

THE IMPACT OF JOB STRESS ON JOB PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY ON ACADEMIC STAFF AT DHOFAR UNIVERSITY

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to determine the levels of job stress among the academic staff at Dhofar University, to measure the job performance level, and determine the impact of the job stress factors (workload, role conflict and role ambiguity) on job performance. For this purpose, 102 structured questionnaires were collected from academic staff of Dhofar University, Sultanate of Oman. Obtained results from the research questionnaires were analyzed by using Multiple Regression analysis, to find the impact of job stress on job performance. Results show that the level of academic staff of job stress was medium and sometimes low. In addition, the level of job performance was somewhat high. Moreover, it was found that workload has a positive statistical effect on job performance. While role conflict has negative statistical effect on job performance. Finally, role ambiguity does not significantly affect on Job performance.*

Keywords: Job Stress, Job Performance, Academic Staff, Dhofar University, Oman.

JEL Classifications: J59, M10.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is important to perceive and address job stress, because its elements badly affect employee mental as well as physical health (Rana & Munir, 2011). Modern societies face widely increasing in the number and size of organizations that provide services to the community; these organizations employ and rely on specialists and professionals whom supposed provided a suitable work environment to perform their roles

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effectively. Since we live in an environment dominated by different stimulus and motivations (physical, moral and psychological), which in turn have an impact on the individual, not only at home but also surpassed to work environment, these stresses make individual lives in a state of anxiety, tension and emotion which affects the duties, functions, and relationship with workers in the organization and even on his health and safety (Revati, 2012; Soran *et al.*, 2014).

Many researchers confirmed increased interest of researchers in the field of organizational behavior in studying factors affecting job performance (Shockley-Zalabak, Ellis, & Winograd, 2000), such as job stress, which made the organization strives to remove or neutralize the factors causing job stress among individuals in order to improve job performance, many studies have addressed the subject of job stress and performance and the relationship between them in many sectors of society (Husain, 2013; Alnaqib, 2012; Dar *et al.*, 2011; Setar *et al.*, 2015) while others focused on the impact of stress on performance in the educational sector (Ali *et al.*, 2014; Kholifat & Almatarneh, 2010; Vazi *et al.*, 2013; Hanif, 2004). Teachers are the foundation stone in developing and advancing the construction of any society and they aspire to respect and appreciation, and aspire for working in right atmosphere that enables them to perform educational services well. Generally teachers can not complete their educational duties appropriately, if adequate circumstances does not exist, matter which requires identifying stress of work to which they are exposed and work to overcome them, which prevents frustration or poor performance experienced by teachers and address the problems that are an obstacle offering this noble service, because high levels of job stress among teachers may affect the goodness of the graduates quality, researches and publications they did.

This study came to examine the impact of job stress on job performance in education sector, and we will study only organizational role factors that cause stress (workload, role ambiguity and role conflict), because it is not appropriate to study physical factors in service organizations such as university. The main aim of this study to determine the impact of these organizational factors on the performance of employees in the education sector in Sultanate of Oman, study instrument has been developed and applied on Dhofar University in Salalah, Sultanate of Oman.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Job Stress

Stress is a status which happens when individuals recognize that the conditions or strains facing them may be more than their endurance. The term job stress can be defined as a group of external harmful factors in the work environment, which may be psychological, physical or social (Greenberg & Baron, 2007; Arnold & Feldman, 2000). (While Ivancevich, Jamal and others defined job stress as an individual's reactions and interactions to characteristics of the work environment that seem morally, emotionally and physically threatening, mediated by individual differences and/or

psychological actions (Ivancevich & Matteson, 2002; Jamal, 2005; Szilagy & Wallace, 1987). Job stress will be experienced, when the imbalance between demands of work environment and the individuals' abilities increases, so at work, stress may be an awareness indicated by ambiguity, conflict and overload arising from the work environment and the characteristics of the individual. We can note three main components of job stress process (Alamian, 2005; Alsharm, 2005): (1) stimulus: Is the primary stimulants resulting from feelings of stress which may come from the environment, organization or individual, (2) response: psychological, physical and/or behavioral reactions, which individual represents as anxiety tension and frustration (Sur & NG, 2014), (3) interaction: which explains the relationship between stimulus and response elements. One of the Japanese management rules says: The effectiveness of the organization depends on its leader's ability to harness the power of stress in themselves and employees, and shift it into energy for success. Job stress study's importance is clear when we know that 40% of workers who report their job are extremely stressed (NIOSH, 1999), as Forbes website noted that work stress responsible for up to 8% of national spending on healthcare in USA 2015, also according to (SWA.gov.au) official Australian websitemental stress costs Australian business more than 10 B\$ yearly.

