



Impact of Positive Stress on Job Performance with Reference To Public Sector of Pakistan: A Case Study of Healthcare Workers.

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Abstract

The concept of positive stress, commonly referred to as eustress, is a phenomenon where we interpret a situation as challenging but view it as an opportunity to perform well. This positive attitude helps us cope with the task at hand and achieve better outcomes. In contrast, if we perceive a stressful situation as a potential threat or danger, it leads to negative stress or anxiety, which can have detrimental effects. Positive stress or eustress has been found to have a positive impact on work performance, by driving motivation and enhancing job satisfaction. With that in mind, a recent study aimed to investigate the effect of job-related positive stress on the job performance of healthcare professionals. The research focused on examining how positive stressors in the workplace can influence the performance of healthcare workers, and whether this effect could be sustained over time. The study's findings shed light on the importance of positive stress in the workplace and its contribution to the overall job performance of healthcare professionals.

Keywords: Positive stress, Negative stress, Anxiety, Stress, Motivation



Introduction

Stress is a major research topic in mental well-being and among the most controversial fields in psychology and sociology in the modern century (Edwards, Webster, Van Laar, Easton, & Stress, 2008). Medical science describes stress as a response of an organism to environmental demands or pressures (O'Connor, Thayer, & Vedhara, 2021). Stress is a normal part of everyday living. It affects human multiple times during their lives. Many people experience stress due to unclear societal, personal, and environmental circumstances. Furthermore, the environment and circumstances have a significant influence on one's thought. Stress causes a variety of ideas to emerge in an individual's intellectual. (Frankenhuis, Young, & Ellis, 2020). All the proceeded thoughts can either be good or bad, which significantly impacts creating an attitude and behavior (Chauhan, Ali, Munawar, & Science, 2019). Individuals may encounter varying degrees of stress even when subjected to homogenous scenarios (Turner et al., 2020). Stress could be negative or positive. When one perceives the source of stress as a hazard with a bad result, this deviates stress towards depression. On the other hand, positive stress, or eustress drives motivation for improved enactment. (Albort-Morant, Ariza-Montes, Leal-Rodríguez, Giorgi, & Health, 2020). Globally, job-stress has now emerged as a significant challenge and is currently among one of the most widely discussed topics that can impact people's health in several ways, including; inadequate access to basic life facilities, living expenses, side hustles for supplemental income, incompatible working environment, and tough and challenging working conditions. Work-related stress also affects the mental capabilities of the person performing the job, which creates a direct or indirect impact on the productivity of the employee performance (Hassan, Azmat, Sarwar, Adil, & Gillani, 2020; Hon, Chan, & Lu, 2013). On the contrary, a moderate amount of positive eustress can facilitate job performance (AbuAlRub, 2004), aids with memory retrieval and consolidation (Goldfarb, 2019), improve recital which optimizes future performance and prevent frequent error repetition (Hupbach & Fieman, 2012).

Literature Review

Workplace stress is influenced by a number of factors other than job performance; including, conflict at work-place, job uncertainty, workload and exhaustion (Glazer, Beehr, Psychology, & Behavior, 2005). In some cases, stress is not merely related to one's personal perspective or psychological abilities; it can also have an impact on how a team behaves (Groen, Wouters, & Wilderom, 2012).



Further, job stress could be positive as it can enhance employees' performance (Carr, Hamlett, Hillbrand, & Dissociation, 2019), e.g., short deadlines can stress out employees, who may then put up more effort to meet the deadline and accomplish the desired result. Moreover, people believe that they can handle challenging tasks as it helps their professional progress, such as heavy workloads, demanding responsibilities, and tight deadlines. (JianWei et al., 2019).

Some employers think it is reasonable to put a certain amount of pressure on employees to enhance their job performance. However, sometimes due to pressures, employees can get demotivated resulting in dissatisfaction (Trivellas, Reklitis, Platis, & sciences, 2013). According to Zafar *et al.*, employees are essential resources of an organization. Their satisfaction has a crucial impact on achieving the objective, which can impact the desired growth of an organization. (Zafar, Ali, Hameed, Ilyas, & Younas, 2015). Employee job performance significantly impacted job stress, satisfaction, and motivation (Kakkos, Trivellas, & Fillipou, 2010). A study conducted by Reb *et al* concluded that good performance could result from positive stress energy and positive creative support (Reb, Chaturvedi, Narayanan, & Kudesia, 2019).

