Abstract

The aim of this research was to investigate the relationship of job stress with turnover intention and job performance, considering the moderating role of organization-based self-esteem (OBSE). Data collected from 286 employees of Iranian National Drilling Company (INDC), who were selected by simple random sampling method. Pearson correlation and Moderated regression analysis through SPSS 19 software package were used for data analysis. Findings indicate the negative relationship between job stress and job performance and positive relationship between job stress and turnover intention. In addition, organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) significantly moderated the relationship of job stress with turnover intention and job performance.

Keywords: Job stress, turnover intention, job performance, OBSE;

1. Introduction

Stress at work is an increasingly common feature of modern life. Owing to an increasing impact of psychosocial stress at work on health and economic loss (Dunham 2001; Landsbergis 2003), research in this area has witnessed rapid progress in recent time (Dunham 2001). In recent years workplace stress has become a common problem for human resource managers (Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009). A basic hypothesis in stress theory is that psychosocial stressors in the work environment such as role stress, lack of control and lack of social support, and the interaction Theorell, 1990).

A physiological approach conceptualizes work stress as a negative psychological state which is the result of a dynamic interaction between the person and their work environment. Job stress is defined as an individual’s reaction to the characteristics of the work environment that seem emotionally and physically threatening (Jamal, 2005). Employees who experience high level of job stress are more likely to be unhealthy, poorly motivated, less productive and less safe at work. Their organizations also are less likely to succeed in a competitive market. Work stress can come from a variety of sources and affect people in different ways.

A negative relationship between job stress and performance was conceived by those that viewed job stress as essential for the organization and its employees (Westman & Eden, 1996). Motowidlo (2003) defines job

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performance as the total expected value to the organization of discrete behaviors that an individual carries out over a standard period of time.

Turnover intention has been a critical issue for management for many years (Chen, Lin & Lien, 2010) and it is a major problem for organizations now. Tett and Meyer (1993) defined turnover intentions as conscious wilfulness to seek for other alternatives in other organization. Job stress influence employees’ job satisfaction which in turn leads to low performance and the intention to leave the job (Applebaum, Fowler, Fiedler, Osinubi, & Robson, 2010). There are many researchers who found that the greater the amount of stress, the higher will be the turnover intention of employees (Chen et al., 2010; Applebaum et al., 2010). A positive relationship was also found between work-life conflict, stress, and turnover intentions by Noor and Maad (2008).

An individual difference variable that may moderate the relationship between job stress and its outcomes is organization-based self-esteem (OBSE: Pierce, Gardner, Cummings, & Dunham, 1989; Pierce, Gardner, Dunham, & Cummings, 1993). Pierce et al. (1989) introduced the concept of organization-based self-esteem. Organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) is defined as the degree to which an individual believes him/herself to be capable, significant, and worthy at work (Pierce et al., 1989). Individuals with high OBSE perceive themselves as trusted, valued, and contributing members of the organization. Pierce et al. (1993) are the first researchers who proposed and examined OBSE as an individual difference moderator. Therefore, we wanted to address this idea in the present study. Our goal was to investigate the relationship of job stress with turnover intention and job performance, regarding the moderating role of organization-based self-esteem (OBSE). Accordingly, the following hypotheses have been developed for the current research:

H2. Job stress relates positively to turnover intention.
H3. OBSE moderates the relationship between job stress and job performance, that is, individuals with low OBSE will react more negatively to job stress than those with high OBSE. Consequently, they will have lower level of job performance.
H4: OBSE moderates the relationship between job stress and turnover intention, that is, individual with low OBSE will react more negatively to stress than those with high OBSE. Consequently, they will have higher level of turnover intention.

Method

1.1. Participants

Respondents for this study were selected by simple random sampling method from Iranian National Drilling Company (INDC). Anonymous questionnaires were distributed to 300 full-time employees. All together, 286 questionnaires were returned and analyzed. The response rate was 95 %. From this sample 86 % were men, average age was 31 years, and average organizational tenure was 11 years.

1.2. Measures

Job Stress Scale. Job stress was measured with a 13-item scale developed by Parker & Decotiis (1983). The content of the items comprising the first component of this scale is closely associated with feelings of being under substantial time pressure, and is named time stress. The second component is dominated by items having to do with job-related feelings of anxiety. This dimension of job stress is referred to as anxiety. Alpha coefficient in this study was .86.

Job Performance Scale. Job performance was measured with the Graphic Rating Scale developed by Paterson (1922). Alpha coefficient in this study was .89.

Turnover Intention Scale. Turnover intention was measured with a 3-item scale developed by Camman, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh (1979). Participants responded on 7-point Likert-type scale from “1” (strongly disagree) to “7” (strongly agree). Alpha coefficient in this study was .83.
OBSE Scale. OBSE was measured with a 3-item scale developed by Pierce et al. (1989). Alpha coefficient in this study was .92.

