



Research Paper

Assessment of the level of job stress of employees of Golestan Province Gas Company

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Abstract

The present study was conducted with the aim of assessing the level of job stress of employees of Golestan Province Gas Company. This study is descriptive-survey in nature and applied in terms of purpose. The statistical population of the study consisted of 823 employees of Golestan Province Gas Company. 262 people were selected as the statistical sample of the study based on the Cochran formula and simple random sampling method. The standard job stress questionnaire (HSE) was used to collect data. Statistical tests were performed in two descriptive and inferential sections using SPSS statistical software. The results of the study showed that the job stress dimensions were evaluated as above average. The ranking of job stress dimensions was based on the Chi-square test (42.220) and according to the calculated significance level ($p=0.0005$). The ranking of job stress dimensions showed that the change dimension with an average of (4.45) ranked first, the role dimension with The average (4.24) is ranked second, the need dimension with an average (4.12) is ranked third, the relationship dimension with an average (4.11) is ranked fourth, the control dimension with an average (4.08) is ranked fifth, the support dimension with an average (4.01) is ranked sixth, and the support dimension with an average (3.98) is ranked seventh.

Keywords:

Change, Role, Need, Relationships, Control, Support of Colleagues, Support of Management.

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Having frequent stress disrupts the human mind and thoughts and over time increases burnout. Burnout means a state of physical, emotional, and mental fatigue that occurs as a result of prolonged exposure to a demanding job (Zahoor et al, 2021). Job stress involves a pattern of reactions that occur when employees are faced with demands at work that do not match their knowledge, skills, or abilities, which in turn challenges the individual's ability to adapt. These demands may be related to time pressure or the amount of work (quantitative demands), or to the difficulty of the work (cognitive demands), or to the empathy required at work (emotional demands), or to high physical demands, or even to the inability to show emotions at work (Heidari, 2019). Job stress, to the extent that it does not exceed the individual's abilities and capacity, can improve performance by increasing motivation, but if it exceeds the coping capacity of individuals, it can have a debilitating effect on individual and organizational performance (Tongchaiprasit & Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2016). The topic of job stress began with the study of (Selye, 1964). Job stress is the interaction between work conditions and the employee in such a way that the individual cannot cope with the pressures associated with it. Studies have shown that job stress endangers the mental health of employees, leads to physical exhaustion and job dissatisfaction, and leads to specific reactions in individuals (Derykund, 2021). Sources of stress reported in various studies include time demands, job security, insufficient training resources, poor employee relations, time pressure, workload, organizational problems, insufficient training, and lack of awareness of new topics (Zarei, 2015). The World Health Organization introduces the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) stress assessment tool as a valid tool that includes seven areas of need, control, peer support, managerial support, relationships, role, and change (Poms et al, 2017). Given that this tool has a certain comprehensiveness with respect to employee job stress, the researcher in the present study intends to analyze the dimensions of this tool among employees of Golestan Province Gas Company. Accordingly, this study attempts to answer the question of what is the level of job stress of employees of Golestan Province Gas Company?

Theoretical framework

Job stress

When an individual is faced with situations in the workplace that are unrelated to their current capacities or needs and desires, they experience inconsistency and conflict, and the only way to reduce it is personal adaptation to new conditions (Prasad & Tanwar, 2022). (Dave1, 1987) states that in the personal sphere, the phenomenon of stress constitutes an inevitable part of professional life and originates from job-related experiences. This situation can be considered as a motivating force for individuals to increase and improve their actions to a small extent. But at a high level, it has adverse consequences (Sajadi et al, 2020). The US Department of Health has defined job stress as: harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the demands of a job do not match the employee's resource capabilities or needs (Cheema et al, 2022). People show responses or reactions to job stress that have been discussed in various stress-related texts as consequences, responses, reactions, or effects of job stress. (Jack & Bier, 1993) suggest that people who experience stress may experience a wide range of symptoms of physical illnesses. Many of these discomforts can be successfully resolved with treatment. However, some of these illnesses are much more severe and dangerous (Minihan et al, 2022).

(Minihan et al, 2022) In a study conducted on Irish primary school teachers, they concluded that the presence of job stress in teachers had reduced their job performance. (Adigun & Mngomezulu, 2022) In their study, they assessed job stress in educational organizations and stated that the level of job stress in these individuals was above average and reduced their job satisfaction. (Cheema et al, 2022) In a study conducted in secondary schools in India, they concluded that the level of personal tensions with students and job conflicts were the main factors of job stress in these individuals. The results of the study (Sharma, 2022) also showed that there is a significant relationship between job burnout and job stress.

Research Methodology



The present study is descriptive-survey in nature. The statistical population of the study consisted of 823 employees of Golestan Province Gas Company. The sample size of the study was 262 people based on the Cochran formula and was selected by simple random sampling. Library and field methods were used to collect data. Face and content validity were used to determine the validity of the research tool. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to confirm the reliability of the questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used by the SPSS statistical software to analyze the collected data.

