



RESEARCH PAPER**Job Stress and Work Well-Being: A Mediating Role of Turnover Intention**

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigates the mediating role of turnover intention in the relationship between occupational stress and work well-being. Occupational stress poses a significant threat to employees' psychological well-being and turnover intention, with far-reaching implications for organizational productivity and economic growth. Despite growing concerns, the complex relationship between occupational stress, work well-being, and turnover intention remains unclear. A quantitative-survey design was employed and to evaluate the variables of study. The total number of participants in the study was 201, aged 18 to 60, and all working. The result showed the significant mediating effect of turnover intention on the relationship between job stress and work-life well-being ($p < 0.05$). The study's result stressed the significance of managing job stress and facilitating employee well-being. This underscores the importance of managing job-stress and promoting well-being, revealing a complex interplay between stress, well-being, and turnover-intentions. This highlights the need for a comprehensive approach for promoting employee-wellbeing to foster a healthier and more sustainable work environment.

KEYWORDS Job stress, Turnover intention, work well-being, psychological well-being, occupational stress

Introduction

Occupational stress has become pervasive in modern workplaces, affecting employees' psychological well-being and organizational outcomes. Existing literature highlights that academic staff faces stress due to which their well-being decreases and performance declines (i.e. Hall-Kenyon, 2014) which directly influences students' academic achievement through metacognition and motivational orientation (UYERI, 2024, Ramzan et. al., 2024, Ali et. al., 2023). In contrast, research has extensively explored the direct effects of occupational stress on employee's well-being. The mediating role of turnover intention remained understudied.

Transformations in global economic realities are progressively converting the demand for work from physical assignments to more cognitive and emotional labor. Workplace stress has emerged as a significant concern in developing nations. (Houtman, Jettinghof, & Cedillo, 2007). It is crucial to preclude high levels of stress in an occupational setting to improve the quality of professional life for employees, primarily when job insecurity is increasing due to the recession (Ruotsalainen, Serra, Marine, & Verbeek, 2008). Occupational stress, a subjective experience encompassing high arousal and dissatisfaction, has been recognized as a significant concern affecting the well-being of individuals in the workplace (Karasek, 2006).

This research aims to investigate the relationship between occupational stress and employee well-being while considering turnover intention as a potential mediator. Employee well-being, which encompasses the physical, mental, and emotional states of individuals in the workplace, is a critical indicator of overall job satisfaction and quality of life. Turnover intention refers to an employee's inclination or desire to leave their current job position (Khalid, Pan, Li, Wang, & Ghaffari, 2020).

The present study will employ a survey-based research methodology, utilizing three scales to measure the variables of interest: The Employee Well-Being Scale, the Turnover Intention Scale, and The New Job Stress Scale. The Employee Well-Being Scale will assess various dimensions of employee well-being, including physical health, mental well-being, and job satisfaction. The Turnover Intention Scale will measure employees' intention to leave their current job position. The New Job Stress Scale will capture the level of occupational stress experienced by employees in the workplace.

Occupational stress not only poses risks to an individual's well-being and psychological health but also has broader implications for the well-being of workers' families (UN, 2016). Recognizing the significance of safe and secure working environments, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 8 aims to ensure decent work and economic growth, emphasizing the protection of workers' psychological well-being (SDG 8: Health, decent work, and the economy: policy brief, 2019). Occupational stress has been identified as a significant contributor to various adverse outcomes, including decreased productivity, impaired decision-making, and increased absenteeism (Mustafa, 2015).

Literature Review

Several studies have explored the relationship between occupational stress and employee outcomes. For example, Butt (Punjab University) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between occupational stress and organizational commitment in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Pakistan. The findings revealed an inverse relationship between occupational stress and organizational commitment, highlighting the impact of occupational stress on employee commitment and the need for understanding stressors specific to the NGO sector (Butt, n.d.,2009).

