The Mediating Role of Perceived Organisational Support in the Relationship between Stressors and Burnout

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates organisational stress in the information technology sector, focusing on the relationships between workplace stressors, perceived stress, burnout, and perceived organisational support. Drawing on the transactional model of stress, the research adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional design to explore how work demands and organisational resources interact in shaping employees' psychological well-being. Data were collected through an online questionnaire administered to 145 IT employees between March and June 2025. The findings revealed significant associations between the main study variables. Workplace stressors were positively correlated with perceived stress and burnout, while perceived organisational support was negatively associated with stressors, perceived stress, and burnout. These results indicate that employees exposed to higher levels of work-related demands tend to experience greater psychological strain and exhaustion, particularly when organisational support is perceived as limited. Furthermore, a mediation analysis demonstrated that perceived organisational support partially mediates the relationship between workplace stressors and burnout. This suggests that organisational support plays a key role in shaping how strongly stressors translate into emotional exhaustion. Employees who perceive higher levels of support are less likely to experience burnout, even when exposed to sustained work demands. These findings highlight the importance of organisational resources in high-pressure IT environments, where continuous change and performance demands are common. Strengthening organisational support practices and reducing excessive stressors may help protect employee well-being, limit burnout, and enhance long-term adaptability and performance.

KEYWORDS: *stress, perceived stress, burnout, stressors, workplace, employees, organisational support*

JEL CLASSIFICATION: *M12, I31, J28*

1. INTRODUCTION

Stress at work has become a persistent issue for modern organisations, as it influences employees' psychological well-being, work behaviour, and overall organisational functioning. Ongoing changes in work structures, increased performance expectations, and constant time pressure have intensified exposure to stressors in many industries. When such demands exceed employees' available resources over longer periods, stress may accumulate and lead to negative outcomes such as emotional exhaustion, reduced motivation, and burnout. These effects not only affect individuals, but also translate into higher absenteeism, turnover intentions, and declining productivity at the organisational level.

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The information technology sector represents a particularly relevant context for studying workplace stress. IT employees often operate in fast-paced environments characterised by rapid technological development, frequent system updates, tight project deadlines, and high accountability. Continuous learning requirements and extended working hours, often enabled by digital connectivity, further blur the boundaries between work and personal life. Under these conditions, stressors may become chronic, increasing the risk of burnout and threatening both employee well-being and organisational sustainability.

At the same time, organisations vary in how effectively they support employees when facing demanding work conditions. Perceived organisational support reflects the degree to which employees believe that their organisation values their contributions and is concerned with their well-being. Research suggests that such perceptions play a key role in shaping employees' responses to stress, since support can reduce perceived stress, limit emotional exhaustion, and foster resilience. Moreover, organisational support may influence the process through which stressors lead to burnout, acting as a mechanism that weakens or partially explains this relationship.

Building on established theoretical models of stress, this study is grounded in the transactional perspective, which emphasises the interaction between work demands, individual resources, and organisational context. Within this framework, workplace stressors, perceived stress, burnout, and perceived organisational support are viewed as interconnected components of a broader adaptation process. Organisational support is conceptualised as a key contextual resource that can influence how employees appraise stressors and manage sustained demands. By examining these relationships in the IT sector, the study seeks to deepen theoretical understanding of how support mechanisms shape stress responses and protect against exhaustion. In doing so, the research contributes to the development of integrative models of workplace stress that link organisational resources with employee well-being and performance in demanding work environments.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Occupational Stress and Burnout in the Workplace

Occupational stress is increasingly common nowadays, affecting a large proportion of the workforce across sectors. Studying it is very important, because its high prevalence undermines employee well-being and generates organisational costs such as lower productivity, absenteeism, and turnover. Moreover, understanding its causes and buffers – especially in high-demand sectors like IT – enables targeted interventions to protect well-being and sustain performance.

Occupational stress refers to an adverse psychological reaction that arises when work demands surpass an employee's perceived or actual capacity to cope, resulting in a mismatch between job requirements and personal resources (Folkman et al., 1987). High exposure to occupational stress – excessive demands, low control, and job insecurity – is increasingly common and is linked to a higher risk of anxiety and depression as well as physiological effects like elevated systolic blood pressure (Capizzi et al., 2010; Strazdins et al., 2004).

