




Research Article

# The Impact of Workload on Job Satisfaction and mediating effect of Job Stress

Muhammad Yasir Anwar\*, 

Muhammad Yasir Anwar, Deputy Director, Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan. Office No. 7-113, Higher Education Commission (HEC), Sector H-9, Islamabad, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8855-4504>

\*Corresponding Author email: [myanwar@hec.gov.pk](mailto:myanwar@hec.gov.pk)

Submitted: 07 March 20222

Revised: 07 April 20222

Accepted: 08 April 20222

## ABSTRACT

It is evident that job satisfaction had become a challenge for a project-based workforce due to various reasons including job stress, not only impacting the employee performance but also resulting in health-related issues. In public sector, specifically in Pakistan, workload related issues are becoming common, therefore, the research is focused to study the impact of workload on job satisfaction, time limitations and mediating role of job stress to job satisfaction. The study addresses development projects of higher education sector of Pakistan that are implemented at public sector universities across Pakistan. This study focuses building the framework of the study therefore literature is reviewed in this study relevant to the problem. In the next phase of the study, the data will be collected through questionnaire from project employees of Higher Education Commission and public sector universities of Pakistan. In the future work of this study, the SPSS analytical tool will be used for data analysis to indicate the impact of workload and job satisfaction and mediating impact of job stress to the job satisfaction.

**Keywords:** *Project, workload, job satisfaction, job stress, higher education sector*

---

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background

At a projectized context, the study explores the workload balance and employee job satisfaction in Pakistan's public sector higher education institutions, as well as the mediating impact of job stress. Because of the diverse type of difficulties involved in projects, efficient project management has always been a challenge for project managers, sponsors, and executors around the world. As a result, projects have been postponed and cost overruns have occurred. Various strategies have been designed to reduce the impact of these impediments, but it remains a challenge owing to changes in economic and social needs. When it comes to development initiatives in the Pakistani context, we frequently notice that time and expense overruns are common. There could be a variety of factors that prevent project aims from becoming reality to project benefits. The importance of the project team's role in the project's success cannot be overstated. As a result, in a projectized work environment, the level of commitment is extremely demanding, difficult, and unpleasant. As a result, project employees are subjected to time pressure and frequent job assignment changes to fulfil deadlines. As a result, employee satisfaction suffers and stress rises. Workplace stress occurs when, among other things, what needs to be done is

out of balance with available capacity. Conflicts with coworkers or other stakeholders, as well as a constantly changing working environment, are all sources of work-related stress. Workplace environments, job needs, organizational cultures, role conflicts, both personal and professional connections at the workplace, poor management, and so on are all potential stressors in a projectized firm.

### **1.2. Problem statement**

In comparison to prior generations who were less stressed, but now the humans are critically influenced with survival challenges and lifestyle problems as a result of rapid technical innovation and expanding economic demands. People nowadays are constantly coping with stress related to their jobs. Work, on the other hand, is an important component of behavior, life, and workplace stress which now cannot be handled by removing the reasons & causes, since this might lead to other issues. As a result, it's critical to recognize that stress doesn't necessarily have bad consequences; it can also have a positive impact on people (Chienwattanasook & Jermsittiparsert, 2019; Kerdpitak & Jermsittiparsert, 2020). As a result, the work environment has a significant impact on job satisfaction. It has been observed that in Pakistani public organizations, people who are performing and doing their jobs efficiently are usually carrying the weight of others who are not good performers or have not been engaged in such a manner as compared to the good performers, or who may be weak links in a thread who have been meant to complete the count of employed team but have not been given any task due to their attitude or other reasons. Good performers, on the other hand, have remained engaged because they enjoy performing their work well; but, when the time required to accomplish tasks decreases while the number of tasks increases, the situation may become difficult to manage and result in stress.

