

**EFFECTS OF ORGANISATIONAL, SOCIAL AND
PERSONAL FACTORS ON PSYCHOLOGICAL
STRESS, WMSDS AND WORK PERFORMANCE: A
CASE OF INDIAN MIDDLE-LEVEL MANAGERS**



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CONCLUSIONS: KEY FINDINGS AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

In the past two decades, the well-being of employees, comprising of psychological and physical health, has become a focal point for organisations and researchers worldwide. This increased focus is due to many reasons like 1) increased work demands, 2) competition in the workplace, and 3) increased awareness of the people regarding mental and physical health etc. studies reported many factors affecting the well-being of the employee such as “Effect of organisational factors on distress”. A literature survey revealed that most studies focus on the population from western countries. There are a few research based on the Indian working population. It is scarcer in the field of Middle-level Managers (MLMs), especially those in the telecommunication sector, in the Indian context. For this research work, the following objectives were set to analyse the psychological and physical well-being and work performance of the MLMs working in the telecommunication case organisation.

1. To check the validity of the job demand-control (support) model and analyse the direct and indirect effect of job demand, job control and “support at work” on psychological stress and job satisfaction.
2. To analyse the effect of job control dimensions on psychological stress.
3. To analyse the effect of organizational factors on psychological stress and WMSDs.
4. To analyse the direct and indirect effects of organizational, social, and personal factors and physical and psychological stress on work performance.

For this purpose, 250 MLMs were contacted, and 210 responded. ANOVA, Binary Logistics Regression (BLR) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) were used for the analysis. This chapter summarises the research, key findings and managerial implication.

Besides, the limitations and future scope of the research are also discussed at the end of the chapter.

7.1. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The validity of the JDC and JDCS model was checked to predict psychological stress and job satisfaction for the Indian MLMs working, especially in a telecom organisation. For this purpose, six different cut-off points were used for job categorisation, and ANOVA was used to determine if there was a difference among the job categories. However, the results of the ANOVA could not provide a concrete conclusion. So, Structural Equation Modelling was used to study the direct and indirect effect of workload, control and support on psychological stress and job satisfaction. The results indicated no effect of workload on psychological stress and job satisfaction. This finding suggests that workload is not a critical factor that needs to be considered for the present case of MLM. This insignificant effect of workload on psychological stress and job satisfaction might be due to the low physical activities of the MLMs belonging to a public sector organisation. These findings suggest that MLMs could take additional responsibilities in the case organisation without compromising their psychological health. However, it is an issue to address further that the increased responsibilities are not overwhelming or too much that it would create a situation of psychological stress and job dissatisfaction in the MLMs. While workload had no association with psychological stress and job satisfaction, job control had. The results suggest that the MLMs suffering from psychological stress and having low job satisfaction can be provided with more control at the workplace to reduce their psychological stress and increase their job satisfaction. This will also help the MLMs to contribute better towards the growth of the psychologically well organisation. For the present case of Indian MLMs, the direct hypothesis of the JDCS and JDCS model was partially supported. Results also supported

the buffer hypothesis of the JDC model as the increased control will reduce psychological stress and increase job satisfaction.

In JDC and JDCS models, only the “control over work” dimension of the job control was considered. However, “control over working time” and “control over working days” are also important dimensions of job control. So, the effect of all three job control dimensions as 1) “control over work”, 2) “control over working hours”, and 3) “control over working days” on psychological stress was analysed using Binary Logistics Regression with controlling variable for age, gender, experience in the organisation and experience on the current position. The results suggested that MLMs with low “control over work” and “control over working days” have more psychological stress. However, the MLMs with high “control over working hours” had more psychological stress. These results further confirm the result of the first objective. It provides a more in-depth understanding of how different dimensions of job control can have varied effects. MLMs can be provided with more “control over work” and “control over working days” to ensure their psychological well-being. However, providing “control over working hours” should be decided with caution as it has a negative effect on psychological well-being. “Control over working hours” can be provided to employees with some restrictions to facilitate the MLMs in order to have better “control over working hours” but not with negative effects. This can be done by setting deadlines for work, timely reporting of progress of a project or task etc.

An effort has been made to find the effect of organisational factors like demand, control, and age on the WMSDs. For this purpose, SEM was used. More than half of the MLMs were suffering from pain in at least one body part. Neck and lower back pain was the prominent problem among MLMs of the case organisation. Similar to the previous, workload had no association with WMSDs either. The present case is of MLMs of a

telecom organisation, whose job responsibilities require low physical activity, so a non-significant association of WMSDs with workload has resulted. This study also confirmed that “control over work” was the most critical factor affecting WMSDs. Age had a significant effect on the pain in the knee and upper back. Results of the study suggest that the MLMs suffering from pain in the knees and back with more age may have good physical well-being by providing more control. This would, in turn, help the organisation as these experienced MLMs can contribute much towards the growth and development of the organisation and can also mentor the younger generation of MLMs.

A comprehensive model considering all the variables was considered to determine the effect of organisational, social and personal factors and physical and psychological stress on work performance. A very complex SEM model was developed as the number of variables was too high. The analysis showed that alcohol consumption and tobacco use had a significant effect on behavioural stress. Also, tobacco consumption was related to the job satisfaction of the MLMs but alcohol. So, tobacco use reduces job satisfaction and increases behavioural stress. Otherwise, low job satisfaction may lead to high behavioural stress and tobacco consumption. The case organisation may design the policy to control tobacco use during working hours. Moreover, the organisation can also organise seminars and programs to promote a healthy lifestyle among the MLMs.