Stress in organisations affects both employees and their institutions, with two different results: moderate stress can aid performance, while chronic high stress harms health and productivity, so managers must understand employees' stress perceptions (Olteanu & Radu,

2025). Thus, stress has a dual nature – eustress and distress; Selye (1976) noted that moderate stress (eustress) can be adaptive, whereas threatening stress leads to distress and fatigue.

Professional fatigue develops as a result of prolonged exposure to work-related demands and pressures. It is characterised by emotional and cognitive exhaustion, reduced motivation, and impaired concentration. This condition is frequently linked to burnout and may be accompanied by anxiety, depression, and feelings of helplessness. Appels (2000) and Kant et al. (2003) warn that chronic fatigue can lead to harmful coping such as substance abuse; thus Kaur and Haque (2024) argue that occupational fatigue signals a serious psychological imbalance requiring both individual and organisational intervention.

Maslach et al. (1997) define burnout as work-related physical, mental and emotional exhaustion that alters attitudes and behaviour and undermines personal accomplishment. Leatz and Stolar (1993) similarly describe it as long-term exhaustion from emotionally demanding roles combined with very high self-expectations. Burnout typically develops in the workplace but can stem from personal or social strains, and it negatively affects colleagues and private life, damaging teamwork and well-being (Bakker, 2009; Burke & Greenglass, 2001). Maslach et al. (2001) describe burnout as three core dimensions: emotional exhaustion (feeling drained of inner resources), depersonalisation/cynicism (detached, cynical attitude toward work and colleagues), and low work success (negative self-evaluation of work results). Gorji (2011) found that the first two dimensions – exhaustion and depersonalisation – negatively affect work performance.

The main factors that lead to occupational stress and at an extreme level to burnout can be grouped into individual, organisational and external factors. Thus, *individual factors* relate to personal traits, demographics, appraisals, and coping resources that shape stress vulnerability. Personality, age, and gender influence reactivity and coping (International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 2019), while low perceived competence and control amplify stress. Coping capacity determines how effectively demands are managed, and perceived work-life imbalance or mismatched resources-demands fosters chronic strain, emotional exhaustion, and lower satisfaction. Radu et al. (2020) show that work engagement and autonomy can buffer the effects of demands by boosting perceived performance and satisfaction, whereas burnout erodes this pathway.

Since excessive workload is widely regarded as a central contributor to stress in organisational contexts (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2004; Topper, 2007), it is very important to understand the *organizational factors*. These include role ambiguity and low decision-latitude, unclear task definitions, and perceived lack of control over decisions (Iverson et al., 1998; Johnson et al., 2006). Conflicting expectations, a politicised climate, poor colleague relations, high workloads, precarious or flexible employment conditions, demanding physical tasks, and workplace harassment further increase stress risk (Manshor et al., 2003; Otto & Schmidt, 2007). Occupational stress due to organisational factors arises when job demands exceed employees' adaptive resources, producing psychological and physical strain that undermines motivation, performance, and workplace climate (Pitariu, 2004). Nerstad et al. (2023) frame this as an imbalance between demands and personal resources like time, support, and autonomy, highlighting the ongoing managerial relevance of prevention and support.

External factors include family and socioeconomic pressures, health status, technological change, and macroeconomic instability. Family responsibilities, financial insecurity, and poor

physical or mental health increase vulnerability to workplace stress (Manshor et al., 2003). Rapid digitalisation and the so-called "technostress" (related to the constant system change, remote work, blurred work-life boundaries, and ongoing learning demands, etc.) raise anxiety about competence, job insecurity, and fatigue, especially when training and support are missing (Radu & Stan, 2025; Sonnentag & Frese, 2003). Kraimer et al. (2003) argue that economic instability (crises, inflation, unemployment) further heightens uncertainty and stress across employee groups.

The transactional model frames stress as an ongoing appraisal process: stress arises when demands exceed resources, shaped by experience, context, and coping (Cooper et al., 2001). In contrast to this model, the interactional view links external demands and internal reactions, but can oversimplify by ignoring personal meaning and context (Pitariu & Vîrgă, 2008). The stimulus view treats stress as external demands that overwhelm coping, analogous to a force acting on a system (Cooper et al., 2001). Theoretical models, from causal to transactional perspectives, highlight the central role of subjective appraisal, alongside organisational context and coping capacity, in the development of stress (Pitariu & Vîrgă, 2008; Ursu, 2007).

