Relationship between occupational stress (0S) and organization citizenship behavior (OCB) of academic staff working at higher educational level

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ABSTRACT

The present study was aimed to analyze the relationship between occupational stress and organization citizenship behavior of academic staff working in Higher Education Institutions of Pakistan. Qualitative and quantitative approaches have been used to explore the relationship of occupational stress and organization citizenship behavior by using a sample of 240 academic staff of public sector institutions of higher education located in Islamabad, Pakistan. Data were collected through personal visit to the offices of academic staff. Two research instruments i.e. Occupational Stress Inventory–revised (OSI-R) and OCB inventory by Podsakolf and Mackenzie were used to collect data. For data analysis Pearson Correlation was applied. Data analysis revealed that significant negative relationship was found in responses of academic staff regarding occupational stress and organization citizenship behavior.

Introduction

Education is very important for an individual's success in life. Education is generally seen as the foundation of society which brings economic wealth, social prosperity and political stability. In recent years, inclusive education has risen, which is viewed as the creation of a learning environment that promotes the full personal, academic and professional development of all learners, irrespective of race, gender, disability, religion, culture, sexual preference, learning styles and language. Higher education helps in maintaining a healthy society which prepares health care professionals, educated health care consumers and maintaining healthy population. Higher education is recognized as the best investment for the economic and social development of a country today. Institutions of higher education have the main responsibility for equipping individual with advanced knowledge and skills mandatory for positions of senior concern in government, business and other professions. The rate at which universities are established in Pakistan by not only the Federal and State governments but also by individuals and religious bodies is a totally welcome development which informs of the acceptance of education as the essential thrust for individual and national development. This nevertheless, has led each university into setting new goal in a bid to defend its existence as capable of having both competent staff and equally capable of producing the much needed professional manpower required by the nation. These then have placed great challenges on the academic staff which may likely cause stress especially if they are dissatisfied in the course of carrying out their duties. In accordance with the above cited the role of academic staff is very important with all the areas of responsibility apropos of the educational system.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), an important characteristic of academic staff, is referred as a set of work based behavior patterns in that exceed the basic job requirement of the employees (Begum, 2005). The obeying of organizational rules, regulations and procedures even when no one is looking, extending cooperation to colleagues and helping to resolve their issues refer to organizational citizenship behavior. OCB is considered as a key driver of high level productivity of the employee and ultimately the effectiveness of the organization. In such a complex scenario, academic staff may seriously be affected by the occupational stress. Enduring stress that is narrated with the place of work is called occupational stress. The concept of occupational stress and organizational citizenship behavior are innermost aspects of modern day and dwell in academics' and practitioners' attention now for more than half a century.

But the relationship between occupational stress and organizational citizenship behavior is still a prey to researchers' negligence and lacks the imperial investigation.

The present study aims to analyze the relationship between occupational stress and organization citizenship behavior and of employees working in public sector higher education institution in Pakistan. The present study is an effort in this regard.

Literature review

Stress may be defined as a situation wherein factors interact with a person to change (i.e. disrupt or enhance) his/her psychological and/or physiological condition, such that the person is forced to deviate from normal functioning (Beehr and Newman, 1978).Stress, in general, can be defined as the reaction of individuals to demands (stressors) imposed upon them .It submits to situations where the well-being of individuals is detrimentally affected by their failure to cope with the demands of their environment (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2006). Occupational stress and workplace health have become issues of great concern over the last decade, both internationally and nationally. Given the value of work in this society, the amount of time spent at work and the current changes that are affecting the nature of work, it is not surprising that work stress appears to be increasing (Szymanski, 1999). Occupational Stress is an extremely difficult construct to define. Obviously, it is stress on the job, but stress on the job occurs in a person.

Several sources of occupational stress exist. Some of these stressors are intrinsic to the job. Some are related to the employee's role within the organization, some to career development, some to relationships at work, and some to structure and climate of the organization. Occupational stress, particularly, is the inability to cope with the pressures in a job (Rees, 1997).It is a mental and physical condition which has an effect on an individual's productivity, effectiveness, personal health and quality of work (Comish & Swindle, 1994). Although everyone manifests a response to stress, reactions vary widely across individuals. Even at a physiological level, when confronted with a major stressor, some people experience a rapid increase in heart rate while others feel tightness or knotting in the stomach or tension headaches (Johansson, Cavalini & Pettersson, 1996). Antoniou et al. (2006) point that specific conditions that make jobs stressful can be categorized either as exogenous (i.e. unfavorable occupational conditions, excessive workload, lack of collaboration, etc.) or endogenous pressures (i.e. individual personality characteristics, etc.).(Lu et al., 2003), grouped job stressors into the following six categories: physical environment, role stressors, organizational structure and job characteristics, relationships with others, career development, and work-family conflict, According (Murphy, 1995), common organizational and individual stressors could be classified into five groups: (1) organizational practices - performance reward systems, supervisory practices, promotion opportunities, (2) job/task features - workload, work pace, autonomy, (3) supervisors, coworkers, customers, and (5) employee personal characteristics - personality traits, family relationships, coping skills.

