

Impact of Workload and Job Complexity on Employee Job Performance with the Moderating Role of Social Support and Mediating Role of Job Stress: A Study of Travel agencies in Rawalpindi, Islamabad and AJK

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Abstract

This study has been conducted to explore the effect of workload and job complexity on employee job performance, with the mediating role of job stress and moderating effect of social support on employees of travel agencies in Rawalpindi, Islamabad, and AJK. Data were collected through questionnaire from 285 working employees of travel agencies located in Rawalpindi, Islamabad and AJK. The results of the study revealed that workload and job complexity have positive and significant impact on job stress, while job stress has a negative impact on job performance, whereas workload, job complexity and its outcome job stress negatively affected by social support. Results also revealed that social support moderate the relationship of workload, job complexity and job stress. Therefore, the employees of travel agencies affected through workload and job complexity, by which job stress occur and job performance decreases respectively. In addition, social support reduces the job stress of employees in the travel agencies.

Keywords: Workload; Job Complexity; Social support; Job stress; Job performance

Introduction

The main objective of any organization is to increase performance by all mean. However the focus of the study is to find out the relationship among workload, job complexity, social support, and job stress and job performance. So that, the job performance is negatively affected by workload and job complexity, in addition moderator social support shows positive relation between independent variables workload and job complexity and dependent variable job performance. Whereas, mediator job stress indicates negative relationship between independent and dependent variables. Employee Job performance plays an important role in any organization because employee Job performance as a whole will reflect as well as affect the organization performance in today's competitive business environment. However, organizations always want well contribution from their workers time to time.

Individual Employees performance collectively will enhance organizational performance [1]. Performance of the organization is affected by job stress so that why more and more managers tend to focus on improving job performance in order to achieve their organizational goals and ambitions. Research proved that performance is affect by job stress either in a positive or negative way [2]. Organizations need highly performing individuals in order to accomplish their goals, to deliver the services they specified in, and finally to achieve competitive edge [3]. Organizational performance and individual performance has same qualities. It presents high performance when accomplishing tasks results in satisfaction, efficaciousness and subordination [3]. Furthermore, high performing gets promoted quickly, and they are awarded by honored. And more opportunities are introduced for those who perform well as compare to moderate or low performing individuals [4].

As a matter of fact, the importance of employee job performance is reflected from literature that is devoted for it and many contributing researchers in this field have written on individual job performance. Individual job performance plays an essential role in what we do as researchers and practitioners [5].

Furthermore, performance must be distinguished between effectiveness and efficiency [6]. Effectiveness focuses on the quality of being able to bring about an effect, and efficiency focuses on the ratio of the output to the input of any organizational system. Job performance in any organization become very essential and measurement of employee job performance depends on the effectiveness and efficiency of that organization.

Both theoretically and in a practical manner, it is vital to identify predictors of job performance that how job performance affected. Broadly speaking, one can distinguish between person specific and situation specific predictor variables. Variables that have specific individual differences are Person specific variables, but it is expected that they are to be rather stable amongst individuals. But in situation specific variables qualify the work situation or the organizational circumstance, but not the individual person [3].

According to Glass and singer's [7], injurious effects on performance follow exposure to unpredictable, uncontrollable stressors should occur because of essential effort that are required for repelling events would put one less able to deal with later demand and frustration. Unpredictable stress will definitely affect overall performance of the organization. So the controllable and predictable stressors seems to be less aversive, adjustment, to these stressors would presumptively necessitate less effort and therefore would be less likely to be less effective post arousal performance.