Research Findings

Descriptive statistics related to demographic information shown in Table (2) indicated that 194 (74%) male employees and 68 (26%) female employees were included. 41 (15%) were in the age range (20-30 years), 68 (26%) were in the age range (31-40 years), 93 (35%) were in the age range (41-50 years) and 60 (24%) were in the age range (6-51 years). 55 (21%) had a diploma or higher diploma, 166 (63%) had a bachelor's degree and 41 (16%) had a master's degree or higher. 60 (23%) had less than 10 years of work experience, 166 (63%) had work experience (11-20 years) and 36 (14%) had Work experience was more than 20 years.

Descriptive statistics of the study variables showed that the highest average of the job stress variable was related to the role factors component (3.92) with a standard deviation of (0.657), and the lowest average of the job stress variable was related to the management support component (3.58) with a standard deviation of (0.801). To use parametric tests, the normality of the distribution of the influence and empowerment strategies variables was first examined using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

In inferential statistics, it was determined that the current status of the seven dimensions of job stress, as shown in Table (7), the observed average of job stress in the dimensions of need (3.87), control (3.85), support from colleagues (3.77), support from management (3.58), relationships (3.89), role (3.92), change (3.91), and job stress (3.83) is greater than the expected average (3), which is found by examining the one-sample t-test in the dimensions of need (12.696), control (14.197), support from colleagues (11.723), support from management (8.525), relationships (14.243), role (16.568), change (12.223), and job stress (14.751). Table (7) shows that all the actual and expected (desirable) averages of the current status of job stress dimensions are significantly different at an error level of less than one percent and with a confidence level of 99 percent. In other words, job stress was assessed as above average in all dimensions. Based on the HSE questionnaire guidelines, which state that high scores indicate lower job stress, we conclude that employees perceived lower job stress in all indicators.

Conclusion

The main research question examined the level of job stress among employees of Mazandaran Province Gas Company. In this regard, it can be stated that job stress affects the health of individuals, reduces the quality of life, and increases the likelihood of work-related injuries. Studies have shown the role of job stress in the occurrence of symptoms of illness, labor turnover, and early retirement. The first specific research question assessed the level of job stress among employees based on the need component. In explaining this question, it can be stated that given that the company's employees have a significant impact on the overall performance of the organization, paying attention to the mission of this organization and emphasizing rules to improve the job process is doubly important. The need (demand) dimension pays attention to the scope of employees' duties and considers their responsibility dimensions. The second specific research question assessed the level of job stress among employees based on the control component. The result of testing this question is explained as follows: the control dimension means how much an individual is allowed to perform his/her job duties based on desired methods. The third special question assessed the level of employee job stress based on the component of co-worker support. The result is explained as follows: the component of co-worker support refers to the level of encouragement, support, and resources provided by co-workers in the gas company. The fourth special question of the research assessed the level of employee job stress based on the component of management support. The result is explained as follows: Employee support from management refers to the measurement of encouragement, support, and resources provided by the gas company management. In other words, it is the level of perceived support from the company manager by employees. Managers who pay attention to their employees in the gas company and solve their educational and even personal needs open a growth path for their employees. As long as employees benefit from the support of their managers, they will minimize job stress in various aspects of training or responsibility for job duties. The fifth special question of the research assessed the level of job stress of employees based on the relationship component. The result is explained as follows: the existence of flexible relationships in the company allows employees to discuss organizational



problems with other colleagues or others without any stress and to solve these problems with common sense. The existence of relationships in the organization leads to the formation of a sense of belonging among employees, which will increase their work commitment and reduce stress caused by work pressures. Special Question The sixth research assessed the level of employee job stress based on the role component. The result is explained as follows: Paying attention to the role component of employees in the workplace means to what extent employees perform their duties correctly so that role conflict does not occur in the gas company. The seventh special research question assessed the level of employee job stress based on the change component. The result is explained as follows: The category of change in the workplace indicates how to manage organizational changes in such a way that the relationship of these changes with individual performance is desirable. In order to grow and gain sufficient experience, employees must be able to keep up with job changes so that they can make good use of them and apply the changes to improve their job performance.

The results of this question are consistent with and supported by the findings of the research (Minihan et al, 2022), (Sharma, 2022) and (Lee et al, 2022). The results of the research indicated that the presence of job stress in individuals reduces their level of job performance.

Based on the results of the research, it is recommended that the management of the Gas Administration Company, when hiring employees, examine their personality traits and hire employees who can manage job conditions optimally. This can be examined and evaluated based on the job qualifications and individual and job capabilities of the individuals. It is recommended that employees match their interests with job characteristics before entering the work system and being absorbed into this organization and only enter this profession if they are aligned. However, employees who enter this profession solely to have a job will suffer from the psychological tensions and stresses of this profession. One of the limitations of the present study was that this study was conducted in the Golestan Province Gas Company with a distinct organizational structure compared to other organizations, so it is necessary to consider generalizing the results to other government organizations. Accordingly, future researchers are advised to conduct a similar study in other government organizations and compare the results of the two studies.