

IMPACT OF JOB STRESS ON JOB PERFORMANCE OF A SELECTED GARMENT FACTORY IN KURUNEGALA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

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INTRODUCTION

The world of work and business has become increasingly subject to fast-changing forces like increased competition, the pressure of quality, innovation, and the pace of doing business (Bamba, 2016). With increasing emphasis on the quality of work and delivery speeds, many employees are working under immense stress due to the dramatic increase in demand for an employee (Yunita & Saputra, 2019). Consequently, job stress has become a frequent problem across all occupations and is a common phenomenon in the garment industry (Islam & Stringer, 2018).

Different aspects of job performance, productivity, decision-making abilities, job satisfaction, absenteeism, organizational skills, creativity, accuracy, initiative, and attention to personal appearance are affected by stress (Ratnawat & Jha, 2014). According to the findings of Khuong and Yen (2016), workload, role ambiguity and role conflict, working relationships, career development, and working environment have been identified as the critical factors that affect employees' job performance through job stress. Similarly, the findings of Murali et al. (2017) have revealed that employee job performance is affected by time pressure, lack of motivation, and role ambiguity, and work overload, lack of motivation, harassment, role conflict, and reduction of resources. Yunita and Saputra (2019) have argued that when employees are highly stressed, their performance decreases.

Consequently, organizational performance is declined due to increased labour turnover, absenteeism, work ineffectiveness, and legal and financial damages. Ekienabor (2016) discovered that job stress impacted employee commitment, thereby causing a decrease in the employee's performance. Further, Shagvaliyeva and Yazdanifard (2014) have found that when there is too much stress on employees, it directly affects the quality of output and performance. Many researchers have found that job stress impacts employee job performance (Dar et al., 2011; Khuong & Yen, 2016; Islam & Stringer, 2018), but only a few studies have been conducted on this area in the Sri Lankan garment industry. Therefore, this research attempts to fill that empirical gap through a study conducted in a selected garment factory in Kurunegala District, Sri Lanka. The machine operators in the selected garment factory are highly target-oriented and work under tremendous pressure due to the higher demands of their jobs. The selected garment factory had undergone a significant drop in production over the past six months, and the labour turnover for the particular period had increased drastically. Hence this study was conducted to address the problem: Does job stress impact machine operators' job performance in the selected garment factory? Accordingly, the main objective of this study is to investigate the impact of job stress on the job performance of machine operators. Further, the researchers also attempt to identify the impact of work overload, working environment, role ambiguity, and salary on the job performance of the machine

operators in the selected garment factory. The findings of this research would be necessary for making strategic decisions on improving employee performance and conducting further research in the same field. However, since the study considers one category of employees in a single company, the generalizability of the findings is limited.

METHODOLOGY

The study used job stress as the independent variable and job performance as the dependent variable. Here, the job stress of machine operators in the selected garment factory was measured using four sub-dimensions: work overload, working environment, role ambiguity (Khuong & Yen, 2016), and salary (Awadh et al., 2015). Job performance was measured in terms of task and contextual performance (Kappagoda, 2018). The conceptual model used in the study is presented in Figure 1.

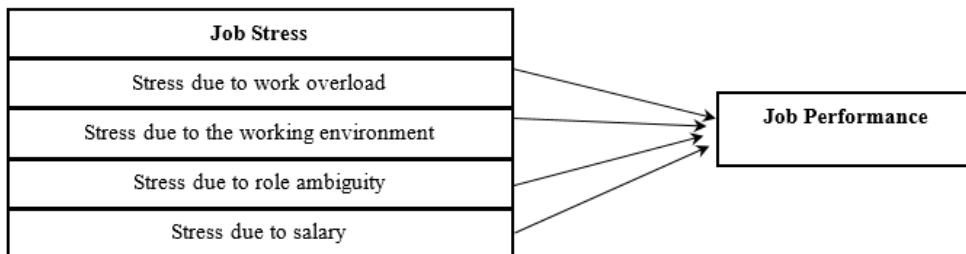


Figure1 Conceptual Model

The researchers developed the following hypotheses based on the above conceptual model.

H1: Stress due to work overload has a significant impact on the job performance of machine operators

H2: Stress due to the working environment has a significant impact on the job performance of machine operators

H3: Stress due to role ambiguity has a significant impact on the job performance of machine operators

H4: Stress due to salary has a significant impact on the job performance of machine operators

H5: Job stress has a significant impact on the job performance of machine operators.