### **1.3. Research Gap**

Many factors influence the successful implementation of projects in project management. Uncertain project needs, non-involvement of relevant stakeholders in project affairs, lack of ownership, non-engagement of relevant resources, frequent changes in project scope, inaccurate and late decision making, and so on are examples of these. The Federal Government of Pakistan designs the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) every year to offer funds to development plans in many sectors such as transportation, defense, communication, IT, infrastructure, higher education, and health. Project membership in PSDP has its own set of economic, social, and political advantages. The ultimate goal, however, is to benefit the specific group, the broader public, and organizations in order to better contribute to Pakistan's economic development. As a result, using the correct project management approaches, it is vital to achieve project objectives as envisioned with zealous efforts. The success of any endeavor is entirely contingent on the resources used. Human resource management, for example, is the most important resource that must be effectively managed. As a result, deciding which project management resources to hire is always a difficult task. It has been observed that various levels of work have been done all over the world to increase employee performance through various motivator models. In Pakistan, however, we continue to administer and govern our development projects using traditional management techniques. As a result, the purpose of this research is to look into the relationship between workload

and job satisfaction, as well as the impact of job stress on job satisfaction as a mediating factor. The annual review of HEC - PSDP indicate delay in completion of projects which is taken as reference to undertake this study.

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

During the study, solution or probable answers to the following questions will be studied:

1. What are the factors that affect the employee performance?
2. Do workload results in increased stress which affects the job performance?
3. Do time pressure is an important factor which is generating stress in performing assign tasks?
4. Do frequent changes in assigned tasks affect the employee performance and job satisfaction level?
5. Which factors are crucial for job satisfaction in a workplace?

#### **1.5. Research Objectives**

The objective of my research includes the following:

1. To get an understanding of workload impact in projectized environment implementing in Pakistani Higher Education Sector (public sector universities)
2. The impact of workload on project team, their job performance and stress resulting due to workload.
3. To study the impact of time pressure and frequent changes in job roles/assignment in constrained project environment?
4. To establish relation between workload and job satisfaction and mediating role of job stress in projects implementing at public sector universities of Pakistan.

#### **1.6. Scope of Research**

This study examines the significance of project employees' job satisfaction in the public sector. The study looks into the workload balance and employee job satisfaction in Pakistan's public sector higher education institutions in a projectized environment, as well as the effect of job stress as a mediating factor. The importance of the project team's role in the successful completion of the project cannot be overstated. As a result, the amount of dedication required in a projectized work environment is extremely demanding, difficult, and unpleasant. As a result, project employees are subjected to time pressure as well as frequent changes in task assignments in order to fulfil deadlines. As a result, stress levels rise and employee satisfaction plummets. Workplace stress occurs when the workload is out of balance with available resources, among other reasons. Conflicts with coworkers or other persons involved, as well as a constantly changing working environment, are all sources of work-related stress. Workplace environments, job needs, organizational cultures, role conflicts, both personal and professional connections in the workplace, or poor management are all potential stressors in a projectized organization.

#### **1.7. Significance**

Stoshikj (2014) indicated that, "due to market developments and competitiveness, companies' project-based burden is increasing, necessitating the use of an effective project management system." HEC, as a sponsoring agency, that has a portfolio of over 1000 projects, with new projects added on a yearly basis, necessitating the hiring of committed personnel to complete these projects. Workload concerns, stress at work, and a decrease in job satisfaction plague the development work of Pakistan's higher education sector, causing delays in project implementation and negatively impacting socioeconomic growth. Workplace stress can lead to negative implications for employees, such as mental illness and despair. Ranavolo et al. (2017) endorsed that now employees are faced with depression and mental disorders due to job stress as identified by different research organization specifically the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) that developed policy on "Mental health care" and implemented to address job stress at work. Employee job satisfaction and employee stress are two major challenges that any company must confront and manage. They appear to be unrelated at first glance, but an in-depth examination of both issues reveals that one tends to impact the other and can result in great consequences for both the company and its employees, but only if both are addressed (Haque et al., 2018).

### **1.8. Summary**

In this chapter, we briefly discussed about the key concepts of the research and build a foundation of our study. We must develop relation with workload and job satisfaction and impact of job stress.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Introduction**

The literature review's main focus is on the causes of workload, their impact on job satisfaction, and the mediating effect of job stress caused by the workplace. Diverse theories that examine and characterize human actions in various work environments have undoubtedly evolved over time. Maslow's Hierarchy of Requirements (1943) is the most well-known theory, which divides human demands into five categories: physiological needs, survival mode, safety needs, and so on. Love and belonging are the third, followed by self-esteem and self-actualization, and all human needs attention and care.

