

# The Impact of Job Stress and Empowerment on Employees' Performance. An Analysis of Private and Public Sector Universities of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of job stress and empowerment on employees' performance. The study was conducted in the public and private sector universities of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, Pakistan. A sample size of 280 employees was selected using convenient sampling techniques. The data was collected from Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors and Lecturers' level of employees. 280 questionnaires were distributed among these employees out of whom 240 filled questionnaires were received forming a percentage of 85.71%. In these filled questionnaires 13 questionnaires were discarded because they were improperly filled out while 227 properly filled questionnaires were used for data analysis. Data was analyzed through reliability analysis, demographic analysis, correlation analysis and regression analysis. Findings of the study reveal that there is significant relationship of job stress and empowerment on employees' performance in the public and private sector universities of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa Pakistan.

**Key words:** Job Stress, empowerment, employees' performance.

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## Introduction

Stress is a unique term which is used in different forms in the previous theories and research. Hans Selye was one of the founding father of stress research. Selye (1936), first introduced the idea of stress the life science and defined stress as the force, tension or pressure subjected upon an individual who resists these forces and attempts to uphold its true state. His view in 1956 was that stress is not necessarily something bad but also it depends on how you take it. Moreover, Robbins (1996), assumed stress is the active state of mind in which a human-being faces both an opportunity and constraints. In addition, Sauter and Murphy 1999, assumed stress is the critical reaction of the human body that results when job requirements do not match with the intended capabilities or environment. Similarly, Mahfood, Pollock and Longmire (2013), discussed that stress has many forms but one of the specific form of stress for humans is job stress. Summers (1995), suggested that job stress is mostly referred to the uncomfortable feeling of an individual caused by the changes of normal lifestyle. In addition, Nwadiani (2006), job stress is the disorganization in personality and behavior due to the disturbance of the emotional stability of the individual.

Similarly, Blanchard (2003), viewed that empowerment is a process which help people to increase their self-confidence, manage their powerlessness and helplessness and to have the interest and intrinsic motivation to accomplish tasks. In addition, Baired and Wang (2010), indicated that employee empowerment is more relevant in today's competitive environment where knowledge workers are more prevalent. Researchers also added that organizations are moving towards decentralized, organic type organizational structure. Moreover, Heathfield (2014), stated empowerment is the processes that enable and authorize individuals to think, take action, make decision and control work independently. Similarly, Meneze (2005), argued that job performance is an activity in which an individual is able to accomplish the task assigned to him/her successfully, subject to the normal constraints of reasonable utilization of the available resources.

## Problem statement

On the basis of literature many researchers are of the view that job stress and empowerment has impact on employees' performance but at the same time researchers have shown that some stressful work and empowerment condition are critical to maintain employee performance. Hence the aim of this study was to find out the impact of job stress and empowerment on employees' performance. Via an analysis of the public and private sector universities of Khyber pukhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

## Research questions

1. Is there any relationship between job stress and empowerment with employee performance among the employees of public and private sector universities of Khyber pukhtunkhwa, Pakistan?
2. What is the impact of job stress and empowerment with employee performance among the employees of public and private sector universities of Khyber pukhtunkhwa, Pakistan?

## Objective of the study

1. To examine the relationship of job stress and empowerment on employees' performance in the public and private sector universities of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, Pakistan.
2. To investigate the impact of job stress and empowerment on employees performance in public and private sector universities of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

## Scope of the study

This study was conducted on public and private sector universities of Khyber pukhtunkhwa, Pakistan in order to determine the impact of job stress and empowerment on Professors, Associate professors, Assistant Professors and Lecturers.

## Literature Review

### Stress

According to Harre'and Lamb (1983), stress is the way in which individuals identify and realize problems faced by them, the way they react and attempt to cope with them and the cost of doing so. In contrast, Greenberg, Carr, and Summers (2002), stated that mental stress is caused by professed or genuine challenge to an organism's skill to convene its real or professed requirements. Similarly, to Robbins (2004), stress is a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with opportunity, constraint or demand related to what he desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important. From this definition one can say that stress is not necessarily bad, it also has a positive value when it offers potential gain. Moreover, Brown and Harvey (2006), concluded that stress is the interaction between the individual and environment which results in his or her mental or physical conditions. In addition Topper (2007), identified that stress is the perception of inconsistencies of environmental demands and individual demands. Furthermore, Rue and Byars, (2007), argued that stress is the deficit of physical and mental conditions by perceived danger.

