Job Stresses and Moderating Role of Emotional Intelligence in Improving the Performance of Primary School Teachers, an Empirical Study

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Abstract

In modern era the increase in stress affects all domain of life. Job stress is a crucial problem and job performance is affected in a positive or negative manner. Job satisfaction and emotional intelligence are two important variables in organizational behavioral studies, and are key factors in promoting the efficiency of organizations. The present study was conducted to determine the correlation of job satisfaction and emotional intelligence of the employees. The study was conducted in 28 private and public primary schools to chalk out the association between job performance and job stress, moderated by using the emotional intelligence. This cross-sectional study was performed on 335 employees of Primary Schools, who were selected using convenient and random stratified method. Pre-tested questionnaires were administered to 335 school teachers to collect the information, which was then analyzed statistically by using the SPSS (23.0) measures. Bar-on emotional intelligence and job satisfaction questionnaires were used in this study. The result revealed that there was a direct positive association between job stress and job performance. This association helped to influence and improve the performance of the staff when moderated by emotional intelligence, which has a highly significant interactive role in this regard. The data were analyzed using statistical methods such as goodness of fit tests and regression and correlation analyses.

Keywords: Job stress, Job performance, Association, Interactive role, Emotional intelligence

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Job is considered as an integral part of life in this modern era. Job stress is emerging as an acute problem for everyone, how is facing it. An employee can accomplish an allotted task successfully by the best exploitation of available resources and can show a good performance in job (Rosman & Yousaf, 2013). Many factors affect the job performance and job stress has a major role to influence. In this dynamic age, the organization has to focus on work performance by controlling those factors which influence the overall performance of organization (Kafetsios & Zampetakis, 2008).

An ability to understand and control the emotion is called emotional intelligence (Lopes *et al.,* 2006), an essential factor influencing the performance of an employee in an organization (Cekmecelioglu, *et al*., 2012). Performance of employee is the behavior towards job, the effectiveness of which can be evaluated both as negative and positive performance of an employee (Motowidlo, 1997; Locke, 2004).

In educational sector, teachers are playing the vital role by imparting knowledge and building nation in result. Large number of research studies has been carried out to discover the link among the job satisfaction, performance and stress of high school teachers. Although, the school teachers use to perform their job, however, they do not feel satisfaction due to consistent job stressors (Katrina & Korb, 2013).

The school teachers have more work load, time pressure and job demand which create stress and ultimately affect their mental and physical state, revealed through their performance (Jamal, 1984). Although, a number of social scientists has conducted almost the similar studies at higher schools level, however, probably no research study has highlighted the empirical correlation of job stress and job performance at primary school level in Pakistan. In order to study this, a survey has been carried out among the primary schools available in Lahore city, with the following hypotheses.

H₁: There is a significant negative relationship between job stress and job performance of teachers at primary school level.

H₂: There is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance of teachers at primary school level.

H₃: Emotional intelligence moderates the relationship between the job stress and job performance of teachers at primary school level.

H₄: There is a negative relationship between job stress and emotional intelligence of teachers at primary school teachers.

1.2 Objectives

In order to prove these hypotheses, the impact of job stress on job performance of teaching faculty of primary level schools and also the role of emotional intelligence in moderating the negative effect of job stress on their performance, were studied. The objectives of this study

were (1) To study the influence of job stress on the job performance of primary school teachers and (2) To study the correlation of job stress and job performance with emotional intelligence of primary school teachers.

2. Methodology

2.1 Location and Time of Research

Primary schools in Lahore city having teachers of different age, designation, qualification, income level, experience were the population elements of this study. Primary education sector was selected for this study due to the preliminary and sensitive close interaction of the teachers with the adolescents and young students, prevailing stress while performing the job and opportunity to use emotional intelligence. The duration of this study was 6 months from January-July, 2017.