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There are so many factors in working place that put negative effect on job performance and individual's health. These negative factors and circumstances should be minimized individuals stress and exposure of heavy workload. For the sake of minimization of these types of negative factors and circumstances, the features and characteristics should be fully understood. There are a lot of factors that influence performance and put direct impact on organization. Factors that influence Performance are including job related circumstances, organizational resources, and their performance. Workload reaction can use in a number of traditions to support the designer and operator of existing systems. While a diagnostic instrument, workload can assist the ergonomist to differentiate between the competences of challenging designs [8]. The study and depth of mental workload absorb considerable energy, effort and resources. The most important conferences dedicated to the analysis and workload depth [8]. There are three major components that involve in workload. Input load, operator effect and performance. The input load consists of the task and environmental demand placed on the employees. Employees' effort reflects the employees' reactions to the input load. The strength of effort is almost certainly is one of the most essential elements of workload. Last phase is the level of performance accomplish by the machine user system [9]. Workload is able to use to provide insights into particular job features. Along with the more promising areas of appliance is the online judgment of workload imposed upon individual employees. This critical information is to develop and operate certain adaptive systems support energetic task allocation. Individual failure thresholds have yet to be distinguished unfairly, even in controlled and easily maneuver organizational tasks [10]. As not dispose of their concern with motivational course of actions, researcher study responses to complex work that have begun to recommend that complicated goals can serve as a motivation for strategy development. Therefore, the research that employs a complex work and a difficult goal might show the way to improve job performance due to the effects of both motivational and cognitive processes [11]. Nowadays, work related groups frequently deal with increased job complexity and autonomy. Even though more difficult tasks and greater autonomy can have optimistic and motivating the effects on performance of the group [12]. It is expected that a significant characteristic of the work perspective is job complexity; it is positively related to focus on opportunities. Job complexity refers to the degree by which the tasks on a job seem to be complex and are difficult to perform. The work that involves complex work have need of the use of many high level ability and is mentally challenging [13]. Jobs related to high complexity involves different factor that have to be considered and make available employees with many decision requirements [14]. According to Kozlowski and Hults, [14] the jobs that are high complex are require the full use and development of knowledge, skills, and abilities. Job complexity is usually thought to have optimistic effects on employees and work performance [15]. For example, studies have shown that job complexity put positive effect on active life orientation. Therefore, high job complexity is an essential situational resource for employees and their organization [16].

In Tayloristic approach to work design, low job complexity is innermost characteristic [17], which engages that tasks are divided into extremely uncomplicated and repetitive subtasks that are learned hurriedly. Tayloristic jobs are associated with negative employee performance such as minor personal initiative, readiness to change, and interest in work novelty. It is expected that job complexity is confidently related to center on opportunities because employees in high complex jobs gather from their current job situation that they also have many opportunities that are associated with work [13].

Literature Review

Workload and job performance

Workload experience is determined by the task load and dealings of the subsequent factors: expended effort, task demands, and level of performance [18]. According to Baeten, previous research point toward variables such as workload, clear goals, assessment, and feedback that have an influence on students' approaches towards learning and even additional variables have been proposed as probably encouraging or discouraging a deep approach towards knowledge [18]. Hollnagel referred to workload and acknowledged that high workload could "possibly" be raised in misfortune research [19].

H1: There is significant negative relationship between workload and job performance.

Job complexity and job performance

The complexity of the stream activity depends on the gradient of difficulty and challenge of the required skills, for example, surgeons who performs the same routine operation constantly often experience tediousness [20]. Fundamental motivation is of substantial importance to any organizations and their employees similarly, given that the experience of the employee's work is it emotional, psychological, or physical in nature, and their performance affects due to this work [21].

There is an investigation of relational complexity, a mediation arrangement between financial side and societal side and even between social issues and financial issues [22].

According to Kember, the focus of research is on the influence of the perception of two variables: workload and task complexity [18].

H2: There is significant negative relationship between job complexity and job performance.

Job stress and job performance

The growth and increase in stress can be associated to certain chronological events and trade and industry factors, with little meaningful importance but much symbolic power [23].

It is generally represented by the response which is directly the result of the stressors present in the environment. Whenever a person realizes a stressor in the environment, or subjected to a stressor present in the environment, a same characteristic pattern of physical reaction will occur [24]. Generally, it is perceived that the stress is a performance booster in some conditions but some people believed that stress also hinder the performance [25].

Work-related psychosocial stress is a multi-faceted phenomenon which may affect employee attitudes and behaviors and later stresses put negative impact on the performance [26]. Stress remains their impact at a specific level when it increases or cross its limits it directly affects performance which causes performance reduction.

H3: There is significant negative relationship between job stress and job performance.