Stress affects both mind and body and can persist beyond work, impacting home life; it is associated with anxiety, depression and physiological changes, such as elevated blood pressure, inflammation, and arrhythmia, that increase cardiovascular risk (Pitariu & Vîrgă, 2008; Powers et al., 2018;). Stressors do not always produce immediate reactions; Powers et al. (2018) highlighted the fact that some responses are acute, others accumulate over time leading to chronic strain. Symptoms vary, from emotional (anxiety, irritability, depression, social withdrawal), physical (muscle tension, headaches, insomnia, fatigue, hypertension), behavioural (impulsivity, substance use, absenteeism), cognitive (poor concentration, impaired decision-making) and broader health outcomes (gastrointestinal, dermatological, cardiovascular conditions) (Cohen & Single, 2001). Occupational stress reduces job performance and increases turnover intentions, documented across sectors, for instance, in teaching, with lower performance, absenteeism, and intent to leave (Stevenson & Harper, 2006). In high-demand fields like IT and cybersecurity, chronic workload, tight deadlines, and constant innovation drive burnout and errors, harming productivity and service quality (Platsis, 2019; Shih et al., 2011). At the organisational level, stress raises healthcare costs and voluntary exits (Nobles, 2022; Sheridan, 2020). Shih et al. (2011) note that high turnover often reflects inadequate organisational support (limited counselling, unrealistic demands, poor work-life policies), posing strategic risks for retention and performance.

Effective stress management reduces burnout and requires recognising personal stressors and using adaptive coping: regular physical activity (e.g., outdoor exercise, yoga), adequate sleep (7-9 hours), social support, relaxation techniques (breathing, meditation, music), and leisure for recovery. Cultivating a constructive mindset and daily reflective habits further build long-term resilience (Powers et al., 2018). While these strategies depend on individual resources and capacities, organisational support is essential to enable and sustain them.

2.2 Managing the Occupational Stress – The Role of Organisational Support

Without effective management, organisational stress is associated with higher absenteeism, increased workplace conflict, and lower employee morale (Christo & Pienaar, 2006). Such conditions also undermine team cohesion and reduce the organisation's capacity to sustain consistent and efficient performance.

In a work context shaped by rapid change and sustained pressure, organisations increasingly recognise occupational stress as a factor that directly affects performance and internal functioning. As a result, greater attention is given to organisational strategies for stress prevention and management. Effective measures include involving employees in identifying stressors and implementing solutions such as workload adjustments, flexible schedules, or team restructuring. These actions can lower burnout and improve engagement (Bes et al., 2023). In addition, a supportive organisational climate that promotes collaboration and empathetic leadership is essential for psychological well-being and collective resilience (Roos, 2025).

Beyond structural and relational measures, organisations are increasingly turning to technological solutions to support stress monitoring and regulation. Tools such as smart wearables and artificial intelligence systems are being tested to detect physiological signs of stress and to offer automated guidance, including rest periods or adjustments in work pace (Traunmuller et al., 2024). These personalised responses allow for timely intervention and help prevent overload. When integrated into organisational culture and supported by engaged leadership, such practices contribute to a healthier, more stable, and higher-performing work environment.

Organisational support is a broader concept that does not typically refer to managing stress. Perceived organisational support describes how employees assess the assistance provided by their organisation, particularly whether their work is recognised and whether the organisation shows concern for their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). High perceived organisational support is associated with stronger organisational commitment, an enhanced sense of professional responsibility, lower levels of burnout, higher retention rates, and psychological resilience (Cheng et al., 2020; Xue, 2023).

Organisational support refers to how organisations demonstrate appreciation for employees' contributions and show concern for their interests (Yanbei et al., 2023). Based on social exchange theory, organisational support encourages reciprocal behaviour from employees (Erniriadoğlu & Sönmez, 2021). As a result, strong organisational support can enhance work motivation, strengthen the sense of belonging, improve professional identity, and promote active work engagement (Al-Hamdan & Bani Issa, 2022).

Perceived organisational support fosters a transparent, supportive communication climate that encourages employees to share innovative ideas and engage in creative problem-solving (Neves & Eisenberger, 2012). Combined with an open, inclusive organisational culture that promotes shared values, the perceived organisational support shapes attitudes and behaviours, by enhancing motivation, performance, and organisational loyalty (Schein, 2010).

Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) emphasise that perceived organisational support is inherently subjective, developing over time through employees' interactions and experiences. It therefore reflects a psychological evaluation, shaped by individual interpretation rather than a literal mirror of formal policies or managerial practices (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), which makes employees in identical conditions report different levels of perceived organisational support. Eisenberger and Stinglhamber (2011) position perceived organisational support as a central mechanism explaining employees' responses to organisational treatment, and Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) argue that recognising employees' active interpretation of support enables organisations to design targeted interventions that enhance well-being, strengthen commitment, and improve performance.

2.3 Hypotheses Development

Based on the literature review, this study develops four hypotheses, formulated as follows:

H1. There is a significant negative correlation between stressors at work and organisational support.

High levels of job demands, role ambiguity and conflicts, and adverse work conditions signal to employees that the organisation fails to provide adequate resources and protection, which undermines perceptions of support (Manshor et al., 2003). When tasks are unclear, workloads are excessive, or interpersonal climate is strained, employees interpret these conditions as evidence of limited organisational concern, lowering the level of perceived organisational support. Empirical work framing stress as an imbalance between demands and resources also suggests that greater stressor exposure corresponds to weaker perceptions of available support (Nerstad et al., 2023).

H2. There is a significant negative correlation between organisational support and perceived stress.

Previous research has consistently highlighted the association between low levels of social support within organisations and increased psychological stress among employees. This relationship is particularly strong in occupations characterised by high job demands. Within this framework, perceived workplace support is conceptualised as a protective mechanism that moderates the negative relationship between exposure to intense occupational stress and the deterioration of employees' mental health (Vermeulen & Mustard, 2000). Canboy et al. (2021) find in a large-scale study of French employees that higher perceived organisational support corresponds with lower perceived stress: when employees feel valued and supported, they report reduced stress because the perceived organisational support supplies emotional, informational and instrumental resources that alter appraisal and enhance coping. By fostering work engagement and a sense of meaningfulness, organisational support reduces the perceived intensity of job demands and promotes more adaptive responses to pressure

H3. There is a significant negative correlation between organisational support and burnout.

Zhang et al. (2024) have shown that organisational support functions as a protective resource in high-demand work contexts, buffering employees from the harmful effects of sustained pressure. By signaling care and providing emotional, informational, and instrumental resources, perceived organisational support reduces perceived strain, enhances coping capacity, and promotes recovery—mechanisms that directly counteract the development of emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced personal accomplishment.

H4. Organisational support mediates the relationship between stressors and burnout.

The transactional model implies stressors influence outcomes through employees' appraisals and available resources. Perceived organisational support functions as a contextual resource that shapes those appraisals and coping responses (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). When stressor exposure undermines perceived organisational support, and thus signaling limited organisational care, employees experience higher perceived stress and reduced coping capacity, increasing the risk of emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation. Conversely, a higher level of perceived organisational support provides emotional, informational, and instrumental resources that lower perceived strain and facilitate recovery, interrupting the pathway between stressors and burnout (Canboy et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2024). Therefore we considered perceived organisational support a plausible mediator between workplace stressors and burnout.

3. RESEARCH METODOLOGY

3.1 Instruments

This study uses four measurement scales corresponding to the variables in our hypotheses. Table 1 reports each scale, the number of items, and internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha).

Table 1. Scale Descriptions

No	Variables	Scale Used	Number of Items	Cronbach's alpha
1	Perceived Stress	Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et al., 2012)	14	0.795
2	Stressors	Workplace Stress Questionnaire (HealthyLife, 2019)	55	0.964
3	Burnout	Maslach Burnout Inventory – Short Version (Schaufeli et al., 1996)	9	0.972
4	Organisational Support	Perceived Organisational Support Scale (Eisenberger et al. 1986)	9	0.816

Source: Authors' own compilation based on the data collected

3.2 Participants

This research examined organisational stress, with attention to what triggers it, how employees experience it, and how organisations may respond. The study took place in the information technology sector, chosen because it changes fast and plays a key role in today's economy. Employees in this area often work under strong pressure due to constant skill updates, frequent system and process changes, and ongoing organisational shifts, all of which can increase stress.

