

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND EMPLOYEE JOB STRESS

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between organizational structure and employee job stress in staffs of Khuzestan Steel Industries. The statistical population includes 382 and sample comprises 191 staffs, selected based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table. To collect related data, two questionnaires were utilized: the designed organizational structure questionnaire consisting of complexity, formality, and centralization dimensions as well as job stress questionnaire adapted from standardized modified questionnaire developed by Kyriacou and Sutcliff (1978). Research methodology is descriptive correlational. The experts confirmed the content validity of two instruments. The reliability of questionnaires established through Alpha Cronbach's and reported for organizational structure (0.94) and job stress (0.90) questionnaire. The findings revealed that there are significant relationships between formality, complexity, and centralization dimensions of organizational structure and employee job stress.

Keywords: Organizational structure, formality, complexity, centralization, job stress

INTRODUCTION

A review of presented definitions for the organization by scholars in management field demonstrates that in all of them people and human forces, work and conscious collaboration, and communication to accomplish the goals have been the focus which are the main issues in organizational structure and also effective in employee attitudes and behaviors. In doing so, drawing attention to organization and organizational structure in organizational behavior domain is attached by great importance (Veisi & Savari, 2006). Research in organizational structure includes a broad domain such as how to designate and appoint people in different parts and roles of organization, work grouping and coordinating, how to distribute responsibility and authority, and using knowledge and expertise. The decision making techniques and paying attention to rules and regulations are in this position. Social environments are complicated and continuously in change and these issues cause that the organizations encounter many problems and consequently they come to try different plans and structures. The methods to handle the organization and human forces working there and the way to form its structure should not be neglected, because nowadays organizations could not employ a constant structure continuously and factors inside and outside the organizations make the managers to create proper structures and change them, if necessary.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Beiginia (2001) examined the relationship between structural and contextual dimensions of organization and cooperation. He found positive correlation between structural and contextual dimensions and employee cooperation, while there was no relationship between complexity of these dimensions and employee cooperation. Ghaseminejad (2002) in a research entitled "The relationship between organizational climate and job stress and its effects on Shahrekord high school teachers" concluded that in determining the association between organizational climate and job stress indices, the highest correlation was related to student index. Lapidus et al. (1997) in a study entitled "Stressors, leadership substitutes and relations with supervision among industrial salespeople" found that stressor, interunit conflict, and the substitutes for leadership, organization inflexibility, organization formalization, and spatial distance from supervisor significantly associated with stress. Nasurdin et al. (2006) conducted a study in Malaysia on "Organizational structure and organizational climate as potential predictors of job stress". Regression analysis illustrated that formality and centralization variables positively influence job stress.

Organization:

Max Weber (1942) states that organization is a closed social relationship that based on its regulation does not allow outsiders to enter. Permissions for operation are granted by special people holding this responsibility and those who are at the head of organization and they usually have an executive and administrative committee (cited in Abzari & Saraydaran, 1997, p.9).

Organizational dimensions are divided into two groups: structural and contextual. **Structural dimensions** demonstrate the interior features of the organization which form the base to measure and compare the organizations. Organizational structure is a means by which the organization divides and coordinates its work, determines the manner of decision making, and connects strategy and objectives of the organization to employee behavior (Bowditch et al., 2008). **Contextual dimensions** represent the entire organization such as size of the organization, type of technology, climate and its purposes. Contextual dimensions can be ambiguous, because they show the organizations in an environment in which structural dimensions are included (Daft, 1998, p.27).

Complexity:

When a person enters the organization, at first he encounters the complexity which is the number of management levels in the administrative hierarchy. This complexity can be vertical or horizontal. Large organizations often need additional expertise (specialized groups) which makes them more complex. Concerning complexity, organizations are classified into three groups: horizontal complexity, vertical complexity, and geographical complexity (Daft, 2005).

Formality:

Hague (1995) defines formality as the application of laws in organization. Job description is the criterion which determines the laws that the person should observe in a given position (Cited in Hall, 2003). The directory of organization reflects the formal structure of the organization. This directory is prepared in large and average organizations and comprises organizational objectives, policies and procedures, figures, job description, and instructions for executive managers (Akhavan, 2002, p.68)

Centralization:

Centralization is an aspect of organizational structure and refers to domain in which the senior management takes the decision making power (Gibson et al., 2009, p.526). If in an organization, higher managers decide in all aspects, this is considered as a centralized organization. On the other side, if the lower level staffs hold the ability to be involved in decision making, the organization moves more towards decentralization (Robbins, 1999).

