

JOB RELATED STRESS, ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT, AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS[#]

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The study was designed to examine the relationship between job stress, job satisfaction, and the level of job commitment among government officials. The Job Feeling Scale (Wysocki & Kromm, 1986), the Commitment Scale (Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974), and Anxiety Stress Questionnaire (House & Rizzo, 1972) were administered to a sample of 50 federal government officials. They were divided into two groups according to their job grades, i.e., grades 17 to 18 (n=25) and grades 19 to 21 (n=25). The results showed a significant difference between high and low stress group in relation to job satisfaction. The difference between two groups in relation to job stress, job satisfaction, and level of job commitment were not significant.

The study of job satisfaction and stress has enjoyed a long history in the discipline of industrial/organizational psychology (Mathieu, 1991). For about 15 years, management analysts have been deeply concerned over the negative effects of job stress on job performance and the physical well-being of their employees, as it adversely affects the overall effectiveness of the organization. Stress is not bad upto a moderate level because it enhance the motivation and performance. Yet, the excessive stress and its prolongation over a long period of time can threaten one's ability to cope with the environment. In our culture, work is not always seen as a source of satisfaction and need fulfilment, but rather a source of stress, discontentment, and humiliation too. This attitude has made the job stress as a focal point.

Job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, turnover, lower productivity, lack of motivation, and lower commitment are found by many researchers to be associated with job stress. The general work stress health model (House, 1981; Katz & Kahn, 1978) postulates that objective work conditions can lead to perception of stress, which in turn leads to job related strains (such as dissatisfaction, boredom, and turnover) and individual strains (such as anxiety, depression, and physical illness).

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The government officials, who are no doubt the very important segment of state organization, due to their executive functions and responsibilities are more vulnerable to job stress.

More recently, the concept of organizational commitment has gained increased attention and has been related to a variety of outcome variables (Mathieu, 1991). It has been defined as the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization, which is characterized by belief in and acceptance of organizational goals and values, willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization, and a desire to maintain membership in the organization (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). Organizational commitment has been studied both as a consequence and as an antecedent of other work related variables. Mowday et al. (1982) argued that, with its focus on the organization as a whole rather than the specific job and emphasis on congruence between individual and organizational goals, the attitudes of attachment or loyalty to the employing organization represented by the organizational commitment is conceptually distinct in its focus and time frame from the job specific attitudes of job satisfaction. Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974) suggested that satisfaction represents an unstable and immediate affective reaction to work environment compared with organizational commitment which they view as a long term, slower developing attitude. Therefore, they proposed that satisfaction would causally precede organizational commitment. Subsequent research regarding this ordering produced mixed results. Commitment and satisfaction were found to be reciprocally related, although the influence of satisfaction on commitment was found to be stronger (Mathieu, 1991), and that the variables represent two specific measures of a more global construct.

The present study was undertaken to investigate whether the government officials belonging to different grade levels differ in terms of job stress, job satisfaction, and level of commitment, and also to see the effect of personal-demographic characteristics like age, grade level, and experience on these three variables.

METHOD

Sample

The sample consisted of 50 government officials (25 from grades 17 to 18 and 25 from grades 19 to 21) from Islamabad. Only officials with minimum of one or more years of service were included in the

sample. Their age ranged from 25 to 62 years ($M = 42.50$, $SD = 8.91$). Most of them were postgraduate in terms of their qualification. Their job tenure ranged from 1 to 40 years ($M = 17.12$, $SD = 9.65$).

Instruments

Organizational Commitment Questionnaire

Organizational commitment was assessed with the 15-item Organizational Commitment Questionnaire developed by Porter et al. (1974). The questionnaire measures the extent to which the individual identifies with the organizational goals, is willing to exert effort on behalf of the organization, and intends to remain a member of the organization. This instrument currently dominates most organizational commitment research. The responses to the items are measured on a 5-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The scale measures a single underlying construct (Ferris & Aryana, 1983). The mean score on the questionnaire represents a summary indicator of employee commitment for most working populations. The earlier study has found this scale as reliable to be used in Pakistan (Shah, Kaur, & Haque, 1992).

Job Feeling Scale

The job satisfaction was assessed with the Job Feeling Scale (Wysocki & Kromm, 1986). The scale is a semantic-differential measure of the attitudes of individuals toward various facets of the job: the nature of work, colleagues or coworkers, supervision, pay, and promotion opportunities. The scale can be scored for each dimension as well as for the overall job satisfaction. The earlier studies have also found this scale as reliable to be used in Pakistan (Kaur, Shah, & Haque, 1993; Shah, Kaur, & Haque, 1992).