Job stress mediates between workload and job performance

The applied impact of this research field depends on the amount of knowledge about particular relationships between job related stress and psychosocial job factors [27]. Research related to work stress on a higher limit of provided details variance of 10-15% in individual stress indication measures on the foundation of psychosocial job circumstances emerge to be present [27].

Nowadays, a widespread problem is Job stress crossways profession and its effect on job performance. It is necessary to obtain a holistic picture of nearby of job stress together with the special effects of personality, the work family interaction and the organizational factors in the perception of job stress [28]. By the side of a theoretical level, there are four types of relationships that are used to project while measurement of job performance and job stress [28]. Firstly, there is a negative linear relationship, by which output decline in the company of stress. Output can also be increased as the result of stress, in this manner involves a positive linear relationship between these two. Thirdly, there could be a U-shaped relationship in which, by soft stress lift the productivity first up to the peak and then eventually declines as the person fall down into a state of suffering stress. Alternately, there is no needing be any quantifiable relationship between these two.

H4: Job stress mediates the relationship between workload and job performance.

Job stress mediates between job complexity and job performance

Employees job position awareness would be understood to depend on the categories of activities believed essential for victorious job performance [29]. Stress mediate the performance and Workload, workload lead to raise stress and decrease competency and it has a significant attention in literature [30]. Murphy and Kroker [31] describe job performance as the function of the individual performance on the particular tasks that involve standard job descriptions, and proclaim that it is also affected by variables such as keep up good interpersonal relations, non-attendance, and withdrawal behaviors, violence and other behaviors that increase risks at the place of work [32]. It is indicated that the essence of job performance relies on the requirements of the job, the objective of the organization and the beliefs of the organization about which performance are typically appreciated [33]. The previous studies on stress at the workplace found that there are more unmeasured variables that can contribute to stress at the work place [34]. These comprise individual and family dynamics, socio-economic and monetary status, and mental and substantial health factors.

H5: Job stress mediates the relationship between job complexity and job performance.

Social support moderates between workload and job Stress

Performance would increase by means of the expectation that high effort will go ahead to desired performance and such type of performance will be rewarded by appreciation from social support [29]. In most of the organizations where job stress is predictable job action, increase attendance of the job performance that would provide support towards organization in the form of appreciation [29].

Social set of connections can be affected by both the occurrence and assessment of stressful life occasion, social norms affect event occurrence directly [35].

The most vital issue that deserves further attention is to deal with stressful facet by social support [36]. And workload is cause of stress so the social support can help to deal with workload and stress, by which performance increases. Someone's availability to make available for help or emotional support can protect individuals from some of the negative outcome of major sickness or stressful circumstances [37].

H6: Social support moderates the relationship between workload and job Stress.

Social support moderates between job complexity and job Stress

Generally the task complexity is acknowledged to have optimistic effect on performance when excluding employees' resources taxed beyond capability. Consequently, when task complexity reaches a certain dangerous level, the anticipation in that performance will definitely suffer [30].

Social support engages the replacement of resources between at least two persons, with the aspiration of helping the person who take delivery of the support. It can engage provided that compassion, care, feel affection for and emotional support, actual aid in time, money and energy (instrumental support), information related to self-evaluation (appraisal support), and guidance, information and suggestions [38]. Employees consider their valuation by their organization, they have their particular views regarding the extent to which boss or supervisors give value and appreciation for their contribution and good care of their well being [39].

H7: Social support moderates the relationship between job complexity and job Stress.

Theoretical framework/research model

Theoretical framework/Research model is given in Figure 1.

Research Methodology

Data were collected from 285 employees of travel agencies from three different regions: Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and AJK. In the sample, most of the respondents were males and female represented only 14.5 percent of the total sample. The male employees' representation in the sample was 85.5 percent as per the result. 7 percent respondents were PhD that is of the total sample. Whereas the employees who have masters as their highest degree was 39 percent. Whereas the employees who have intermediate as their highest degree was 11 percent and etc., data were collected through questionnaire.

