

Impact of Work life Conflict, Social Relationship and Job Performance towards Work place Stress

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Abstract

In the present organizational scenario, workplace stress has become a massive challenge due to its connection with psychological, physical, and emotional strain. Considering the importance of such an important aspect, this paper examines the factors that affect workplace stress in the private banking sectors of Sindh Province, Pakistan. This is a quantitative study and utilized cross-sectional data collected from the front-line managers, employing a survey questionnaire. The researchers utilized 280 valid samples to conclude the study. Using the SPSS version 27.0 for Windows, the study's results reveal a significant positive effect of work-life conflict and social relationships on the workplace stress. On the other hand, the study found a negative impact of job performance on workplace stress among the line managers of private sector banks in Sindh, Pakistan. These findings can help company leaders develop and implement quality-of-life strategies and other measures to decrease workplace stress and improve the quality of life of employees and their families, thereby creating social change. The study outcomes would help settle the organizational conflicts that push employees towards deep pressure and stress. Finally, scientific research can play an essential role in the stability of Pakistan's economy by supporting the financial sector. The study may be a robust layout of decreasing pressure and stress among the employees of different sectors.

Keywords: Work life conflict; Workplace stress; Social relationship; Job performance; Line managers.

1. Introduction

In the present era, workplace stress has become essential for practitioners and authorities to gain attention for the success of organizations (Rizwan et al., 2014; Daniel, 2019; Nasrul et al., 2023; Kawiana et al., 2023). The problem of workplace stress has received attention from both;

theoretical and practical sources. In other words, this problem still has significant consequences for the businesses and employees (McCarthy et al., 2010; Moen et al., 2013). In the past, experts and authorities considered issues in production, such as productivity, to be more critical than stress in the workplace (Zahoor et al., 2021; Jadmiko & Azliyanti, 2023; Nemşeanu & Dabija, 2023; Soomro et al., 2023a). However, experts and professionals are investigating the relationship between workplace stress and organizational characteristics such as churn or turnover. This affects business profits and human capital.

Workplace stress has been researched for many years and has become a well-known and popular topic (Javed et al., 2014; Jamadin et al., 2015; Whelan & Turel, 2023; Soomro et al., 2023b). Pakistan's economic prospects have faced many challenges recently, and problems in the banking sector have limited domestic demand. The banking sector has experienced a wave of acquisitions and mergers due to the deregulation of banking policies. One of the requirements for banks to overcome these problems and achieve sustainable development is to strengthen the economy while managing human resources. Investing in skills is essential in today's competitive business world which is done carefully to increase profits. Soomro et al. (2023c) clearly state that if the expansion of human capital accompanies the expansion of banking in many countries, this will ensure the stability of the banking sector and the business world.

In the banking industry, the behaviour of the employees at work, especially on the job, must maintain valuable skills and solve the problem. Workplace behaviour determines organizational success (Nikunlaakso et al., 2023; Gillman et al., 2023). Effective management of human resources to maintain employee satisfaction is critical to success in the banking industry. When employees feel satisfied and happy, they generally perform better and have a positive perspective towards the bank (Bashir & Ramay, 2010). To improve the quality of the company's human resources, employees' work habits should be carefully evaluated. The international banking sector is experiencing rapid and significant changes and growth due to globalization, intense competition, high profitability and large debts. This shows that this workplace creates stress among bank employees. Besides, research has shown that workplace stress is associated with many aspects of organizational performance, especially in the financial sector, which relies on the stability and longevity of good employees.

Considering the importance of stress, job performance, and work conflict constructs towards workplace stress, the present study explores work-life conflict, social relationships, and job performance about workplace stress among line managers of private sector banks in Pakistan. The survey findings would provide guidelines to remove stress among employees at work and support the betterment and success of the banking sector and other private organizations.