Stress produces a range of undesirable, expensive, and debilitating consequences (Ross, 2005), which affect both individuals and organizations. Consequences of occupational stress can be grouped into those on individual and those on organizational level. On the individual level, there are three main subgroups of strains: (Antoniou et al. 2006)

1) Physiological diseases (poor physical health) – such as increased blood pressure and pulse rate, cardiovascular diseases, high cholesterol, high blood sugar, insomnia, headaches, infections, skin problems, suppressed immune system, injuries, and fatigue.

2) Psychological diseases (poor emotional (mental health) – psychological distress, depression, anxiousness, passiveness/aggressiveness, boredom, lose of self-confidence and self-esteem, lose of concentration, feelings of futility, impulsiveness and disregarding of social norms and values, dissatisfaction with job and live, losing of contact with reality, and emotional fatigue.

3) Unwanted feelings and behaviors – such as job dissatisfaction, lower motivation, low employee morale, less organizational commitment, lowered overall quality of work life, absenteeism, turnover, intention to leave the job, lower productivity, decreased quantity and quality of work, inability to make sound decisions, occupational burnout, alienation, and increased smoking and drug intake.

On the organizational level, consequences of occupational stress can be grouped into two major Subgroups: (Hoel et al. 2001),

1) Organizational costs – such as costs of reduced performance, increase in recruitment, training and retraining costs, increased sick pay, increased health-care costs and disability payments, higher complains costs of equipment damage.

2) Organizational symptoms – such as discontent and poor morale among the workforce, performance losses, low quality services, poorer relationships with partners and regulatory authorities, damage to the corporate image and reputation, missed opportunities, disruption to production, loss of valuable staff, increased sick-leave, permanent vacancies, premature retirement, diminished cooperation, poor internal communications, more internal conflicts, and dysfunctional workplace climate.

Stress can be associated with both pleasant and unpleasant events, and only becomes problematic when it remains unresolved (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2006). In other words, one could argue that not all stress is dysfunctional and that, in fact, stress is not inherently bad, while a limited amount of stress combined with appropriate responses actually can benefit both the individual and the organization (Chusmir & Franks, 1988). Namely, as low and high stress predict poor performance, and moderate stress predicts maximum performance (Sharpley et al., 1996), the total elimination of stress should not be aimed at. Recently, (Kelloway, Teed and Kelley 2009) reported that "between 2000 and 2005, the number of articles using the keyword stress has increased by almost 50 per cent (from 4,021 to 5,928).Later in their article, (Kelloway et al,2009) indicate that over 67,000 studies were published on stressful work.

The concept of OCBs was first proposed by Bateman and Organ (1983). This concept reveals the importance of extra-role behaviors and performance by staffs which are referred to as organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) (Bateman and Organ, 1983; Organ, 1988; Smith et al., 1983; Tjosvold et al., 2003). (Smith et al. 1983) defined it as behaviors that are "not beneficial to organizational performance and were decided by the members of the organization. For these behaviors, there were no formal contracts or standards, and no formal rewarding system. Even though the staff did not display these behaviors, they would not be published". Organ (1988) defines OCB as "discretionary individual conduct, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal system of compensation contributing to the general proper functioning of the organization that does not arise from the prescribed role or tasks of the job, in other words, the specific terms of a contract between employees and organizations; this behavior arises rather from personal choices, such that its omission is not generally understood as punishable."(Katz and Kahn 1978) pointed out that organizational citizenship is important in organizations. (Organ 1988) suggested that high levels of OCB should lead to a more efficient organization and help bring new resources into the organization.

A study conducted by (Walz & Niehoff, 2000) showed that OCB are positively related to indicators of individual, unit, and organizational performance. It increases organizational efficiency by increasing production, improving the quality of service (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, and Bachrach, 2000), OCB is valued by employers (Organ et al., 2006). One conceptualization of OCB that has been widely used in the research literature views it as comprised of five dimensions: (1) altruism - the helping of an individual coworker on a task, (2) courtesy - alerting others in the organization about changes that may affect their work, (3) conscientiousness - carrying out one's duties beyond the minimum requirements, (4) sportsmanship - refraining from complaining about trivial matters, and (5) civic virtue -participating in the governance of the organization. (Podsakoff et al., 2000, Organ, 1988).(Williams and Anderson

1991) suggested OCB could be distilled down to two dimensions: OCB-I, which refers to citizenship behaviors focused toward an individual, and OCB-O, which incorporates behaviors targeted at the organization or unit. A three-factor model of citizenship behavior emerged from the work of (Borman et al. 2001b) and (Coleman and Borman 2000). This model of citizenship behavior is comprised by the following three dimensions: interpersonal citizenship performance, organizational citizenship performance and job/task citizenship performance.

