

## **Identifying and Prioritizing Organizational Factors Affecting Job Stress and Providing Appropriate Strategies**

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**Abstract:** Due to the harmful effects of job stress, the study has been conducted with the aim of rating and comparing organizational factors affecting job stress of manger faculty members and non-manager faculty members of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad based on Luthans Model. The current study is applied objectively and in terms of nature and method is descriptive-survey. The study population consisted of all faculty members of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. The sample size was estimated 117 people according to the formula of determining sample size. Sampling method is stratified random sampling that using proportional allocation formula, the participants were selected. Job stress questionnaire of Luthans was used for collecting the field data and its reliability and validity was investigated and confirmed. To test the hypotheses, two-sample student t-test method is used. The research results showed that total internal factors of Luthans Model affect job stress of faculty members but the order of factors affecting job stress of manger faculty members and non-manager faculty members is different so that the order of factors for manager faculty members includes organizational processes; organizational policy; organizational structure and physical conditions and order of factors for non-manager faculty members includes; organizational structure; organizational policy organizational process and Physical conditions. In this study also was specified, gender, education of faculty members not affect job stress. In the end, the required proposals are presented to reduce job stress of manger faculty members and non-manager faculty members.

**Key words:** Job stress, organizational factors, faculty members, manager, reduce

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### **INTRODUCTION**

In recent decades by gradual turning of organizations to technological changes, one of the important problems that is involved human resources and widely is affected the health of employees in work is the phenomenon of job stress caused by job. Job stress reduces the efficiency of forces in organizations, cooperation gives its place to destructive competition and organizational communications disrupts. A manager that is suffering from mental and psychic stresses cannot have a correct relation with his subordinates, will encounter problem with his superior and his client will be upset of him. In addition, complications from deficiency, delay, absence, transfer, leave and as a result, reduce of efficiency and physical and psychological effects of stress will make irreparable damages to organizations. Stress is a physical or mental impairment that individual incidences and is the result of opposition or challenging situations in the job.

Unpleasant physical and emotional reactions interpret job stress that is the result of interactions between staff and environment so that the needs of job is more than staff capabilities. According to the center for disease control and prevention and health journal of

America in the list of ten most stressful jobs, faculty members and teaching job has been reported in the first place (Robbins and Judge, 2010). Because in addition to the problems that raised in all jobs are faced with a series of problems that are related to their job. On the other hand, the scientific nature of university significantly depends on specialist human resources of the university means faculty members.

Fisher believes that faculty members due to lots of science and social roles such as teaching, research, presentations and participation in congress and helping students experience multilateral job stress. As long as faculty preoccupation not focus to matters other than education and training of specialist and committed human resources, realizing great goals of education is impossible and will remain in the form of slogans. Since, universities are scientific centers and training of specialist human resources required of society have particular significance and should be noted what in university has the role of leading and facilitating isn't its physical and construction space but specialist human resources and staff of university who provide the field of growth and excellence of human resources. But job stress can be a serious problem for faculty members in the implementation of the

mission of education and research. Because they have to being in front of a group for several hours a day and talk with them.

Beyond the talking that reduces a lot of energy and power of professor, individual and cultural differences doubled the stress of professor such as age and talent differences, growth and personal maturity of students and professor how to deal with these issues and different organizational factors. In addition the preoccupation of professor in respect of the lesson subject and solving problems in class, closed environment of class and possibly a large number of students and their noise are the stressful factors in education and research. Since, the anxious professor that originally should spend a part of his mental energy to the higher mental functions (studying, teaching, research, perception, recall, reconstruction, creativity, innovation as well as management), he must spend it to deal with job stress and problems solving resulting from it.

