

## **Examining the Effect of Organizational Climate on Job Stress (Case Study: Faculty Members of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad)**

Ahmad Latifian

Department of Management, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran

---

**Abstract:** This study aimed to determine the relationship between organizational climate and job stress of faculty members in Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. The current study objectively is applied research and in terms of nature and method is descriptive-correlation survey. The study population consisted of all faculty members of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. The sample size was estimated 250 people according to the formula of determining sample size. Sampling method is stratified random sampling that using proportional allocation formula, the participants were selected. Standardized organizational climate questionnaire of Kolb; Rubin and McIntyre and also job stress questionnaire of Ivancevich and Matteson was used for collecting the field data. Questionnaires reliability and validity were investigated and confirmed. To test the hypotheses, Pearson-correlation coefficient test method is used. The research results showed that, there is a significant inverse relationship between organizational climate and job stress of faculty members. Moreover, there is a significant inverse relationship between organizational climate variables such as; responsibility, standards, rewards, organization clarity, warmth and support, leadership with job stress. In the end, the required proposals are presented to improve organizational climate and to minimize job stress of faculty members.

**Key words:** Organizational climate, faculty members, job stress, university, mashhad

---

### **INTRODUCTION**

Due to the important role of faculty members in education, it is essential to do basic actions to improve the quality of education and research, to prevent the waste of human capital and material. If the higher educational institutions, especially universities which a bulk of the country budget is allocated to them, have a good organizational climate and the faculty members do their tasks with minimal job stress, in such a condition achieving the goals of higher education will be more rapid. The effectiveness of any organization, is the destination which all of the organizational efforts is performed to arrive it.

To achieve academic effectiveness, the healthy organizational climate (where the managers support teachers and students and teachers are free to the limit of rules and also managers playing roll of facilitator and supporter to teachers) can reduce job stress of the teachers (Chaplain, 1995). Lowenstein examined the symptoms of lecturer's job stress through research and stated that stress leads to physical and mental weakness and diseases. Organizational climate is important concept for managers because organizational goals can be achieve by appropriate and positive organizational climate that help to satisfy members' needs. organizational climate is a term that refers to the perception of teachers from general

environment in universities and it will get effects by formal and informal organization, personality and organizational leadership.

Emphasis on developing organizational climate based on trust, is the essential factors of environmental maintenance, in which the critical factors are under control (Spector, 1998). Organizational climate refers to shared perceptions of policies, practices, formal and informal procedures by personnel. When there is open and positive organizational climate, students and teachers are feeling respected, acceptance and confidence. In such a situation they co-operate for educational objectives (Uline and Moran, 2008).

In a favorable and positive or open organizational climate can find cooperation, loyalty and excellence, but in a negative organizational climate can observe tension, erosion and loss of opportunity (Ghobadi, 1996). One of the causes for gap between favorable and unfavorable organizational climate can be attributed to job stress. It means negative and unfavorable climate can cause job stress and tension. Job stress is perceived such as climate phenomena and is one of the most common consequences of life which in modern times is considered and imposed enormous costs on organizations (Shariati *et al.*, 2011). Inappropriate and negative organizational climate is the result of the lack of coordination between the reality of job and individuals

perceptions of previous expectations of job (Soleimani *et al.*, 2012). Poor organizational climate can lead to physical and psychological disorders (Bahrami *et al.*, 2009). An important factor which always get affected by organizational climate is job stress.