Measures

Data were collected through questionnaires, and in some cases even through online with the help of some friends and colleagues. 350 Questionnaires were distributed to employees of travel agencies through friends, colleagues and by me in Rawalpindi, Islamabad and AJK, in which 285 were returned back. Each question is explained to employees and gives them relaxing environment to obtain required

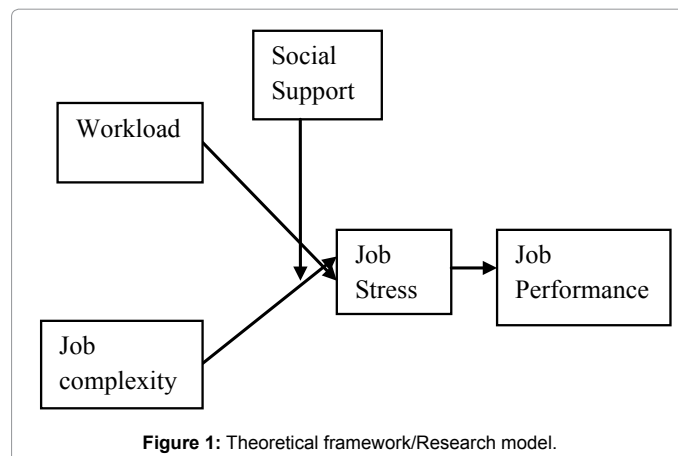


Figure 1: Theoretical framework/Research model.

data. All of the responses were kept rigorously confidential. The response rate was 81%.

Job stress

Job stress questionnaire used was developed by Cousins et al. [40] used eight items and 5-point scale are used, where 5=very often 4=often 3=Never 2=sometimes 1=Rarely. The job stress was a mediating variable measured by 8 items and had the value of Chronbach alpha (.933).

Job performance

Job performance questionnaire was developed by Linda Koopmans’s [41] was used for this study, where 5-points scale and 13 items were used, where 5=Always, 4=often, 3=neutral, 2=sometimes, 1=seldom. The job performance was a dependent variable measured by 13 items and had the value of Chronbach alpha (.760).

Job complexity

Job complexity questionnaire was developed by Eva Kyndt et al. [18] was used in this study, where 5-point scale is used, where 5=It applies completely, 4=It applies, 3=Neutral, 2=Not apply, 1=Does not apply at all. The job complexity was an independent variable measured by 8 items and has the value of Chronbach alpha (.927).

Social support

Social support questionnaire was developed by Sandra A. Lawrence, John Gardner, and Victor J. Callan [42] was used where 5-point scale and 12 items are used, where 5=Very much, 4=Somewhat, 3=Often, 2=A little 1=Not at all. The Social support was a Moderating variable measured by 12 items and had the value of Chronbach alpha (.801).

Workload

Workload questionnaire developed by Eva Kyndt et al. [18] was used where 5 point scale is used where, 5=Very High, 4=High, 3=Neutral, 2=Low, 1=Very Low. The workload was an independent variable measured by 8 items and had the value of Chronbach alpha (.982).

Control variable

Age, gender, qualification, and experience were used as control variable.

Results

Correlation analysis

Correlation is the assessment of the relationship between two or

more variables. Correlation coefficients generally range from -1.00 to +1.00. -1.00 represents strong negative correlation between different variables and +1.00 represents strong positive correlation between different variables. If there is no relationship between variables then it will be shown by zero (0). Pearson correlation is the commonly used type of correlation coefficient, which is also known as product moment correlation or linear correlation. The table below shows the correlation and significance of independent, dependent, moderator, and mediator variables.

Correlation analysis

Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations: Results indicate in Table 1 that the correlation between job stress and job performance are negatively correlated with high significant value of (-.59**, P<.001) which showed a strong negative correlation between these two variables. It shows when job stress increase job performance automatically decreases. Therefore, there is significant negative relationship between job stress and job performance.

Workload and job performance are negatively correlated with significant value (-.10, P<.001), which shows negative correlation between these two variables. Job complexity and job performances are negatively correlated with significant value (-.47, P<.001), which shows negative correlation between these two variables. Here accepted H2. Job stress and workload are positively correlated with significant value (.164, P<.001) which shows positive correlation between these two variables. Job stress and job complexity is also positively correlated with significant value (.039, P<.001) which shows positive correlation between these two variables. Workload and social supports are negatively correlated with high significant values (-.55**, P<.001), which means if social support increases workload decreases and if social support decreases workload increases, which is due to social support, workload decreases.