Prioritizing job stress factors of faculty members in the position of manager and non-manager can be different because a manager that is suffering of psychic and mental stresses cannot have a correct relation with supervisors and superiors and students will encounter problem with them and will make irreparable damages to university. Luthans that is presented one of the most comprehensive models about organizational factors affecting in job stress believes two kinds of internal and external factors affect job stress (Robbins and Judge, 2010). But since external factors of job stress is due to environmental factors such as family characteristics, social, personality, etc., by the organization cannot be controlled and internal factors, including organizational policies, organizational structure, physical conditions and organizational processes provide more organizational fields for job stress and can be controlled, considered more in researches. Strategic role of faculty members in the promotion of the educational and research performance of university requires that in controlling job stress of faculty members of manager or non-manager, reasonable measures carried out to in this way not only the university can better achieve to its qualitative and quantitative targets but faculty members can do their job duties with less job concerns, more efficiency of past. Therefore, the aim of this study is to identify and rank the internal factors of job stress within the faculty members of manager and non-manager at the university of mashhad based on luthans model. It is hoped that the results of this research be effective in decision-makings and adopting appropriate policies to reduce job stress of faculty members of manager and non-manager in the university.

**Theoretical issues:** Since every scientific discipline is investigated the job stress from the view of its unique. In the meantime, the view of one of the prominent experts of behavioral sciences called luthans on job stress is very important. Luthans considered stress as a response that individual incidences for adapting to different external conditions with normal situation as mental or physical (Ali, 2009). Stress factors said to events that cause stress. Luthans is divided factors affecting job stress of staff in organization into two groups external factors and internal factors and believes that effecting job groups and individual characteristics of staff are its causes (Luthans, 1992).

**External job stress factors:** When we look at the organization with open eyes means we accept that the organization affected by the external environment severely. It is clear that job stress not limited only to the events that happen within the organization during working hours. Ivancevich and Matteson divide external stressors as social changes technology, family, transfer, environmental conditions of life. Phenomenon of social and technical changes has had great impact on people's life styles and no doubt these impacts extended to their jobs. Person' family influences his personality growth. Family situation including a brief crisis such as family disputes or illness of a family member or unfriendly relations with wife or children for long periods can appear in the role of an important factor of staff's stress (Ivancevich *et al.*, 2005).

**Internal job stress factors:** Examples of internal job stressors are lack of clear priorities for work purposes, the conflict between units or divisions or shorten of time due to approaching deadline of the end of work. All of the organizational stressors are not in the workplace. Families themselves are organization and variety of roles in the families may cause a conflict. Luthans has classified organizational job stress factors under these categories. Organizational policy (including unfair and arbitrary considerations-related to investigating performances-inequality in payments-inflexible regulations-non-fixed work shifts-equivocal and ambiguous measures-continuous transfer-explaining unrealistic tasks); organizational structure (consisting of concentration, lack of participation in decision-makings, limited possibilities for advancements, formality of more jobs, severe expertise-interdependence of units to each other and contrast of queue and staff-physical conditions of the workplace or physical (including congestion and lack of facilities-work alone, noise, heat and air pollution, safety hazards-inadequate light)-organizational processes

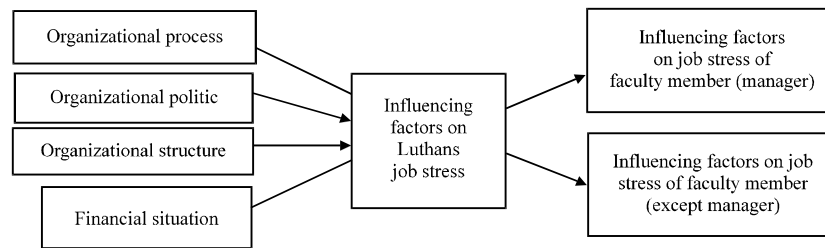


Fig. 1: The stages of research implementation

(including weak or insufficient feedback on performance, opposite or vague objectives, performance measurement with imprecise or ambiguous methods, unfair surveillance systems, workload, inadequate information) (Luthans, 1992).

**Background of the research:** Research about job stress has been growing during the last thirty years and interest in this topic is constantly increasing. As an overview of articles related to job stress in previous years which have been published in foreign publications indicate that >17,000 articles have been published about job stress in organizations. Researchers have already specified a number of job stress resources in different learning environments. For example, some of the most important sources of job stress of teachers are: teach to the lacking motivation' students (Allison, 2007), lack of time and control of bad behavior students (Kokkinos, 2007), lack of job development and administrative issues, lack of time to prepare, difficulty of interacting with parents, lack of independence, lack of motivation (Antoniou *et al.*, 2006). Limited support from the government, inadequate education, lack of awareness of new educational issues, constant changes in curriculum, problems related to the structure of the class, students disciplinary problems, inconsistencies of class (Forlin, 2001), lack of attention to high work load of teachers (Menge and Liu, 2008).