Job stress is mainly due to mismatch between job demands and job resources in which a person suffers from an imbalance between perception of his needs to reveal in workplace and the capability for compatibility with those needs (Soleimani *et al.*, 2012). Of course, stress itself is not actually bad, because in stress, the person mentally is out of normal status and he reveal some kind of excitement that can be positive and negative type. Positive stress, such as employee happiness due to the upgrade notification is given to him and negative stress, like a reprimand employee receives from his superiors. Often stress is known harmful and will be investigated in its negative sense (Ghaseminejad and Siyadat, 2004). Occupation and its features, have a great share in the creation and enhancement of stress. Some jobs, such as police intrinsically are under stress. Other jobs can be referred to faculty members in universities, which they face delicate and sensitive job. At the same time, they should pay attention to three important demands with their limited resources. This demands are related to their specialty, the community and the university. The specialty is that, it is expected they play a crucial role in producing and developing theoretical and applied aspects of science. The society entrusted students to them for education and the university is also calling their attention to the educational framework and regulations. Hence, such pressure could be the potential factors of job stress and reducing productivity of faculty members. (Soleimani *et al.*, 2012). Various studies have shown that creating positive organizational climate lead to reducing job stress. In appropriate and positive organizational climate, fewer employees faced with job stress, so they experience more calmness and peace on the job. Anderson (1982), concluded that in educational organizations which they have negative organizational climate, the teachers feel more humiliated as well as conflicting and job stress rather than to those educational institutions with open organizational climate. Imants (1995) in his research concluded that organizational climate of educational organizations have a powerful impact on the effectiveness of teachers. Given the discussion above, the present study seeks the answer of question that whether there is relationship between organizational climate and job stress of faculty members? whether organizational climate can be helpful to reduce

job stress of faculty members or it is not effective to their job stress? Therefore, the aim of this study is to determine the relationship between organizational climate and its components relationship with job stress of faculty members. It is hoped that the results of this research can be effective in decision-makings and adopting appropriate policies to improve organizational climate and minimize job stress within the faculty members at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad.

**Background of the research:** An overview on the results of similar researches indicates that inappropriate organizational climate can be effective to job stress and low performance of teachers. Researchers have been identified a number of organizational climate variables which affecting job stress in different educational organizations. Chaplain (1995) research in secondary school showed that in positive organizational climate, the behavior of teachers and administrators has been honest, energetic, purposeful and supportive.

Zare *et al.* (2010) showed that, there is a negative relationship between open organizational climate with job stress and also there is warmth, consideration, influence and mobility in open organizational climate. Safari (2010) research showed that, there is a positive relationship between reward, expertise and referent power of managers with organizational climate. Also there is a negative relationship between coercive power with organizational climate in schools.

Mahboubi (1992), research results also showed that there is a significant relationship between organizational climate and teachers' performance. Keramati (2013) findings showed that, there is inverse and meaningful relationship Between organizational structure, accountability and respond, reward, warmth and management support with job stress of teachers. In this research organizational climate variables such as warmth and friendship, reward, organizational structure, organizational standards and supporting teachers by managers were important predictors of job stress. Ghaseminejad and Siyadat (2004) concluded that there is a significant inverse relationship between organizational climate with job stress and job satisfaction of teachers in Kordestan high schools.

**The conceptual model of research:** In this study the relationship between organizational climate and job stress variables is shown in Fig. 1.