2. Literature Review

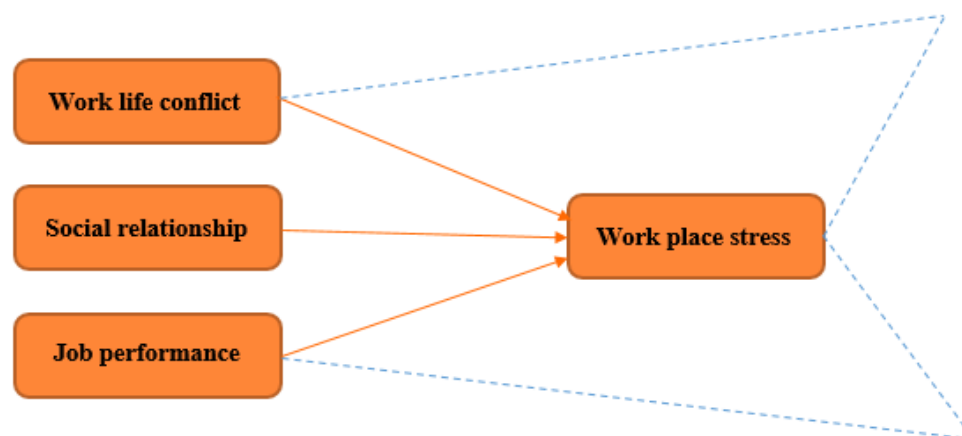
Presently, managing workplace stress has become a significant challenge for the organizations. Several scholars have conducted studies in the diverse regions and contexts to know the reason. Zahoor et al. (2021) conducted an empirical study and found stress factors dangerous for an organization's success and performance. The studies of scholars like Jamadin et al. (2015), Javed et al. (2014), and Rabenu et al. (2017) suggest a positive link between work-family conflict, stress, and work attitudes. The factors such as business strategies, social support and resilience to work-related stress are connected (Jadmiko & Azliyanti, 2023). In the same dimension, Nemşeanu & Dabija (2023) confirmed that telework, job insecurity, and work-life conflict positively predict employee behaviour. The effect of interpersonal conflict, job stress, and work-life balance on turnover intention is substantial.

Regarding the relationship between social relationships and workplace stress, the researchers also claimed a positive relationship between them. For instance, Khodarahimi et al. (2012) found a meaningful association between social support and stress experience. The job stress factor predicts psychological distress at the work-unit level with great complexity (Nikunlaakso et al., 2023). More recently, An et al. (2023) and Gillman et al. (2023) suggested a positive effect of social support and social identification on stress and anxiety among workplace employees. Haly (2009) and Javaid et al. (2023) also demonstrate a positive connection between occupational stress and social support.

Moreover, in the Pakistani context, performance is affected by stress, specifically in the banking context (Kawiana et al., 2023; Ahmed & Ramzan, 2013). An empirical study by Basit & Hassan (2017) demonstrates a positive relationship between job stress and employee performance. Kazmi et al. (2008), Rizwan et al. (2014), and Daniel (2019) suggested a positive influence of job stress on satisfaction and job performance. Recently, Rizkiyani & Kanto (2023), Nasrul et al. (2023), and Pelealu (2023) also demonstrated a positive link between workload and work fatigue, clarifying their role in influencing work stress among different contexts of employee performance.

Therefore, while most studies have been conducted on the organizations outside the healthcare, manufacturing, or service sectors, it is necessary to understand the patterns that cause stress in the work of bank employees. However, empirical investigation among line managers of private banks in Sindh, Pakistan, still needs to be improved. Based on the void gaps, this study examines social relationships, work-life conflict, job performance and workplace stress in Pakistan's private banking sector (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Proposed Conceptual Model of the Study



2.1 Work life Conflict and Workplace Stress

Work-life conflict and workplace stress are significantly connected, as the domain literature demonstrates. In the study of Hill et al. (2008), factors such as gender, workplace flexibility and life stage positively predict family-to-work conflict, stress, and burnout. According to Gisler et al. (2018), work-life conflict negatively predicts employee health. Ahmad (2022) suggested the impact of interpersonal conflict, job stress, and work-life balance on job satisfaction. Similarly, Zahoor et al. (2021) investigated job performance, work-family conflict, work stress, and attitudes toward work-life balance. In the domain literature, several studies like Javed et al. (2014), Jamadin et al. (2015) and Rabenu et al. (2017) demonstrated a positive connection between stress, work attitudes, work-

family conflict and stress. The impact of personal smartphone use on work-life conflict is explored by Whelan and Turel (2023), which is positive and significant. However, the strategies for optimizing social support and resilience to work-related stress in women are found to be positive by Jadmiko and Azliyanti (2023). The empirical assessment of Nemțeanu and Dabija (2023) exerts the negative effect of work-life conflict, job insecurity and telework on employee behaviour.