The analysis included 145 valid responses collected through an online questionnaire. The participants were between 18 and 52 years old. Women made up 73.8% percent of the sample, while men represented 26.2% percent. Regarding job roles, 35.2% percent of respondents were in leadership positions and 64.8% percent held non managerial roles. The analysis included only fully completed questionnaires.

3.3. Data Collection and Analysis

The study employed a quantitative, cross sectional research design to examine the relationships among perceived stress, workplace stressors, burnout, and organisational support within the information technology sector. Data were gathered through an online questionnaire developed with Google Forms and distributed to employees working in this field. The sample included both individuals in leadership roles and employees without managerial duties. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Prior to completing the questionnaire, participants received information about the study objectives and provided informed consent.

Data collection occurred between March and June 2025. A total of 145 fully completed questionnaires were retained for analysis. Data analysis followed a quantitative approach, starting with descriptive statistics to assess data distribution and to guide the selection of suitable statistical tests for hypothesis testing. All analyses were performed using the IBM SPSS Statistics 27 software, with the PROCESS macro version 4.2 for the mediation analysis.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

To obtain a clear overview of how the main study variables perceived stress, workplace stressors, and burnout are distributed, descriptive statistical analyses were conducted. Measures of central tendency and variability were calculated, including the mean, standard deviation, and 95% confidence intervals, as shown in Table 2. Skewness and kurtosis values were also examined to assess whether the variables followed a normal distribution.

Workplace stressors had a mean value of 1.82 (SD = 0.66), with a 95 percent confidence interval between 1.71 and 1.93. The distribution showed moderate positive skewness (Skewness = 0.87, SE = 0.20) and slight kurtosis (Kurtosis = 0.25, SE = 0.40), indicating some deviation from normality. However, these values are within acceptable limits for the use of parametric tests. According to the literature, skewness values between minus two and plus two and kurtosis values between minus seven and plus seven are considered acceptable (George & Mallery, 2010). In addition, the sample size of 145 participants is large enough for the central limit theorem to apply. This means that the distribution of the mean can be treated as approximately normal even when the data are not perfectly normal (Field, 2018). Therefore, the use of parametric tests for the stressor variable is justified.

Burnout had a mean score of 1.36 (SD = 1.49), with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 1.11 to 1.60. The distribution of burnout showed strong positive skewness (Skewness = 1.71, SE = 0.20) and high kurtosis (Kurtosis = 2.90, SE = 0.40). This indicates a clear departure from a normal distribution, with many low scores and a small number of very high values.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis

No.	Variable	M	SD	CI 95%	Skewness (SE)	Kurtosis (SE)
1	Perceived Stress	1.66	0.54	[1.57; 1.75]	-0.12 (0.20)	-0.16 (0.40)
2	Stressors	1.82	0.66	[1.71; 1.93	0.87 (0.20)	0.25 (0.40)
3	Burnout	1.36	1.49	[1.11; 1.60]	1.71 (0.20)	2.90 (0.40)

Source: Authors' own compilation based on the data collected

Note: M = Mean;
SD = Standard Deviation;
CI = Confidence Interval;
SE = Standard Error.

4.2 Hypotheses Testing

Table 3 shows the Spearman correlation coefficients used to examine the relationships between organisational support, perceived stress, stressors, and burnout. Spearman's rank-order correlation was used due to violations of normality assumptions and the ordinal nature of the measurement scales. The results indicate that there are significant relationships between all the variables included in the analysis.

Table 3. Spearman Correlation Coefficients

No.	Variable	Organisational Support	Perceived stress	Stressors	Burnout
1	Organisational Support	-			
2	Perceived stress	-0.26**	-		
3	Stressors	-0.50**	0.55**	-	
4	Burnout	-0.56**	0.50**	0.87**	-

Source: Authors' own compilation based on the data collected

Note: **p < 0.01

H1. There is a significant negative correlation between stressors at work and organisational support.

Spearman's rho = -0.50, p < 0.01, indicating a moderately strong negative correlation between workplace stressors and perceived organisational support (higher stressor levels are associated with substantially lower perceived organisational support. H1 is supported.

H2. There is a significant negative correlation between organisational support and perceived stress.

Results also support this hypothesis, demonstrating a significant negative correlation between organisational support and perceived stress (Spearman's rho = -0.26, p < 0.01). Thus, a higher level of perceived support from the organisation is associated with a lower level of stress experienced by employees.