The study was conducted using the quantitative approach. It was a cross-sectional study, and the data were collected in a non-contrived setting. The study population was all the machine operators of the selected factory, and the sampling was done using the Krejcie and Morgan Table (1970). Accordingly, as the population of the study was 550, the sample size was taken as 226.

The primary data for the study were collected using a self-administered questionnaire consisting of two sections, Part A and B. Part A consisted of demographic data, and Part B included 20 statements (Ekienabor, 2016; Khuong & Yen, 2016; Lopes & Kachalia, 2016) for Job Stress and 12 statements for Job Performance (Beffort & Hattrup, 2003; Koopmans et al., 2014) with a five-point Likert scale (1 for Strongly Disagree- 5 for Strongly Agree). The data were analyzed using univariate and bivariate methods, and the analysis was carried out by SPSS Version 25.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The inter-item consistency and reliability of the questionnaire were examined with the Cronbach Alpha test. According to the findings, job stress and job performance were reported at 0.877 and 0.889, respectively. The Cronbach's Alpha test results suggested that each instrument's internal reliability was satisfactory. The content validity of the instruments was ensured by the conceptualization and operationalization of the variables based on literature and indirectly by the higher internal consistency denoted by Alpha coefficients. The questionnaires were distributed among 226 machine operators, and all the responses were received.

The results of the demographical data reported that most of the machine operators were female between 18 and 25, and 57% were married. 72.4% of the total respondents were in the permanent cadre, and over 35% of them had work experience of more than three years. Most respondents were in the income range 20000-25000, reporting 53%, and only 7% of the total respondents belonged to the income level above 35000.

Table 1 Results of Descriptive Data Analysis

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Stress due to work overload	4.4317	0.2127	-0.630	-0.606
Stress due to the working environment	4.2952	0.4317	0.077	0.594
Stress due to role ambiguity	4.3371	0.109	-0.270	1.173
Stress due to salary	4.4181	0.4073	-0.833	0.073
Job stress	4.3456	0.3386	-0.763	0.575
Job Performance	1.8135	0.5664	0.641	-0.298

According to Table 1, all the mean values of the distribution are above 4.0, indicating that the machine operators in the organization are experiencing high levels of stress due to work overload, work environment, role ambiguity, and salary. The overall job stress is reported as 4.3456, and it denotes that the machine operators of the factory are under a high-stress level at their jobs. In contrast, the mean value of the job performance of the machine operators lies between 1.2471 and 2.3799, indicating a poor job performance level. The Skewness and Kurtosis coefficients depict that the recorded data are normally distributed.

Table 2 Summary of Regression Analysis Results

Predictor	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Beta	Sig. (2 tailed)
Stress due to work overload	.970 ^a	.941	.931	-.970	.000
Stress due to the working environment	.896 ^a	.803	.801	-.896	.000
Stress due to role ambiguity	.918 ^a	.843	.841	-.918	.000
Stress due to salary	.864 ^a	.746	.743	-.864	.000
Job Stress	.934 ^a	.873	.872	-.934	.000

As indicated in Table 2, the b values reported by stress due to work overload, working environment, role ambiguity, salary, and overall job stress are -0.970, -0.896, -0.918, -0.864,

and -0.934, respectively. These values depict a strong negative impact on the job performance of machine operators, and thus the hypotheses H₁, H₂, H₃, H₄, and H₅ were accepted. According to the R Squared values of the overall job stress, 87.21% of the variance in job performance is explained by the job stress level of the machine operators in the selected garment factory. Further, based on the results, it is evident that stress due to work overload, working environment, role ambiguity, and salary could predict employee job performance.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study mainly focused on measuring if job stress impacts machine operators' job performance in a selected garment factory in Kurunegala District. As indicated by the empirical data, it has been identified that work overload, working environment, role ambiguity, and salary significantly influence the job performance of the machine operators in the selected garment factory. Thus it can be concluded that there is a significant negative impact of job stress on the job performance of machine operators in the selected garment factory, and job stress plays a vital role in determining employees' job performance. These findings are consistent with the results of the investigations carried out by Murali et al. (2017), Khuong and Yen (2016), and Ekienabor (2016). Based on these results, the researchers recommend redesigning some jobs to reduce work overload (Awadh et al., 2015), providing sufficient support, guidance, and encouragement, building social support (Goswami, 2015), and maintaining a proper reward system as measures of managing employee job stress to improve their job performance.

Keywords: Job performance, job stress, role ambiguity, work overload

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