

## The Relationship between Job Stress and Organizational Commitment in Tax Organization

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### **Abstract**

*Organizational Commitment has been defined as the extent that an individual accepts, internalizes, and views his or her role based on organizational values and goals. The three components –affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment– form the basis of a new conceptualization of organizational commitment. Job stress has become one of the most serious health issues in the modern world, as it occurs in any job and is even more present than decades ago. The purpose of this research was to study the relationship between job stress and organizational commitment in Mazandaran Tax Organization's employees. Statistical population of this research included all employees (full time) of Tax Organization of Mazandaran (N=243) and statistical sample was equal to (n=149). The results indicated a positive significant relationship between job stress and organizational commitment, affective commitment and normative commitment, but there was not a significant relationship between job stress and continuance commitment.*

**Keywords:** Job Stress, Organizational Commitment, Tax Organization

## Introduction

Human resources often account for a large part of an organization's cost structure in delivering its products and services and any substantial increase in these costs can adversely affect the ongoing viability and profitability of the organization. Job stress is a growing problem that results in substantial costs to individual employees and work organizations around the globe. The overall cost of stress at work has been estimated to be in the range of 20 billion Euros in the European Union and more than 150 billion dollars in US, mainly for health care and treatment costs, absenteeism and turnover costs, absenteeism and turnover. Stress is a word derived from Latin word "Stingere" meaning to draw tight. Stress concept that comes from medicine and physiology was formed by Cannon research (1915) in connection with the physiological responses to stress (Khatibi, Asadi, & Hamidi, 2009).

Armstrong (1998) stated: "As Guest, 1987 indicated, HRM policies are designed to "maximize organizational integration, employee commitment, flexibility and quality of work". For the topic in question our focal interest refers to "Commitment" which can be described as attachment and loyalty. Individuals can display this attachment and loyalty at a variety of levels: their job, profession, department, boss or organization. Realistically then, commitment may therefore be diverse and divided between any of these. More specifically, organizational commitment has been defined by Mowday, 1992 as consisting of three components: identification with the goal's and values of the organization, a desire to belong to the organization and a

willingness to display effort on behalf of the organization". (p. 319)

Research on organizational commitment spans over four decades and remains an area of interest to both researchers and practitioners (WeiBo, Kaur, & WeiJun, 2010). Much of the interest in analyzing job satisfaction and organizational commitment stems from concern for the behavioral consequences that are hypothesized to result from job satisfaction and/or organizational commitment. Among other topics, job satisfaction and/or organizational commitment have been shown or argued to be related to productivity, attendance at work, turnover, retirement, participation, labor militancy, sympathy for unions, and psychological withdrawal from work (Camp, 1993).

Organizational commitment remains one of the most widely studied phenomena in the organizational behavior literature and one of the central concepts in psychology (Addae, & Parboteeah, 2008).

Like motivation, commitment has been a difficult concept to define. Meyer and Allen (1991) compiled a list of definitions and analyzed the similarities and differences. The similarities served as the basis for a definition of what they considered the "core essence" of commitment: Commitment is a force that binds an individual to a course of action that is of relevance to a particular target (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberghe, 2004).

## Literature Review

Organizational commitment has been defined as the extent that an individual accepts, internalizes, and views his or her

role based on organizational values and goals. The three

Components –affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment– form the basis of a new conceptualization of organizational commitment (Boehman, 2006).

The concept of commitment in the workplace is still one of the most challenging and researched concepts in the fields of management, organizational behavior, and HRM (WeiBo et al., 2010; Sowmya & Panchanatham, 2011).

Meyer and Allen (1991; Allen & Meyer, 1990) initially developed their three-component model to address observed similarities and differences in existing unidimensional conceptualizations of organizational commitment. Like all they belied that commitment binds an individual to an organization and thereby reduces the likelihood of turnover. The main differences were in the mindsets presumed to characterize the commitment. These mindsets reflected three distinct themes: affective attachment to the organization, obligation to remain, and perceived cost of leaving. To distinguish among commitments characterized by these different mindsets, Meyer and Allen labeled them “affective commitment,” “normative commitment,” and “continuance commitment,” respectively (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberghe, 2004).

Meyer and Allen's' three - component model of OC has been the dominant framework for OC research in the past decade because it is based on a more comprehensive understanding of OC. The three-component model consists of: (a) affirmative commitment (AC) is the

emotional attachment to one's organization, (b) continuance commitment (CC) is the attachment based on the accumulation of valued side bets such as pension, skill transferability, relocation, and self-investment that co-vary with organizational membership); and, (c) normative commitment (NC) attachment that is based on motivation to conform to social norms regarding attachment (Allen, & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer, Irving, & Allen, 1998; Khatibi et al., 2009; Sowmya & Panchanatham, 2011).

Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian (1974), define organizational commitment as “the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization” (Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974).

Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1982) stated:

“An individual becomes committed to an organization when (a) they internalize the goals and values of the organization; (b) they are willing to exert effort in the attainment of the organization's goals, and (c) they have a strong desire to remain in the organization”. (p.27)

Meyer and Allen (1997) defined organizational commitment as “reflecting the affective orientation toward the organization, a recognition of costs associated with leaving the organization, and a moral obligation to remain with the organization” (Meyer & Allen, 1997, p. 11).