Most of the studies conducted nowadays are purely diverting the peer's attention toward the positive effect of job stress on job performance (Khuong, Yen, & Finance, 2016). Stress exerts an impact on the professional efficacy of job performance in healthcare workers by interfering with job burnout and mental well-being (Sun, Sarfraz, Ivascu, Iqbal, & Mansoor, 2022). Employee performance and job stress are positively correlated (Zafar et al., 2015), which finally becomes the base of this research article. To the best of our knowledge, none of the study has focused on the influence of positive stress on healthcare teaching professionals. To fill this gap present study was planned to find the relation between positive stress and quality of job performance in health care teaching professionals in Pakistan.

Research Methodology

The present cross-sectional study was conducted at a tertiary care university hospital. Informed written consent was also obtained from individuals who participated in the study.

Research strategy:

Quantitative research methodology was adopted for this research. This research was conducted to check the impact of positive stress, an independent variable on the job performance, the dependent variable.



Data collection

Non-probability convenient sampling was used to gather the data. Data was collected from randomly selected 300 health care professionals (response rate 75.6%) working at Dow University hospital, Karachi, Pakistan from November 2019 to February 2020. Healthcare professionals working as medical teaching faculty were recruited in the study. Whereas other healthcare-related professionals and administrative staff working in hospital settings were excluded from the study.

Variables and instruments

Survey tool:

Job stress was measured with the challenge and burden related self-reported stress. The research tool used in this study was a close-ended questionnaire based on 5 points Likert scale (1 = no stress; 5 = great stress). Higher values indicate greater job stress. The questionnaire consisted of 20 questions. There were two portions of the questionnaire: section A consisted of data related to demographics including gender, age, qualification, designation, work experience and department. Section B consisted of questions related to dependent and independent variables including stress and job performance.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed through SPSS version 20. Descriptive and inferential analysis including stress scores, stress levels, mean stress score, standard deviation, and ANOVA were used to analyze and interpret data by setting job satisfaction as the dependent variable against flexible working hours, training of employees, work environment and job security as dependent variables.

Results

Demographic features of Participants

The study includes 300 participants, out of which 227 were responders, 26% were males, while 76% were females. Among the responders 26% were less than 25 years of age, 50.7% were between 25-35 years, 17.2% were between 36-45 years, and 6.2% of responders were more than 45 years of age.

Regarding professions of the participants, 36.1% were lecturers, 45.8% were assistant professors, 7% were associate professors, and 11% of the participants were professors.

Regarding service tenure 18.9% were working for less than one year, 58.1% were in service for 1-5 years, 17.6% had service tenure between 6-10 years, while 5.3% participants were in service for more than ten years.



As far as education status is concerned 48.5% were graduates, while 51.5% were postgraduates (Table1).

Table 1
Demographic features of Participants

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	59	26
Female	168	74
Age		
<25 yr	59	26
26-35 yr	115	50.7
36-45 yr	39	17.2
>45 yrs	14	6.2
Designation		
Lecturer	82	36.1
Asst. Prof	104	45.8
Assoc. Prof	16	7.0
Prof.	25	11.0
Year of services in current organization		
<1 yr	43	18.9
1-5 yr	132	58.1
6-10 yr	40	17.6
>10 yr	12	5.3
Qualification		
Bachelors	110	48.5
Postgraduate	117	51.5

Stress scores of participants

Scores for different parameters indicating stress are expressed as mean \pm standard deviation (SD), scores for each parameter are given below:

For not getting sufficient breaks was 1.69 ± 1.22 , for pressurized long working hours was 1.78 ± 1.15 , for unachievable deadlines was 3.35 ± 1.63 , for unrealistic time pressures was 1.78 ± 1.25 , for supportive feedback on the work done was 2.12 ± 1.37 , for encouragement from manager was 2.93 ± 1.35 , for getting help and support from colleagues was 2.24 ± 1.59 , for comfortable working environment was 3.24 ± 1.72 , for availability of adequate equipment at workplace was 3.41 ± 1.61 , for working authority was 1.95 ± 1.32 , for clear working objectives was 2.03 ± 1.39 , for adequate time division between different work tasks was 1.97 ± 1.35 , for knowing responsibilities was 2.15 ± 1.59 , for satisfaction with the nature of



work was 3.24 ± 1.6 , for satisfaction with supervisor was 2.12 ± 1.48 , for good relationship with colleagues was 2.48 ± 1.19 , for satisfaction with the work remuneration was 2.86 ± 1.31 , for satisfaction with the promotion opportunities in present organization was 1.88 ± 1.4 and mean score for satisfaction with the current job was 1.88 ± 1.404 (Table2).