Job stress can be classified into two types (Rizwan, Waseem, & Bukhari, 2014; Kotteeswari and Sharief, 2014; Kazmi *et al.*, 2008) (1) eustress or positive stress, which is beneficial in case we may feel challenged, but the reasons of stress will be opportunities that are meaningful to us, they help in providing us with energy and impulse in meeting our responsibilities and achieving our goals. This model supposes that at a low level or non-exist of stress, the individual does not face any challenge so he or she is not likely to offer any good performance, but at medium level of stress individuals will offer a mediocre or high performance, for example, as the manager puts the deadline earlier or shorter, because of stress employees will work hardly and effectively to accomplish their organizational goals. Some of organizations' management think that setting a reasonable degree of stress on employees can promote the employees' performance (Zafar *et al.*, 2015), as Muse, Harris& Field, (2003) supported the positive relationship between job stress and job performance; and a large number of researches indicate that as job stress increases, performance may at first rise, but at some degree begins to fall (Luthans, 2013), (2) distress is a condition which happens when an individual perceives a loss or risk or when it badly affects him or her (Kolt, 2003).

2.1.1. Workload

Workload refersto the concentration or the amount of assignments and tasks, which employee responsible at work (Ali *et al.*, 2014). This aspect refers to the degree of stress experienced by individuals due to the conception that they are unable to adapt or be active with the amount of work assigned to them (Idris, 2011). Workload can be classified into: (1) role overload: when individuals are expected to do over than available

time, resources and their capabilities, individuals face many expectations from direct boss, subordinates, colleagues, top management, local community and so on (Ammar, 2006). Role overload can be qualitative or quantitative (Trayambak *et al.*, 2012), qualitative takes place when individual does not have sufficient abilities to do work, while quantitative task happens when individual has huge tasks to do or too time shortage to perform them (Conley & Woosley, 2000). (2) Role lower load: when tasks and duties of the role are less than the level of individual capabilities, which generates bored feelings or stress, in both last cases, individuals face job stress, in the first case they may be afraid, tensed and fear not lead their expected duties, and in the second they feel small work or lack of its importance, so this affects job performance. We can set the following hypothesis:

H1: Workload has significant impact on job performance.

2.1.2. Role conflict

When role requirements of an individual are irreconcilable, it allows role conflict to happen, also role conflict occurs when individuals face many contradictory job tasks, or when they oblige to do things they do not have desire to do. It is a serious situation, because commitment to the role requirement makes it difficult to involve to the requirements of another (Seller & Damas, 2002). Role conflict can be defined as individuals jointly do different roles which conflict each other. According to Luthans, 2013 there are three types of role conflict. First one is the conflict between the individual and the role. There may be confusion between the personality of individual and the expectations of the role, second type is intrarole created by conflict expectations about the method of doing the role, it occurs when role requirements are not agree with individual's attitudes and values. Last type interrole conflict which results from the contrast requirements of two or more roles the individual must play at the same time. Taris and colleagues 2001 and Gellespie and his colleagues 2001 detected the impact of role conflict on faculties' job performance. Thus we formulated the following hypotheses.

H2: Role conflict has significant impact on job performance.

2.1.3. Role ambiguity

Role ambiguity describes lack of information needed by the individual in accomplishing his or her role in an organization, such as information, limits of authority and responsibility, policies and rules of the organization, and methods of performance evaluation (Ammar, 2006). Role ambiguity comes when individual does not have clear role to do the assigned job (Kahn *et al.*, 1964), Rizzo and his colleagues 1970 defined role ambiguity as employees who do not have clear direction to the expectations of their role in the organization. Employees usually face two models of role ambiguity: one about tasks and related activities; the second related to feedback regarding to task performance. Feedback is critical to enable the employees in evaluating their

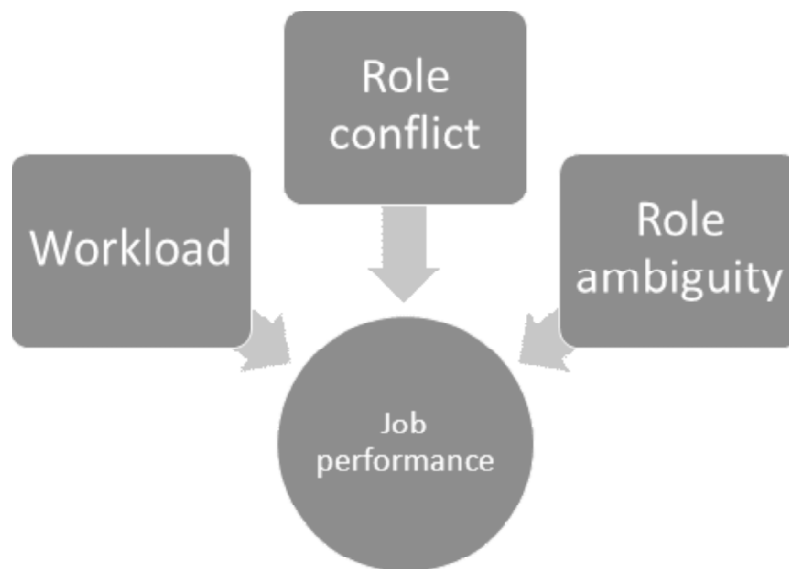
performance and to inform them about progressing toward task accomplishing (Idris, 2011), role ambiguity related to job performance (Bandura and Locke, 2003), so we set the following hypotheses.

