

## **Impact of stress antecedents on work stress and employees performance**

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**Abstract:** *The objective of the study was to explore the influences of stress antecedents on work stress and to further explore the effect of work stress on employee performance. Data was collected from 180 employees, including managers and officers of public sector banks through questionnaire. Results showed that stress antecedents have a positive influence on work stress, and work stress has a negative impact on employee performance. This research was conducted on the employees of banking sector located in one division of Punjab. So this could restrict the research to one location only. But this study is significant in order to retain the high-valued banking employees.*

**Key words:** *excessive work demand, improper work life balance, work stress, employee performance*

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### **I. Introduction**

Modern work lifestyle is full of stress. You need not only to cope with challenges at work but also with stress that you take along with you to work. Changing technology, new product/services demands, demographic changes, increased competition and increase in workload psychological problems and stress issues increased rapidly. These stresses contribute to decreased organizational performance, decreased employee overall performance, decreased quality of work, high staff turnover, and absenteeism due to health problems. Stress produces strain, disrupts equilibrium, and it is the source of any number of emotional, physical, economic and social problems. Stress has been defined in different ways over the years. Originally, it was conceived as pressure from the environment, and as strain within the person. It is the psychological and physical state that results when the resources of the individual are not sufficient to cope with the demands and pressures of the situation. Thus, stress is more likely in some situations than others and in some individuals than others (Michie, 2002)

Stress is the outcome of facet of the assigned work role that caused harmful effect for individual. Occupational stress is considered as harmful factor of the work environment (kahn, wolfe, quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). It also has unpleasant effects on health of an individual as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the workers. Stress is typically discussed in a negative context; it also has a positive value. But it still has destructive impact on employee performance, and this study will prove the negative association between stress and employee performance (sanghi, 2006). Presence of any of these gives a clear signal of presence of high level of stress in the environment (bashir & Ramay, 2010)

- Increase in number of stress related worker compensation claims.
- Employee fatigue due to excessive work.
- Customer complaints about the employee as irritable or stressed.
- Recorded incidents of verbal or physical conflict among any employees.
- Increase in absenteeism associated with the filing of stress claims due to lack of support from management.
- Unusually high employee turnover rates related to work place stress that causes family conflicts.

This study focuses on the impact stress antecedents have on work stress and effect of work stress on employee performance. This study is important to make peoples in the banks aware of the impact of stress antecedents and making them capable to cope with them and keep monitoring them to minimize their impact on performance.

### **Problem Definition:**

Stress is a universal phenomenon that continuously disturbs the life of an individual either directly or indirectly. Every individual of the society is facing stress in its different forms and impacts. Stress causes the imbalance in employee's life; it may improve the efficiency of them or badly affect the health, attitude and job performance of them (wolfe, 2004). Stress significantly affects those employees working in organizations like banks that

need mental ability as well as physical ability to perform the job. This study brings out the broad outline of stress, its antecedents, and their impact on employees performance.

**Objectives of study:**

**Major objective**

To find the impact of stress antecedents on work stress and employees performance

**Sub objectives**

Sub objectives of the study are as follows

- i. To find the impact of excessive work demand on work stress
- ii. To find the impact of improper work life balance on work stress
- iii. To find the impact of work stress on employees performance

**Significance of the study:**

This study will act to increase the body of knowledge for academicians, it will tend describe that how various antecedents affect stress and how stress effect employee's performance in banking sectors. On the basis of reviewed literature it is find out there is significant amount of research on both antecedents of stress and impact of stress employee's performance in other countries but as compared to Pakistan there is not much work done on this issue. So here in study we would try to explain the relation of antecedent of stress and its impact on employee's performance. It can help the managers to get an idea that how stress can affect employees' performance in any organization specifically in banking sector.

## **Literature review**

**Stress and employee performance:**

Job performance can be viewed as 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 (Dar, Akmal, naseem, & khan, 2011). (Selye, 1936) was the first introduced the idea of stress in to the life science. He defined stress as the force, pressure, or tension subjected upon an individual which may induce insufficient or inappropriate changes in the behavioral and physiologic control systems. When increased from the level it results into different physical and psychological diseases. Job stress is considered rising and has become challenge for the employer and because high level stress is results in low productivity, increased absenteeism and collection to other employee problems like alcoholism, drug abuse, hypertension and host of cardiovascular problems (Menze, 2006). There have been so many reports of worldwide workplace stress recently that it would be perfectly reasonable to conclude that everyone everywhere is depressed. Every employee feels stress related to work. Many employers complain about their jobs, their bosses, their subordinates. The stress at workplaces is hovering from many years. But management did not take it up seriously and considered the solution as soft stuff. (Ira S.Wolfe, 2004) Stress exists in every organization either big or small the work places and organizations have become so much complex due to which it exists, work place stress has significant effects over the employees job performance (Anderson, 2003). In banking sector particularly higher management doesn't realize the impact of stress on employee performance which ultimately results in critical managerial dilemmas as (imtiaaz & ahmed, 2009) described "Higher level of stress existed with no managerial concern for solution consequently lowering the employee performance, staking organizational reputation and loss of skilled employees, these situations call for immediate concern from organization management for employing effective stress management practices to increase employee satisfaction and overall employee performance."