(Shin, Cho, Kim , & Kin, 2015) examined the relationship between occupational stress, turnover intention, and various demographic, health behavior, and job-related characteristics among customer service representatives in call centers. Results indicate that factors such as age, sleep patterns, job demands, and autonomy significantly influence turnover intention. Specifically, turnover intention decreases with higher job autonomy but increases with elevated job demands. Moreover, the study highlights the heightened impact of occupational stress on turnover intention in conditions characterized by high job demands, low autonomy, and inadequate supervisor and co-worker support, suggesting the necessity for organizational efforts to mitigate occupational stress factors and promote retention.

Additionally, Chitra and Karunanidhi (2021) conducted a study focusing on resilience training and its impact on occupational stress, resilience, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being among female police officers in India. The study found that resilience training effectively enhanced resilience, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being while reducing occupational stress (Chitra & Karunanidhi, 2021).

(Fong & Mahfar, 2013) investigated the relationship between occupational stress and turnover intention among employees in a furniture manufacturing company in Selangor state. The study analyzed the levels of occupational stress and turnover intention among employees, as well as examined the correlation between these variables. Additionally, the study seeks to explore how different dimensions of occupational stress, such as organizational structure, social support, work overload, role conflict, and working environment, are related to turnover intention. Ultimately, the objective is to provide empirical evidence on the relationship between occupational stress and turnover intention, thereby informing strategies for managing stress and reducing turnover within the organization. In conclusion, there was a statistically significant positive relationship between occupational stress and employee turnover intention.

Moreover, Khalid et al. (*Frontiers in Public Health*) examined the impact of occupational stress on job burnout among bank employees in Pakistan, with psychological capital acting as a mediator. The study revealed significant associations between extrinsic effort, over-commitment, and emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. It also found that psychological capital played a mediating role between occupational stress and job burnout (Khalid, Pan, Li, Wang, & Ghaffari, 2020).

A Sri Lankan's study explored the mediating role of job stress on the relationship between job satisfaction facets and turnover intention amongst construction project professionals (Dodanwala & Santoso, 2022). It was found that job stress fully mediated the relationship between satisfaction with supervision and turnover intention, and partially mediated the relationship between job security and turnover intention. Demographic variables like gender, age, and organization tenure also affect employees' stress levels.

A study examined the impact of COVID-19 on Healthcare Workers (HCWs) and police personnel, revealing high levels of Occupational Stress (OS) and psychological complications. However, Positive Psychological Capital (PPC) and Emotional Quotient (EQ) played a crucial mediating and moderating role, respectively, in maintaining psychological well-being (PWB). PPC characteristics, such as resilience and optimism, helped mitigate stress and promote PWB during the pandemic. (Ravikumar, 2022)

Based on the existing literature, it is evident that occupational stress can have profound implications for employee well-being and organizational outcomes. However, limited research has specifically investigated the relationship between occupational stress, employee well-being, and turnover intention. Therefore, this study aims to contribute to the understanding of this relationship and the potential moderating effect of turnover intention.

Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant relationship between job stress and work-life well-being.

H2: There is a significant relationship between job stress and turnover intention.

H3: There is a significant relationship between work-life well-being and turnover intention

H4: Turnover intention mediates the relationship between job stress and work-life well-being.

Material and Methods

Sample

The data is comprised of 210 working individuals aged ranging from 18 to 60 years ($M = 33.87$, $SD = 10.11$). Of the sample, 91 were male (45.3%) and 110 were female (54.7%). The sampling technique was convenience sampling and data was collected from teachers and staff of various schools and universities. The inclusion criteria were, that participants should be employed full-time, between the ages of 18 and 60, and they should not have any psychological disorders.

The current study utilized three validated scales to measure the variables of research:

The New Job Stress Scale: The New Job Stress Scale developed by Shukla & Srivastava (2015) was used to measure job stress levels in employees. This scale has 0.81 Cronbach's alpha which suggests that it is a reliable and valid instrument for assessing job stress in employees (Shukla & Srivastava, 2015).

Employee well-being scale: the participant's work well-being was assessed using the Work well-being (WWB) subscale from the Employee Well-Being Scale by Zheng, et. al. (2015). The Cronbach's alpha of the WWB subscale is 0.93 which suggests that the WWB scale is valid and reliable to effectively capture the multi-dimensional nature of work well-being (Zheng et al., 2015).

