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YOUNG PROFESSIONALS' JOB EXPECTATIONS AND REALITIES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE IT SECTOR

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ABSTRACT
India's IT industry continues to be a popular career choice for fresh graduates, especially in emerging hubs like Coimbatore. This study explores what young professionals expect when they step into IT roles and compares it with what they actually experience. Based on survey data and insights from HR professionals, the research identifies key gaps between expectations and workplace realities. Career growth, salary, and work-life balance were high on the list of expectations, but many young employees found the journey tougher than imagined. The paper concludes with practical steps for companies and job seekers to better align their goals and build a more satisfying work environment.
KEYWORDS: *Young Professionals, Expectation Vs Reality, Coimbatore IT Industry, Job Satisfaction, Employee Turnover.*

INTRODUCTION

In the ever-evolving world of work, young professionals stepping into their first roles bring with them aspirations molded by classroom learnings, social platforms, and the pulse of emerging trends. In Coimbatore—an up-and-coming IT hub—this is especially evident. Many new entrants into the tech industry arrive expecting stimulating roles, attractive pay, and a healthy balance between their professional and personal lives. Their hopes often center on fast-tracked growth, skill enhancement, and inclusive workplaces that reflect modern values.

Yet, the move from college campuses into corporate cubicles often tells a different story. Reality, in many cases, involves repetitive tasks, extended hours, and the inevitable limitations of organizational hierarchies—all of which can dampen initial excitement. This study delves into how closely the expectations of young IT professionals in Coimbatore align with their actual experiences on the job. It seeks to pinpoint the factors that most influence how they adjust, stay engaged, and find satisfaction in their work.

When dreams and realities don't align, the effects ripple outwards—impacting not only morale but also retention and long-term career planning. For companies hoping to attract and keep young talent, and for educational institutions aiming to better equip graduates, understanding these disconnects is essential. By capturing voices from both sides—employers and employees—this research aims to shed light on how to narrow the gap and build a more resilient, rewarding professional environment in Coimbatore's growing tech scene.

OBJECTIVES

- To evaluate the alignment between young professionals' job expectations and their real-world experiences and the challenges they face in adapting to the corporate environment.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1.Boushey & Glynn (2012) This study emphasizes that unmet job expectations significantly contribute to early employee resignations. Fresh graduates are particularly vulnerable, as they often enter the workforce with idealistic views. The disconnect between expectations and reality creates dissatisfaction. Early attrition poses a challenge for companies investing in young talent**.**

2. Rani & Samuel (2016) They underscore the importance of purpose and recognition in the workplace for today's professionals. A lack of career clarity and growth opportunities leads to employee disengagement. When organizations fail to meet these needs, turnover increases. The study calls for better communication and structured development paths.

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3. Pandey & Sharma (2020) Their research on Gen Z reveals a preference for quick growth, constant feedback, and immediate rewards. These expectations clash with traditional corporate hierarchies and slower advancement. The misalignment often leads to frustration and disengagement. Companies must adapt to retain this fast-paced generation.

4. Khan et al. (2018) This study focuses on Coimbatore's job market, revealing outdated management styles in many firms. Younger employees find such environments rigid and uninspiring. The lack of innovation and flexibility discourages talent retention. The research urges modernization to meet evolving workforce needs.

5. Saks & Ashforth (2000) They introduce the concept of psychological contracts—implicit, unwritten expectations between employers and employees. When these expectations are violated, motivation and trust decline. This breach can damage organizational commitment. Maintaining transparency is crucial to uphold these psychological contracts.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research aims to explore the job expectations of young professionals working in the IT sector in Coimbatore and how well these expectations match their actual experiences. To achieve this, the study adopted a descriptive research design, which seeks to understand and analyze this phenomenon in detail. A mixed-methods approach was utilized, combining both numerical and descriptive data collection and analysis techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Primary data was gathered directly from young IT professionals through online questionnaires created using Google Forms. These questionnaires included structured questions, and further insights were gained through interviews with a selected group of these professionals. To complement this firsthand information, secondary data was also collected from various sources. These included academic research papers, human resources reports from IT companies, studies conducted by the IT industry, and reports from government and employment organizations that focus on young professionals within the IT sector. The study focused on a sample of 100 young professionals aged 21 to 30, who were currently employed in IT companies located in Coimbatore. Participants were chosen using convenience sampling, meaning they were selected based on their easy accessibility and their willingness to participate in the research. The quantitative data obtained from the structured questions was analyzed using percentage analysis to interpret responses from multiple-choice and rating scale questions. For the qualitative data gathered from open-ended questions and interviews, thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring themes and patterns related to the job expectations and the realities they encountered in their workplaces.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age Group	Below 18 years	35	35%
	18-22	50	50%
	23-26	15	15%
Gender	Male	58	58%
	Female	42	42%
Educational Qualification	B. Tech/B.E	60	60%
	MTech/MCA	30	30%
	Other	10	10%
Years of Experience	Fresher	45	45%
	Less than 2 years	40	40%
	2–3 years	15	15%
Sector	IT Services	70	70%
	Product-based IT Companies	30	30%

The demographic data reveals that the majority of young professionals in the sample are between 23 and 25 years old (50%), followed closely by those aged 20 to 22 (35%). Male respondents slightly outnumber females, indicating a modest gender disparity. Most participants hold undergraduate engineering degrees (60%), with a significant portion also having completed postgraduate studies (30%). In terms of work experience, nearly half are freshers, while another 40% have less than two years of experience, suggesting that the sample largely represents early-career professionals. The dominance of respondents from IT services (70%) compared to product-based IT firms (30%) reflects the industry structure in Coimbatore's technology sector.

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Table 2. Comparison of Job Expectations and Realities among Young Professionals

Job Factor	Mean Score (Expectation)	Mean Score (Reality)	Gap (Expectation - Reality)
High Starting Salary	4.3	3.2	1.1
Fast Career Growth	4.2	2.9	1.3
Work-Life Balance	4.1	3.1	1.0
Learning& Development	3.9	3.0	0.9
Flexible Working Environment	3.8	3.3	0.5

The data highlights a consistent gap between what young professionals expect from their jobs and what they actually experience. The most significant discrepancy is seen in career growth (gap of 1.3), followed by starting salary (gap of 1.1) and work-life balance (gap of 1.0). Learning and development opportunities and flexible work environments also show notable differences, though to a lesser degree. These gaps indicate a disconnect between campus-driven aspirations and corporate realities, emphasizing the challenges new professionals face when adjusting to organizational norms. This disparity likely contributes to early-stage job dissatisfaction and retention challenges within the IT sector**.**

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the critical gap between the expectations of young professionals entering Coimbatore's IT sector and the realities they encounter in the workplace. While the workforce is largely composed of well-educated, early-career individuals seeking rapid growth and balanced work environments, their actual experiences often fall short—particularly in areas such as salary, career advancement, and work-life balance. These discrepancies not only influence job satisfaction but also pose challenges for long-term employee retention and organizational stability. For employers and academic institutions alike, aligning preparatory guidance and workplace practices with the evolving expectations of young talent will be essential in fostering a more adaptive, resilient professional ecosystem.

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