**Excessive work demands:**

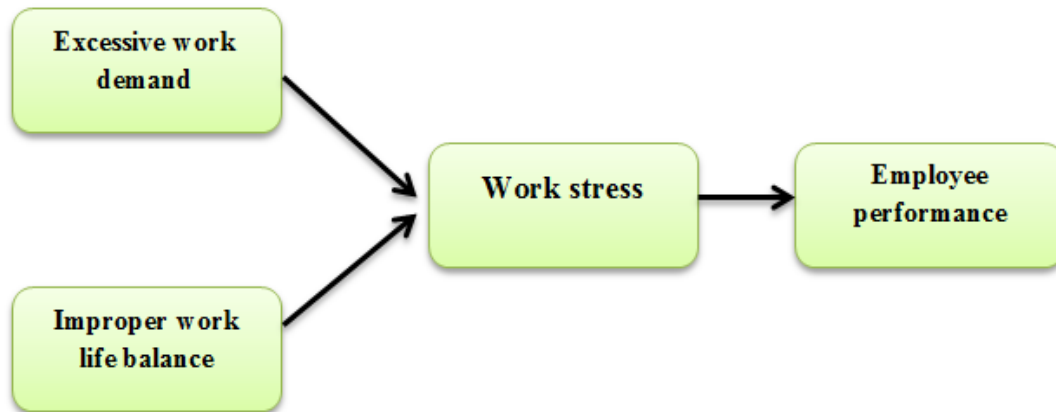
Stress is an unwanted reaction people have to severe pressures or other types of demands placed upon them. A huge and multi fields literature points a lot of key factors such as work environment, management support, work load etc. in determining the stressful the work can be and its effect on employee physical and mental health (Logan & Ganster, 2005). Work overload & time pressure to complete too much work in short span of time is big source of stress which decrease the performance of employees. "With excessive pressures, the job demands cannot be met, relaxation turns to exhaustion and a sense of satisfaction replaces with the feelings of stress, motivation sheds away and the workers start losing interest in the work and hence performance chart shows a negative trend (mahmood, hussain, hannan, & muhammad, 2010)". Studies showed that negative pressure of stress originate from workload. Workload is major source of it; it creates the pressure to employees to produce with effectively and efficiency (Al-Aameri, 2000)

**Improper work Life balance:**

There are a lot of reasons causing stress work family conflicts work over load one of reason identified by (Stamper & Johlke, 2003) that if the organization or management does not appreciates its employees for their

hard work or contribution toward the organization creates stress and mostly creates intention to leave. According to (Anderson R. , 2003) work to family conflicts is also a predecessor which creates stress in employees of an organization. Job stress has been also viewed as dysfunctional for organizations and their members. (kahn, wolfe, quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1965) While work family conflict can be thought of as a result of work stressors, it also has been studied as a stressor since the 1970s. Theoretical models examine how the work family interface affects individual health and well-being, and in turn how this affects a person's performance in work and family roles. An employee has to experience stress if conflict arises between family and work life (Sotirios, 1939)

**Theoretical Framework:**



**Impact of stress antecedents on work stress and employees performance**

**Hypothesis:**

- H1:** Excessive work demand will increase the work stress.
- H2:** Improper work life balance will increase the work stress.
- H3:** Increase in work stress will decrease employee performance.

**Research Methodology**

**Research paradigm:**

Research on social sciences is mainly based on two main paradigms named positivism or systematic/quantitative approach and constructionism or qualitative approach. The Present study fall in positivism research paradigm, as the ontological approach of the research is based upon the acceptance of a single concept as knowledge. The epistemological approach is objective and deductive methodological approach is used. This study is conducted by using questionnaire as a data collection technique and probability sampling was used for drawing sample from population in an unbiased way.

**Sampling Design:**

Study population comprised of employees working in public sector banks in Punjab. The targeted banks include Bank of Punjab & National bank of Pakistan. Sample was drawn using multistage cluster sampling by using which we have selected Punjab province among all province. Clusters then further made according to geographical locations of Punjab and we had 9 divisions named Bahawalpur, Faisalabad, Dera Ghazi Khan, Lahore, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi, Multan, Sargodha and Sahiwal by using simple random sampling, cluster of Gujranwala division was selected. Gujranwala cluster then further divided into six strata's on the basis of districts in Gujranwala named Gujranwala district, Sialkot district, Mandi bahaudin district, Gujrat District, Narowal district and Hafizabad District. Then we use disproportionate stratified random sampling, and 5 branches of each bank from each district were selected and total 4 employees from each bank branch were targeted. So the total sample size of this study was 240. The response received was 180 (75 percent).

**Data collection methods:**

For present study questionnaires used as data collection method. Questionnaires were personally administrated as well as through e-mails.

