latent variable(Job Stress)

B, Γ = relationship coefficients

ζ = structural error

The mode assumes that:

Job stress acts as an independent latent variable

Productivity acts as a dependent variable \

The relationship analyzed is between job stress and productivity. We anticipate a negative relationship, which means stress decreases productivity.

E. Working of the SEM Model

The SEM model follows a series of steps to analyze the data. Firstly, the completed questionnaire are read into the software and assigned numerical values based on the Likert scale. Thereafter, the responses are organized into stress and productivity related constructs. The model then computes latent variables from the observed indicators of the said constructs.

The resulting latent variables are then analyzed by the SEM model in a path analysis to investigate the effect of job stress on productivity and to determine the specific contributions of several individual constructs to stress and productivity.

This analysis helps to identify the major determinants for the performance of employees.

F. Data Processing and Scoring

A scoring methodology is applied to the stress survey questionnaire to provide consistent measurement of the stress levels experienced by engineers. Since most of the stress-related questions are scored with the responses listed in ascending order, scores are therefore inversely provided and high score indicates a high stress level. One exception is the workload question which is intended to reflect stress levels and is therefore not inversely scored.

Scores for the construct-level are calculated are the average of the items within that construct. Similarly, the overall score for job stress is the average of the stress constructs and the overall score for productivity is the average of the stress constructs and the overall score for productivity is the average of productivity constructs. Extremely high levels of stress yield very low levels of productivity.

G. System Implementation and Machine Learning Integration

This system is built as a web-based application backed by the flask framework, storing results in SQL lite databases. The system includes a web interface to input user answers and view results. Additionally it has pages for authentication, calculating scores, storing answers and predictions.

We incorporate machine learning methods to improve the prediction. The input feature of interest that we use for the prediction task is the composite job stress standardized. We employ Linear Regression, Random Forrest, Gradient Boosting and Logistic Regression to predict the level of productivity and to classify employees into their performance categories.

We look at how a prediction id done by tracing the stress score, applying the necessary scaling and running it through the various models that have been developed for the service. We then go through how this information is presented on a neat dashboard, showing the predictions in both numeric and written from clarity.

H. Model Evaluation

For assessment, standard metrics have been used for all models. For regression, the R-squared value gives a measure of how much variability in productivity can be explained by the respective model. For classification, accuracy provides a measure of the model's performance. It is shown that using ensemble methods results in improved performance over purely linear models.

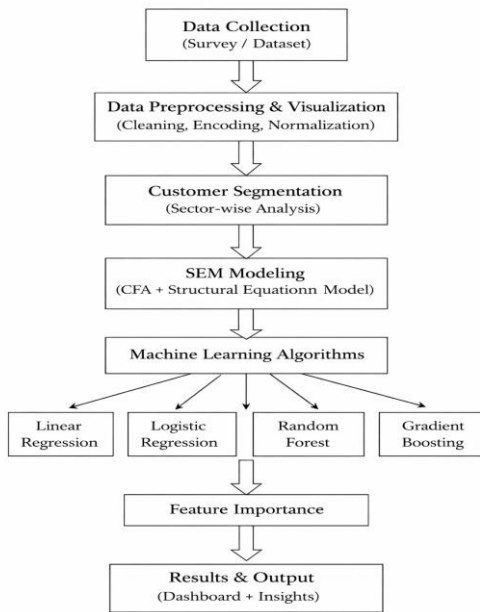


Fig.1 System Architecture

The demonstration of our architecture is displayed in Fig1. This Fig.1 describes about the methodology of our work which includes data collection, data preprocessing and visualization, customer segmentation, SEM Modeling, Machine Learning algorithms such as linear regression, logistic regression, random forest, gradient boosting, feature importance, results and outputs.

IV. Results and Discussions

In this paper, we present a system for stress detection and improving employee productivity. We evaluate the performance of the system on a large dataset of 100,000 employee records that contain stress, productivity and demographic attributes. The data was collected in a balanced manner such that employees at all levels of stress were represented equally.