### Job stress

Cooper et al., (1996) stated that job stress is expensive to human being, associations and humanity at managerial stage. Klink, Blonk and Schene (2001), discussed that at the human being stage it may be patent in the form of irritation, nervousness and sleep disorder. Wheeler and Riding (2002), stated that at managerial stage job stress may effect on expenses because of increase in absentisem. Santos and Cox (2002), also stated that by product of job stress can be affect the customer in the shape of defective goods and unhelpful performance such as discourtesy. Demerouti et al., (2003) argued that there is a buffer between job stress and creativity. But other researcher like Hon and Kim (2003) show that employees have a positive behavior towards the job and organization when they do work under job stress. Furthermore, Hon, Wilco and Lin (2012), say job stress is one of the topics which are discussed generally and approximately in the world. Because it has an impact on psychological capability of the employees through which they have no ability to perform effectively in their organization. Moreover, Groen, Wouters and Wilderom (2012), say Job stress with mental capabilities or internal state of mind is not only linked, but it also effects on creative performance.

### Employees' empowerment

According to Thorlakson and Murray (1996), it is assumed that empowerment relates to getting workers to do what needs to be done and not to tell them what to do. In addition, Conger and Kanungo (1998), demonstrated that empowerment has two approaches. The first approach is termed as situational approach and the second approach is called psychological approach. The situational approach is concerned with transferring the power from higher management to lower management by enabling them to make decisions while the second approach concerned with low decision making processes. Furthermore, Savery and Luks (2001), in their survey proposed that empowerment is to share management power normally for two reasons. The first is to develop improved employees and organizational performance and the second to help employees attain personal goals. In addition, Savery and Luks (2001), proposed that empowerment in workplace decrease perceived stress which arises from organizational change and increased productivity. Stress less when workers no longer need to report to someone a daily basis. Empowerment gives employees themselves responsibility over their achievements. Petter et al., (2002) has assumed seven dimensions of empowerment such as autonomy, power, initiative and creativity, responsibility, knowledge and skills, decision making and information.

### Employees' performance

Scott (1966), demonstrated that employees' performance is the total output that employees' give to an organization, which it recognizes. Researcher also stated that employees' performance is the sum of total abilities, opportunities and motivation. Similarly, Meneze (2005), argued that job performance is an activity in which an individual is able to accomplish the task assigned to him/her successfully, subject to the normal constraints of reasonable utilization of the available resources. Moreover, Brown (2012), asserts that best employees' performance can be achieved in presence of adequate balance such as employees who may have proper authority, control and empowerment to make effective decisions.

Meyerson and Dewettinck (2012), found different types of relationship between job stress and empowerment with employees' performance. First is the inverse relationship between job stress and empowerment with employees' performance where a rise in the level of job stress and empowerment decreases the employees' performance. Second is the direct relation where rise in the level of job stress and empowerment increase job performance. The third is that job stress and empowerment makes a U shape with employees' performance.

**Hypotheses**

**H1:** There is an impact of job stress on employee performance.

**H2:** Employees empowerment has impact on employee's performance.

On the basis of literature the following conceptual framework of job stress and empowerment with employees' performance has been developed.

**Research Methodology**

Primary data has been used in this study and the data was gathered from different public and private sector universities of Khyber pukhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Responses were obtained from different Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors and Lecturers serving in various disciplines such as management science, computer science, biological science, textile and fashion. This research is Quantative in nature. A survey was conducted using closed ended questionnaires. Stratified sampling technique has been utilized in this study. The total respondents were 227 and reliability analysis, demographic analysis, correlation analysis and regression analysis were used in this study.

**Analysis and Result**

Table 1 (next page) shows the independent variable (job stress, empowerment) number of items and dependent varia-

ble (employees' performance) number of items. The job stress number of items are 14 while empowerment number of items are 15, employees' performance number of items are 7 and 36 are the total number of items. According to the below table below the Cronbach's alpha for job stress and empowerment are 0.830 and 0.720 while for employees' performance is 0.80 which shows that there is high level of consistency. Hence the reliability statistics indicate that Cronbach's alpha is approximately 0.81 for all variables, which also shows that high level of consistency.

Table 2 describes demographic analysis of the study and each category is explained below.

**Designation**

Data for this study was collected from 227 faculty members of these universities i.e., Lecturers, Assistant Professors, Associate Professors and Professors as well, out of which 70% were Lecturers, 19.8% were Assistant Professors, 9% were Associate Professors and 1.8% were full Professors. The result of designation in demographics specifies that most of the respondents in the study were Lecturers.

**Gender**

The next column is related to the gender of the respondents. The demographic characteristic show that the majority of the respondents are male with 197(86.8%) and 30(13.2%) female.

**Age**

On age profile 30 (13.2%) were between 26 to 30 years old. 110 (48.5%) respondents were of age from 31 to 35 years old, 36 to 40 years old revealed a number of 59 (26.0%) while 28 (12.3%) were of age category above 40 years.

**Education**

In terms of qualification profile, the findings revealed that Master degree holder are 69(30.4%), MS/M Phil degree holders are 113 (49.8%), PhD degree holders are 44(19.4%) and 1 (0.4%) respondents belonged to other qualification.