2.2 Research Methods

In this survey based study, a research model was designed to show the correlation amid job stress and job performance as independent and dependent variables, respectively, with moderating effect of emotional intelligence. The reliability of variables was tested through Cronbach's alpha value which was 0.892.
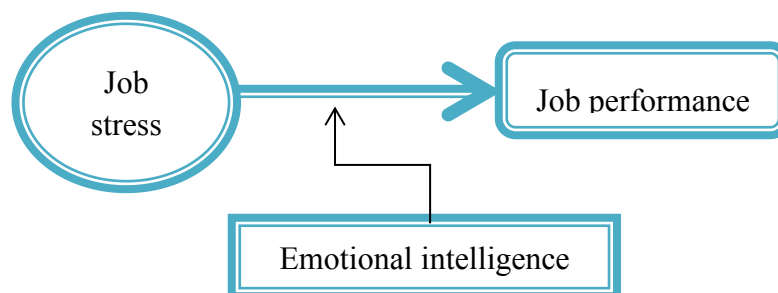
In this survey, the pretested questionnaires were used as a research tool to collect the data. Four hundred (400) questionnaires were distributed among 28 primary schools. Out of which 40 questionnaires were not returned and 25 were not filled properly which were then disqualified. Among the left over, 335 questionnaires were distributed to 45 male and 290 female teachers, depending on the availability. Convenient and stratified sampling techniques were used to select the schools. Similarly, simple random sampling technique was used to collect the data from the teachers by giving them assurance of confidentiality.

The questionnaire was comprised of 39 testimonials. Likert scale was used for getting responses of sensation and reactions of teachers. While preparing the questionnaire, the testimonials used by Parker (1983) and Dubinsky & Mattson (1983) for job stress and job performance respectively, were used. Similarly, while developing the portion of emotional intelligence, the tool prepared by Schulte (1998) was followed.

3. Results and Discussion

In order to test the hypothesis, the information collected in this survey was deemed through demographic profile of respondents. The results were also analyzed through descriptive, correlation and regression testes to verify the variables.

3.1 Demographic Analysis of Respondents

Table 1. The Demographic Profile of Primary School Teachers

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	45	13.4
Female	290	86.6
Age (Years)		
20-29	183	54.6
30-39	111	33.1
40-49	41	12.2
Marital status		
Married	152	45.4
Unmarried	183	54.6
Qualification		
Graduate	125	37.7
Post graduate	210	62.7
Job experience (Years)		
1-5	210	62.7
6-10	103	30.7
11-15	22	6.6
Monthly income (PKR)		
10,000-20,000	263	78.5
21,000-30,000	60	17.9
31,000-40,000	4	1.2
above 40,000	8	2.4
Nature of Job		
Permanent	154	46.0
Contractual	181	54.0

Table 1 indicated the demographic information about the primary teachers of these schools. The results depicted that among all the respondents, 86.6% (290) were female teachers and 13.4% (45) were male. Similarly, 54.4% (183) teachers were aged from 20-29 years, 33.1%

(111) from 30-39 years and 12.2% (41) from 40-49 years of age. Regarding marital status, 54.6% (183) teachers were found unmarried, whereas, 45.4% (152) were married. The results also delineated that 62.7% (210) teachers were post graduate in qualification as compared to 37.7% (125), who were just graduate. Similarly, 62.7%, 30.7% and 6.6% of the teachers have 1-5, 6-10 and 11-15 years of job experiences, respectively. Regarding monthly income, 78.5% (263) of respondent had monthly income ranging from 10,000-20,000 PKR, whereas, rest of the teachers i.e. 21.5% (72) had income ranged from 21,000-40,000 PKR. With reference to nature of job, the teachers serving on contract were more i.e. 54% (181) as compared to permanent teachers who were 46.0 % (154) of the total respondents.