The distributions for job stress and productivity are both symmetrical throughout the range of the instrument with a central tendency slightly less than mid-range. This means that the regression equation is neither biased in favor of high stress nor low stress and should be a fair predictor across all levels of stress including those classified as low, medium or high.

Employees were recently categorised based on their levels of stress and results showed a large number of employees under the high stress category. In comparison, there was a relatively smaller number under the medium stress category; most employees experiencing either low or high levels of stress at work. This profile highlights a need for early identification and intervention measures to prevent employees moving into high stress.

High job stress was found to have a strong negative effect on employee productivity. The findings from correlation analysis indicated that as job stress increased, productivity decreased significantly. This inverse relationship between job stress and productivity reflects the well-documented finding in organizational behaviour that high job demands are negatively related to performance when employees receive inadequate support and resources.

Using job stress data from the American Workplace Study, machine learning methods have been applied to build models for predicting self-reported and objectively measured productivity. All methods achieved good performance and the combination of bagging and feature boosting in both the Random Forest and Gradient Boosting approaches achieved the highest accuracy. Notably, linear regression also achieved the high accuracy and, while not best, the results suggest that while stress and productivity are related in a generally linear fashion, there are some non-linear variations as well as mentioned in the Table 3.

Model	Metric	Value
Linear Regression	R ²	0.82
Random Forest	R ²	0.88

Gradient Boosting	R ²	0.90
Logistic Regression	Accuracy	0.91(91%)

Table.3 Model Performance

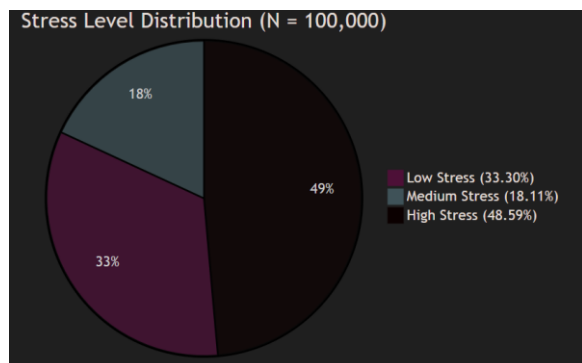


Fig.2 Distribution of Stress levels

As per the above Fig.2 a classification model was used to accurately assign employees into two groups, those that are highly productive and those that are less productive. This model is practical for applied use as it offers an effective and simple means of sorting employees to focus attention on those that require more assistance or other improvement.

A more detailed analysis of the relationship between stress and productivity reveals a mark decline in levels of productivity as stress levels rise. This is illustrated by the graph below which shows that employees with low levels of stress are the most productive. Importantly the results also show that there are critical points (or thresholds) where a small increase in stress leads to a sharp fall in productivity. Management must consider these findings not monitoring stress and implementing measures before their employees reach critical stress conditions.

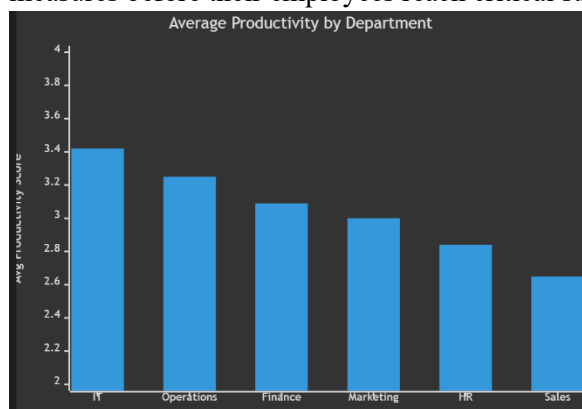


Fig.3 Productivity Across different sectors

As per above Fig.3 department-wise, there was observable disparity in the productivity levels. Departments like IT exhibited very high productivity while working under moderate stress possibly because of organized workflow and availability of requisite resources. Department such as sales displaced lowest level of productivity to deliver desired performance and ambiguity of actual outcomes. Hence, solutions for stress management would require to be department specific rather than homogenous for entire organization.