The term stress is used to refer to dependant variables which are consequences for the stressors and the term stressor denotes the preludes or independent variables which may cause abnormal function or disease (Fletcher, 2002).

Torington et al. (2002) state that job stress causes bad health conditions (e.g. heart disease, high blood pressure, depression, anxiety) and consequently results in behaviors such as insomnia, anxiety, difficulty in concentration, increase in illegal drink consumption, tobacco, and other drugs and both of these lead to increased absenteeism, high staff turnover, reducing job satisfaction, and an environment without desirable relations between employees.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In present research, there is an attempt to summarize tables and graphs using descriptive statistics and then inferential statistics with Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was utilized to analyze the collected data out of the questionnaires. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) presented a model for determining sample population size. Due to convenience in using, this model is popular among researchers (cited in Javaherizadeh, 2007, p.67). The statistical population includes 382 and sample comprises 191 staffs, selected based on this table. Research methodology is descriptive correlational. In order to collect the relevant data, organizational structure and job stress questionnaires were utilized. Two experts confirmed the content validity of the instruments. The reliability established for the designed questionnaire for organizational structure using Alpha Cronbach was 0.94. The job stress questionnaire was developed based on standardized modified instrument of Kyriacou and Satcliffe (1978). The reliability of this questionnaire determined through Alpha Cronbach was 0.90.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

First hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between formality in organizational structure and employee job stress.

H₁: There is significant relationship between formality in organizational structure and employee job stress.

Table 1. Correlation coefficient of formality in organizational structure and job stress

Correlation coefficient	N	Sig.
0.943	191	0.000

As displayed in table 1, the correlation coefficient between formality in organizational structure and employee job stress is 0.943 which is significant at $p < 0.05$; hence, H₁ is confirmed and there is significant correlation between formality in organizational structure and employee job stress.

Second hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between complexity in organizational structure and employee job stress.

H₁: There is significant relationship between complexity in organizational structure and employee job stress.

Table 2. Correlation coefficient of complexity in organizational structure and job stress

Correlation coefficient	N	Sig.
0.740	191	0.000

As can be seen in table 2, the correlation coefficient between complexity in organizational structure and employee job stress is 0.740 which is significant at $p < 0.05$; therefore, H₁ is confirmed and there is significant correlation between complexity in organizational structure and employee job stress.

Third hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between centralization in organizational structure and employee job stress.

H₁: There is significant relationship between centralization in organizational structure and employee job stress.

Table 3. Correlation coefficient of centralization in organizational structure and job stress

Correlation coefficient	N	Sig.
0.584	191	0.000

According to table 3, the correlation coefficient between centralization in organizational structure and employee job stress is 0.584 which is not significant at $p < 0.05$; therefore, H₁ is confirmed and there is significant correlation between complexity in organizational structure and employee job stress.

CONCLUSION

The results related to first hypothesis demonstrated that there is significant correlation between formality in organizational structure and employee job stress ($r=0.943$). For the specialized people, the more strict regulations are implemented and formality is considered, the more it is possible for these people to experience stress. By imposing excessive formality, the employees' abilities to apply knowledge, experience, and creativity are reduced and this can result in appearing conflict between person and organization which is among the causes of job stress. This finding is consistent with Nasuridin et al. (2006) and Lapidus et al. (1997) which show significant correlation between formal structure and job stress. The findings relevant to third hypothesis revealed that there is significance relationship between complexity of organizational structure and employee job stress ($r=0.740$). When the organization is complicated, creating coordination and imposing control on employee make them stressful. Regarding

third hypothesis, it was found that there is significant relationship between centralization of organizational structure and employee work-related stress ($r=0.584$). When an organization draws much attention to specialization and tasks are accomplished based on it, there is less focus on organizational structure and job stress cannot be related to centrality of organizational structure. This result is in line with Lapidus et al. (1997) illustrating relationship between substitutes for leadership and job stress as well as Nasurdin et al. (2006) showing relationship between centralization and job stress.

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