Table 2
Stress scores of participants

	Questions	Mean Score	SD
Q#1.	I am unable to take sufficient breaks.	1.69	1.221
Q#2	I am pressured to work long hours.	1.78	1.158
Q#3.	I have unachievable deadlines.	3.35	1.634
Q#4.	I have unrealistic time pressures	1.78	1.250
Q#5.	I am given supportive feedback on the work I do.	2.12	1.376
Q#6.	My manager encourages me at work.	2.93	1.353
Q#7.	I get the help and support I need from colleagues.	2.24	1.595
Q#8.	The work environment is comfortable.	3.24	1.724
Q#9.	The equipment I use is adequate to do my job.	3.41	1.612
Q#10.	I know my authority	1.95	1.328
Q#11.	My job objectives are clear	2.03	1.390
Q#12.	I know that I divide my time adequately to carry out different tasks.	1.97	1.353
Q#13	I know what my responsibilities are.	2.15	1.594
Q#14	How satisfied are you with the nature of your work?	2.61	1.238
Q#15	How satisfied are you with the person who supervises you?	3.24	1.604
Q#16	How satisfied are you with your relationship with your colleagues?	2.12	1.482
Q#17	How satisfied are you with the remuneration you receive for your work?	2.48	1.191
Q#18	How satisfied are you with the opportunities there are for growth or promotion at your organization?	2.86	1.315
Q#19	How satisfied are you with your current job?	1.88	1.404



Stress level in different strata of individuals:

P-value (0.0023) shows a significant difference in stress among individuals belonging to different age groups. Similarly, P-value (0.865) also shows a statistically non-significant difference in stress levels among individuals belonging to different genders. On the other hand, there is no significant difference in stress levels between people belonging to various designations (P=0.208). At the same time, the duration of service (P=0.0004) and education status (P=0.008) has a significant effect on stress level (Table3).

Table 3
Stress level in different strata of individuals

Variable	Mean	SD	F	P-value
Age(yr)				
<25 yr	50.6780	13.032	4.983	0.0023**
26-35 yr	45.1391	11.139		
36-45 yr	42.8974	13.977		
>45 yrs	39.1429	18.446		
Gender				
Male	41.627	13.828	1.240	0.865
Female	47.297	12.417		
Designation				
Lecturer	47.024	14.129	1.528	0.208
Assistant Professor	46.423	10.959		
Assoc. P	42.625	16.704		
Prof.	41.440	14.024		
Duration of service (yr)				
<1 yr	51.627	14.432	6.326	0.0004**
1-5 yr	45.325	10.369		
6-10 yr	40.050	12.860		
>10 yr	49.750	23.285		
Qualification				
Bachelors	48.663	10.041	4.376	0.008**
Postgraduate	51.402	4.800		

The research shows that stress levels among individuals from different age groups are significantly different, as indicated by a (P-value 0.0023). Similarly, (P-value 0.865) shows a



less significant difference in stress levels among individuals belonging to different genders. On the other hand, there is no marked difference in stress levels including people belonging to diverse positions (P-value=0.208). In contrast, service duration (P-value 0.0004) and academic status (P-value 0.008) have a significant influence on stress levels.

Conclusion

In conclusion, stress experienced by health care professionals had a considerable and significant impact on the magnitude of their job performance. Therefore, job-related positive stress results in improved job performance. Further, increasing job-related stress increases job performance.

Positive stress has a direct correlation with job performance. It was also concluded that as the person achieved higher education, positive stress makes them more perfect and disciplined due to knowledge and duration so in this way; higher education can enhance the relationship between positive stress and job performance. Concurrently, the individual's job designation was found to have an insignificant role in positive pressure.

Discussion

Occupation stress could also be positive because it can upgrade numerous workers (JianWei et al., 2019). Due to pressure that low cutoff time causes, employees may work extra hard to meet the cutoff time. Hence, time pressure ultimately adds up stress (Gmelch, 1993; M. Steyn & D. Kamper, 2006). A fraction of the employers imagine that it is sensible to put a specific measure of pressure on workers/employees to improve their activity execution. In this context, we studied the impact of positive stress on the job performance of teaching faculty in the healthcare profession controlling for age, gender, qualification, designation, and duration of service.