Consequently, the above literature provides the positive connections between work-life conflict and workplace stress in diverse contexts rather than confirmation among line managers of different private banks in Sindh. Thus, we proposed:

H1. Work-life conflict is significantly positively associated with workplace stress.

2.2 Social Relationship and Workplace Stress

When employees are encouraged to participate and rewarded for doing so, they are more likely to support the organization's transformation goals. According to Viswesvaran et al. (1999) and Khodarahimi et al. (2012), workplace relationships and social support are a massive contribution to the mental health and stress experience. In the study of Goh et al. (2016), the broader health implications and costs associated with workplace stress in the United States. Based on the vigorous review, Haly (2009) demonstrates a positive connection between occupational stress and social support. Other domain investigations like Mutkins et al. (2011) and Whitaker et al. (2015) underline the positive effect of burnout in intellectual disability support staff and the quality of teacher–child relationships on stress. Mindfulness also mediates these associations (Javaid et al., 2023). In the study of Nikunlaakso et al. (2023), the influence of job stress on the psychological distress at the work-unit level enhances the complexity of understanding this relationship. Moreover, well-known domain scholars like Gillman et al. (2023) and An et al. (2023) explore the influence of social support, social identification, job insecurity, and social media exposure on cognitive appraisals, anxiety, and the overall life satisfaction in workplace employees. Hilal (2023) investigated the mediating contribution of organizational stress in the connection between leader-member interaction and workplace jealousy.

Consequently, the literature confirms the relationship between social relationships and workplace stress. Thus, to ensure this association among line managers of private banks in Sindh, we suggest the following:

H2. Social relationship is significantly positively associated with workplace stress.

2.3 Job Performance and Workplace Stress

Job performance predicts workplace stress, which is clearly demonstrated by the domain literature. For instance, Goswami (2015) and Ismail et al. (2015) underline job stress's negative impact on employee performance in the banking sector. Basit and Hassan's (2017) study claims the significant contribution of the effect of job stress on employee performance. Factors such as turnover intention, job satisfaction and workplace stress are meaningfully and substantially connected in the healthcare sector (Chao et al., 2015). In the same direction, workplace stress and employee performance are found to be positively related to each other in Kenya (Awadh et al., 2015). Scholars like Kazmi et al. (2008), Rizwan et al. (2014) and Daniel (2019) demonstrate a significant influence of job stress on satisfaction and job performance. The research extends beyond traditional sectors, with studies by Rizkiyani and Kanto (2023), Nasrul et al. (2023), and Pelealu (2023) exploring specific stressors like noise, workload, and work fatigue, elucidating their role in influencing work stress and subsequently employee performance. Moreover, geographic and sectorial variations have affected the stress and performance in the context of the Pakistani banking sector (Ahmed & Ramzan, 2013; Kawiana et al., 2023). As a result, the literature offers significant covariance between job performance and stress in

the literature. In other words, performance predicts stress, and stress predicts performance. Hence, to confirm these associations, the researchers proposed:

H3. Job performance is significantly positively associated with workplace stress.

3. Methods

3.1 Approach and tools for data collection

The study applied the quantitative approach due to robust and best practices of management, social and business research (Challet et al., 2001). The researchers collected cross-sectional data using a questionnaire from the domain literature. The questionnaire provides valuable insights by giving the respondents a wide range of choices within the ethical premises. The researchers randomly targeted the line managers working in different private sector banks of Sindh, Pakistan. The researchers applied both modes of data collection, i.e. personal visits and online questionnaires by sending the link of an online survey through various modes such as email, WhatsApp, etc.

3.2 Respondents and samples size

The targeted respondents of the study were line managers of the different private-sector banks in Sindh, Pakistan. Line managers are considered as the valuable organisation assets and robustly enhance performance (Rimi et al., 2017). Initially, the researchers sent/ dispatched 400 surveys, 280 valid samples were returned with a response rate of 70%. Finally, the researchers utilized 280 good samples to infer the results.