**Conceptual Model**

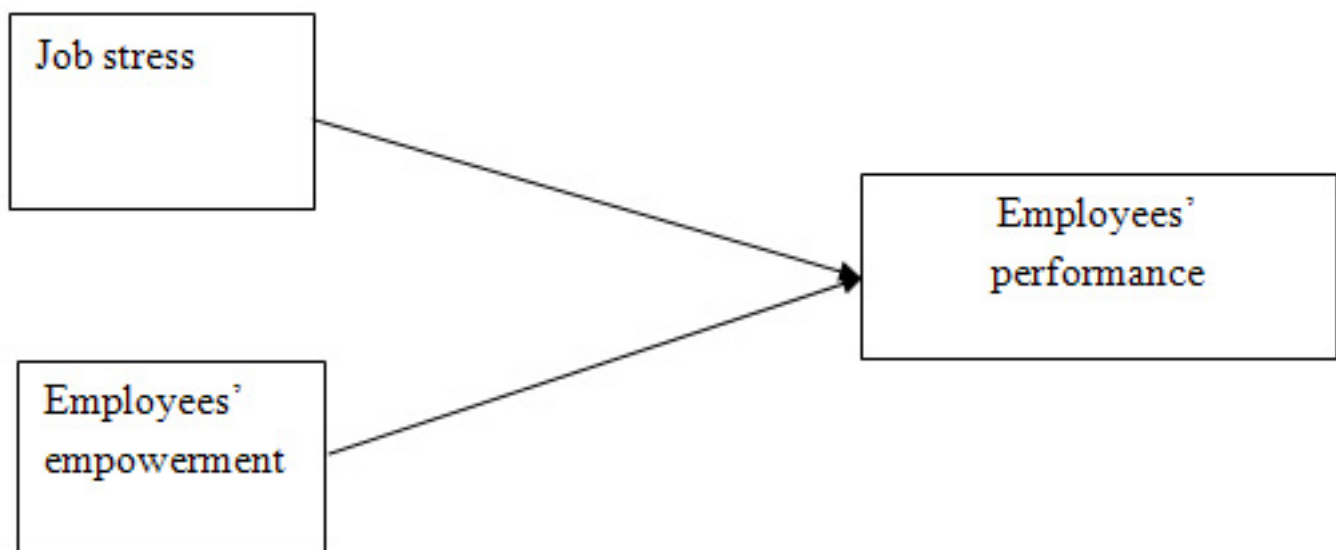


Table 1

Reliability Analysis		
Description	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
Job Stress (JS)	.830	14
Empowerment (E)	.720	15
Employee Performance (EP)	.80	07
Total	0.81	36

Table 2

Demographics		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Designation	Lecturer	159	70.0	70.0	70.0
	Asst. P	45	19.8	19.8	89.9
	Associate. Prof	19	9.0	9.0	98.2
	Professor	4	1.8	1.8	100.0
Gender	Male	197	86.8	86.8	86.8
	Female	30	13.2	13.2	100.0
Age	26 – 30	30	13.2	13.2	13.2
	31 - 35	110	48.5	48.5	61.7
	36 – 40	59	26	26	87.7
	Above 40	28	12.3	12.3	100.0
Education	Master	69	30.4	30.4	30.4
	MS/M Phil	113	49.8	49.8	80.2
	PhD	44	19.4	19.4	99.5
	Others	1	0.4	0.4	100.0

Table 3

Correlation Analysis			
Variables	JS	E	JP
JS	1	0.372**	0.339
E	0.372**	1	.523**
JP	0.339	.523**	1

\*\*p<0.05, \*p<0.01

Table 4: Regression Results

Hypothesis	R <sup>2</sup>	B	t-test	F-test	Sig.
H1	0.298	.139	2.756	47.280	.000
H2	.462	.462	7.624	38.23	.000

Table 3 shows correlation among dependent and independent variables. The value of independent and dependent variable at ( $p=0.000 < 0.05$ ) shows that there is positive relationship among independent variable (job stress, empowerment) and dependent variable (employees' performance).

Table 4 shows regression analysis of independent variable (job stress, empowerment) and dependent variable (employees' performance). The value of Hypothesis 1 indicate that there is a significantly positive impact of job stress on employee performance which is proved by the value of R square (0.298) and T (2.756). Moreover, F-test static value (47.280) is very large which shows that the model is good enough. Similarly, the value of Hypothesis 2 also indicates that there is positive impact on employee performance. Hypothesis is accepted, R square (.462), T (7.624) with significant value of 0.00. Along with it, if we look at the goodness of fit of the model which is exposed by the F-test static value (38.23) is also high and shows that the overall model is fit.

### Conclusion

The objective of this study was to find out the impact of job stress and empowerment on employees' performance in the public and private sector universities of Khyber pukhtunkhwa Pakistan. Analysis shows a close relationship between independent and dependent variable. It also concludes that employees' who are working in the public and private sector universities shows job stress and empowerment as a real challenge. It also important to continuously monitor the working environment for job stress and empowerment related purposes. Moreover, this study also concludes that the majority of employees' like job stress and empowerment and that will increase their employees' performance.

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