**The main research hypothesis:** There is a significant relationship between organizational climate and job stress.

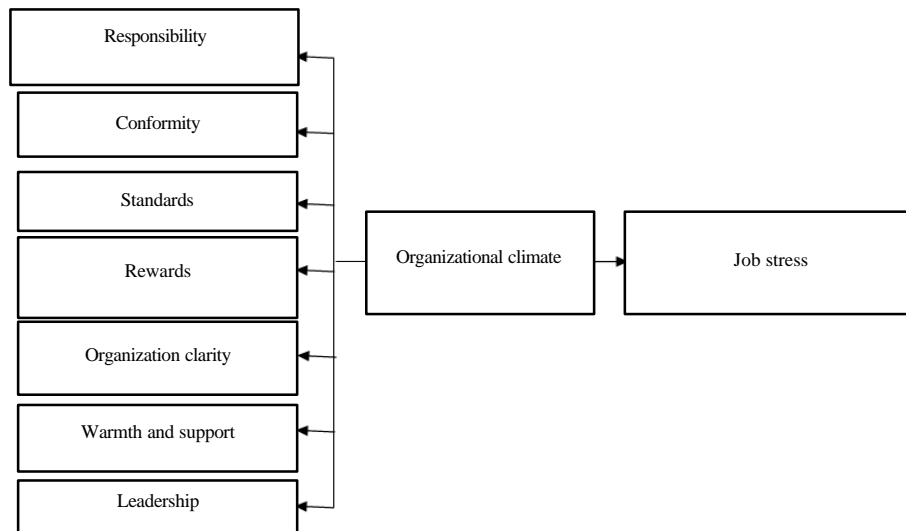


Fig. 1: The conceptual model

#### Secondary hypotheses:

- There is a significant relationship between compatibility and job stress
- There is a significant relationship between individual responsibility and job stress
- There is a significant relationship between standards and job stress
- There is a significant relationship between rewards and job stress
- There is a significant relationship between organization clarity and job stress
- There is a significant relationship between warmth and job stress
- There is a significant relationship between leadership and job stress

#### MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research objectively is an applied research and in terms of nature and method is descriptive- correlation survey. This study is conducted at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad in 2013. Statistical population consisted of all faculty members (760 people) with a minimum degree of MA. For determining the sample size, the formula of determining sample size of Cochran was used and 250 people were selected randomly. For collecting data, standardized organizational climate questionnaire with 17 questions which was developed by Kolb *et al.* (1979) has been used as independent variable. This questionnaire is based on seven indicators include: conformity, responsibility, standards, rewards, organization clarity

warmth and support, leadership (Fig. 1). Also, job stress questionnaire with 25 questions which was developed by Ivancevich *et al.* (1980) has been used as dependent variable in this research. Questionnaires included closed type questions in a Likert scale of 5 ranks. Validity of the questionnaires is confirmed. Reliability of the organizational climate questionnaire calculated according to Cronbach's alpha and is equal to 0.69 and job stress questionnaire is 0.89 which shows the high reliability of both questionnaires. To describe the demographic variables, descriptive statistics indicators were used and to answer questions and test of hypotheses, the inferential static indicators, especially Pearson's correlation coefficient test is applied. In the analysis of data, SPSS Software have been used.

#### Definition of indicators of organizational climate questionnaire

**Conformity:** The feeling that there are many externally imposed constraints in the organization; the degree to which members feel that there are many rules, procedures, policies and practices to which they have to conform rather than being able to do their work as they see fit.

**Responsibility:** Members of the organization are given personal responsibility to achieve their part of the organization's goals; the degree to which members feel that they can make decisions and solve problems without checking with superiors each step of the way.

**Standards:** The emphasis the organization places on quality performance and outstanding production

Table 1: The frequency of general information of sample population

Age	Percentage	Academic level	Percentage	Qualification	Percentage	Management	Percentage	Gender	Frequency (%)
34-45	59/2	Instructor	22	MA	2/4	Manager	14/4	Male	92/8
46-55	39/6	Associate Professor	74/4	Ph.D	97/6	Non-manager	75/6	Female	7/2
56-65	1/2	Associate Professor							
		Professor	3/6						
Total	100		100		100		100		100

including the degree to which the member feels the organization is setting challenging goals for itself and communicating these goal commitments to members.

**Rewards:** The degree to which members feel that they are being recognized and rewarded for good work rather than being ignored, criticized, or punished when something goes wrong.

**Organization clarity:** The feeling among members that things are well-organized and goals are clearly defined rather than being disorderly, confused, or chaotic.

**Warmth and support:** The feeling that friendliness is a valued norm in the organization; that members trust one another and offer support to one another. The feeling that good relationships prevail in the work environment.

**Leadership:** The willingness of organization members to accept leadership and direction from qualified others. As needs for leadership arise, members feel free to take leadership roles and are rewarded for successful leadership. Leadership is based on expertise. The organization is not dominated by or dependent on, one or two individuals (Kolb *et al.*, 1979).