Turnover Intentions scale: The present study used 6 6-item scale of Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6) by Bothma and Roodt (2004) to measure participants' intentions to leave their current jobs. This scale is widely used and has demonstrated strong psychometric properties. The Cronbach's alpha for TIS-6 is 0.80 which is acceptable and indicates the scale's validity.

Procedure

The study used a survey research design to establish the direct and indirect relationships between job stress, work well-being, and turnover intentions. Participants were provided with informed consent forms and were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. After consenting, participants completed a demographic questionnaire followed by the three scales mentioned above. The survey was administered in a quiet room within their workplace during scheduled breaks to minimize disruptions.

All procedures followed the ethical guidelines outlined by the American Psychological Association, ensuring that participants were treated with respect and that their rights were protected throughout the study. Participants were debriefed after completing the survey and were informed they could withdraw from the study at any stage of research.

Results

To evaluate the correlation and mediation effect of turnover intention between job stress and employee well-being, Process V4 by Andrew F. Hayes SPSS 22 software was used. The total number of participants in the study was 201. The tabulated results are as follows:

Table 1
Descriptive details of the Demographic variables (N=201)

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
Age	18	60	33.87	10.11	102.27	0.54	-0.57
No. of Siblings	0.0	10.0	4.22	2.04	4.15	0.55	-0.01

This table shows that the mean age of data is 33.87 with SD 10.11. The mean of number of siblings is 4.22 with SD 2.04.

Table 2
Frequency Distribution and percentage of Demographic Variables (N=201)

Variable	Category	f	%
Birth Order	1st Born	61	30.3%
	Middle Born	103	51.2%
	Last Born	21	10.4%
	Only Child	16	8.0%
Marital Status	Single	78	38.8%
	Married	108	53.7%
	Separated	2	1.0%
	Divorced	4	2.0%
	Widowed	9	4.5%
Gender	Female	110	54.7%
	Male	91	45.3%

This table shows the statistics of demographic variables. Most of the data is from middle-born ($f=103$) and married ($f=108$) individuals. The sample has 54.7% female and 45.3% male. The sample of the study predominantly is from female, middle-born, and married individuals.

Table 3
Reliability Analysis of Questionnaires (N=201)

Scale	No. of Items	α	Mean	SD
Work Well-Being (WWB)	6	0.793	34.05	5.195
Job Satisfaction (JS)	9	0.789	26.66	6.660
Turnover Intention (TIS)	6	0.649	15.24	4.747

This table shows that the Cronbach alpha of all the scales is in an acceptable range.

Table 4
Correlation analysis of variables (N=201)

Variable	M	SD	WWB	JS	TIS
WWB	5.68	0.87	--		
JS	26.67	6.64	-0.105	--	
TIS	15.23	4.74	-0.336	0.341	--

Note. WWB=Work Wellbeing, JS= Job, TIS=Turnover Intentions, M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation.

The r value between work well-being and job stress is -0.105, highlighting a very weak negative correlation. The $p > 0.05$, suggests that this correlation is not statistically significant. Thus, there is insufficient evidence to conclude that job stress and work well-being are related in this sample. The r value between work well-being and turnover intentions is -0.336, suggesting a moderate negative relationship. This means that as turnover intentions increase, work well-being tends to decrease. The $p < 0.05$, indicates strong evidence for the relationship between TIS and WWB. Moreover, the r value between job stress and turnover intentions is 0.341, highlighting a moderate positive correlation. This suggests that as job stress increases, turnover intentions tend to increase. The $p < 0.05$, meaning there is a significant positive relationship between job stress and turnover intentions. The above mentioned finding verifies study's Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3 and rejected hypothesis one. Thus it can be concluded that there is a relationship between JS and TIS, and TIS and WWB but there is no relationship or very weak relationship between JS and WWB.