2. Results

The correlations between variables, means, and standard deviations are reported in Table 1. Table 1 shows that job stress has a significant negative correlation with job performance (r= -.37, p<.01) and a positive relationship with turnover intention (r=0.45, p<0.01), which provided support for H1 and H2.

Moderated hierarchical regression analysis was used to investigate the moderating effects of organization-based self-esteem (OBSE) on the relationships of job stress with job performance and turnover intention. According to Baron and Kenny (1986) and James and Brett (1984), test for moderation should include a term for the direct effect of the predictor (of job stress), a term for the direct effect of the moderator (OBSE) and the interaction term (or product) of the two. The moderating effect is supported if the interaction term is significant. The results of the moderated hierarchical regression analysis are shown in Table 2. The significant R² change (R²= 0.21, ΔR²= 0.04, p< 0.01) regarding the interaction of job stress and OBSE in prediction of job performance supported H3. The significant R² change (R²= 0.253, ΔR²=0. 032, p< 0.01) regarding the interaction of job stress and OBSE in the prediction of turnover intention supported H4.

| Table 1. Descriptive statistics and inter-correlations for study variables |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Variable                    | M     | SD      | 1        | 2        | 3        | 4        |
| 1. Job stress               | 34.60 | 10.87   | ---      | ---      | ---      | ---      |
| 2. Job performance          | 37.71 | 6.60    | -.37**   | ---      | ---      | ---      |
| 3. Turnover intention       | 10.87 | 5.37    | .45**    | -.05     | ---      | ---      |
| 4. OBSE                     | 36.58 | 7.18    | -.14*    | 0.41**   | -.17**   | ---      |

* P<0.05  ** P<0.01

| Table 2. Results of the moderated hierarchical regression analysis |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Independent variable        | R²     | R² Change | R²      | R² Change |
| Step 1 Job stress           | 0.07   | ---       | 0.205   | ---      |
| Step 2 OBSE                 | 0.17   | 0.10”     | 0.221   | 0.016*   |
| Step 3 Job stress x OBSE    | 0.21   | 0.04”     | 0.253   | 0.032*   |

* P<0.05  ** P<0.01

Discussion and implications

The main goal of the present study was to examine the moderating role of OBSE in relationship of job stress with job performance and job turnover intention in Iran. Consistent with previous research (e.g., Westman & Eden, 1996) we showed that Job stress relates negatively to job performance (H1). As noted by Jackson and Schuler (1985), negative relationships between job stress (that result from the role ambiguity and role conflict) and job performance can be explained by research that focuses on cognitive and motivational processes. For example, role ambiguity can be conceptualized as a lack of knowledge of the most effective job behaviors, and role conflict occurs when, due to conflicting information, the individual is unable to do everything that is expected (Jackson & Schuler, 1985). Thus, from a cognitive perspective, both role ambiguity and role conflict should result in lower levels of performance since they represent a lack of information and information overload, respectively. From a motivational view, performance should be negatively related to role stress since they tend to weaken effort-to-performance and performance-to-reward expectancies (Jackson & Schuler, 1985).

Our results also indicate that job stress relates positively to turnover intention (H2). A significant relationship between job stress and turnover intention was also found by Layne, Hohenshil, & Singh (2004). The stressors in the work environment influence the job satisfaction of employees which in turn leads to the intention to leave the job (Applebaum et al., 2010). Stress is an emotion that decreases job satisfaction and increases turnover (Côté & Morgan, 2002).
The findings of this research supported H3 and H4, that is, confirms the moderating role of OBSE in the proposed relationships. Behavioral plasticity refers to the extent to which individuals are affected by external factors. Brockner (1984) suggests that people differ in their attention and reactions to external cues. As a result, external factors affect their attitudes and behaviors differently. Brockner’s research focused on self-esteem as a major source of observed variation in plasticity. Brockner (1984) noted that people with low self-esteem should be relatively more behaviorally plastic (or reactive) than people with high self-esteem, since they are more easily influenced by external cues. Therefore, in organizational contexts, people with high self-esteem or high levels of OBSE may be less responsive to negative information than employees with low levels of OBSE. When threatened by perceived stress, employees with low OBSE may cope more passively with negative stimuli than employees with high OBSE, principally by increasing absenteeism, lowering organizational commitment and intrinsic motivation. It is likely that high OBSE employees engage in problem-focused coping or cognitive consistency behaviors by reporting higher intrinsic motivation and higher organizational commitment, and by being absent less than low OBSE employees. Low OBSE employees may report lower intrinsic motivation and job performance, and be absent more than those with high OBSE. In sum, it is highly recommended that organizations invest time and resources toward discovering how job stressors might be managed for better performance, as well as for retaining employees in their jobs. To do this, considering the OBSE is so important.

References