Job complexity and social support negatively correlated with high significant value (-.42, P<.001) which shows social support strongly negatively correlated to job complexity, and has significant impact on job complexity.

Social support and job stress strongly negatively correlated with high significant value (-.37, P<.001) which shows negative correlation between these two variables. When social support increases job stress decreases and if

Social support decreases job stress increases.

Social support and job performance are positively correlated with

	Mean	Std. Deviation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1: Age	2.21	0.979	1								
2: Experience	2.29	1.015	0.080	1							
3: Gender	1.15	0.355	0.142*	0.058	1						
4: Qualification	2.46	0.832	0.014	0.078	-0.014	1					
5: WL	1.25	0.38	0.029	0.026	0.037	0.052	1				
6: JC	5.0	0.31	-0.006	-0.044	-0.034	-0.088	-0.027	1			
7: SS	4.86	0.54	0.014	-0.119*	0.033	0.145*	-0.55*	-0.42	1		
8: JP	5.01	0.42	-0.025	-0.048	-0.031	0.034	-0.10	-0.47	0.83**	1	
9: JS	1.40	0.39	0.091	0.031	0.081	0.016	0.164**	0.039	-0.37	-0.59*	1

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1: Correlations.

high significant value (.83**, $P < .001$) which means social support enhance support job performance.

Regression analysis

To find out the relationship of independent variable to dependent variable regression analysis is used. Regression analysis is used to identify how the unique value of the dependent variable changes when any of the independent variable is varied, while the other independent variables are held constant. Below Table 2 shows the results of regression analysis for employee job performance.

Multiple regression analysis were carried out to find empirical evidence for the assumptions, in Table 2, the results indicated that workload is strong predictor of employees job performance. As shown in the above Table 2 it presents the results of regression analysis as it shows workload was ($\beta = .301$, $p < .001$) significantly related with job performance and job complexity was ($\beta = .247$, $p < .01$) significantly related with job performance.

The significance value $P < .001$ shows that there is significant relationship between workload, job complexity and job performance at travel agencies. The R^2 value .151 shows that 15% of variation in employees' job performance is caused by workload and R^2 value .231 shows that 23% of variation in employees' job performance is caused by job complexity. In other perspective it can be said as employees of travel agencies job performance is about 15% and 23% dependent on their workload and job complexity respectively. It is quite a significant value which also indicates rest of 77% is the product of other variables that may or may be the part of conceptual model for overall study but which have not been included in current model.

On the whole, these results suggest that workload and job complexity have significant relationship with travel agencies employees' performance. The value of ΔR^2 from Table 3 represent change in actual value that is .162, the value shows that about 16% change occurred in actual R-square. F and t values indicate the fitness of the model for the study, thus value of ($F = 9.44$, $t = 3.53$), represents that the model is appropriate for present study.

Moderation and Mediation

According to Baron and Kenny [43], moderator is supported if the interaction term (independent variable*moderator) and dependent variable is significant. In addition, the relationship between Independent and dependent variable and moderator and dependent variable also significant, but these are not relevant to moderation [43]. In Table 4, two interaction terms are defined, because of two independent variables that are (Workload*social support) and (Job complexity*social support). Table 4 explains all conditions of Baron and Kenny [43]. According to [43], mediator is supported when independent and mediator variable have the variation, and mediator must affect on dependent variable and have variation between these two variables. There is also a third path of the mediation according to

Predictors	Job performance		
	β	R2	ΔR^2
Step1			
Control variables		.012	
Step 2			
Workload	0.301**	0.151	0.075
Job complexity	0.247**	0.231	0.162**

* $P < 0.05$; ** $P < 0.01$.

Table 2: Regression analysis.

Predictors	Job performance		
	β	R2	ΔR^2
Step1			
Control Variables		0.012	
Step 2			
Workload	0.055**	0.042	0.036
Job Complexity	0.025**	0.076	0.071
Social Support	0.273**	0.084	0.079
Step 3			
Workload* Social support	0.077**	0.717	0.660
Job complexity* Social support	0.131**	0.870	0.730

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3: Moderation regression analysis for social support.

