

EXPLORING CORRELATION BETWEEN JOB STRESS AND COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS JOB PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

Job related stress takes place in the working environment. Job related stress is one of the leading issues for organizations globally as well as in Pakistan. This study aimed to determine the correlation between job related stress and employees "Community Pharmacists" job performance, to achieve this objective, the study was conducted, including only community pharmacist working in Lahore, Pakistan. Sample size of 64 obtained by using Rao software. However, due to Covid-19, Total of 31 filled questionnaire were received out of 64, which shows a response rate of 48% in this research.

Quantitative research tools used for collecting data, pharmacists (participants) received an E-Questionnaire, based on closed questions and a 5-point Likert scale type, in which clearly stated that by filling the questionnaire they are agreeing for participation in the study and providing consent.

Adopted questionnaire used which was used previously by Ugur Yozgat in his research "Job stress and job performance among employees in the public sector in Istanbul: examining the moderating role of emotional intelligence", (2013). Convenience simple random sampling technique was used.

Majority of participants were females (61%). The bivariate analysis showed that data was reliable for job related stress and job performance factor (Cronbach's Alpha =0.821 and 0.890) respectively. A moderate, negative significant correlation exists between job related stress and job performance ($r = -0.523$ and $P = 0.003 < 0.01$), indicating that as job related stress increases, community pharmacists job performance decreases

To reduce the job related stress, many strategies can be opted, as stress management techniques training can be provided. However, it is suggested to conduct further studies with large sample size and inclusion of more variables.

INTRODUCTION

The workplace of the twenty-first century is dynamic, fast-changing, and highly competitive, offering numerous opportunities but also posing considerable challenges for employees. The shifting demands and expectations of modern work environments often heighten stress levels, particularly for professionals working under constant pressure such as Nigerian workers. Although moderate stress may enhance performance, excessive or prolonged stress can produce serious physical and psychological consequences. Stress is one of the most prevalent challenges employees face, and organizations must manage it effectively to maintain efficiency and productivity. Uncontrolled stress leads to work-life imbalance, pressure, and conflict, and has been widely studied among students (Kumari & Gartia, 2012), bankers (Velnampy & Aravinthan, 2013), and healthcare professionals (Naqvi et al., 2013).

Rapid advancements in healthcare have intensified demands on workers, making it increasingly difficult for them to meet professional standards (Moen, 2000). Globally, pharmacy practice has diversified, leading to new forms of stress among pharmacists who must meet growing community expectations (Seston et al., 2009). Despite the global expansion of pharmaceutical care services, Pakistan faces a significant gap in workforce development. The shortage of qualified pharmacists and lack of strategic vision have placed heavy workloads on those in the retail sector. Pharmacists, as essential custodians of public health, are legally required to be present in community pharmacies to provide services (Goetz et al., 2013). Increased workloads have been shown to heighten stress among UK pharmacists (Lea et al., 2012), while U.S. studies found that although job pressure increased, many pharmacists still reported job satisfaction (Mott et al., 2003). In South Africa,

major stressors included job requirements, lack of resources, and type of pharmacy setup (Rothman & Melan, 2007), and about half of pharmacists in another study reported burnout and anxiety (Jocic & Karajnovic, 2012).

Long working hours, low salaries, insufficient support, and heavy workloads contribute to high stress levels and low productivity, which in turn affect healthcare system efficiency (Azhar et al., 2009). Job-related stress leads to poor professional performance (Gillespie et al., 2001) and reduced organizational effectiveness. As stress continues to grow across professions, some organizations have prioritized stress management, though many still underestimate its impact on employee well-being and overall productivity. Hence, this study examines the relationship between occupational stress and pharmacists' job performance in community pharmacies in Lahore, Pakistan, and suggests strategies to minimize its adverse effects.