Herzberg's Motivation Hygiene Theory (1959) discusses what makes you feel good about your job (act as motivators) and what makes you feel horrible about your job (act as demotivators). With regard to workplace and job stress, the Lazarus and Folkman Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping (1984) dispute on Job Satisfaction. Many aspects in understanding the impact of workload on job satisfaction are integrated and supplemented by these ideas. Stress is defined as an imbalance between perceived external or internal pressures and perceived personal and social resources to deal with them, according to Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) theory of stress and coping the Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping (TTSC) is a paradigm for evaluating damages, risks, and challenges that emphasizes on assessment. This evaluation's output, or outcome, is a description of the procedure for dealing with stressful situations. Stress manifests itself in a variety of ways. Thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and emotions are examples of these

methods. External stressors are the most common cause. The amount of stress a person feels is determined by how they perceive the circumstance. Workplace stress is a major issue around the world. It not only has a detrimental impact on employee health, but it also has a negative impact on organizational productivity. Workplace stress occurs when the amount of work required exceeds the available capacity. The following are examples of potential stressors in the workplace, or the most common issues: Working conditions, Job specifications, Cultures within organizations, Role disagreements, Workplace interactions, both personal and professional, Ineffective management.

## **2.2. Workload**

The workplace plays an important role in achieving organizational or personal goals by allowing employees to work in a relaxed and healthy atmosphere. Several studies have stressed the importance of a stress-free workplace. Professionals in Pakistan's public sector are frequently confronted with workload-related challenges during their careers. In study, Boles et al. (2004) defined workplace as the human, technical, and organizational environment supplied by organizations. According to Chandrasekhar (2011), performance is defined as an employee's efficiency and effectiveness at their job. Employee satisfaction is defined by Mokaya et al. (2013) as a good experience and sense of comfort for employees that is tied to their specific employment.

Furthermore, work overload, high job demands from businesses, and long working hours all contribute to workplace stress, which has an impact on employee happiness and performance. The Workload is defined by Goldschmied & Spitznagel (2020) as number of assignments or duties given to a person for completion can be treated as a major job stressor.

It can be further divided into two types: first, when employees are given too many tasks to manage; and second, when employees believe they are unable to manage a certain task owing to a perceived lack of abilities, knowledge, and skills to complete that activity, although workload may cause problems.

Workload consequences can also manifest themselves as a higher proclivity to quit, a lesser level of commitment, poor mental health, tiredness, and increased tension. Work environment is one of the occupational stressors, according to Tufail & Sultan (2019). For example, it could manifest as uncertainty or increased workload, both of which can have a negative impact on employees' well-being at work. Virgolino et al. (2017) backed up this claim and defined the workload as a matter of how one perceives about the task, its complexity in performing and completing it, affecting the employee mental stamina and impacts the decision making are contributor to occupational stress.

Similarly, time constraint or limitation for an employee to perform the specific task have a relation with the length of time required to complete the work in an optimal manner (Goldschmied & Spitznagel, 2020), which could lead to an increase in stress levels. As a result, one of the major reasons contributing to higher stress levels among employees is time pressure. When

staff do not have enough time to perform particular responsibilities, this might also happen (Mangalaselvi, 2017).

Time pressure, on the other hand, is a characteristic that contributes to long work hours and a more competitive workplace. Furthermore, time constraints may have a direct impact on the element that causes strain, triggering a cascade of other workplace issues. As a result, employees are affected to the workplace stressors that is determined due to time pressure and employees therefore had to work for long hours to manage their work which can be treated as additional job pressures.

Repeated interferences during a task by involving the employee in other tasks causes stress because both occupations are jeopardized to some extent, and the employee is under pressure to finish both or all of the given jobs within the time frame. Therefore. Interruptions are a hindrance to doing the first work in a pleasant manner, and they have a negative impact on employee performance and lead to job stress.

### **2.3. Job Stress**

According to Foy et al., occupational stress is primarily a situation that discuss on employee capabilities against job demand which results into physical and emotional deterioration (2019). Previous research has identified various job stress levels, as well as origins and its impact regarding elements that produces job pressure as working environment. The stress level has also impacted the human performance as a mediating factor at work, as deliberated by (Hair et al., 2016) define mediation as "an intervening variable that bridges the gap between the independent and dependent conceptions." As a result, job stress may have an impact on job satisfaction. High levels of stress can have negative consequences for a person's psychological well-being, physical health, and professional effectiveness. According to Karem et al. (2019), stress is any emotional reaction to external impacts that might significantly impact employee health." The impacts of stress are both apparent and intangible, and they frequently result in decreased productivity, as well as a lack of interest and focus on the task at hand. Job stress, according to Kong & Jolly (2019), frequently leads to job discontent.