H3: Role ambiguity has significant impact on job performance.

2.2. Job performance

Job performance of employees is the most critical subject which plays an important role in accomplishing organizational performance (Wang *et al.*, 2015), Job performance can be defined as set of managerial behaviors express how employees do their jobs (Alawamlah, 2004). Schermerhorn, Hunt & Osborn, 2005 stated that job performance contains a quality and quantity of results driven from individual or group struggle completion. In another meaning job performance can be described as the ability of individuals to achieve their respective work aims, then meet their expectations, achieve benchmarks or accomplish their organizational goals (Ismail *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, we can propose the following model for research (Figure 1):

Figure 1: Study model



3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Design

This study is based on descriptive analytical method for exploring the impact of job stress dimensions (workload, role conflict and role ambiguity) on job performance of the academic staff at Dhofar University. Data for the current study were collected by

two steps: (1) manually distributing: at first, survey was distributed during fall examination time, so the response was slightly low because faculties were busy with proctoring and examination duties, that was the reason why we moved to next step, (2) E-distribution: we designed the survey on Google Form website, then the survey link was circulated to all academic staff, which is more easily and confidential because they can answer by the link survey which in turn sends the results automatically to the form without mentioning the participant's name, so the results became better than manually method.

3.2. Population and Sample

This study population consisted of all academic staff from all colleges at Dhofar University. The survey was distributed to all academic staff members at DU, whom 221 members representing the entire research population, the number of received questionnaire which valid for analysis was 102, so the response rate was more than 46% from population's study.

3.3. Measures

We developed this questionnaire from many validated scales (Chandhok& Tyagi, 2012; Parker & DeCotiis, 1983; NIOSH, 1999; Cousins *et al.*, 2004; Caponetti, 2012; Shahriari *et al.*, 2013). Some changes were done to fit educational context. It consisted of 22 items and included 5 items for each dimension (workload and role ambiguity) and 6 items for (role conflict and job performance). Likert-5-point type- was used for measuring survey questions, ranged from minimum scale number 1 (strongly disagree) to maximum scale number 5 (strongly agree).

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Frequencies of demographic variables

Frequencies of sample's members are outlined in Table 1, which show 85% of sample are males, about 59% are middle aged 35-45 years group.

Table 1
Frequencies of demographic variables

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Elements</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1. Gender	Male	87	85.3
	Female	15	14.7
	Total	102	100.0
2. Age (years)	less than 35	16	15.7
	from 35 less than 40	26	25.5
	from 40 less than 45	34	33.3
	from 45 less than 50	21	20.6
	50 and above	5	4.9
	Total	102	100.0

contd. table 1

Variables	Elements	Frequency	Percent
3. Position	Lecturer	17	16.7
	Assistant Professor	77	75.5
	Associate Professor	6	5.9
	Full Professor	2	2.0
	Total	102	100.0
4. Experience (at DU)	less than 1 year	27	26.5
	from 1 to less than 3	38	37.3
	from 3 to less than 5	27	26.5
	5 and above	10	9.8
	Total	102	100.0
5. Salary (RO)	Less than 1500	16	15.7
	1501-2000	80	78.4
	2001-2500	5	4.9
	2501 and more	1	1.0
	Total	102	100.0
6. Marital Status	Single	7	6.9
	Married	95	93.1
	Total	102	100.0

4.2. Scale Validity and Reliability

Reliability of the instrument has been estimated by using Cronbach’s Alpha, where the results show good values of consistency for all variables except high value for Role Ambiguity, as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2
Mean, standard deviation, items no, Cronbach’s alpha and correlations among variables

S	Variables	M	S.D	Items No.	1	2	3	4
1	Workload	3.352	0.771	5	(0.685)			
2	Role Conflict	2.727	0.787	6	0.335**	(0.741)		
3	Role Ambiguity	2.607	0.988	5	0.295**	0.528**	(0.870)	
4	Job Performance	3.656	0.607	6	0.370*	-0.294*	-0.060	(0.704)

Values which are in parentheses indicate Cronbach’s alpha reliability estimates. N=102. **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

4.3. Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 showed that recognizing Job Stress dimensions by academic staff at Dhofar University was medium for workload and low for two others, also showed that, level of job performance of academic staff at Dhofar University was 3.656 more than average.