Also the workload and other factors such as sufficient time, lack of institutional support, lack of perception of resources and lack of control over the workplace selection were in the next rank of job stress (Ross and Altmayer, 1998). In Iran, several studies have been conducted on job stress of professors and teachers and it is specified that inadequate of facilities, organizational factors and environmental factors affect job stress. In other research, it was specified all organizational job stressors factors affect in job stress of teachers. Also among organizational job stressors, factors of organizational structure, system of rewards (encouragement, punishment) and lack of participation in decision-makings have had impact in job stress of teachers, respectively (Ramezani *et al.*, 2004).

Also, it is specified that attention to the morality of professors and manager avoidance from autocratic behavior has a positive impact in reducing stress and increasing the participation of faculty members (Mehr *et al.*, 2005). In some research, qualification (Akbar and Ahmad, 2004) was mentioned as moderator variables of job stress.

**Research questions:**

- What organizational factors affect job stress of faculty members?
- How is the ranking of organizational factors affecting job stress of the manager faculty members?
- How is the ranking of organizational factors affecting job stress of the non-manager faculty members?
- What is the relationship between education level and organizational factors of job stress of faculty members?

**The stages of research implementation:** In this study, according to luthans comprehensive view about organizational factors of job stress, first job stress sources of faculty members were identified in the next stage, these factors, according to faculty members view (manager non-manager) were prioritized. The stages of the research implementation are shown in Fig. 1.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This research based on objective is applied and based on method is descriptive-survey and is conducted at Ferdowsi university of mashhad in 2012. Statistical population consisted of all faculty members (700 people) with a minimum degree of MA in Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. For determining the sample size, the formula of determining sample size of cochran was used and 117 people were selected randomly. For collecting data, research made questionnaire has been used. Questionnaire based on four indicators of luthans job stress is designed that are: organizational policy,