The majority of research in the past have agreed that job stress has the potential to lower job satisfaction. Abualoush et al. (2018) discovered job stress victims who also expressed low job satisfaction in their study. Furthermore, there are a number of elements that can help to alleviate workplace stress. A pleasant work atmosphere and a competitive wage package, for example, may boost employees' attitudes toward their jobs and minimize stress. According to Yee (2018), the events that promotes the satisfaction of employee at work and academicians', standing, or remuneration were found to be among the ones that improved job satisfaction. Stress, according to the study, is a threat to good physical and mental health. Stress signals, confrontation and resistance, can be easily spotted in both individuals and organizations, according to a report (Jayanthi et al., 2018). Stress has a number of features that can be seen in a variety of ways. In fact, conflict and stress can harm an organization's reputation; as a result, numerous events and activities are organized on a yearly basis to allow employees to be relieved of their workplace stress without incurring significant costs.

#### **2.4. Job Satisfaction**

Job happiness is an essential factor in increasing employee productivity and competitiveness (Hafeez et al., 2018). Employment satisfaction is defined as "workers' perception of their job" in another definition (Danendra & Rahyuda, 2019). According to Jiang et al. (2019), psychological and environmental factors are the sources of job satisfaction. Academicians' happiness, on the other hand, is linked to their well-being, commitment, and motivation for their work. This is mostly because they are the most expensive component of organizational human resources. As a result, increasing job happiness among academics may minimize expenditures that are integrated with high stress levels, resulting in health & work-related issues (Robinson et al., 2019).

Previous research has found that certain components of academic labor, such as lecturing, provide academics with a sense of fulfilment. Job discontent, on the other hand, happens when certain factors, such as compensation, working environment, and interpersonal relationships, have an impact on an employee's job performance. Teaching efficacy and job stress were found to be contributors to job satisfaction in a Skaalvik & Skaalvik (2016) study. According to a study, work satisfaction among academic staff has an impact on their motivation, performance, morale, and progress. According to Fayzhall et al. (2020), studying different patterns can assist distinguish between academic staff or teachers working who wish to leave the field and those who want to stay in it. Academicians' attitudes, judgments, and reactions, on the other hand, reveal their goals. Stress and job satisfaction are linked in another research of elementary school teachers (Carson et al., 2016).

#### **2.5. Hypothesis Development**

Workload is described by Goldschmied and Spitznagel (2020) as stress or tension that is linked with certain duties of a person in completion of its job. Furthermore, Goldschmied & Spitznagel (2020) discovered link between duration required to complete a job in an optimal manner with time actually provided for completing the job results. Therefore, if the force of time to complete tasks surpasses a threshold level, it will have a detrimental impact on employees' performance and, as a result, lead to job stress (Maniya, 2018). Due to numerous working interruptions, time pressure is also a factor that contributes to job stress (Maniya, 2018). In other studies, even when people were thought to be capable of controlling their time, researchers were unable to find connection of between the aspect of time limitation to perform job and job stress.

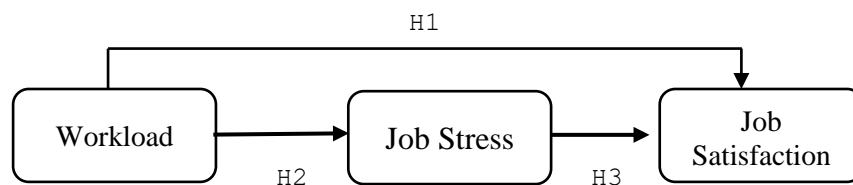
Interruptions, according to Gupta et al. (2016), are "an interference that generally happens while executing particular specified tasks." According to Addas & Pinsonneault (2018), frequent interruptions cause stress and cause work completion to be delayed. Another study discovered negative relationship of workload impact on an employee with respect to performing jobs satisfactorily (Guarnaccia et al., 2018). Therefore, workload is an important aspect that is affecting job satisfaction, particularly among academics. Furthermore, Sun & Xia (2018) discovered an erratic association between job satisfaction and workload, which they attribute to situational conditions or distinct socio-economic characteristics.