H3. There is a significant negative correlation between organisational support and burnout.

This hypothesis is also confirmed by the results obtained, which indicate a significant negative correlation between organisational support and burnout (Spearman's rho = -0.56, p < 0.001). Therefore, employees who perceive greater support from the organisation are at lower risk of experiencing professional exhaustion.

H4. Organisational support mediates the relationship between stressors and burnout.

To test hypothesis H4, a simple mediation analysis was performed using the PROCESS v4.2 macro for SPSS, in Model 4. The analysis was performed on a sample of 145 participants (Table 4). The procedure included a bootstrap with 5000 repetitions, and confidence intervals were set at 95%.

Table 4. Mediation analysis of the relationship between stressors and burnout through organisational support

Effect	Coefficient (b)	SE	t	p	95% CI
Model M: Organisational support					
Constant	6.5	0.25	26.53	<.001	[6.02; 6.99]
Stressors	-0.97	0.13	-7.68	<.001	[-1.22; -0.72]
Model Y: Burnout					
Constant	-0.36	0.51	-0.7	0.488	[-1.37; 0.66]
Stressors (direct)	1.58	0.13	12,16	<.001	[1.32; 1.83]

Effect	Coefficient (b)	SE	t	p	95% CI
Organisational support	-0.24	0.07	-3.38	0.001	[-0.39; -0.10]
Indirect effect					
Stressors → Organisational support → Burnout	0.24	0.1	-	-	[0.02; 0.42]

Source: Authors' own compilation based on the data collected

Note: SE = Standard error;
CI = Confidence interval.

The analysis demonstrated that stressors have a significant negative impact on perceived organisational support. Specifically, the regression coefficient was b = -0.97, with a standard error SE = 0.13 and a significance level $p < 0.001$, indicating a statistically strong association. The 95% confidence interval ranges from −1.22 to −0.72. A higher level of stressors is associated with a lower perception of organisational support.

These results indicate that as the level of stressors at work increases, employees tend to perceive a lower degree of support from the organisation. In other words, a more stressful professional environment is associated with a decrease in the feeling that the organisation provides adequate support in managing daily tasks and pressures.

Furthermore, the analysis showed that both stressors and organisational support are significant determinants of burnout, b = 1.58, SE = 0.13, $p < .001$, 95% CI [1.32; 1.83].

In contrast, organisational support had a negative effect on burnout, b = -0.24, SE = 0.07, p=0.001, 95% confidence interval CI [-0.39; -0.10].

Since both the indirect effect (stressors → organisational support → burnout) (b = 0.24, 95% CI [0.02, 0.42], $p < .001$) and the direct effect of stressors on burnout are significant (b = 1.58, CI [1.32; 1.83], $p < .001$), both pathways are present, organisational support partially mediates the relationship. Part of the influence of stressors on the level of burnout is transmitted through employees' perception of the support provided by the organisation.

5. DISCUSSIONS

This study examined the relationships between key variables related to employee psychological well-being, namely professional stressors, perceived stress, and burnout, by also looking at the perceived organisational support. Correlation and descriptive analyses clarify how these factors interact and shape overall well-being. Consistent with previous research, stress emerges from the interaction between external demands and individual coping resources (Cooper et al., 2001).

Typical sources of stress include conflicting roles, lack of task clarity, constant time pressure, problematic work relationships, and inflexible or unsupportive organisational environments. These conditions lead to exhaustion, burnout, emotional distress, and unhealthy behaviours at the individual level, and to reduced productivity, absenteeism, turnover, and a weakened organisational climate at the collective level. Contemporary views emphasise early

identification of these risks and the use of coordinated interventions that target both stress outcomes and their root causes.

All the four hypotheses proposed in our studies were confirmed. The negative correlation between workplace stressors and perceived organisational support (H1) suggests that adverse work conditions function as signals of organisational neglect, aligning with Manshor et al. (2003) and demand–resources perspectives (Nerstad et al., 2023). Practically, this implies that reducing concrete stressors (clarifying roles, adjusting workloads, improving interpersonal climate) can directly protect employees' perceptions of being supported—thereby preserving a key organisational resource.