### **Questionnaire:**

The proposed questionnaire includes the following variables:

#### **Excessive work demand:**

Excessive work demand has been measured by scale developed by (Buckingham, 2004).

#### **Work life balance:**

Work life balance has been measured with help of scale developed by Wesley, J. R. and Muthuswamy, P. R. (2005).

#### **Work stress:**

Work stress scale was developed by (kahn, wolfe, quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964)

#### **Employee performance:**

Employee performance has been measured with scale developed by (Dizgah, et al., 2012).

### **Data analysis:**

Table A-1 shows that among 180 respondents 138 (76.7%) respondents were male and 42 (23.3%) were female. Out of all 132 (73.3%) were married and 48 (26.7%) were unmarried. Study was conducted on banking sector, in which 15 (8.3%) employees were junior officers, 60 (33.3%) were officer grade 3 level employees, 23 (12.8%) were officer grade 2 level employees, 14 (7.8%) employees were officer grade level 1, 42 (23.3%) employees were branch managers at bank of Punjab and national bank of Pakistan and 26 (14.4%) employees were operational managers at banks. Targeted banks were public and employees were having experience from 1 to 20 years, because of public sector banks many employees were having experience more than 20% too. Cronbach's Alpha was used to check the reliability of the content. In A-2 table of the appendix, Cronbach's Alpha values are proving the reliability of the constructs, value of alpha was 0.867 and total number of items is 52. Correlation analysis was run to check the relationship strength and table A-3 is proving the positive attachment of variables excessive work demand and improper work life balance with work stress with the 0.00 significance. For further analysis two sets of multiple regression was run (appendix table A-4) and in Anova table significance value is less than 0.05 and model summary table check the strength of relationship between all four variables. In model summary table value of adjusted R square (which is .44 (44%) showing 44% degree of change where we took work stress as dependent variable and as independent variables (table A-4 (a)). The value of adjusted R square (which is .258 (26%) showing 26% degree of change where we took employee performance as dependent variable and work stress as independent variables (table A-4 (b)).

### **Discussion:**

Present study proposed that excessive work demand and improper work life balance has a significant positive relationship with work stress and work stress has a significant negative relationship with employee performance. Stress is the outcome of facet of the assigned work role that caused harmful effect for individual. Occupational stress is considered as harmful factor of the work environment (kahn, wolfe, quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1965). It is one of the major reason employees show a decline in performance curve. Contingency plans must be made within an organization to cope with the reasons cause workstress which in turn decreases performance so it will affect the overall organizational goal. There are also some limitations embedded in present study, which includes time and resources constraints. That might result into low generalizability, because target area is one (Punjab) province of Pakistan. This research offers a point for further studies in future as there can be involvement of certain other variables which can play the mediating or moderating role between the relationships of variables. Many other leadership styles can also be used for further studies.

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## Appendix

Table A-1 Data and Descriptive Statistics		
<b>Gender</b>	Male	138 (76.7%)
	Female	42 (27.3%)
<b>Marital status</b>	Unmarried	48 (26.7%)
	Married	132 (73.3%)
<b>Designation</b>	Junior officer	15 (8.3%)
	OG3	60 (33.3%)
	OG2	23 (12.8%)
	OG1	14 (7.8%)
	BM	42 (23.3%)
	OPM	26 (14.4%)
<b>Experience</b>	1-5 years	61 (33.9%)
	6-10 years	40 (22.2%)
	11-15 years	14 (7.8%)
	16-20 years	32 (17.8%)
	20 & above	33 (18.3%)

**Table A-2 Cronbach's Alpha (reliability test)**

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
<b>0.867</b>	<b>52</b>

<b>Table A-3 Correlation Analysis</b>					
		<b>EWD</b>	<b>IWLB</b>	<b>WS</b>	<b>EP</b>
<b>Excessive work demand</b>	Pearson Correlation	---	.720**	.407**	.605**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	180	180	180	180
<b>Improper Work Life balance</b>	Pearson Correlation	.720**	---	.692**	.603**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	180	180	180	180
<b>Work stress</b>	Pearson Correlation	.407**	.692**	---	.824**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	180	180	180	180
<b>Employee performance</b>	Pearson Correlation	.605**	.603**	.824**	---
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	180	180	180	180

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Regression analysis**

**Table A-4 (a)**

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.671 <sup>a</sup>	.450	.444	.35864

a. Predictors: (Constant), excessive work demand, Improper work life balance

**Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.168	.192		.948	.345
	excessive work demand	.672	.113	.548	5.625	.000
	Improper work life balance	.562	.137	1.042	10.700	.000

a. Dependent Variable: work stress

**Table A-4 (b)**

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.516 <sup>a</sup>	.266	.258	.37154

a. Predictors: (Constant), work stress

**ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.877	2	4.438	32.152	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	24.433	177	.138		
	Total	33.310	179			

a. Predictors: (Constant), work stress

b. Dependent Variable: employee performance

**Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.479	.196		2.446	.015
	Work stress	.804	.142	.638	5.678	.000

a. Dependent Variable: employee performance