Work performance is a very important outcome measured as a latent variable. The analysis through this comprehensive model revealed that organisational factors were more significantly associated with work performance in comparison to social and personal factors. Similar to psychological stress and WMSDs, work performance was significantly associated with job control. “Control at work” had a positive effect on work performance and job satisfaction and a negative effect on psychological stress and

WMSDs. An increase in “control over work” will result in improved work performance, increased job satisfaction, and decreased psychological stress and WMSDs.

Similarly, more “control over working days” would increase work performance and decrease cognitive stress. However, “control over working hours” had a negative association with work performance. It suggests that an increment in “control over working hours” would result in decreased work performance. This is somewhat due to the human tendency to keep delaying the “work on hand” until the last possible moment, leading to decreased work performance and low quality of work due to the last-minute hustle. However, reducing the “control over working hours” cannot be the proper solution to mitigate its negative effect. It might decrease job satisfaction for the employees as they feel more restricted. The better approach to deal with this is to provide them “control over working hours” with a possible restriction. For example, instead of allowing flexible work time, MLMs should be provided with the option to choose between various reporting times of the day with fixed working hours for the day. This will make them feel that they have control without overburdening, thus resulting in better work performance as well as increased psychological well-being and job satisfaction.

Job control is the most significant dimension of the case organisation that was associated with psychological stress, WMSDs, job satisfaction and as well as with work performance. These findings provide evidence that work flexibility is of the utmost importance for the well-being and job satisfaction of employees and also to improve their work performance. However, the negative association between “control over working hours” and work performance also sheds light on the fact that increasing job control without analysing the dimensions separately can have an undesired effect on well-being and work performance. So, while providing more job control to the employees, caution should be made to identify the dimensions of job control and their effect so that it will be

more towards the betterment of psychological and physical health and work performance of employees and the organisation.

The following subsection specifies the implications derived from these analyses and the results.

7.2. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Occupational stress and WMSDs are issues of great concern in organisations worldwide. The work performance of the employees is one of the factors that are very highly affected by occupational stress and WMSDs and thus incur losses to the organisation. So, it is very important to understand the factors associated with occupational stress, WMSDs and work performance. Also, how these factors affect these variables related to employees is of great concern as this could help organisations in improving and framing policies for the betterment of both employees and organisations. Based on the results of the present work following can be recommended.

- The organisations can develop policies focusing on the job control aspect more in comparison to the workload for middle management employees. Some amount of workload can be varied as its effect on any output variable was not found in the case of MLMs.
- Organisations should focus on providing their employees
 - 1) more “control over work” as it reduces occupational stress and WMSDs and as well as to improve work performance of the employees,
 - 2) a restricted “control over working hours” as it has a negative effect on psychological well-being and as well as work performance. Providing “Control over working hours” should be decided with caution to facilitate the MLMs to have better “control over working hours” but not the negative effects,

3) more “control over working days” as it reduces occupational stress and improves the work performance of the employees.

- Management can train the leaders to provide professional as well as moral support to their subordinates.
- Training of the MLMs and other employees can be designed to reduce substance usage to promote a healthy lifestyle.
- Intervention programs can be organized to improve employees’ interpersonal relationships so as to have high “support at work”. These kinds of programs give employees the feeling of belongingness and improve the relationships between colleagues, which in turn increases psychological well-being and job satisfaction.

As the study has been done for a telecommunication case organisation, it has its limitations for the generalisation of findings. The following subsection shows such limitations.

7.3. LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT WORK

Through this research, an effort has been made to identify the associated factors and their effect on occupational stress, WMSDs and work performance and their effect on them.

Following are the limitations of the findings of this research.

- The sample of the study had 91% male and 9% female. So, the results of the study are more valid for the male MLMs than female MLMs.
- As the research work was a cross-sectional study, data was taken at a single point in time. So, the time effect of variables such as job control and support were not analysed. Findings can be generalised in a similar setting keeping in mind that the time effect was not considered.

- This research was conducted specifically for a public sector telecommunication organisation, so these findings may not be directly helpful for other organisations as there is a difference in the work culture and work environment of the public and private sector organisations.
- As this research was focused on middle-level managers, the findings may not be suitable for employees on the other levels of the organisational hierarchy.

Keeping in mind these limitations, the findings of this work can be interpreted in different situations.

Findings, implications and limitations have yielded areas where this research work can be extended. Next section details such extensions of this work with future cope.

7.4. SCOPE FOR FUTURE WORK

The present work is focused on the effects of organisational, personal and social factors on occupational stress, WMSDs and work performance of middle-level managers from a single telecom organisation in a public sector. So, for generalisation, more public and private sector organisations can be considered for future work. Intervention studies to support the findings of the present work are also a possible extension of this work, especially the variation of workload and job control. A comparison study for the public and private sectors can be done to compare the effect of organisational factors on occupational stress, WMSDs and work performance. Considering the private sector in the studies will yield more general implications. Longitudinal study and control group study can also be done based on the results of the present study.