Anxiety Stress Questionnaire

The existence of tensions and pressures growing out of job requirements, including the possible outcomes in terms of feelings or physical symptoms was measured by Anxiety Stress Questionnaire (House & Rizzo, 1972). It has 17 statements falling into three subscales: Job Induced Tension (7 items), Somatic Tension (5 items), and General Fatigue and Uneasiness (5 items). Responses are scored as 2 or 1 for true or false, respectively, and averaged.

Procedure

Prior appointments were taken with the officials. Each subject was contacted individually during office hours. Subjects were briefed about the purpose of the study and assured that the responses would be kept confidential. Questionnaires containing the relevant measures and general demographic characteristics were administered on them..

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics and correlations among the study variables. The results indicate a significant and negative correlation ($r = -.44$, $p < .001$) between job induced stress and job satisfaction, i.e., higher the stress lower the job satisfaction. Most empirical evidence supports a negative relationship between job satisfaction and job stress (Kahn & Byosiere, 1992). In almost all cases this has been assumed to represent a causal effect of job stress on job satisfaction. However, as Bedian, Burke, and Moffett (1988) noted that the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction may be reciprocal. The job induced stress also indicates a significant negative correlation ($r = -.31$, $p < .05$) with the organizational commitment. There is a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment ($r = .28$; $p < .05$). Mathieu (1991) found organizational commitment and job satisfaction were reciprocally related, but determined that the influence of job satisfaction on organizational commitment was stronger. However, Vandenberg and Lance (1992) found the opposite, i.e., organizational commitment was an antecedent of job satisfaction. Both of these variables were correlated in similar directions with the remaining variables. However, job satisfaction was more negatively correlated with job induced stress ($r = -.44$) than organizational commitment ($r = -.31$). The results also showed high consistency of Job Feeling Scale. The overall job satisfaction significantly correlated with the nature of the work ($r = .85$, $p < .001$), supervision ($r = .89$, $p < .001$), coworkers ($r = .92$, $p < .001$), promotion ($r = .71$, $p < .001$), and pay ($r = .72$, $p < .001$), respectively. The measure of stress also had highly significant correlatons with the subscales of job induced stress ($r = .79$, $p < .001$), somatic tension ($r = .77$, $p < .001$), and general fatigue and uneasiness ($r = .65$, $p < .001$).

Table I
Means, standard deviations, and correlations among all variables (N= 50)

Variables	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI
I. Organizational Commitment	-										
II. Overall Job Satisfaction	.28*	-									
III. Work	.22	.85***	-								
IV. Supervisor	.10	.89***	.73***	-							
V. Colleagues/ Coworkers	.29*	.92***	.71***	.79***	-						
VI. Promotion	.33**	.71***	.38**	.53***	.65***	-					
VII. Pay	.36**	.72***	.57***	.45***	.60***	.60***	-				
VIII. Overall Stress	-.22	-.34**	-.35**	-.32*	-.31*	-.12	-.24	-			
IX. Job Induced Stress	-.31*	-.44***	-.41**	-.45***	-.39**	-.16	-.37**	.79***	-		
X. Somatic Tension	-.09	-.09	-.07	-.05	-.14	-.02	-.09	.77***	.37**	-	
XI. General Fatigue & Uneasiness	-.08	-.20	-.29*	-.19	-.15	-.08	-.04	.65***	.30*	.33**	-
M	53.88	138.34	35.92	34.90	35.18	14.26	18.08	3.72	1.16	1.54	1.02
SD	7.68	38.49	10.65	11.90	10.96	6.56	5.52	2.87	1.49	1.34	0.98

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 2

Correlation between job induced stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment in relation to personal variables

Personal Variables	<i>n</i>	Job Induced Stress & Job Satisfaction	Job Induced Stress & Organizational Commitment
<i>Age (in years)</i>			
25-36	12	-.84***	-.42
37-45	21	-.39	-.51**
46-62	17	-.18	-.07
<i>Experience(in years)</i>			
upto 10	13	-.79***	-.56*
11 to 20	18	-.20	-.19
21 to 40	19	-.18	.08
<i>Grades</i>			
17	12	-.78**	-.19
18	13	-.80***	-.66**
19	17	.03	-.11
20 and above	8	-.23	.07

