

MEDIATING ROLE OF ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIES IN RELATIONSHIP OF THE CAUSES AND OUTCOMES OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

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ABSTRACT

Everyone has the right to spend his life happily but the question arises, how. The goal of this research is to identify the Mediating role of Organizational strategies in the relationship of causes (Individual stressors, Group stressors, organizational stressors, & Extra-organizational stressors) and outcomes (Depression, Absenteeism, & Trauma, etc.) of occupational stress. This work has applied the qualitative tools of thematic analysis like “argumentation” to analyzed results. For the field study, a questionnaire was used to gather the first-hand view on the topic, using a seven-point interval scale to agree or disagree with the statements to analyze the empirical relationships. Two hundred and fifty-two judges and advocates represented by 18 females and 234 males completed a constructed and standardized questionnaire. The empirical results from the current study tell that the mediating variable, i.e. organizational strategies plays a very significant role while reducing the level of stress among the employees.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Stress is a negative aftereffect of current living. The efficiency of the individual is affected by the variety of stressors in all fields of life, which ultimately affects the performance of the job. Various researchers in their research presented that most of the employees having no knowledge and lack of diversified skills cannot perform efficiently and effectively, however, the energetic employees are

more efficient (Khan and Khan, 2017). Stress at the job is seen and felt at an individual level and activated by occasions or circumstances that continuous and are excessively extreme to exceed an individual's resources to manage them effectively and coping capabilities. It is a universal phenomenon in almost all organizations. Occupational stress shows job mobility, high burnout, poor work performance, ineffective relationship in the office, and dissatisfaction. Most of the scholars are of the view that stress is very dangerous not only for business but also for individuals (Bashir and Ramay, 2010).

Stressors include lack of safety, job insecurity, overtime such as working late or work for the longer period, lack of security, lack of autonomy in the job, repetitiveness, lack of resources and equipment, organizational climate and work schedules, etc. (Manshor et al. 2013). Therefore, if stress is not managed properly, then it affects the performance as well as the health of the individuals. The chance was that the workers are not exempted from this threat, and there is the possibility of being burdened with long working hours and work overloads (Colligan and Higgins, 2006). Moreover, if someone managed it properly through coping strategies such as personal strategies (like self-esteem, locus of control along with recreational activities) and organizational strategies, the stress level can be reduced (Parveen and Inayat, 2017).

Numerous researchers established the relationship between causes of stress, outcomes of stress, and coping strategies, i.e. organizational strategies, e.g. (Iqbal, 2013), concluded in his study that level of stress can be minimized by utilizing the different organizational strategies. The occupational stress put the extremely negative effects like depression absenteeism, poor health, trauma, and many others on employees.

Therefore, the basic goal of this research study is to explore the mediating variable organisational strategies that play the role between the causes and outcomes of occupational stress (Rahman et al., 2015). This is a continued work of Ahmad et al. (2020) on the meditational effects of personal strategies in the relationship of causes and outcomes of occupational stress: a survey of the judiciary in KP Pakistan. The study hypotheses are

H#1: Organisational strategies mediate the relationship of Individual stressors and Outcomes

H#2: Organisational strategies mediate the relationship of Collective stressors and their outcomes

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

When stress occurs in the work environment, it is called occupational stress. The issue of occupational stress has been of extraordinary worry to numerous industrial/ organizational psychologists because researchers found that undue stress is imposed on workers, it will influence the activity execution and their psycho-substantial, that is, physical and mental, health as well. Stress is a physical and psychological condition that affects the employees when they are unable to meet the job requirements and unable to handle the pressure of the situation (Hobfoll and Freedy, 1993).

Stress is very common in employees and is an unavoidable consequence of the current living. It is mostly found at employees of lower levels, where they have no control over the working environment. Recently numerous studies have targeted the stress at work among employees in different organizations, e.g., doctors, polices, nurses, academics, and teachers (Manjunatha and

Renukamurthy, 2017). In this modern world, the Occupational stress has become the most serious issue regarding health, and it became the most popular topic in recent years, for applied research in psychology, and in the broader areas of social sciences (Colligan and Higgins, 2006).

2.1 TYPES OF STRESS

Basic classification of stress can best be explained by Hans Selye (1956), according to him stress can be of over stress or hyper stress: in hyper stress, the demands and workload of the job are greater than the individual officer is likely to manage, Undesired (distress): it makes one feels irritable, frustrated and exhausted, Under stress or hypo stress Where there is too little work to do, and this leads to boredom, under-stimulation, depression and possibly lack of motivation, The next type of stress is called Desired or eustress: When something is challenging and motivating to do (Cosio et al., 2010).