Hans Selye (1965), the father of stress research, viewed stress as a neutral reaction, emphasizing that its effects depend on how individuals respond. Job stress, a complex physical and psychological response, occurs when work demands exceed an employee's abilities or resources. Numerous studies have demonstrated that stress negatively affects healthcare workers, leading to anxiety, depression, and low job satisfaction (Barkved & Kristiansen, 2005). McNeely (1987) found that workload, conflicts, and the organizational environment were key stressors lowering performance. Similarly, a study in Sudan linked pharmacist stress to poor pharmaceutical care and low job satisfaction (Tahir et al., 2019), while Quigley (2017) observed that financial pressure and competition exacerbate workplace stress. Research in Malaysia showed that greater stress reduces job satisfaction and performance (Teong et al., 2019), and other studies

confirmed the inverse link between stress and performance (Kazmi, Amjad, & Khan, 2008). Glazer and Beehr (2005) identified stress as a major factor behind absenteeism and turnover. Although mild stress may temporarily boost performance, excessive stress causes dissatisfaction and poor results (Trivellas et al., 2013). Job satisfaction and motivation are closely tied to stress levels (Qadoos et al., 2015). Bemana (2013) and Jaffar (2017) also found that job stress negatively affects satisfaction, while continuous overload leads to psychological problems (Health and Safety Executive, 2001). Malik, Haider, and Hussain (2017) revealed that low pay, inadequate training, and lack of support significantly elevate stress among pharmacists in Pakistan. Similarly, Johnson et al. (2005) highlighted low wages and underutilization of skills as major performance stressors, while Lankau et al. (2006) linked discrimination and poor management to declining job outcomes. Further studies show that work overload, role ambiguity, and underutilization of skills are frequent stressors (Anderson, 2003; Rose, 2003; Ojukuku et al., 2012). Extended working hours directly reduce performance (Kahn et al., 1964), whereas supportive supervision enhances it (Ren, 2001). Stress has also been shown to lower productivity in banking (Ahmed & Ramzan, 2013) and other sectors (Mead, 2000). Overwork remains a global issue, reducing quality of life and health, particularly in Asian countries (Steven et al., 2004). Other common workplace stressors include interpersonal conflicts, family issues, lack of feedback, and poor recognition (Stamper & Johlke, 2003; Parikh, Taukari, & Bhattacharya, 2004).

Modern organizations often expect high productivity with fewer staff, creating a stressful climate (Mimura & Griffiths, 2003). Stress and job performance share complex relationships: moderate stress may enhance productivity, but

excessive stress decreases it, forming an inverted U-shaped curve (Jalagat, 2016). Since jobs define social identity and involve both physical and emotional effort (Newman, 2012), persistent stress may lead to anxiety, frustration, and health deterioration (Traverse, 2013). Environmental stressors—such as noise, extreme temperatures, or poor management—further aggravate the problem (Thakre & Shroff, 2016). Pharmacists, in particular, face unique stressors including accuracy pressures, high workloads, and time constraints (Gaither et al., 2008; Johnson et al., 2014). Medication errors add to their stress (Boyle et al., 2012), while inadequate organizational support and culture negatively influence performance (Ashcroft et al., 2005). Studies suggest that reducing negative workplace factors and promoting positive ones, such as supportive communication, can improve performance and satisfaction (Gaither et al., 2008). Persistent job stress contributes to absenteeism, illness, and even heart disease (Lidwall & Marklund, 2006; Kivimäki, 2006). Therefore, identifying workplace stressors and addressing them through effective management strategies is essential. As Cooper (2003) emphasized, stress management is synonymous with good management—by controlling stressors, organizations can enhance employee well-being, productivity, and overall performance.

Objective of Study

The foundation of this study is to find the correlation between job related stress factors and community pharmacists job performance as a case study while the specific objectives are: To study the correlation between job stressors and pharmacists performance at the pharmacy. To make suggestions and recommendations on how to reduce those stressors.

Significance of the Study

The current study is significant for the following reasons:

It will help the organization and the community pharmacy owners to put more efforts in order to reduce the impact of different stressors on community pharmacists job related performance. Which in turn, not only results in pharmacists increased productivity but will contribute in increasing pharmacy turnover as well.

On the other hand, this study provided suggestions to on how to manage impact of different stressors and how to bring work-life balance.