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

The relationship between job induced stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment with respect to personal variables are presented in Table 2. The results indicate a significant but negative relationship between job induced stress and job satisfaction with respect to age group of 26 to 36 years ($r = -.84, p < .001$), and for experience upto ten years ($r = -.79, p < .001$). While for grades 17 to 18 it also has significant negative relationship. The results also show a significant but negative relationship between job induced stress and organizational commitment for the age group of 37 to 45 years ($r = -.51, p < .01$), and for experience upto 10 years ($r = -.56, p < .05$). It shows that the officials having the age upto 36 years and a maximum experience upto 10 years were more effected by the job induced stress, i.e., those having the age from 25 to 36 years and possess an experience from 1-10 years are more vulnerable to job induced stress.

Table 3

Means, standard deviations, and *t*-value of high and low stress group in relation to job satisfaction and organizational commitment

Variables	Job Stress				<i>t</i>
	High (<i>n</i> = 29)		Low (<i>n</i> = 21)		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Organizational Commitment	51.95	8.42	55.27	6.91	1.53
Job Satisfaction	125.52	40.15	147.62	35.06	2.07*

**p*<.05; *d.f*= 48

As shown in Table 3, the difference between the high and low stress group in relation to job satisfaction and organizational commitment was apparent. The mean scores are higher among the low stress group than the high stress group. However, the significant difference between the high and the low stress group has been found on job satisfaction only. The high stress group of officials differ significantly with the low stress group with regard to their job satisfaction. The data provide sufficient evidence to conclude that job induced stress have significant impact on the job satisfaction of officials working in different grades or cadre.

Table 4

Means, standard deviations, and *t*-values of the official grades in relation to organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and job induced stress

Variables	Job Grades				<i>t</i>
	17 - 18 (<i>n</i> = 29)		19 - 21 (<i>n</i> = 21)		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Organizational Commitment	52.24	8.06	55.52	7.05	1.53
Job Satisfaction	136.32	39.31	140.36	38.35	.37
Job Induced Stress	1.28	1.72	1.04	1.24	.57

d.f= 48; All *t* values are nonsignificant.

The results in Table 4 show that there is no significant differences between the two groups of officials (grades 17 to 18, and grades 19 to 21) in terms of commitment, satisfaction, and job induced stress. The purpose of the present study was to investigate whether the two groups of government officials differ in terms of job stress, job satisfaction, and their level of commitment. The top officials (Grade 19 & above) in government departments are required to maintain their responsibilities for people (interacting with others, attending meetings, etc) and things (equipment, budgets, etc), seek multiple goals and are also most susceptible to political influences as compared to officials of Grade 17 and 18. Therefore it was believed that these two groups will differ in terms of these three variables related to job.

The data in this study indicate that there is no significant difference between the two groups in terms of job stress, job satisfaction, and the level of organizational commitment. It could be argued that the government officials whether they belong to any of the above two groups occupy position of higher power, prestige, status, and job security in addition to other privileges and benefits related to their jobs, and their decisions have a significant consequences for a large number of employees or people. Therefore, they are more likely to be similar in terms of these three job outcomes. Another possible reason might be that the organizations are doing well and there is no profit and loss concept, and the work is mostly routine wise, so the officials of both the group may perceive job stress to be a natural and expected aspect of their work because of their managerial responsibilities and benefits.

As far as the relationship of job stress, job satisfaction, and level of commitment in relation to personal-demographic characteristics like age, grade, and experience are concerned, the findings of the study indicate that officials ranging in age from 25 to 36 years and having an experience from one to ten years (mostly represented by Grade 17 to 18 officials) are more vulnerable to job stress, as far as their job satisfaction and level of commitment is concerned. Another finding of this study shows a significant difference between high and low stress group in terms of their job satisfaction. The effect of job stress on job satisfaction is consistent with findings from a large body of literature (Kahn & Byosiere, 1992). Like other employees, the government officials or executives, are unlikely to be satisfied in a job that causes them stress. For most individuals, stress is an undesirable state, and thus jobs that creates stress are by implication generally undesirable. As the present study was carried out on a small sample, its implications are limited, yet it does show a trend. Like many other studies the results

from this study can not address the causality issue. Further research in this area with different occupational groups as well as job levels may help in greater understanding and remedial measures for handling job stress.

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