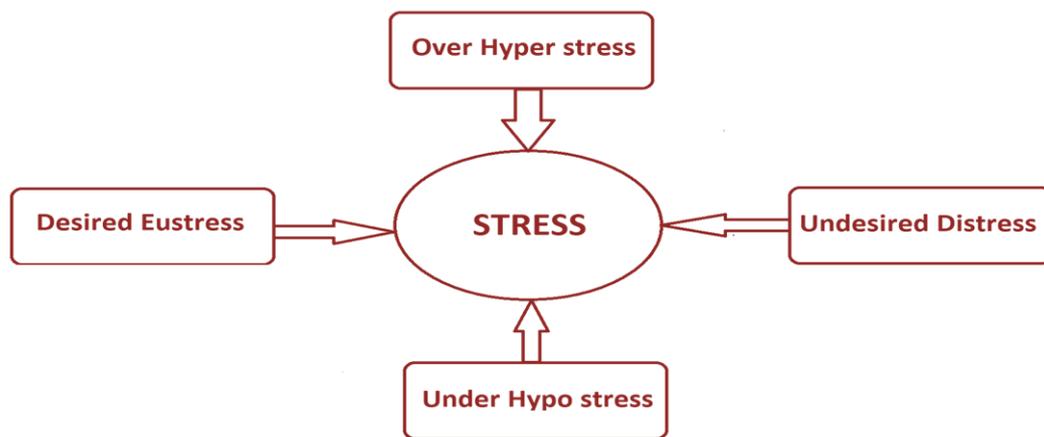


Figure 1: Models of stress on Hans Selye (1956).

Figure 1 explains the different types of stress given by Hans Selye (1956). There are kinds of stress i.e Over/Hyper stress, Under/Hypo stress, undesired/Distress, and Desired/Eustress (Ahmad et al., 2017).

2.2 CAUSES OF STRESS

Stressors are the factors that are responsible for creating a stressful situation. Stressors are of two types viz; Individual Stressors (Role ambiguity; Job demand; Role conflict; Work overload) Group Stressors (Group Cohesiveness, Lack of Social Support, Organisational Environment). 1st are those feelings inside a person are called internal stressors while the second are those factors that are found outside a person are called External stressors and both lead to stress (Mark and Smith, 2012).

2.3 OUTCOMES OF STRESS

Researchers indicated that blood pressure, coronary heart diseases, depression, absenteeism, trauma, cancer risk factors, musculoskeletal disorders, and psychosomatic symptoms are ill-effects of occupational stress. Depression, anxiety, and trauma are the most commonly diagnosed psychological problems (Warraich et al., 2014).

2.4 COPING STRATEGIES

2.4.1 ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES

Various organizational strategies like improved communication process, consultation with employees at all the levels of management, examining the reward system, providing them with training opportunities, establishing a proper counseling mechanism, all can reduce stress level among the employees and thus enhance the output of the employees (Awan et al., 2014).

2.4.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The research empirically developed the proposed model and variables are given in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Theoretical Framework for this study.

The proposed conceptual research model Figure 2 shows the relationship between the independent variable i.e causes of occupational stress and the dependent variable i.e outcomes of stress. Mediating variable coping strategies are also used to mediate the relationship between the causes and outcomes of occupational stress.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The target population consisted of 458 judges and 8556 advocates of KPK (Divided into twenty-five districts and six divisions) Pakistan. Author 1st conducted the pilot study and then used its results in 'sample-size' determination. Using the formula for the finite population of 9014 advocates and judges, a sample of 285 is selected. According to Fraeklin and Wallen (2002), in choosing a sample size for a study, the researcher needs to choose a number that he/she can have access to within the time frame in which the study is being conducted. Simple random sampling, the part of probability sampling, is used because it has significant advantages over non-probability sampling. The only technique that offers an estimate of accuracy is probability sampling. The precision of the estimate is an essential criterion for a good sample design. The data was collected from the standardized questionnaire distributed among Judges and advocates (High court and lower courts). Two hundred and eighty-five questionnaires were floated while 252 were returned with a response rate of 88%. For primary data, SPSS 20 was used for data analysis and interpretation.

3.1 MEDIATION MODEL

For analysis, Barron and Kenny's (1986) Model is used. According to this model, a variable can be taken as a mediator of a given independent variable to a given dependent variable. Mediation occurs when the independent variable considerably influences the mediator; the independent variable considerably influences the dependent variable in the absence of the mediator; the mediator has a

significant distinctive effect on the dependent variable; and finally, the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable contracts with the addition of mediator in the regression-model.