Literature Review

Overview of Job Stress and Pharmacists' Role

Pharmacists and pharmaceutical health care services are essential in delivering quality medical care across both developed and developing countries. Although a considerable number of pharmacists graduate annually in Pakistan, they remain underutilized within the health system. When pharmacists experience job-related stress, it not only affects their well-being but also their performance and the overall quality of care delivered to patients. Pharmacy as a profession bridges health and basic sciences to ensure the safe and effective use of medicines. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Pharmaceutical Federation conceptualized the "seven-star pharmacist," who is expected to be a caregiver, communicator, decision-maker, manager, lifelong learner, teacher, leader, and researcher (Thamby & Subramani, 2014).

In Pakistan, the Pharmacy Council reports that over 34 institutions offer the Pharm-D degree—17 in the public and the rest in the private sector—with approximately 3,915 students enrolling each year. Pharmacists thus represent a vital component of human resources for health, one of the five pillars necessary for strengthening the healthcare system (Khan, 2015). To ensure that pharmacists fulfill this role effectively, it is critical to identify and

minimize job-related stressors that impair their productivity.

Understanding Work-Related Stress

Yan and Xie (2016) defined work stress as a series of physical, psychological, or behavioral responses triggered by one or more workplace stressors. Moustaka and Constantinidis (2010) described it as both a physiological and psychological reaction to stimuli or challenging situations. According to the WHO, work-related stress arises when employees face job demands and pressures beyond their ability to cope. Stress can stem from numerous factors, but inadequate supervisory support and limited job control tend to worsen its effects. Stress has been directly linked to cardiovascular diseases, back pain, anxiety, depression, fatigue, and insomnia (Fishta & Backe, 2015), with around 10% of illnesses worldwide connected to occupational stress.

Hassard et al. (2017) concluded that economic instability and financial crises aggravate workplace stress, leading to losses in productivity, absenteeism, and rising healthcare costs. Stressors may be internal—such as workload, long hours, or hazardous conditions—or external, such as poor organizational structure, lack of recognition, job insecurity, and limited career growth.

Stress Among Healthcare Professionals

Healthcare workers are particularly vulnerable to occupational stress, which, if unmanaged, can evolve into mild mental health issues (Koinis et al., 2015). Emotional exhaustion from patient suffering, organizational conflicts, and high workloads are common sources of distress. Highly structured work cultures may also lead to moral distress caused by ethical or regulatory constraints (Jacobs et al., 2017). Community pharmacists experience diverse stressors because they must balance their responsibility for patient safety with administrative and business duties.

Studies show that community pharmacists face higher stress levels than many other health professionals. Workload is among the key contributors (Johnson et al., 2014). Additional stressors include lack of competence, inconsistent workflow, inadequate rest breaks, and unrealistic patient expectations. Yet, few large-scale studies have explored the specific causes and consequences of stress among community pharmacists, particularly its direct relationship with job performance.

Job Performance and Organizational Factors

Job performance refers to how effectively individuals fulfill work-related tasks and roles. A supportive organizational culture can enhance job performance, while an unsupportive one may suppress it. Empirical studies have linked employee performance with leadership quality, empowerment, commitment, customer satisfaction, and goal orientation. Organizations frequently rely on training and development programs to raise performance levels. Moreover, performance data often inform decisions regarding promotions, pay, and recognition.

Research indicates that pharmacists are generally aware of their stress levels and associated consequences, including poor sleep and reduced quality of life. A U.S. survey found that about 68% of pharmacists reported job stress and work overload. Workplace stress is now recognized as a leading challenge affecting both employee health and productivity (Mott, 2000).

Lambert, Hogan, and Griffi (2007) observed that although psychosocial aspects of work and employee well-being have been studied extensively, the effect of stress on performance remains an open field for exploration. Stress responses differ among individuals, manifesting as fatigue, irritability, dizziness, digestive issues, or persistent headaches. Key sources of occupational stress include ambiguous job descriptions, extended working hours, excessive

workload, insufficient support, and negative organizational climates.