**Investigating general information:** According to information obtained from the demographic (population) part of questionnaire, some of the characteristics of the population, including gender, age, educational level and academic level, employment status in the form of frequency Tables have been estimated (Table 1).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- $H_1$ : There is a significant relationship between organizational climate with job stress

Because the variables were measured on interval scale in this research, the pearson correlation coefficient test has been carried out to see the relationship between the variables of organizational climate and job stress. So, the following assumptions are testing through pearson correlation test.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation test between organizational climate and job stress

Lines	Test statistics	Results
1	Pearson correlation value	-0/165
2	Significance	0/03

$$\begin{cases} H_0 : \rho = 0 \\ H_1 : \rho \neq 0 \end{cases}$$

The  $H_0$  means, there is no relationship between two variables X and Y and  $H_1$  means, there is a significant relationship between the two variable. If the obtained Sig. is smaller than level of significance 0/05, the null hypothesis will be rejected and alternative hypothesis will be accepted. So, the results of the  $H_1$  test are shown in the following Table.

As shown in Table 2, the correlation value has been obtained -0.165 and significance is 0/03 because Sig. is smaller than the level of significance (0.03<0/05). Which shows that there is a significant inverse and negative relationship between organizational climate and job stress. It means, favorable and open organizational climate will reduce Job stress. This finding is consistent with the result of researches by Ghaseminejad and Siyadat (2004) Juliet and Vijila (2012), Chaplain (1995) and Mahboobi (1992) which showed that there is a significant inverse relationship between organizational climate and job stress. So all seven indicators of organizational climate are significant predictors of job stress experienced by the faculty members.

**H(1-1):** There is a significant relationship between conformity and job stress.

As shown in Table 2, the correlation value has been obtained 0.233 and significance is 0/01 because sig is smaller than the level of significance (0/01<0/05) which shows that there is a significant positive relationship between conformity and job stress. It means, conformity with rules will increase job stress. This finding is consistent with the result of researches of Safari (2010) which concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between coercive power of managers for conformity to rules and regulation and job stress. So, conformity is a significant predictor of job stress experienced by the faculty members.

Table 3: Pearson correlation test between conformity and job stress

Lines	Test statistics	Results
1	Pearson correlation value	0/233
2	Significance	0/01

Table 4: Pearson Correlation test between individual responsibility and job stress

Lines	Test statistics	Results
1	Pearson correlation value	-0/163
2	Significance	0/03

Table 5: Pearson correlation test between standards and job stress

Lines	Test statistics	Results
1	Pearson correlation value	-0/154
2	Significance	0/03

As shown in Table 3, the correlation value has been obtained -0/163 and significance is 0/03 because Sig. is smaller than the level of significance ( $0/03 < 0/05$ ), which shows that, there is a significant neative relationship between individual responsibility and job stress. It means individual responsibility will decrease job stress. This finding is consistent with the findings of Safari (2010) which concluded that there is a significant negative relationship between individual responsibility and job stress. So, individual responsibility is a significant predictor of job stress experienced by the faculty members.

- $H_3$ : There is a significant relationship between standards and job stress

As shown in Table 4, the correlation value has been obtained -0/154 and significance is 0/03 because Sig. is smaller than the level of significance ( $0/03 < 0/05$ ) which shows that there is a significant negative relationship between standards and job stress. It means standards will decrease job stress. This finding is consistent with the research by Keramati (2013) which concluded that there is a significant negative relationship between standards and job stress of teachers. So, standards is a significant predictor of job stress experienced by the faculty members.

- $H_4$ : There is a significant relationship between rewards and job stress

As shown in Table 5, the correlation value has been obtained -0/182 and significance is 0/01 because sig is smaller than the level of significance ( $0/01 < 0/05$ ) which shows that there is a significant negative relationship between rewards and job stress. It means, rewards will decrease job stress. This finding is consistent with the research of Keramati (2013) which concluded that there is a significant negative relationship between rewards and

Table 6: Pearson correlation test between rewards and job stress

Lines	Test statistics	Results
1	Pearson correlation value	-0/182
2	Significance	0/01

Table 7: Pearson correlation test between organization clarity and job stress

Lines	Test statistics	Results
1	PearsonCorrelationvalue	-0/180
2	significance	0/01

Table 8: Pearson Correlation test between warmth and job stress

Line	Test statistics	Results
1	Pearson correlation value	-0/175
2	Significance	0/02

Table 9: Pearson correlation test between leadership and job stress

Line	Test statistics	Results
1	Pearson correlation value	-0/173
2	Significance	0/02

job stress of teachers. So rewards is a significant predictor of job stress experienced by the faculty members.