Predictors	Job performance		
	β	R2	ΔR^2
Step1			
Control Variables		0.012	
Step 2			
Job Stress	0.230*	0.095	0.271
Step 3 and 4			
Workload	0.237**	0.351	0.265
Job complexity	0.283**	0.263	0.174

Job stress as mediator, $t = 2.715$ $t = 4.481$, $t = 5.253$.

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4: Mediated regression analysis for job stress.

Barron and Kenny, independent must affect dependent variables but it must be less. Table 4 shows all the conditions of Baron and Kenny [43] related to mediation.

This study proposed that social support would moderate the relationship between employees' workload, job complexity for job stress. However the empirical testing of this study found considerable support for the hypothesis. The results of moderated multiple regression indicated that social support played its role to determine the relationship between workload, job complexity and job stress. In Table 4 that are under discussion for linear regression moderation at first step value of controlled demographics represents r^2 value of .012. In second step of multiple regression values of each independent variables and social support which is moderating variable for the study are integrated. It is important to mention that as unstandardized coefficient values are used for the study so each variable is being integrated on the basis of its own unit of measurement. The value of r^2 .084 of social support shows that it is responsible to about 8% variation in employees' social support and their job stress. Whereas the beta value .273 shows that social support is responsible for about 27% of its relationship with concern variable. In third step the multiple regression analysis is performed, two interactions were found to find out what effect they gave when in harmony with each other. For workload (workload*social support) the beta value ($\beta = 0.077$, $P < .001$) shows that there role is about 7% for job stress. For job complexity (Job complexity*social support) the beta value ($\beta = 0.131$, $P < .001$) shows their sensitivity is about 13%.

The value of r^2 .870 shows that moderates 87% of the relationship when in contrast with workload, job complexity and job stress. $\Delta r^2 = 0.730$ shows that change in original r square is about 73% which shows greater change. Overall it shows effective moderation so all hypotheses for accepted for the study. The t value of workload and job

complexity are $t=20.130$, $t=17.413$ respectively which shows the fitness of the model of the study.

Barron and Kenny, 1986 mediation analyses were carried out to test whether the effect of workload, job complexity on employees' job performance could fully or partially be explained by job stress.

In Table 4 the value of r square .012 indicates that the role of demographics in form of gender, age, qualification and experience is about 1% for the concerned variables. Results of the mediation analyses shown in Table 2 also indicated that job stress partially mediated between workload, job complexity and employees job performance. The results indicated r^2 and ΔR^2 .095 and .271 respectively. To find out full mediation third and fourth steps were performed where linear regression results represented little mediation for workload and job complexity. Results indicated the effect of workload and job complexity with a beta value of $\beta=0.237$, and $\beta=0.283$ respectively and were significant at $P<.005$. The results indicated r^2 and ΔR^2 .263 and .174 respectively was significant at $P<.001$.

Discussion

This study was conducted to find out the relationship between workload, job complexity and employees job performance with the mediating role of job stress and moderating role of social support in travel agencies located in Rawalpindi, Islamabad, and AJK. Regression analyses were undertaken to determine the effect of workload, job complexity on employees' job performance and role of job stress as mediator. However, the present study also focused on social support in the life of employees of travel agencies where they faced a lot of stress due to workload and job complexity and due to this job stress occur and job performance automatically decreases.

Limitation

According to the gap in literature, several limitations exist in this study. The findings are limited to only travel agencies, located in Rawalpindi, Islamabad and AJK. Sample size is small, for the further study using large sample size to attained better results. Another limitation is the cross sectional design of study. The application of longitudinal rather than a cross sectional design and large sample size would strengthen future studies. This study is conducted in private sector so can apply in public sector also.

Implications

For practical implications it offers some interesting guidelines for managers in the travel agencies in reduction of stress from their organization. In addition, for the purpose to increase employees job performance and to decrease job complexity, workload, should encourage their employees and give them moral support on workplace. Top managers can structure the workplace so that the workers are encouraged to balance the performance. Organizations should start stress management workshops. To reward their employees so they become more active in accomplishing their goals. The private sector should provide their employees mental health benefits so that can help employees manage their work without any stress and control their mental disturbance also.

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