Studies on Job Performance and Stress Relationships

Over the decades, numerous investigations have examined employee performance across cultures and sectors to better understand its determinants (Ramli, 2019). Understanding job performance drivers helps organizations enhance employees' physical and mental capacity, creativity, and critical thinking. Mamede, Schmidt, and Rikers (2007) categorized performance into general, human, chemical, and administrative types, asserting that it depends on skills, effort, and the work environment. Employee knowledge represents skill, while motivation to complete tasks reflects effort.

Organizations are highly dependent on employee performance for success or failure, and stress has a profound effect on both individual and organizational outcomes. Empirical findings consistently reveal an inverse relationship between stress and performance. Teachers, for instance, show decreased performance under elevated stress levels. However, the relationship varies depending on organizational culture and context. Ratnawat and Jha (2014) identified four possible relationships:

1. **Negative linear** – performance declines as stress increases;

2. **Positive linear (eustress)** – moderate stress enhances performance;

3. **U-shaped** – productivity rises up to an optimal stress point, then declines; and

4. **No significant relationship** – in some cases, stress and performance are unrelated.

Summary

The reviewed literature demonstrates that occupational stress is a global phenomenon with serious implications for employee well-being and job performance. Pharmacists, in particular, face high levels of work-related stress

due to workload, regulatory demands, and emotional labor. Effective management of these stressors is vital not only for maintaining pharmacists' health but also for ensuring safe and efficient pharmaceutical care. Further empirical research in Pakistan's community pharmacy sector is necessary to explore this relationship in greater depth and to inform strategies that can improve both employee performance and healthcare service quality.

Research Methodology

Introduction

This study empirically examines the correlation between job-related stress and job performance among community pharmacists working in Lahore, Pakistan.

Type of Research

A quantitative research design was adopted to explore the relationship between stress and employee performance. This approach enables statistical testing of hypotheses and provides measurable insights into the study variables.

Data Collection Sources

Primary data were collected directly from community pharmacists through structured questionnaires, while secondary data were obtained from academic books, journals, reports, and other scholarly materials.

Data Collection Tools and Instruments

Following Zikmund (1997), the research employed a structured framework to collect and analyze data systematically. The questionnaire included demographic questions and items adapted from Ugur Yozgat's (2013) study on job stress and performance, using scales developed by Parker and DeCotiis (1983) for stress and by Dubinsky and Mattson (1979), later modified by Singh et al. (1996), for job performance. Distributed through Google Forms, this method was cost-effective and time-efficient.

Ethical Considerations

Participants provided informed consent via the online questionnaire, which clearly stated the

voluntary nature of participation. Ethical approval for this study was granted by the Virtual University, Pakistan.

Study Area and Participants

The study was conducted in Lahore, Punjab—the province contributing significantly to Pakistan's economy. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, data were collected electronically from community pharmacists employed in retail pharmacies. Convenience sampling was used, and Rao Software recommended a sample size of 64 respondents; 31 valid responses (48%) were received.

Data Analysis and Processing

Collected data were coded and analyzed using SPSS (version 20.0). Descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, and standard deviations) and inferential analyses were applied. Pearson correlation was used to measure the relationship between job stress and performance.

Reliability and Index Development

Reliability of the scales was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, where 0.821 for job stress and 0.890 for job performance indicated acceptable and high reliability, respectively. An index variable was created to combine related items and measure overall variable impact.

Statistical Techniques

Both univariate and bivariate analyses were performed. Univariate analysis described individual variables, while bivariate (Pearson correlation) assessed the relationship between stress and performance. The coefficient value ranged from +1 to -1, with higher absolute values indicating stronger correlations.

Data Analysis

The key objective of conducting this research was to empirically study the correlation between job related stress and job performance of community pharmacist working in Lahore, Pakistan. The collected data was subjected for analysis and is presented as under:

Univariate Analysis

Data is analyzed using single variable at a time, so single variable is studied separately and independently. It studies the range of values, measures central tendency (mean), standard deviation, study of variance as well as trends of

the responses and patterns to the variables. For different variables, all the values of frequency distribution can be presented in a text as well as in graphics.

Distribution of respondents according to their gender characteristics

Table 1. *Distribution of the respondents according to their gender*

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	12	39%
Female	19	61%
Total	31	

The table (1) above, shows that majority of the respondents females with 61%, while only 39% were males.