3.3 Measurement scales

The researchers applied a six-item scale by O'Neil et al. (1986) to measure work-life conflict factors. Likewise, the social relationship construct was measured with four items. These items were adopted from Hanpachern's (1998) study. Similarly, the researchers applied a thirteen-item scale to assess job performance, as modified by Yang and Hwang (2014). Finally, the researchers used a nine-item scale to evaluate the workplace stress. The scale was developed by Karasek (1985). All the scale items were measured with a five-point Likert scale, assigning choices to strongly agree=1 to strongly disagree=5.

4. Analysis

4.1 Demography of the respondents

The demographic constructs show a majority of male (72.14% or n=202) respondents compared to females (27.86% or n=78). The researchers noticed a majority of the respondents (39.29% or n=110) were between 31-40 years of age; 19.64(n=55) were 41-50; 18.21(n=51) were 20-30; 14.29(n=40) were 51-60 and only 1.43 %(n=4) were 61 and above years of age. Regarding marital status, the researchers noted a majority of the respondents, 57.50 % (n=161), were married, 30.36 %(n=85) were single, 11.43 %(n=32) were divorced/widows and only 0.71% (n=2) were others. Concerning the highest education level, a majority of respondents (63.57% or n=178) were master's degree holders; 28.57 %(n=80) were bachelor's degree holders, and only 7.86 %(n=22) were M.Phil./PhD holders. The final indicator of job experience suggests a majority of the respondents (29.29% or n=82) were having between 1-5 years of experience; 26.07 % (n=73) having 11-15 years; 18.21 % (n=51) having 6-10 years, and only (10% or n=28) were having less than one year of experience (Table 1).

Table 1. Demography (n=280)

Construct	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	202	72.14
	Female	78	27.86
	<i>Total</i>	<i>280</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Age [years]	< 21	20	7.14
	20-30	51	18.21
	31-40	110	39.29
	41-50	55	19.64
	51-60	40	14.29
	61 and above	04	1.43
	<i>Total</i>	<i>280</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Marital status	Single	85	30.36
	Married	161	57.50
	Divorced/Widow	32	11.43
	Others	02	0.71
	<i>Total</i>	<i>280</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Highest educational level	Bachelor Degree	80	28.57
	Master Degree	178	63.57
	M.Phil/Ph.D.	22	7.86
	<i>Total</i>	<i>280</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Job experience [years]	< 1	28	10.00
	1-5	82	29.29
	6-10	51	18.21
	11-15	73	26.07
	16 and above	46	16.43
	<i>Total</i>	<i>280</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Source: Researchers' own survey

4.2 Descriptive statistics

We conducted descriptive statistics to determine the respondents' population distribution (Murphy, 2021). In the analysis, the maximum values for mean were observed at 3.776 (social relationship), while minimum values were found for job performance (1.084). Likewise, the maximum standard deviation values were recorded as 2.009 for job performance construct, while the minimum (0.099) for workplace stress (Table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics (n=280)

S.No	Variable	Mean	Standard deviation
1	Workplace stress	3.065	0.099
2	Work life conflict	2.994	1.023
3	Social relationship	3.776	1.314
4	Job performance	1.084	2.009

Source: Authors' Data Survey

4.3 Reliability assessment

To ensure the internal consistency among the scale items, the researchers applied Cronbach's alpha (α) reliability as suggested by (Hair et al., 2020). The alpha values are considered 0.70 as the cutoff values recommended by Hair et al. (2020). As a result, we found the overall reliability of the scale to be 0.808, along with satisfactory scores for every construct greater than 0.70 (Hair et al., 2020).