The results of demographic analysis depicted that majority of primary teachers serving in these schools were females. Most of the teachers were young, unmarried, post graduate in qualification, with lesser job experience and working on contractual basis. The results also delineated that most of the teachers were young in age, more qualified and had an experience less than 6 years as compared to other teachers working on permanent basis and had more experience.

3.2 Descriptive Analysis

Regarding descriptive analysis, Table 2 indicated the mean values and standard deviation of independent, dependent and moderating variables. Likert scale (5-Point) was used to measure the influence of these variables on respondents. The results delineated that the mean values of job stress was lesser (3.1773) than the job performance (3.6592), which reflected that the school teachers were comparatively more satisfied and job stress instead triggered to improve their performance. Similarly, the mean value (3.8126) of emotional intelligence was observed to be higher than the job stress, which also supported the hypotheses 2, 3 and 4selected for this study.

Table 2. The Descriptive Analysis of Data Collected from the Primary Teachers

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Job Stress	3.1773	0.75757
Job Performance	3.6592	0.69849
Emotional Intelligence	3.8126	0.62171

Devi (2012) described that stress does not have ruthless effect always, however, a minute stress can motivate the employee to fulfill the task effectively and efficiently, whereas, too much stress can affect and make the task difficult to perform efficiently. Arvind (2014) while studying the correlation of stress and satisfaction level revealed that a little bit stress in the challenging environment leads to higher job satisfaction.

3.3 Correlation Analysis

The results in Table 3, showed that among the 335 primary school teachers, job stress and job

performance were significantly correlated at 0.01 level and reported to be 184%. Similarly, emotional intelligence also disposed-off a similar correlation which was 25.8% between emotional intelligence and job stress. So, both of the variables indicated a weak relationship with job stress, whereas, a strong positive correlation of 74.7% (p< 0.01) was observed between job performance and emotional intelligence, which in inference also supported the hypotheses 2 and 3 of this study.

Table 3. The Correlation Analysis of Data Collected from the Respondents

Variables	Job stress	Job performance	Emotional intelligence
Job stress	1		
Job performance	0.184**	1	
Emotional intelligence	0.258**	0.747**	1

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

This research highlighted four types of associations between job stress and job performance such as curvilinear, negative and positive and no relationship. These results are corroborated by the work of Salami (2010) who also studied that a stress will be beneficial for the motivation of employee resulted in a good performance at job moderated by positive effect of emotional intelligence. The results of this study did not correlate and support the hypothesis 1 rather rejected it with the reason that statistical analysis displayed the positive correlation between them.

Similar studies carried out by Sy *et al.* (2005) also revealed that high level of stress causes favorable effect and results in good performance. It also has been suggested that those workers who have strong emotional intelligence can understand their feelings as well as feelings of others and they have ability to handle the situation and face less stress, as compared to employees who have low level of emotional intelligence, are not able to manage the situation and face stress.

Other researchers such as Ugur (2013) has found the job performance on the scale of emotional intelligence and confirmed the positive relationship and constructive association between these two variables. Daus & Ashkanasy (2005); Coetzer (2007) and Shah (2012) carried out their research in different set ups and also measured the positive influence and correlation of job stress on work performance if moderated by the emotional intelligence. It was also noted that an employee who has upper level of emotional intelligence can perform higher even in state of acute stress (Bar, 2000). Nikolaou (2002) also have found the inverse connection among job stress and emotional intelligence in various educational and business groups. It has also been confirmed that self-motivated person execute their tasks profoundly and these studies finally confirmed the hypotheses 2, 3 and 4 of this research survey.

In the descriptive and inferential analysis of research study carried out by Downer (2006), a negative association of job stress and corresponding performance has been observed with

strong positive relationships existed between job performance and emotional intelligence. Consequently, this study supported hypothesis 2 whereas, rejected the hypothesis 1, respectively.

3.4 Regression Analysis

Hierarchical regression was also run through three different steps in this empirical study (Table 4) to verify the variables and ultimately the hypotheses. In first step, effect of job stress and job performance was measured, in second step, the interaction of job performance and emotional intelligence was measured, whereas, in third step, the interaction of these three variables was measured.