At this point it is interesting to report that our results are in line with Bashir and co-workers who had reported an inverse relationship between stress and work performance in the banking sector (Bashir, Ismail Ramay, & Ramay, 2010). Stress can be modified through management response towards employees (Bouckenoghe et al., 2017). Organizations rely upon inspiration hypotheses to improve the individual's performance. One of those technique is remunerating them as per their desire (Faisal Ahammad, Mook Lee, Malul, & Shoham, 2015; Liu, Yu, Guo, & Li, 2022; Munandar, Musnadi, & Sulaiman, 2019; Ogbonnaya, Daniels, & Nielsen, 2017).



Stress is not always connected to the mental abilities or inner state of mind; however, it also affects the personnel's conduct (Groen et al., 2012). Also, leadership & organizational support had a profound and significant impact on lecturer's performance and adaption of new changes For example: if a lecturer is encouraged by management, it will serve as a catalyst and makes him/her more determined in enhancing the performance for future endeavors.(Novitasari & Studies, 2020; Salfina, Reflianto, & Asrul, 2022; Taufikin, Zamroni, & Muthohar, 2021). Likewise level of support provided by management can either mitigate or exacerbate employee stress levels (Bashir & Ismail Ramay, 2010; Stamper & Johlke, 2003). Few employers believe that imposing a certain degree of pressure on workers, within moderate limits, can enhance activity execution and maintain competitiveness as employees strive to meet deadlines and achieve desired outcomes prior to cutoff time.

The present study reported the positive impact of stress on job performance. This finding is in line with other studies who also reported significant impact of positive stress on job performance (Aduma et al., 2022; Ahmed & Ramzan, 2013; Ali et al., 2011; Bashir & Ismail Ramay, 2010; Chao, Jou, Liao, & Kuo, 2015; Deng, Guo, Ma, Yang, & Tian, 2019; Gilboa, Shirom, Fried, & Cooper, 2008; Halkos & Bousinakis, 2010; Khan, Abbas, Kumari, & Najam, 2022; Khuong & Yen, 2016; Wu, 2011). Whereas, multiple researchers reported negative correlation between work-related stress and its impact on job performance (Ahmed & Ramzan, 2013; Bashir & Ismail Ramay, 2010; Gilboa et al., 2008; Kazmi, Amjad, & Khan, 2008; Khuong & Yen, 2016; Wu, 2011). Therefore, these studies serve as a foundation for future investigations to evaluate stress levels in healthcare teaching professionals.

Furthermore, they can also be used in hospitals to determine the effect of stress on job-associated demographic factors and to make critically vital decisions to enhance employee satisfaction, which will facilitate the sectors' growth and profitability.

As far as taking breaks and long working hours is concerned, our study populations revealed that majority of people in health care teaching profession were able to take breaks during their working hours and did not face longer occupied hours frequently which have an impact in reducing stress related to long working hours. This finding is in line with those studies who reported flexible working hours for medical education professionals (Dousin, Collins, & Kler, 2019; Pines & Maslach, 1978). Although few studies have reported that professionals in health care teaching do face long working hours which add up in their work related stress (Agha & Humanity, 2017; García-González, Torrano, García-González, & health, 2020; S. Masuku & S. J. U.-C. E. R. Muchemwa, 2015; Thielmann et al., 2022).



Meetings deadlines is one of the most difficult tasks to meet for health care teaching professionals in the study. Same was reported by _et al who reported that due to lack of time deadlines are often not met by these professionals which increases their stress levels and can affect their performance. These findings concur with Masuku & Muchemwa (2015), who pinpointed imperative of meeting deadlines as pre-dominant stressor among lecturers. Although, division of time (S. Masuku & S. Muchemwa, 2015) (Lestari & Management, 2021) and time management with respect to priorities(Ekundayo, Konwea, Yusuf, & Studies, 2010; Jani, Shahid, Thomas, Francis, & Humanity, 2015) is a consistent key.