Distribution of respondents according to their age characteristics

Table 2. *Distribution of respondents according to their age characteristics.*

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20-25 Years old	9	29%
26-30 Years old	16	52%
31-35 Years old	5	16%
36-40 Years old	1	3%
Total	31	

As shown in table (2), that majority of the respondents were 52% lying in age category (26-30 years old), while (20-25 years old) accounts

for 29%, 16% of participants were from age category (31-35 years old) and only 3% were (36-40 years old).

Distribution of respondents according to their education, experience, income, work place and occupancy characteristics

Table 3. *Distribution of respondents according to their education, experience, income, work place and occupancy characteristics*

Education	Frequency	Percentage
B-Pharm	1	3%
Pharm-D	23	74%
Masters	7	23%
Total	31	

Experience	Frequency	Percentage
Internee	2	6%
Less than 1 Year	9	29%
1 to 4 Years	10	32%
5 to 9 Years	7	23%
Greater than 9 Years	3	10%
Total	31	

Income	Frequency	Percentage
less than 18,000	1	3%
18,000-35,000	13	45%
36,000-45,000	4	14%
46,000-55,000	2	7%
56,000-65,000	4	14%
More Than 65,000	5	17%
	29	

Working place	Frequency	Percentage
Single Pharmacy	12	43%
Chain pharmacy	16	57%
Total	28	

Occupancy	Frequency	Percentage
Employee	24	83%
Pharmacy Owner	5	17%
Total	29	

Approximately 74% of respondents' maximum education was Pharm-D as the table (3) above indicates, however, only 3% were B-Pharm and 23% accounted for Masters in Pharmacy. Also shows that 32% participants responded that they have (1-4 years) experience, 29% stated that they have less than 1 year experience, while 23% were having experience from (5-9 years) and only 10% were having experience greater than 9 years.

Table (3) above, shows that majority (45%) were receiving salary in the range (18000-35000) and only 17% were receiving more than 65000, while 3% receiving salary less than 18000 and one participant did not respond to the question. In addition to this, 57% participants were working on chain pharmacies and about 43% on single pharmacies while 3 participant did not answer. Maximum number of participants 83% were working as employees

and only 17% were having their own pharmacies. Two respondents did not answer the question.

Job related stress (JS) and employee (Community pharmacist) job performance (JP)

Table 4. Job Related stress (JS) and employee (Community Pharmacist) Job Performance (JP)

Variable	Mean	SD
JS	3.42	0.56
JP	2.81	0.69

Table 4 shows that the mean for job related stress factor cumulatively is 3.42, which indicates respondents neutral responses, that neither they agree nor disagree about experiencing job related stress. The mean value

for employees (community pharmacists) job performance is $2.81 \approx 3$, which reflects likelihood of their job performance neither poor nor good.

Reliability of Job related stress (JS) and Job Performance (JP)

Table 5. Reliability of Job related stress (JS) and Job Performance

Parameter	JS	JP
Cronbach's Alpha	0.821	0.890

Table (5) shows the reported Cronbach Alpha values of both variables of the study, indicating that both variables are reliable.

Bivariate Analysis

One of the widely used tools of quantitative data analysis, in which two variables are involved for analysis, in order to test and determine the correlation between the two variable. In most studies either Pearson correlation or spearman correlation coefficient is used. Pearson correlation was used to determine the relation between job stress and

employees (community pharmacists) job performance. Downhill linear correlation coefficient indicates that, 0 means no relationship, 0.3 means low correlation while 0.5 indicates moderate correlation and 0.7 indicates strong correlation. Its value ranges from +1 and -1, +1 indicates positive linear correlation, zero (0) indicates no linear correlation and -1 indicates negative linear correlations.

Table 6. Correlation between jobs related stress and job performance of employee community Pharmacist

Parameter	JS	JP
Pearson Correlation	-0.523	-0.523
Sig (2-tailed)	.003	0.03
N	31	31

Table (6) above, shows that job related stress has moderate, negative significant correlation with job performance ($r = -0.523$, $P = 0.003 < 0.01$) tested at 0.01 level of significance, indicating that as a job stress level increases, job performance decreases moderately, these results are consistent with the previous studies in which job stress was correlated and affecting employees job performance. The findings were similar to the one by Wu in (2011), this study also indicated that job related stress is negatively associated with job performance.