The analysis indicated the higher trend i.e. 34 % in performance despite the job stress present among these primary school teachers. Similarly, correlation value (R=0.184) displayed a weak relationship between job stress and job performance and overall goodness of fit (F=11.674) exercised a positive regression analysis between job stress and job performance variables. In addition, a highly significant (p< 0.001) relationship has also been evolved between job stress and job performance. Furthermore, the β value showed that 1 unit change in job stress brought 0.184 unit change in job performance of primary school teachers in positive direction.

Table 4. The Regression Analysis of Data Collected from the Respondents

Relationship of Variables	Correlation (R)	Coefficient of determination (R^2)	Goodness of fit (F)	Significance Level	B
Job stress--Job performance	0.184	0.340	11.674	0.001	0.184
Emotional intelligence---job performance	0.747	0.559	421.367	0.000	0.747
Job stress x Emotional intelligence----Job performance	0.453	0.205	86.071	0.000	0.453

Furtherer, regarding the relationship of emotional intelligence and job performance, the correlation (R) and coefficient of determination (R^2) analysis also displayed the highest performance i.e. 74.7% and 55.9%, respectively, due to the moderate influence of emotional intelligence exercised by the teachers. Similarly, the F value (F=421.367, p< 0.000) depicted the strong and highly significant relationship between these two variables. The β value also showed that 1 unit change in emotional intelligence brought 0.747 unit change in job performance in positive direction.

Similar trend has also been observed while multiplying values of job stress and emotional intelligence as the interaction variables and the effect generated on job performance of these

primary school teachers. The results depicted that due to 45% of correlation among these variables, 20.5% more performance has been measured as a coefficient of determination. The overall goodness of fit (F= 86.071, P<0.000) also reflected that the relationship between interaction variable and job performance was significantly high. β value also showed that 1 unit change in interaction variable brought 0.453 unit change in job performance in positive direction. The regression analysis carried out also supported the hypotheses 2, 3 and 4 set for this study and consequently rejected the hypothesis 1 and found that job stress inversely enhanced the job performance when moderated by the emotional intelligence in primary schools setup.

Varatharaj (2012) delineated that a person can obtain his goal and objective with the ability of emotional intelligence. People face difficulty in managing the bad feelings which involved wrath, annoyance, thwarting, disturbance and grief (Sy, 2013). Adverse emotion affect the mental and physical health of the employee as well as the organization (Cherniss, 2000; Cook, 2008; Ishak, 2010). Similarly, the high level performance of a person having highly emotional intelligence causes the increment in the performance of organization (Arnold, 2005; Hayashi, 2006; Samir and Lenka, 2012; Dev, 2012). Keshavarz (2011); Yadav (2011) & Ali (2011) also studied the curvilinear relationship between stress and performance and indicated that the employee's performance can be improved by moderate anxiety and positive relationship among job stress and its performance.

4. Conclusion

It is concluded from the study that job performance and job stress have significant relationship with each other. Job stress resultantly, helps to influence and improve the performance of the teaching staff of these primary schools when moderated by emotional intelligence. In this study there was the significant relations between age, sex, education level and job status with job satisfaction.

The reason to choose this sector was to find out the correlation of job stress and job performance, moderated by the emotional intelligence, exercised by teachers of primary schools in managing the routine tasks. The primary teachers community plays the vital role to meet all the organizational objectives, have bundle of work and time pressures and are facing continuous stress to meet up the demands and have to handle parent teachers meeting. Stress is becoming a problematic issue for workers as well as for the institutions and creates barriers in achieving the routine and non-routine tasks. Whereas, this study concluded that job stress is directly proportional to job performance and helps to improve, if moderated by the emotional intelligence, especially in the primary schools setup.

support in completing this research work.

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