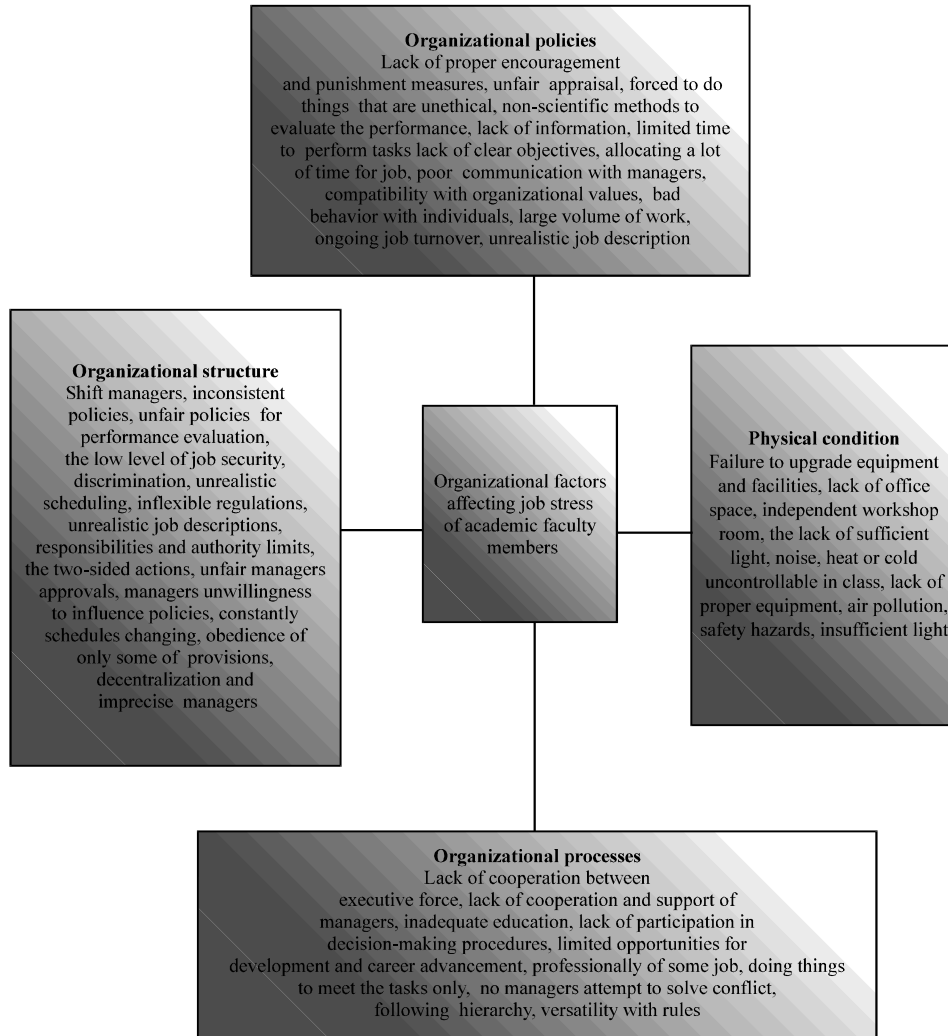


Fig. 2: The questionnaire structure of organizational factors affecting job stress of faculty members

Table 1: The frequency of general information of sample population

Age	Frequency	Academic level	Frequency	Qualification	Frequency	Employment status	Frequency	Management	Frequency	Gender	Frequency
34-45	60	Instructor	16	MA	16	Formal	80	Manager	30	Male	82
46-55	33	Associate Professor	44	PhD	101	Contractual	37	Non-manager	87	Female	35
56-65	24	Associate Professor	42	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Professor	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	117	-	117	-	117	-	117	-	117	-	117

organizational structure, physical conditions and organizational processes and 44 items (Fig. 1). Questionnaire included 44 closed questions in a Likert scale of 5 ranks. Validity of the questionnaire was confirmed. Reliability of the questionnaire was calculated according to Cronbach's alpha equal to 0.96 that shows the high reliability of the questionnaire. To describe the demographic variables, descriptive statistics indicators were used and to answer questions and test of research hypotheses, inferential static indicators, especially variance analysis, Duncan test, LSD, chart of comparing

means and pearson's correlation coefficient were used. In the analysis of data, SPSS and STATISTICA Software have been used (Fig. 2).

**Investigating general information:** According to information obtained from the demographic (population) part of questionnaire, some of the characteristics of the population, including gender, age, educational level and academic level, employment status in the form of frequency tables have been estimated (Table 1).

**RESULTS**

First question of the research is that “what factors are effective in faculty members’ job stress (manager and non-manager) of Ferdowsi University?” t student test results showed that based on the views of faculty members, total four factors of Luthans Model’s job stress, the organizational policies, organizational structures, material conditions and processes are effective in job stress (p = 0.0000). According to the obtained results with 95% confidence coefficient, it can be concluded that of respondents view:

- The factor of organizational processes is effective on job stress of faculty members (managers and non-manager)
- Organizational policy is effective on job stress of faculty members (managers and non-manager)
- Organizational structure is effective on job stress of faculty members (managers and non-manager)
- The factors of physical and material of work are effective on job stress of faculty members (managers and non-manager)

According to confirming main hypothesis, in each 4 studied factors can hypothesis, test results, each of these factors to answer the main question is in Table 2. As can be seen in Table 2, the total mean value of investigated job stress factors in this study is equal to 67.63 but according to the calculated probability (p-value) value for the one-sample t-test is equal to 0.000 and because this value is <0.05 therefore, we can reject the null hypothesis with 95% confidence and the result leads to confirm of main hypothesis (i.e., the total of studied factors are effective in job stress of faculty members (manager and non-manager)). Samaneh Fath Ali Zadeh in a study entitled (Investigating Factors Affecting Mental Stresses Due to Work Environment on Education Managers of Tabadekan) concluded there is a significant relationship between organizational factors and mental stress of elementary school principals.