Table 3. Reliability assessment

S.No	Variable	No. of items	Alpha (α)
1	Workplace stress	9	0.831
2	Work life conflict	6	0.796
3	Social relationship	4	0.843
4	Job performance	13	0.873

Source: Researchers' own data

4.4 Hypotheses testing

The researchers applied Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analysis, as the primary standard tests that best predict the effect of independent constructs on dependent constructs (Shi and Conrad, 2009). The researchers used the SPSS version 27.0 as the best construct tool for analysis (Tsumoto and Tsumoto, 2011). With regard to the hypotheses results, the researchers found R^2 to be 0.398, and the F value was 342.184. The analysis confirmed a significant positive effect of work-life conflict on workplace stress ($H1=r=0.430^{**}$; $\beta=0.321^{**}$; $p<0.01$). Hence, $H1$ is supported. Likewise, the social relationship factor significantly positively affects workplace stress ($H2=r=0.399^{**}$; $\beta=0.281^{**}$; $p<0.01$), supported by the data. On the other hand, the job performance negatively affects workplace stress ($H3=r=-0.228^{**}$; $\beta=-0.106$; $p>0.01$). As a result, $H3$ is rejected (Table 4 and 5).

Table 4. Pearson's correlation (n=280)

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Workplace stress	---			
2. Work life conflict	0.430**	---		
3. Social relationship	0.399**	0.299**	---	
4. Job performance	-0.228**	-0.167*	0.105*	---

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level 2-tailed

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level 2-tailed

Source: Scholars' own calculation

Table 5. Multiple regression (n=280)

Construct	Dependent variable Workplace stress [β]
1. Work life conflict	0.321**
2. Social relationship	0.281**
3. Job performance	-0.106
R^2	0.398
F value	342.184

* $p<0.01$; ** $p<0.05$

Source: Researchers' own estimation

5. Discussion and conclusion

The study aimed to explore workplace stress through work-life conflict, social relationships and job performance in the private banking sectors of Sindh Province, Pakistan. The study confirmed a positive effect of work-life conflict and social relationships on the workplace stress among the line managers of private banks in Sindh, Pakistan. Several studies have found the positive effect of work-life conflict and social relationship on the workplace stress in several contexts and regions as well. These results show that managers are tired of their busy work schedule to pay attention to their health. Their job or work affects their leisure or family life. Sometimes, they have difficulty in relaxing. Leaders' work or academic needs take them further away from family or fun than they want. Their work often interferes with other areas of their lives (family, health, recreation) (Zahoor et al., 2021; Javed et al., 2014; Jamadin et al., 2015; Rabenu et al., 2017; Whelan & Turel 2023; Jadmiko & Azliyanti 2023; Nemțeanu & Dabija 2023; Javaid et al., 2023; Nikunlaakso et al., 2023; Gillman et al., 2023; An et al., 2023). Therefore, overwork and stress due to the need to perform work can affect/harm their lives. They also have established good relationships with the workplace and have positive thoughts and ideas in the workplace. Employees interact with employees as messengers, employees, or managers, but thoughts, feelings, and emotions can be positive or negative. A relationship depends on the employee's likes and dislikes, communication, relationships, work entertainment, etc. You need to pay attention.

On the other hand, the study found a negative association of job performance with workplace stress. These results are accorded as well as contradictory in the literature (Kazmi et al., 2008; Rizwan et al., 2014; Daniel, 2019; Rizkiyani & Kanto, 2023; Nasrul et al., 2023; Pelealu, 2023; Ahmed & Ramzan, 2013; Kawiana et al., 2023). These negative associations suggest that the managers cannot properly show their performance due to the work stress. Their actions and behaviours must fully contribute to accomplish the organizational goals. They believe that their job requires working very hard. They can only ask to do excessive work where enough time is needed. Because their job requires a lot of effort over a long period, they cannot understand the conflicting emotions of others. They also find their jobs busy and tiring. In banking, waiting for work from other people or departments often reduces their workload.

To sum it up, the overall findings suggest a positive effect of work-life conflict and social relationships on workplace stress among line managers of private banks in Sindh, Pakistan. On the other hand, the impact of job performance on workplace stress is negative. The findings contribute to understanding the role of work-life conflict and social relationships on the workplace stress. The results would also support banking authorities and planners to overcome their employees' stress by making effective policies that relieve their employees. Moreover, the study would smooth out employee relationships to work together and contribute in improving their organizations. Finally, the study would enrich the depth of management literature specifically for private sector organizations.

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