Individual stress factors also showed that there were multiple stress factors that all seemed to have more or less the same influence on stress. Stress factors that influence workload and job security were most prominent. Stress related to organizational support and availability of resources was also pronounced. Similarly, the multiple factors influencing productivity, such as time management, supervision, remuneration and work processes, all need to be addresses when aiming to combat stress and to optimise productivity.

Real-time predictions are also made available to employees and management through a richly featured dashboard that shows stress levels and productivity. Multiple models are used to create accurate predictions and aid decision making.

Job stress was found to be a major factor decreasing productivity in many sectors. The combination of both statistical analysis and machine learning approaches allowed the system to not only gain insight into the phenomenon but also provided a predictive model that can be used for real-world decision making. The results of this study provide insights into the importance of stress management, monitoring, and data-driven decisions to maximize employee performance and overall organizational productivity.

V. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we describe how we used machine learning and built a web-based system that can analyse and predict employee productivity based on job stress indicators. A framework to analyse stress effect on job performance was developed, using structured survey instrument, statistical analysis, and employing Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), and machine learning prediction models. Several stress and productivity related factors are studied in the system, and the analysis is performed from multiple perspectives.

One of the main findings of this research is the “bad” relationship between job stress and job performance in terms of being productive (productivity). The finding suggests that, there is a strong negative relationship between them. As job stress increases, the level of job productivity sharply decreased. The SEM model validates the aforementioned relationship, by measuring job stress and job productivity in terms of observed variables as latent variables, and explained by a negative and direct path. The three causes of excessive stress at workplace, namely, excessive work load, lack of organizational support and role ambiguity are found to lower employees’ efficiency, motivation and ultimately their performance output. Consistent with the patterns observed in the prior section, the machine learning models used to forecast employee productivity on the basis of their self-reported stress showed strong correlation with actual productivity. While the best models were ensemble learning techniques (with models), this finding is consistent with an overall very strong linear relationship as well as small number of non-linear influences on employee productivity.

Our study not only showed the negative impact of stress on individual productivity but also established a prediction method to classify employees into different productivity levels. This prediction method allows organizations to identify employees who are under stress and take remedial measures to prevent them from being impacted severely by stress. Interestingly, the study found that stress impacts productivity differently in different departments, reflecting the influences of work environment, organisational design and job requirements in individual departments.

The developed web-based dashboard allows both employees and administrators to monitor and evaluate stress, assess productivity, and gain predictive insights for decision making, enabling this traditional stress assessment to transition into a more dynamic and data-driven system for managing the workforce by providing an interactive real-time monitoring platform.

The findings have important implications for human resources management, organisational policies and practice. Notably, stress can have a negative impact on productivity and the ways in which others report that they can manage their workload. Findings highlight areas where organisations can develop workplace interventions such as workload balancing, improvements to communication and workload balancing, improvements to communication and employee support. Organisations can also continuously monitor employee stress and act accordingly to prevent burnout and maintain optimal levels of productivity.

Although the proposed model achieves good accuracy, there are a few limitations in this study. First, the dataset used is cross-sectional and therefore unable to trace the changes of stress levels over time. Second, some subjective biases may exist in the survey responses. Moreover, the current model only deals with stress factors with simplified that are difficult to include in the model.

Scope for Further Research

Future research could further develop this system by introducing more sophisticated methods, and a greater variety of data sources, such as natural language processing of open-ended employee comments to gain greater insight into causes of stress. There are also opportunities for longitudinal studies on stress and productivity over time to get a better handle on trends. Using deep learning techniques that incorporate multiple input features could also improve accuracy for stress and productivity predictions by incorporating a much more nuanced set of data than is currently used.

In addition, the current system can be enhanced with real-time input of several indicators of human physiology obtained from wearable devices or devices located in the workplace. The development of mobile applications for data input and integration of methods of explainable AI can be considered as well. This study could be extended to others sectors.

This study found a strong correlation between job stress and decreased employee productivity due to stress. Employing both Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and machine learning techniques in this research enables the identification of causality between job stress and decreased productivity, while also providing a foundation for future, predictive research. These findings to employees' poor performance to anticipating and fostering healthy workplace habits, which will increasing employee satisfaction and contribute to the overall well-being of the organization.

Conflict of Interest: Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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