**The second question of research:** How is the ranking of organizational factors affecting job stress of manager faculty members?

Table 2: t student test results to respond the main research question

Factors	Sample size	Mean	SD	p-values
Total factors	117	67.63	11.65	0.000
Organizational policy	117	70.30	9.23	0.000
Organizational structure	117	70.26	9.36	0.000
Material conditions	117	61.01	13.26	0.000
Organizational processes	117	69.00	11.75	0.000

To investigate this question, we use the one-way ANOVA and because Fisher’s static probability value is equal to 0.048 that is smaller than 0.05 so with 95% confidence, the null hypothesis is rejected base on the lack of significant difference  $H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3 = \mu_4$  so organizational factors are effective on job stress of manager faculty members.

In order to rank the factors, Duncan and LSD tests and organizational factors comparison chart are used that due to the significant differences, organizational factors can be arranged in order of impact as shown in Table 3. Factors of organizational processes and organizational policy form Group 2 and factors of organizational structure and material conditions form Group 1. Therefore, factors affecting job stress of manager faculty members are organizational processes, organizational policy; organizational structure and aterial conditions.

**The research question 3:** “How is the ranking of organizational factors affecting job stress of non-manager faculty members?”

To investigate this question, we use the one-way ANOVA and because Fisher’s static probability value is equal to 0.000 that is smaller than 0.05 so with 95% confidence, the null hypothesis is rejected base on the lack of significant difference  $H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3 = \mu_4$  so organizational factors are effective on job stress of non-manager faculty members.

In order to rank the factors, Duncan and LSD tests and organizational factors comparison chart are used that due to the significant differences, organizational factors can be arranged in two groups in order of impact as shown in Table 4. As can be seen in Table 4, factors of organizational structure, organizational policy and

Table 3: Organizational factors affecting job stress of manager faculty member

Organizational factors affecting job stress	Sample size	Mean	
		Group 1	Group 2
Material conditions	30	68.0000	-
Organizational structure	30	68.1340	-
Organizational policy	30	-	71.836
Organizational process	30	-	72.308
p-value	1	-	0.0460

Table 4: Organizational factors affecting job stress of non-manager faculty members

Organizational factors affecting job stress	Sample size	Mean	
		Group 1	Group 2
Material conditions	87	58.6044	-
Organizational process	87	-	67.8686
Organizational policy	87	-	69.7817
Organizational structure	87	-	71.0037
p-value	1	0.035	-

Table 5: The relationship of education on organizational factors of job stress

Title of factors	Sample size	Mean of MA degree	Mean of PhD degree	Static of Fisher test	p-values
Organizational process	117	67.88	69.18	0.168	0.683
Organizational policy	117	71.17	70.17	0.159	0.691
Organizational structure	117	723.75	69.88	1.306	0.255
Material conditions	117	59.29	61.29	0.313	0.577

faculty members are as follows; organizational structure, organizational policy, organizational process and material conditions.

**Fourth question of the research:** “Is there a significant relationship between the level of education and organizational factors of job stress?” In response to this question, this hypothesis was formulated.

- Hypothesis 1: there is a significant relationship between the level of education and organizational factors of job stress

As can be seen in Table 5 because in relation to all organizational factors of job stress, Fisher’s static probability value is  $>0.05$  so with 95% confidence, null hypothesis is confirmed based on there is no significant relationship between the level of education and organizational factors of job stress ( $H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3 = \mu_4$ ). Therefore, education is not effective on factors of job stress. In some researches, education (Akbar and Ahmad, 2004) is mentioned as moderator variables of job stress.