3.2 DATA ANALYSIS TOOLS

Descriptive, as well as in inferential tools, are used to analyze the data. Descriptive highlighted the position and nature of the research variables, and inferential tools are utilized to test hypotheses. Regression and Correlation are used for testing of hypothesis.

This study involves individual stressors (IS), collective stressors (CS), personal strategies (PS), outcomes of stress (OC), mediating variable (MV), and organizational strategies (OST).

4 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.1 MEDIATION MODEL-1 [CAUSES (IS) → OST → OUTCOMES (OC)]

Figure 3 mediation Model-1 (Mediator = OST) Individual stressors were hypothesized as the main factor of Outcomes while using Organizational strategies in the workplace are tested as Mediator. The question was, ‘Whether Individual stressors or Organizational strategies are playing a bigger and significant role in bringing variation in the outcomes of stress?’

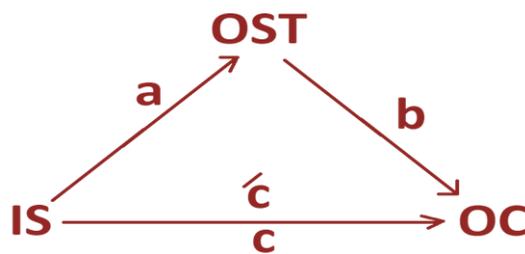


Figure 3: Mediation Model-1 (Mediator = OST)

Table 1: Model 1 Summary [H#1]

Model	R	R2	Adjusted R2	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	0.50a	0.25	0.25	0.607	87.02	0.00b

a. Predictors: (Constant), Individual stressors.

Table 1a: Coefficients of Regression [H₁] (Dependent variable: organizational strategies)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.74	0.45		1.64	0.10
	Individual stressors	0.78	0.085	0.50	9.32	<0.01

Table 1b: Model-1 - computing regression model summary [H#1].

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F	Sig.
1	0.63a	0.40	0.40	0.71	0.40	170.49	<0.01
2	0.72b	0.53	0.52	0.64	0.12	140.58	<0.01

a. Predictors: (Constant), Individual stressors

b. Predictors: (Constant), Individual stressors, Organisational Strategies

Table 1c: Coefficients of Regression [H#1]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	11.11	0.53		20.80	<0.01
	Individual stressors	-1.30	0.10	-0.63	-13.05	<0.01
2	(Constant)	11.52	0.47		24.07	<0.01
	Individual stressors	-0.87	0.10	-0.42	-8.49	<0.01
	Organisational Strategies	-0.54	0.06	-0.41	-8.13	<0.01

a. Dependent Variable: outcomes

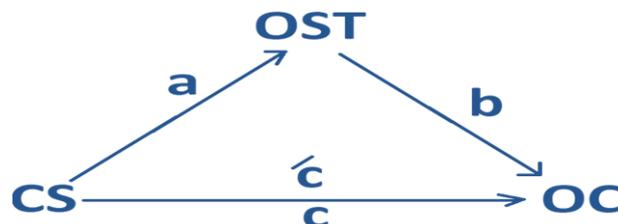
Table 1d: Summarized analysis result for Model-1

	Conditions	Y/N	Beta and p-value
1	'a' IV is Significantly connected with MV. [IV→MV]	Y	B = 0.78 p= <0.01
2	'b' MV is Significantly linked with DV. [MV→DV]	N	B = -0.54 p= <0.01
3	'c' IV Significantly explains DV. [IV→DV]	Y	B = -1.30 p= <0.01
4	'c' may or may not be significant [IV&MV→DV]	Y	B = -0.87 p= <0.01

Tables 1a, 1b, 1c, in stepwise multiple regressions, R^2 increases from 40% to 53%, i.e. (0.40 to 0.53) because of Mediator. Similarly, in Table 1d, the Beta-weight of 'c' goes a bit up from -1.30 to -0.87 (with p-value = <0.01). Beta-weight of Mediator 'b', -0.542 and is 'significant' with a p-value of <0.01 partial mediation happens; therefore, Hypothesis H#1 is accepted.

4.2 MEDIATION MODEL-2 [CS-OST-OC]

Figure 4 mediation Model-2 (Mediator = OST) shows that Collective stressors were hypothesized as the main factor of Outcomes while using Organizational strategies in the workplace are tested as Mediator. The question was, 'Whether Collective stressors or Organizational strategies are playing a bigger and significant role in bringing variation in the outcomes of stress?'