Many researchers have determined different effects of OCB like Personality and satisfaction, (Organ and Lingl 1995), perceptions of fairness (Organ and Moorman, 1993), performance and job satisfaction (Organ, 1988;Moorman, 1991) , perceived organizational support (Moorman et al., 1998), relationship between the organizational citizenship behavior , TQM practice and organizational performance (Joo Y. Jung and Soonkwan Hong,2008).

Earlier research studies show that stressful work decreases wellbeing in the workplace (Danna and Griffin, 1999),increases psychological distress at work (Van der Doef and Maes, 1999), fosters violence among colleagues (Mueller, De Coster, and Estes, 2001) and causes burnout (Aspinwall and Taylor, 1997).Moreover stressful work increases absenteeism (Brun and Lamarche, 2006), and affects employee productivity (Jex, 1992).Previous empirical researches (LeRouge, Nelson, and Blanton, 2006; Tuten and Neidermeyer, 2004) indicated that stressful work environments increase job dissatisfaction. Nevertheless, despite extensive research, Ganster and Schaubroeck (1991) affirm that most research on job stress has focused on determinants rather than outcomes (e.g., organizational citizenship behavior, intention to leave, productivity, etc.).

Concurrently, few empirical studies examine the relationship between occupational stress and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Because OCB has become a major research topic in the last decade, the lack of research associating job stress and OCB is surprising. Recently, (Bolino and Turnley 2005) pointed out that today "the ideal worker is an employee who not only demonstrates high levels of task performance, but also engages in high levels of contextual performance or OCB as well.

Moreover, OCB can be viewed as the first step of a withdrawal process, suggesting increases in lateness and absenteeism when an employee dissociates from OCB (Harrison et al., 2006).

OCB has received a great deal of attention. OCB develops through the voluntary efforts of employees to exceed prescribed instructions and tasks. These efforts are oriented towards two major targets, with members of the organization being the first target. In this case, OCB is revealed as helping (forms of behavior reflecting social, moral or practical assistance). Helping may reflect significant traits such as altruism, conciliation and even courtesy. Giving and receiving help strengthens ties between employees. Helping promotes the desire to reciprocate, contributes to learning the ropes and frees management control over tasks, allowing management to concentrate on developing goals, etc.

A few studies have examined the relationship between occupational stress and OCB and provided different findings. Using a sample of nurses, (Motowidlo, Packard, and Manning 1986) provide data showing that interpersonal effectiveness is not influenced by both the frequency and intensity of stressful events, but rather by subjective stress. Despite these findings and because interpersonal effectiveness aggregates different dimensions such as concentration, perseverance, composure, morale, teamwork cooperation, sensitivity to patients, adaptability and caring for uncooperative patients, it is difficult to distinguish how exactly OCB and stress are related.

Thus, in their literature review on OCB, (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, and Bachrach 2000) report negative relationships between role ambiguity and altruism, and between role conflict and altruism.

In the scream for university education and with each university determined to achieve its goal, the academic staff are bound to be stressed. (Ahsan, Abdullah, Fie and Alam 2009) identified stress inducing factors in academic staff to include: work overload, home work interface, role ambiguity and performance pressure. In support of stress on academic staff, (Abouserie 1996) found workload and conducting research as factors of stress. Listing the most related stressors on academic staff, (Ahmandy, Changiz, Masiello and Bromnels 2007), included workload, conflict, demands from colleagues and supervisors, incompatible demands from different personal and organization roles, inadequate resources for appropriate performance, insufficient competency to the demands of their role, inadequate autonomy to make decision on different tasks and feeling of underutilization (Winfield 2000) indicates that there is prevalence of occupational stress among academic and general staff of universities. Studies by (Awopegba 2001), (Lam and Punch 2001) are in support of stress among academic staff of universities.

Earlier study by (Ofoegbu , Nwadiani 2006) found that the level of stress among academics was significantly high.

A few researchers attempted to explore the relationship between OCB and OS among academic staff. This study aims to analyze the relationship between OCB and OS experienced by university academic staff.