### DISCUSSION

After extracting results of design and investigating factor affecting job stress and analysis of respondents view achieved the overall results that job stress of faculty members of manager and non-manager is in relatively high range and all organizational factors have impact in job stress, this results are consistent with the research by Ramazani *et al.* (2004) and Fath Ali Zadeh that concluded, organizational factors have impact on job stress of teachers. It was also specified prioritizing job stress factors is different in faculty members of manager and non-manager. Job stress factors of faculty members (manager) in order of priority are; organizational processes; organizational policy; organizational structure Material conditions as well as faculty members’ job stress factors (non-manager) in order of priority are organizational structure; organizational policy; organizational process; material conditions. In fact, factors of organizational processes and organizational policies for faculty members (manager), factors of organizational structure and policies by being in first rank for faculty members (non-manager) have the most impact

on job stress. Ramazani *et al.* (2004) in a part of their study concluded that among the organizational stressors, organizational structure has the most impact in job stress of teachers. Organizational policy which is on the second rank and material conditions by being in the fourth rank are the common aspects in prioritizing job stress factors affecting faculty members of manager and non- manager.

The next factor of stress is organizational policy that consists of 15 components (Fig. 2). These components are consistent with a part of the research of (Ross and Altmayer, 1998) lack of managers support and problems of administrative, lack of time for tasks (Antonio *et al.*, 2006), lack of awareness of duties and titles of new training (Ramazani *et al.*, 2004), the politic of reward, encourage and punishment, low job security and ambiguity in role. Today the majority of educational institutions tend to have many formal bureaucratic structures and create a rigid and impersonal space. This can lead to job stress significantly. Therefore, it is suggested, respected authorities use the strategy of creating supporter organizational space to deal with job stress caused by the factor of organizational policy. The aim of this strategy can be lack of focus or creating organizational dynamic with consultative decision-making and information flow from the bottom to up and a variety of policies and legislation at the university developed and pursued through active participation and direct survey of faculty members.

The factor of organizational structure by being in the third rank for the faculty members (manager) and by being this factor in the first rank for faculty members (non-manager) has impact in job stress. The factor of organizational structure is made up of 10 components (Fig. 2). These components are consistent with a part of the research results of (Mehr *et al.*, 2005) attention to the morality of professors, avoiding the manager of autocratic behavior and increasing participation in decision making (Mehr *et al.*, 2005) organizational space, quality of work life of staff (Ramazani *et al.*, 2004), the lack of participation in decision-makings and Moghimi limited opportunities for development and promotion. Therefore, it is suggested, the principles of flexibility and balance that are the important principles of organization and management should be observed and the method of management and participation should be used based on the goal in group decision makings with its real meaning and according to

rules and used of educational programs and courses for job development. Factor of organizational processes by being in third rank for non-manager faculty members and by being in first rank has impact in job stress of manager faculty members. This factor is composed of 12 components (Fig. 2). These components are consistent with a part of research results by Ross and Altmayer (1998) administrative issues, Edimansyah *et al.* (2008) management style, control, feedback and continuous justification of staff by manager, Ramazani *et al.* (2004) inappropriate methods of rewards and punishment.

### CONCLUSION

This issue can be due to this that in the university, system of evaluating performance was common traditionally and this issue causes judgments and unrealistic methods of evaluation system have a major role in encouragement and punishment measures that this issue is effective in incidence of faculty members' job stress. So, systematic performance monitoring and evaluation systems can be considered a positive step in reducing the incidence of job stress. Today by combination of monitoring systems and evaluating performance with management processes is stepped an important step in reducing incidence of job stress. The new systems of evaluating performance systems, feedback, full participation, improvement as well as performance evaluation system, training, system, improvement and comprehensive evaluation can be useful. At the end, the factor of material conditions (physical work) by being in fourth rank has impact in job stress of faculty members of manager and non-manager. These results are consistent with a part of the research of (Garousi and Mani, 2005) inadequate facilities, Adymansyah and colleagues, inappropriate working conditions (Ross and Altmayer, 1998), lack of control over the workplace selection. To achieve something useful by a person should provide appropriate and conducive physical environment for him. About the component of shortage of educational and research environment is recommended that teachers' work room to be independent as much as possible so that they can more comfortably and without worrying about interference with their counterparts programs with more concentration do their scientific activities, about the items of lack of fit and proper deployment of equipment is recommended, allowed the faculty members to organize their equipment and work tools according to their taste and personal preference. The installation part also acted with detailed planning and embedded control keys of heating and cooling systems in appropriate place and proper operation of these devices during the year.

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