A favorable work environment is a crucial component significantly influencing the performance of healthcare lecturers (Fatmasari & Badaruddin, 2022; Haziroh, Putra, Budiantoro, & Review, 2021; Narasuci, Setiawan, & Noermijati, 2018). This surrounds various facets for example: The organization's cleanliness, relationship with colleagues, provision of comfortable physical conditions, accessibility to necessary resources and cutting-edge technological tools, opportunities for career advancement, fostering of a harmonious workplace environment, motivational cultivation, upholding mutual respect & esteem. This insight resonates with prior studies, which underscores a noteworthy significant contribution of collegial assistance and support in enhancing overall job satisfaction (Awang, Ahmad, Zin, & Analytics, 2010; Khalid, Irshad, Mahmood, & Management, 2012; Skaalvik, Skaalvik, & education, 2011). Continuing along the same thread, as deliberated in our own studies, it becomes apparent that organizational management support & supervision also plays an utmost significant role too. This alignment echoes in numerous other research studies (Ahmad & Yekta, 2010; Chang, 2015; Khalid et al., 2012; Malau & Research, 2023; Pan, 2010; Sudibjo, Bernarto, & Yuliana, 2018; Yuwono, 2021).

In the realm of delivering supporting feedback, either from students or management, our study unveils its importance in job performance & satisfaction. The feedback, specifically from students in the form of lecturer feedback evaluations systems not only fulfills administrative obligations but can also help in improving the quality of lecture delivery. This, in turn, translates into improved performance (Flodén & Education, 2017; Hendry & Dean, 2002; Keane & Labhrainn, 2005; Kim & Hong, 2020; Xhomara & Bara, 2018). As far as supportive feedback and appreciation from organizational management is concerned, our study highlights its significant importance on employee's performance and satisfaction. These findings parallel the outcome with numerous other studies too (Aktar, Sachu, Ali, &



Management, 2012; Farooq, Khan, & business, 2011; Novitasari & Studies, 2020). For example: organizational management support and feedback could help health care educators in comparing their performance as well as in creating balance between positive and negative experiences.

Job satisfaction emerges as an indispensable cornerstone when one approaches the subject of positive work stress and the efficiency of employee performance. Job satisfaction has a direct influence on job performance (AM et al., 2022; Anwar, Chandrarin, Darsono, Respati, & Management, 2017; Awang et al., 2010; Kongnyuy & Valery; Sudibjo et al., 2018). Job satisfaction reflects an individual's thoughts, mirrors an individual feeling, considering the entire spectrum of challenges that one faces in work environment. Job satisfaction includes many dimensions including motivation, work satisfaction, work environment, promotional opportunities, workload and relationship with colleagues.

In the discourse that follows, our study continues exploring the intricate domain of promotional opportunities. It is within this sphere that our studies have shed light on this area, exposing the substantial implications they have on both job performance and job satisfaction. When it comes to prospects for promotional opportunities our study had been supported by other studies (Awang et al., 2010; Munyengabe, Haiyan, Yiyi, Jiefei, & Education, 2017; Mustapha, Zakaria, & Sciences, 2013). Whereas, few literatures also shows impact of promotional opportunities on commitment (Munyengabe et al., 2017; Nemmaniwar & Deshpande, 2016)

Lecturers work satisfaction had a significant impact on their performance. Same was reported by E. Siahaan & co. Authors who concluded that the greater degree of contentment lecturers had in their professional roles & work, the more passionately they will excel in their performance (Submitter et al., 2022).

Our results revealed that the gender of healthcare personnel does not influence the relationship between work-related stress and job performance. This finding is consistent with those studies who reported effect of stress on job performance is not regulated by the gender of employee (Aduma et al., 2022; Ali et al., 2011). However, this finding deviates from the outcomes reported by Anders et al., who reported that gender difference do effect the outcome of job stress on job performance (Frederiksen, 2008).

Regarding the effect of academics on job performance, our study findings are in line with



prior studies, indicating a substantial influence of academic and professional credentials on the job performance of employees (Ishola, Adeleye, & Tanimola, 2018).

Finally, our study lays the groundwork for future studies that will determine the level of stress prevailing in healthcare environments.

Majority of the stress was experienced by individual of young age. this finding is in line with the study at Australian university(Sharpley, Reynolds, Acosta, & Dua, 1996). Furthermore, another study concluded that the age element could potentially exert influence on workplace stress(Rauschenbusch, Krumm, Thielgen, & Hertel, 2013). whereas in contrast, a study by S. Mauno and co. Authors reveals that younger employees are more resilient to job stressors (Mauno, Ruokolainen, Kinnunen, & Health, 2013).

This study provides a platform for future studies to evaluate stress level in health care teaching professionals and can be used in hospitals to measure the impact of stress on job-related demographic factors and make necessary decisions to enhance the employees' satisfaction level, which would be helpful for the sectors' growth and profitability.

Limitations and future directions

Being single centered and small sample size are the key limitations of the study therefore, a larger sample size is recommended for future research which would aid in achieving more robust results

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