Summary

Majority of the respondent's females with 61%, while only 39% were males. Moreover, majority of the respondents were 52% lying in age category (26-30 years old), while (20-25 years old) accounts for 29%, 16% of participants were from age category (31-35 years old) and only 3% were 36-40 years old.

Approximately 74% of respondents' maximum education was Pharm-D, however, only 3% were B-Pharm and 23% accounted for Masters in Pharmacy. Also shows that 32% participants responded that they have (1-4 years) experience, 29% stated that they have less than 1-year experience, while 23% were having experience from (5-9 years) and only 10% were having experience greater than 9 years. 45% were receiving salary in the range (18000-35000) and only 17% were receiving more than 65000, while 3% receiving salary less than 18000 and one participant did not respond.

In addition to this, 57% participants were working on chain pharmacies and about 43% on single pharmacies while 3 participants did not answer. Maximum number of participants 83% were working as employees and only 17% were having their own pharmacies. Two respondents did not answer.

The reported Cronbach Alpha values of 0.821 and 0.890 respectively for both variables of the study (JS) and (JP), indicating that both variables are reliable.

Correlation between jobs related stress and job performance of employee community Pharmacist. shows that job related stress has moderate, negative significant correlation with job performance ($r = -0.523$, $P = 0.003 < 0.01$) tested at 0.01 level of significance, indicating that as a job stress level increases, job performance decreases moderately, these results are consistent with the previous studies in which job stress was correlated and affecting employees job performance.

Conclusion

This study was conducted in order to determine the correlation between job related stress and employees pharmacist job performance. Caution is essential while interpreting the results of this study, because of low number of respondents. However, the findings were similar to the one by Wu in (2011), this study also indicated that job related stress is negatively associated with job performance. Another study by Balayssac et al. (2017), he conducted his study on French community pharmacies and conducted that work related stress not only reduce their performance but also many health issues like anxiety and sleep disturbances. However, Jalagat (2017) found a positive significant correlation between job stressor and employees job performance, which means a job related stress increases employee job performance also increases. While Yurtkorub (2013) reported that a negative significant but low correlation exists between job stress and job performance of employees. Results from correlation analysis, reported moderate, negative significant relationship between job stress and employees (pharmacists) job performance ($r = -0.523$, $p = 0.003 < 0.01$).

This study reported that community pharmacist as well suffer from work related stress which effects their job performance. Work related stress should be regularly ruled out in pharmacies. More over stress management techniques should be taught and training must

be provided to the pharmacists and organizations like pharmacies, owners must take initiatives and preventive measures in order to reduce stress effects on job performance and thus promoting productivity and staff wellbeing. Since Pharmacy degree is mostly linked with the teaching of pharmaceutical sciences while neglecting stress management training provision. So, measures should be taken globally to provide stress management training courses for pharmacy students as well as professional working pharmacists.

Recommendation

Work related stress should be regularly ruled out in pharmacies. More over stress management techniques should be taught and training must be provided to the pharmacists and organizations like pharmacies, owners must take initiatives and preventive measures in order to reduce stress effects on job performance and thus promoting productivity and staff wellbeing.

Provision of work life balance workshops the organizations must adopt active listening, supportive behaviors and should promote it. Promotions, recognition of efforts and open communication culture must be promoted in order to reduce stress and enhance staff productivity.

Moreover, Psychologist must be available in every organization who provides counselling to employees and help them in overcoming stress.

Limitations

- The study location was limited to Lahore district due to the circumstances resulted from Covid-19 and due to short time frame provided for conducting the survey study, as well as due to availability of limited resources only, sample size of the study was small.
- Being a female researcher sometimes, it was difficult in Covid-19 raised situation to manage time for family, job and collection of data in the

same time. Due to lock down because of Covid-19 majority of the pharmacists showed less interest, for participating in the study.

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