Methodology

Stratified random sampling technique was used to get sample from academic staff of public sector universities, Islamabad, Pakistan. Quantitative approach and survey research design were used. The population of the study comprised of all full time academic staff viz. Lecturer, Assistant Professors etc., working in public sector higher education institutions located in Islamabad, Pakistan. Before starting collection of data, verbal and formal (where required) permission was obtained from academic staff. Afterward, questionnaires were circulated to the selected sample. Total population size was 2281. The sample size was 240 university academic staff. Two research instruments were used to collect data from sample. In order to measure the occupational stress level of university academic staff, the occupational stress inventory (OSI-R) with 100 items was used.

The questionnaire covers two subscales of occupational role stress, and personal strain. The items were measured in a 5 point Likert - like scale ranging from "never true" to "most of the time true". The reliability of scale is 0.91. Podsakolf and Mackenzie (1999) inventory was used to measure OCB by7-point frequency scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Scoring criterion of the items was in a way that higher scores indicated higher level of occupational stress and organization citizen ship behavior.

Analysis

SPSS version 16 was used to analyze the data. Data were gathered with pre-determined questions, which were analyzed by calculating the Mean score, Standard deviation and Pearson correlation of each of the variables to measuring correlation between occupational stress and organization citizenship behavior among academic staff at higher educational level. Correlation analyses indicated that two dimensions of occupational stress has significant negative relationship with organization citizenship behavior.

Discussion and recommendations

This study represents an effort to examine the relationships between occupational stress and OCB. There are diverse researches on occupational stress and organizational citizenship behavior in the field of education but no unequivocal work is found to investigate the relationship between occupational stress and organizational citizenship behavior among university academic staff.

This study will leave a new dimension to the whole education system. Results of the study will help the top management of higher education institutions to establish appropriate environment to reducing the occupational stress that can enhance the level of Organizational Citizenship Behavior in university academic staff.

On the basis of the statistical findings presented in the earlier section, a highly significant negative correlation is obvious between occupational role stress and organizational citizenship behavior in university academic staff. The result of Table 1 shows that there is significant negative correlation between occupational role stress and organizational citizenship behavior in university academic staff. It could be interpreted by the Pearson correlation value (-.580**) of this study that high level of occupational role stress decreases the organization citizenship behavior which affects the work efficiency of employees. The result of Table 2 presents that there is significant negative correlation between personal strain and organizational citizenship behavior in university academic staff. The Pearson correlation value (-.376**) of this study indicates that OCB is more negatively affected by high level of occupational role stress .The third relevant finding in Table 3 demonstrates that there is significant negative correlation between occupational stress and organizational citizenship behavior. It could be interpreted by the Pearson correlation value (-.541**) of this study that as occupational stress increases, it produces a loss in effectiveness of OCB. (Bolino and Turnley 2005) reported a positive relationship between perceived stressful work and OCB. (Motowidlo et al. 1986) reported a negative relationship. While (Pascal Paillé, 2011) found no relationship between stressful work and OCB .This study indicates a negative correlation between occupational stress and organizational citizenship behavior. Detailed analysis of the relevant factors has revealed the fact that academic staff experience comparatively higher level of occupational stress which ultimately leads lower level of OCB.

The findings of the study indicated that all dimension of occupational stress have negative relationship with OCB

Table 1 shows mean scores, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation of academic staff. The calculated Pearson correlation -.580**is significant at 0.000 level of significance. This shows that there is a negative significant correlation between occupational role stress and organizational citizenship behavior which indicates that the high level of occupational role stress leads to low level of organizational citizenship behavior among academic staff of higher education institutions.

Table 2 shows mean scores, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation of academic staff. The calculated Pearson correlation -.376** is significant at 0.000 level of significance. This shows that there is a negative significant correlation between personal strain and organizational citizenship behavior which indicates that the high level of personal strain contributes low level of organizational citizenship behavior among academic staff of higher education institutions.

Table 3 shows mean scores, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation of academic staff. The calculated Pearson correlation -.541** is significant at 0.000 level of significance. This shows that there is a negative significant correlation between occupational stress and organizational citizenship behavior which indicates that the high level of occupational stress contributes low level of organizational citizenship behavior among academic staff of higher education institutions.

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Table 1: Correlation between academic staff's occupational role stress and academic staff's OCB

	Mean	S.D.	N	P. C	Sig	(2-tailed)
Occupational role stress	186.53	18.143	240			
				-.580**	.000	
OCB	27.72	9.717	240			

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

Table 2: Correlation between academic staff's personal strain and academic staff's OCB

	Mean	S.D.	N	P. C	Sig	(2-tailed)
Personal strain	94.68	13.988	240			
				-.376**	.000	
OCB	27.72	9.717	240			

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

Table 3: Correlation between academic staff's occupational stress and academic staff's organizational citizenship behavior

	Mean	S.D.	N	P. C	Sig (2-tailed)
Occupational stress	281.20	29.149	240		
				-.541**	.000
OCB	27.72	9.717	240		

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