4.4. Correlation Test

We used this to test determine the correlation coefficient among study variables, because if correlation coefficient was high and more than 80% it means there is strong correlation among variables, which requires the integration or merging of some variables together. Table 2 showed that correlation coefficients amongst variables were

significant except the relation between Role Ambiguity and Job Performance was very low and not significant.

4.5. Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses of the study have been tested by using multiple regression analysis, using the statistical program SPSS.

Table 3
Results of multiple regression analysis for the effect of Job Stress dimensions on Job Performance

<i>Variables</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>R²</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig</i>
1. Workload	0.094	0.119	2.108	0.027	0.21	70.71	0.049
2. Role Conflict	-0.089	-0.116	-2.958	0.034			
3. Role Ambiguity	-0.021	-0.034	-0.284	0.777			

Table 3 showed that the proposed model appears valid as the value of F was (70.71) with a level of significance (0.49). The results showed that only workload and role conflict have statistically significant effect on job performance, while role ambiguity does not have statistically significant effect on job performance that's mean H3: (role ambiguity has statistical significance effect on job performance) is not supported. Beta values showed that work load has more effect than role conflict on job performance. The explanatory power has reached to 21%.

5. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

5.1. Job Stress

Mean of job stress dimensions by Dhofar University's academic staff was slightly low, because means of role conflict and role ambiguity were less than 3, and workload's mean was somewhat medium. This was due to the policies and new bylaws which university applied. The results showed that workload dimension got first rank with mean 3.35. This indicates that academic staff practice and face medium levels of stress related to capacity and amount of duties and tasks they required to do, attending meetings was most affecting factor in workload. Role conflict got the second rank with mean score 2.73. This means that academic staff experience low level of conflict as they do tasks and activities which does not coincide with their principles, values and past experience they have. In final place was role ambiguity dimension with mean 2.61. This shows clear and defined roles, activities and tasks performed by academic staff such as teaching, examinations activities and advising roles. These results differ in terms of the order of the job stress dimensions with study of (Kholifat & Almatarneh, 2010) which showed that role ambiguity dimension came first, followed by role conflict dimension and finally workload dimension.

5.2. Job Performance

Job performance's mean of academic staff at Dhofar University was somewhat high, the mean was 3.66. This is due to interest of Dhofar University about commitment of academic staff regarding quality of education services that provided, and the university values all efforts consideration which made by academic staff effectively. In addition, increasing concern of DU with continuous awareness sessions about performance scales and appraisal, quality standards and mentoring.

5.3. Workload and Job Performance

The results showed that workload has significant effect on job performance. This result clarified that workload's levels at DU academic staff were medium and within normal and accepted rates, the reason may be new comers (26.5% of academic staff being in DU for less than one year, and nearly 58% less than three years), this consisted to (Lease, 1999) which explained that new comers usually practice high levels of workload. As beta value was positive, workload positively related to job performance.

5.4. Role Conflict and Job Performance

Study found significant effect for role conflict on job performance. This result indicated that role conflict's levels were low, that's mean academic staff do not face confusion during performing regular duties. As beta value was negative at significant value 0.034 less than 0.05, we can say role conflict negatively relates to job performance.

5.4. Role ambiguity and Job Performance

Study found no significant effect for role ambiguity on job performance. This result indicated that role ambiguity's levels were low, that's mean academic staff at DU do not face vagueness related to academic activities of teaching, research and other professional services, because they know their job description in details, like teaching hours, goals of other activities like proctoring, meetings, student advising, and they receive feedback about performance. As beta value was negative at significant value 0.777 which more than 0.05, we can say there is no significant effect of role ambiguity on job performance.

6. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Results of this study require to be viewed in light of study limitations. First, study sample are academic staff at Dhofar University, so none academic staff are excepted, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Second, data was collected during fall examination till first of spring semester, while academic staff stressed by examination duties such as proctoring and student's marks. We hope future researchers to do more studies about additional variables that related to job stress factors as job demand, job control and job support, and to apply studies in other fields.

7. CONCLUSIONS

This study reaches to following findings: Job stress not bad all times, as medium workload's level by academic staff at DU affects positively on job performance. Also the level of role conflict and role ambiguity at DU is low. In addition, role conflict has a significant effect on job performance, while role ambiguity does not significantly affect on Job performance. Finally, academic staff's job performance level at DU is somewhat high.

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