Table 5
Mediation analysis of the impact of job stress on work well-being through turnover intention (N=201)

Effect	B	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	Standardized Effect
Total Effect (JS → WWB)	-0.0137	0.0092	-1.4870	.1386	-0.0318	0.0045	-0.1048
Direct Effect (JS → WWB)	0.0014	0.0093	0.1543	.8775	-0.0169	0.0197	0.0110
Indirect Effect (JS → TIS → WWB)	-0.0151	0.0043	-	-	-0.0248	0.0076	-0.1158

Note. JS=Job Satisfaction, WWB = Work Well-Being, TIS = Turnover Intention; SE = Standard Error, LLCI = Lower Level Confidence Interval; ULCI = Upper-Level Confidence Interval, B = Unstandardized regression coefficient.

The above table highlights that there is no significant impact of JS on WWB ($p > 0.05$) but when TIS mediates then the relationship between JS and WWB exists ($p < 0.05$). hence, verifying our hypothesis that TIS mediates the relationship between JS and WWB.

Discussion

The results of this study provide insight into the correlation and mediation effect of turnover intention between job stress and employee well-being. The findings showed a negative weak correlation between work well-being and job stress. This shows that stress at work might have a direct effect on a person's general sense of well-being outside of work-related domains. This result is in line with several earlier studies (Aruldoss, Kowalski, & Parayitam, 2021; Attar, ÇAĞLIYAN, & Abdul-Kareem, 2020; Bell, Rajendran, & Theiler, 2012), which contend that although job stress might negatively impact outcomes connected to the job, its impact on more general dimensions of well-being may be less significant.

Moreover, our findings showed a moderate positive correlation between job stress and turnover intentions. This suggests that as job stress increases, turnover intentions TIS and WWB. This implies that employees are more inclined to consider leaving their current

positions when job stress increases. This result is consistent with the Job Demands-Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), which suggests that high job demands—such stress—may result in unfavorable consequences like the intention to leave the job.

Moreover, the findings demonstrated a statistically significant inverse correlation between the intention to turnover and work-wellbeing. This suggests that workers with greater plans to leave typically have worse levels of well-being in their lives outside of work. This result emphasizes how crucial it is to take into account how work-related factors affect employees' overall quality of life.

The mediating effect of turnover intention on the connection between work-wellbeing and job stress is particularly intriguing. Our results imply that turnover intention mediates the association between work-life balance and job stress. This suggests that workers who intend to leave their jobs more frequently may experience worsening impacts of job stress on work-life balance. This research emphasizes how crucial it is to take individual variances and environmental influences into account when figuring out how work-related stressors and well-being results interact to one another.

Conclusively, these results advance our knowledge of the relationships among work well-being, intention to leave a job, and job stress. They emphasize how crucial it is to deal with job stress and intention to leave as possible variables affecting workers' well-being at work and outside of it. Subsequent studies ought to delve deeper into the mechanisms that underlie these associations and examine possible measures to alleviate the adverse impacts of occupational stress on workers' general well-being.

Recommendations

The study has a few limitations. First of all, as data is gathered from several organizations within a single city, findings cannot be extrapolated to the entire population. Second, although the data is cross-sectional, longitudinal research can highlight the real-world relationship between work-life and job stress. Finally, a more precise picture of the potential causes of work-life balance issues and workplace stress would have been provided by gender differences.

The study provides significant theoretical implications for organizational psychology, human resource management, and work-life balance research. It contributes to the development of a framework that elucidates the relationship between job stress and work-life well-being, highlighting the importance of considering both job-related and individual factors. The findings support the Job Demands-Resources model, emphasizing the need to balance job demands with job resources to promote employee well-being. Turnover intention is a key mediator in the relationship, highlighting the need for understanding individual differences and contextual factors. The findings have implications for organizational interventions aimed at promoting employee well-being, such as reducing turnover intention and integrating work and non-work domains. Overall, the study contributes to our understanding of the complex interplay between job stress, turnover intention, and work-life well-being. It also suggests that addressing job stress can enhance economic productivity and contribute to social welfare. The findings can also inform policy discussions and legislative reforms to improve working conditions and promote work-life balance.

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