- $H_5$ : There is a significant relationship between organization clarity and job stress

As shown in Table (6), the correlation value has been obtained -0/180 and significance is 0/01 because Sig. is smaller than the level of significance ( $0/01 < 0/05$ ) which shows that there is a significant negative relationship between organization clarity and job stress. So, organization clarity is a significant predictor of job stress experienced by the faculty members

- $H_6$ : There is a significant relationship between warmth and job stress

As shown in Table 7, the correlation value has been obtained -0/175 and significance is 0/02 because Sig. is smaller than the level of significance ( $0/02 < 0/05$ ), it shows that there is a significant negative relationship between warmth and job stress. It means, warmth will decrease job stress. This finding is consistent with the research of Keramati (2013) which showed that, there is a significant negative relationship between warmth and job stress of teachers. So warmth is a significant predictor of job stress experienced by the faculty members

- $H_7$ : There is a significant relationship between leadership based on expert power and job stress

As shown in Table 8 and 9 the correlation value has been obtained -0/173 and significance is 0/02 because Sig. is smaller than the level of significance ( $0/02 < 0/05$ ) which

shows that there is a significant negative relationship between leadership and job stress. It means, leadership based on expert power will decrease job stress. This finding is consistent with the research of Keramati (2013) which concluded that there is a significant negative relationship between leadership and job stress of teachers. So expertize leadership is a significant predictor of job stress experienced by the faculty members

### CONCLUSION

This study sought to evaluate the effect of the organizational climate and job stress among university faculty members. Theoretical background of research has shown that negative and unfavorable organizational climate can be a critical factor in creating and increasing job stress. In the space of favorable and positive organizational climate, individuals adapt themselves with institutional constraints and framework. On the basis of the responsibility and delegated authority, individuals try to play an effective role to achieve challenging goals. In a positive organizational climate, individuals pay attention and care for bonuses, warmth, human relation and competent expertize leaders. Moreover, the results of this study also showed that, positive organizational climate has a significant inverse effect on job stress which that confirms the main hypothesis of this research. So, the results indicates that, all seven indicators of organizational climate are the predictors of faculty members' job stress. This finding is consistent with the researches of Ghaseminejad and Siyadat (2004), Juliet and Vijila (2012), Halpin and Croft (1995), Mahboobi (1992) which found that there is a significant inverse relationship between organizational climate and job stress. Based on the results of this study, it is suggested that the management should be aware of the important role of organizational climate on job stress and its effect on performance and efficiency of faculty members. The test result of hypothesis (1-1) showed that there is a significant positive relationship between conformity and job stress. It means whatever the compulsion for conformity is more, job stress is also more. Conformity is the feeling that there are many rules, procedures, policies and practices imposed constraints, which faculty member have to conform rather than being able to do their work as they see fit. So, management of university should try to minimize the faculty members' job stress by creating appropriate official and non-official rules and regulations. Also short-term training courses should be held for faculty members to explain and understand the importance of conformity to rules, procedures and policies. The test result of H(1-2) to H(1-7) showed that, There is a significant negative relationship between

components of organizational climate such as; responsibility, standards, rewards, organization clarity, warmth and support, leadership with job stress. In order to create a desirable organizational climate, management should specially focus on improving these components of organizational climate, so that will decrease the job stress of faculty members. The following suggestions could be helpful to this aim.