**Figure 4: Mediation Model 2 (Mediator = OST)**

For checking H#2, organizational strategies mediate the relationship between Collective stressors & Outcomes of stress using Model-2. In Tables 2, 2a, 2b, 2c, and 2d, based on stepwise multiple regressions (IV-DV & IV & MV-DV), Path 'a' is insignificant, and as per Barron & Kenny (1986) if path 'a' is insignificant, then there is no Mediation; therefore H#2 is rejected and null hypothesis stands true.

Table 2: Model Summary [H₂]

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	0.09a	0.00	0.00	0.702	2.18	0.14b

a. Predictors: (Constant), collective Stressors

Table 2a: Coefficients of Regression [H#2]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.33	0.41		10.53	<0.01
	Collective Stressors	0.13	0.09	0.09	1.47	0.14

a. Dependent Variable: ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIES

Table 2b: Model-2 computing regression model summary [H₂].

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F	Sig.
1	0.30a	0.09	0.08	0.888	0.092	25.18	<0.01
2	.72b	.52	0.52	0.643	0.434	138.014	<0.01

Table 2c: Coefficients of Regression [H₂]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.56	0.521		3.00	<0.01
	Collective Stressors	0.59	0.11	0.30	5.01	<0.01
2	(Constant)	5.35	0.45		11.83	<0.01
	Collective Stressors	0.72	0.08	0.36	8.30	<0.01
	Organizational strategies	-0.87	0.05	-0.66	-15.09	<0.01

a. Dependent Variable: outcomes

Table 2d: Summarized analysis result for Model-2

	Conditions	Y/N	Beta and p-value
1	'a' IV is Significantly connected with MV. [IV→MV]	Y	B = 0.13 p = 0.140
2	'b' MV is Significantly linked with DV. [MV→DV]	Y	B = -0.87 p = <0.01
3	'c' IV Significantly explains DV. [IV→DV]	Y	B = 0.59 p = <0.01
4	'c' may or may not be significant [IV&MV→DV]	N	B = 0.72 p = <0.01

5 CONCLUSION

From this study, it is concluded that the strategies used by the organizations such as reward policy, job consistency, consult with employees, employees training opportunities, bringing improvement in communication, establishing counseling system by saying that “Everything is possible” are significant and are helpful to reduce stress level among the employees of the judicial system. Stress and its effects not only have impacts on an individual’s life but also affect employee’s family relations, relations with friends, and professional relations. Most of the people are unable to handle the stressful situation; therefore, they lose their relations. Due to stress employees undergo severe issues of absenteeism, trauma, and depression, Therefore, it is essential to reduce stress and cope with different strategies at the organization level because it ultimately affects the performance of the employees. Instead of taking tension and stress in life, it is good to manage the things properly, and thus, in this way, one can prevent himself from the major diseases. So to reduce the stress level of the judiciary, one should adopt various techniques that reduce the level of stress among the employees of the judiciary. Significant & Insignificant Factors.

This study results describe the significance or relative function of the variables, along with the strength of the impact, as described in the literature. It is therefore concluded that collective stressors are not important for organizational strategies. This situation is very surprising because collective

stressors are very widely reported as a critical factor in defining the outcomes of stress. Furthermore, the organizational strategies mediate the relation of individual stress and outcome, while organizational strategies do not mediate the collective stressors and outcomes.

Coping with organizational strategies is very tough because the strategies discussed in this study can only be implemented in the judiciary therefore its findings cannot be applied in all governmental institutions. Although the literature emphasizes that the views of other workers should be included due to limited resources, the employees from the other organizations could not be included. The research sample was limited because those persons are attached to bars and judiciary. The employees who are retired from their current position, other advocates having no practice, or working outside of the province are not included. All questionnaires were distributed during working hours; therefore, stress' levels could be higher during duty. Therefore, before generalizing the results into other departments, cities, or countries, these limits should be considered.

A qualitative type of research could be employed by interviewing the respondents, i.e., judges and advocates. A longitudinal study is recommended to determine the effect of different causes of stress, their outcomes, and strategies used to overcome the stressful situation in the organization. Stressors comprise of jobs demand, role conflict, work overload, group cohesiveness, role ambiguity, lack of social support, organizational climate, conflicts, task design, interpersonal relationships, management style, career concerns, political factors, environmental conditions, technological factors, and economic factors and are also found in the present research, but still, many factors play the role of catalyst in stress. The actual or real cost is still not clear and is a matter of perceptions which needs further study for its clarification.

6 AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIAL

Data can be made available by contacting the corresponding author.

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