The observed negative association between perceived organisational support and perceived stress (H2) reinforces the organisational support as a resource that alters cognitive appraisal under the transactional model (Canboy et al., 2021; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). It provides emotional, informational, and instrumental resources that attenuate the subjective intensity of job demands. It is also interesting to look at the results for the two hypotheses together: the negative correlation between stressors and perceived organisational support is moderate–strong (Spearman's rho = -0.50), while the relationship between perceived organisational support and perceived stress is weaker (Spearman's rho = -0.26). This pattern suggests that workplace stressors have a substantial impact on employees' perceptions of organisational support, while perceived organisational support only partially attenuates subjective stress. Possible explanations include measurement differences, the presence of other mediators or buffers, such as coping and autonomy, and the fact that perceived organisational support may operate indirectly or less immediately on perceived stress.

The negative relationship between perceived organisational support and burnout (H3) supports the protective role of organisational support in preventing emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced personal accomplishment (Zhang et al., 2024). This finding has clear consequences for retention and performance in high-demand sectors like IT: strengthening perceived organisational support through recognition, autonomy, and recovery opportunities might have a key role in reducing the burnout-related costs.

Our mediation analysis has revealed a partial mediation of the perceived organisational support on the relationship between stressors and burnout (H4). This result supports models linking demands, appraisals, and contextual resources (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) and implies that interventions must tackle both source reduction (stressors) and resource enhancement (perceived organisational support). Stressors still predict burnout directly, yet the indirect pathway through organisational support shows that the perceived support climate shapes how strongly stressors translate into exhaustion. In the IT sector, this mechanism may be stronger because project work often combines time pressure with rapid change and high accountability. Under these conditions, support may need to be concrete and immediate to be perceived as relevant.Organisations should therefore prioritise practices that visibly communicate care (feedback, access to resources, managerial support), because such investments can decrease perceived strain and foster engagement.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the relationships among key dimensions of organisational stress within the information technology sector, with a focus on workplace stressors, perceived stress, burnout, and perceived organisational support. Our findings indicate that stress management

should not focus only on individual coping. Reducing stressors and strengthening clear, consistent support practices may jointly limit burnout and sustain performance.

Workplace stressors are strongly associated with higher levels of perceived stress and burnout. Employees exposed to sustained demands, time pressure, and role-related challenges tend to report greater psychological strain and a higher risk of emotional exhaustion. These results reinforce the view that stress in organisational settings is not an isolated reaction, but a cumulative process that develops when demands consistently exceed available resources.

Perceived organisational support emerged as a central protective factor. Higher levels of perceived support were associated with lower perceived stress and reduced burnout, highlighting the importance of supportive organisational practices in demanding environments. Moreover, the mediation analysis showed that organisational support partially explains the relationship between stressors and burnout, indicating that support perceptions shape how strongly stressors translate into exhaustion. This finding emphasises that burnout is influenced not only by the presence of stressors, but also by how supported employees feel about managing them.

The results also underline the relational nature of organisational stress. Stress outcomes reflect the interaction between employees and the organisational context, rather than solely individual vulnerability. In the IT sector, where rapid technological change, continuous learning, and innovation pressure are common, this interaction becomes even more important. Under such conditions, insufficient or unclear support may intensify stress reactions and accelerate burnout.

The cross-sectional design did not allow for causal inference, so longitudinal or experimental studies would be needed in future. Another limitation in our study refers to the fact that the sample was non-probabilistic and relied on self-report measures, which limits generalisability. For our future work, we plan to look separately at the different dimensions of perceived organisational support (career, adjustment, financial support) and maybe to identify the most effective facets against stress and burnout. We are also interested in examining moderated-mediation models that incorporate individual differences (coping style, autonomy) and distinct stressor types (internal, organisational, external).

From a practical perspective, the findings highlight the need for organisations to move beyond reactive stress management approaches. Reducing excessive stressors and strengthening consistent, visible support mechanisms can help limit burnout and sustain performance. Regular assessment of employees' psychological state, clear communication, realistic workload allocation, and supportive leadership are especially relevant in fast-paced IT environments.

Overall, this study contributes to the literature by integrating stressors, perceived stress, burnout, and organisational support within a single explanatory framework. It provides empirical support for theoretical models that emphasise the balance between demands and resources and underscores the role of organisational support as a key lever for protecting employee well-being and ensuring long-term organisational effectiveness.

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