More importantly, there is a link between job happiness and time pressure. According to Adi et al. (2020), growing job expectations increase workplace time strain on employees. Moreover, researchers also felt that there is any positive association of job satisfaction levels and repeated reallocation of work, but few of the other researchers trusted that there has been no relation among the two. The majority of academicians who looked into the job satisfaction and interruption link found that the two have a favorable association. For example, Abualoush et al. (2018) identified a direct link between job satisfaction and job stress, such as demoralization. As a result, work satisfaction is an important metric for describing employees' attitudes or perceptions about their occupations. Furthermore, job happiness is an important factor to consider while forecasting. As a result, work satisfaction is an important metric for describing employees' attitudes or perceptions about their occupations. Furthermore, job satisfaction is an important predictor of work behavior, such as employee turnover, absenteeism, and organizational citizenship (Danendra & Rahyuda, 2019). Individuals' psychological well-being, bodily health, and work performance may all suffer as a result of excessive stress levels. Stress is also described as the emotional or mental response to external pressures that can impact an individual's psychological and physical health. Job stress was revealed to play a mediating impact in Safadi et al.'s (2019) study.

H1 = Workload has significant impact the Job Satisfaction.

H2 = Job stress has significant impact on the job satisfaction.

H3 = Job stress mediates the relationship between the Workload and job satisfaction.



### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Research Design

The research will use quantitative research method to determine the relationship between workload and job satisfaction affecting due to job stress of project employees in projects under implementation at public sector universities of Pakistan. The data will be acquired through the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan being sponsoring ministry and from identified public sector universities.

#### 3.2. Data collection Method

The data collection process will be performed through questionnaire for collection of primary data using Likert scale. The possible key stakeholders for this research activities will be project directors, project managers, director, and project team. How they perceive workload, job stress and job



satisfaction in achieving the project objectives and successful completion of projects.

### 3.3. Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis in this research is "project employee" working in development projects which are under implementation at higher education sector of Pakistan in public sector universities.

### 3.4. Future Direction

The data collection using google docs and data analysis using SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solutions) will be performed in future to determine the relationship between the variables of workload, job stress and job satisfaction.

## References

- Abualoush, S.H., Obeidat, A.M., & Tarhini, A. (2018). The role of employees' empowerment as an intermediary variable between knowledge management and information systems on employees' performance. *VINE Journal of Information and Knowledge Management Systems*.
- Addas, S., & Pinsonneault, A. (2018). E-mail interruptions and individual performance: is there a silver lining? *MIS Quarterly*, 42(2), 381-406.
- Adi, E.N., Eliyana, A., & Hamidah, A.T.M. (2020). Safety Leadership and Safety Behavior in MRO Business: Moderating Role of Safety Climate in Garuda Maintenance Facility Indonesia. *Systematic Reviews in Pharmacy*, 11(4), 151-163.
- Carson, R.L., Hemphill, M.A., & Richards, K.A.R. (2016). Exploring the job satisfaction of late career secondary physical education teachers. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 35(3), 284-289.
- Chienwattanasook, K. & Jermsittiparsert, K. (2019). factors affecting job stress among employees in the banking sector of Malaysia. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 6(2), 288-302.
- Danendra, A.N.B., & Rahyuda, A.G. (2019). The effect of work loads on employee performance with job satisfaction as a mediation variable. *Economic Research*, 3(8), 40-49.
- Goldschmied, N., & Spitznagel, C. (2020). Sweating the connection of uniform colours and success in sport: No evidence for the red win effect in elite women's NCAA basketball. *European Journal of Sport Science*, 1-7.
- Gupta, R., Hur, Y.J., & Lavie, N. (2016). Distracted by pleasure: effects of positive versus negative valence on emotional capture under load. *Emotion*, 16(3), 328.
- Haque, A., Aston, J., & Kozlovski, E. (2018). The impact of Stressors on organizational commitment of managerial and non-managerial personnel in contrasting economies: Evidences from Canada and Pakistan. *International Journal of Business*, 23(2), 166-182.
- Jayanthi, K., Saiki, D., & Dues, K. (2018). Influence of perceived stress on dressing and eating behaviors of chinese female university students residing in the United States.
- Jiang, Y., Li, P., & Wang, J. (2019). Relationships between kindergarten teachers' empowerment, job satisfaction, and organizational climate: a Chinese model. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 33(2), 257-270.

- Lee. (2017a). Relationship between intrinsic job satisfaction, extrinsic job satisfaction, and turnover intentions among internal auditors.
- Lee. (2017b). Validation of interruption management stage model: Can we develop the human cognitive behavior model in interruptive working environment? Paper presented at the International Conference on Applied Human Factors and Ergonomics.