### SUGGESTIONS

- Management should develop clear and recognizable rules, procedures and policies in such a way that the conformity will be possible
- Personal responsibility should be given according to proficiency, ability and talent of faculty members to achieve their specified goals. Management should try to avoid interfering in the faculty members' work by formulating clear responsibility and authority. Training courses such as self-management, time management, decision-making can be helpful to enhance capability of faculty members
- Designing realistic and achievable quality performance and outstanding scientific production will help to improve standards and academic pathways for achievement of faculty members
- The rewards and bonuses schemes should be in such a way that rewards and punishments are clearly known and being recognized by faculty members
- Organizational goals should be defined clearly through creation of an environment in which the faculty members can easily participate and express their views about goals
- The management should provide a sense of support and friendliness as valued norm to improve warmth among all faculty members
- Academic leaders should be promoted based on their academic expertise power. The management should plan in such a way that, faculty members feel free to take leadership roles based on expertise and are rewarded for effective academic leadership

### REFERENCES

- Anderson, C.S., 1982. The search for school climate: A review of the research. *Rev. Educ. Res.*, 52: 368-420.
- Bahrami, A., A. Hussein, A. Mousavi, M. Hanani and Y. Ramezani, 2009. Job stress among nurses in Hospitals of Kashan district. *J. Faize*, 15: 366-373, (In Persian).
- Chaplain, R.P., 1995. Stress and job satisfaction: A study of English primary school teachers. *Educ. Psychol.*, 15: 473-489.

- Ghaseminejad, A. and S.A. Siyadat, 2004. Organizaonal climate relationship with job stress and its effects on high schools teachers. *J. Daneshvar Raftar*, 11: 55-64, (In Persian).
- Ghobadi, A., 1996. Survey of culture and organizational climate and its relationship with employee productivity of Broadcasting. Master's Thesis, Tehran of University, Tehran.
- Imants, J.V.Z., 1995. Teacher sickness absentee in primary schools, school climate and teachers sense of efficiency. *School Organiz.*, 5: 78-88.
- Ivancevich, J., M. Michael and T. Matteson, 1980. *Stress and Work: A Managerial Perspective*. Scott Foresman, Glenview, ISBN: 9780673153814, pp: 118-200.
- Juliet, G.J. and K. Vijila, 2012. Impact of organizational climate on job stress for women employees in information technology sector in India. *Asia Pacific J. Res. Bus. Manage.*, 2: 66-76.
- Keramati, M.R., 2013. Relationship between organizational climate and job stress. *Quarterly J. New Thoughts Educ. Iran*, 4: 103-140, (In Persian).
- Kolb, D.A., E.M. Rubin and J.M. McIntyre, 1979. *Organizational Psychology: An Experiential Approach*. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ., pp: 193-194.
- Mahboubi, T., 1992. The relationship between organizational climate and teachers performance of high schools in Bukan district. Master's Thesis, University of Allameh Tabatabaei, Tehran, Iran.
- Safari, S., 2010. Assessment of executive power and its relationship with organizational climate from the perspective of school teachers. *J. Ind. Organiz. Psychol.*, 3: 41-48.
- Shariati, M., S.M. Noorbakhsh, S.A. Rafatiasl and S. Behriz, 2011. Factors affecting Job Stress of graduates who employed in the police stations of Tehran. *J. Security Manage. Stud.*, 6: 266-296.
- Soleimani, N., N. Abaszadeh and B. Niazazari, 2012. Relationship between work ethics with job satisfaction and job stress in the of vocational training organization of Tehran. *J. New Approaches Educ. Manage.*, 3: 21-38, (In Persian).
- Spector, P.E., 1998. A Control Model of the Job Stress Process. In: *Theories of Organizational Stress*, Cooper, C.L. (Ed.). Oxford University Press, London, pp: 153-169.
- Uline, C. and M. Moran, 2008. The walls speak: The interplay of quality facilities, school climate and student achievement. *J. Educ. Administration*, 46: 55-73.
- Zare, H., A. Faizi and T. Mahboobi, 2010. To investigate the relationship between organizational climate with job stress and creativity of employees in Education and development organization of West Azerbaijan province. *J. Behav. Sci. Res.*, 8: 2-2.