Organizational commitment refers to “a state in which a subordinate identifies with a particular organization and its goals, and wishes to maintain their membership in the organization”. Organizational commitment, which was defined as “loyalty to a social

unit”, has been a concern of managers in many countries. Commitment involves a social contract and the implicit mutual promise of continuing employment and evolving subordinate’s careers. Many researchers found that an organization’s success is determined, in part, by having a high degree of organizational commitment. Organizational commitment is important because it represents the positive side of business. Organizational commitment is also associated with other positive organizational outcomes such as improved performance. Many researchers have indicated that organizational commitment is associated with reduced absenteeism and employee turnover. Employee turnover is very costly. Organizations have to spend money on exit interviews, severance pay, hiring costs, and lost productivity while training the new hires. Getting the best workers and keeping them committed to the organization can help organizations survive and also increase their competitiveness (Rengpian, 2007).

Met analyses indicate that commitment is negatively related to turnover, absenteeism, and counterproductive behavior and positively related to job satisfaction, motivation, and organizational citizenship behaviors. Moreover, research studies have provided evidence of a positive correlation between organizational commitment and job performance. Low commitment has also been associated with low levels of morale and decreased measures of altruism and compliance. Finally, non-committed employees may describe the organization in negative terms to outsiders thereby inhibiting the organization’s ability to recruit high-quality employees (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006).

A highly committed person will indicate a strong desire to remain a member of a particular organization, a willingness to exert high levels of effort on behalf of the organization, and a definite belief and acceptance of the values and goals of the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Jamal, 2011; Al-Hawajreh, 2011).

Organizational commitment had been identified to have significant relationships with job satisfaction, job involvement, stress, occupational commitment, and motivation. One study found that individuals who have a high degree of commitment to their organizations experience greater amounts of stress than those who are less committed (Marmaya, Hanisah, Zawawi, Hitam, & Mohd Jody, 2011).

Several researchers evaluated the theory of organizational commitment by linking this concept with such factors as: (1) job satisfaction (e.g. Warsi, Fatima, & Sahibzada, 2009; Malik, Nawab, Naeem, & Danish, 2010; Wu & Norman, 2006; Currivan, 1999; AL-Hussami, 2008; Paik, Parboteeah, & Shim, 2007; Al-Aameri, 2000; Lok, Wang, Westwood, & Crawford, 2007); (2) turnover (e.g. Ben-Bakr, Al-Shammari, Jefri, & Prasad, 1994; Currivan, 1999; Shore & Martin, 1989; Geurts, Schaufeli, & Rutte, 1999; Huselid & Day, 1991); (3) absenteeism (e.g. Geurts, Schaufeli, & Rutte, 1999); (4) job involvement (e.g. Uygur & Kilic, 2009; Huselid & Day, 1991); (5) organizational citizenship behaviour (e.g. Feather & Rauter, 2004; Yilmaz & Cokluk-Bokeoglu, 2008; Noor, 2009; Gautam, Van Dick, Wagner, Upadhyay, & Davis, 2005; Zeinabadi, 2010); (6) job performance (e.g. Paik et al., 2007; Shore & Martin, 1989;

Riketta, 2002), and (7) Effectiveness (Angle & Perry, 1981).

Stress, in general, and occupational stress, in particular, is a fact of modern day life that seems to have been on the increase. Occupational (job, work or workplace) stress has become one of the most serious health issues in the modern world, as it occurs in any job and is even more present than decades ago. Namely, the world of work differs considerably from the working environment of 30 years ago: longer hours at work are not unusual, frequent changes in culture and structure are often cited, as well as the loss of lifetime career paths, which all leads to greater and levels of stress (Voki , & Bogdanic, 2007).

Job stress can be defined as an individual's reactions to characteristics of the work environment that seem emotionally and physically threatening. It points to a poor fit between the individual's capabilities and his or her work environment, in which excessive demands are made of the individual or the individual is not fully prepared to handle a particular situation. In general, the higher the imbalance between demands and the individual's abilities, the higher will be experienced stress. Job performance can be viewed as an activity in which an individual is able to accomplish successfully the task assigned to him or her, subject to the normal constraints of the reasonable utilization of available resources (Jamal, 2011).

Stress has been defined in different ways over the years. Originally, it was conceived as pressure from the environment, then as strain within the person. It is the psychological and physical state that results when the resources of the

individual are not sufficient to cope with the demands and pressures of the situation. Thus, stress is more likely in some situations than others and in some individuals than others. Stress is not always negative or harmful and indeed, the absence of stress is death. Stress is the non-specific response of the body to any demand, positive or negative, made upon it (Kazmi, Amjad, & Khan, 2008).

Stress is a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint, or demand related to what he or she desires and the outcome of which is perceived to be both uncertain and important (Tang, 2008).

Occupational stress is defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, responses, or need of the worker. Work place stress or job stress is defined as any characteristic of the job environment that poses a threat to the individual, either excessive demands or insufficient supplies to meet the need and lead to a risingsion in a person (Al-Hawajreh, 2011).

Jennings (2008) stated: "Stress has been regarded as an occupational hazard since the mid-1950s. In fact, occupational stress has been cited as a significant health problem. Stress is "a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being." Stress is not inherently deleterious, however. Each individual's cognitive appraisal, their perceptions and interpretations, gives meaning to events and determines whether events are viewed as threatening or positive.<sup>2</sup> Personality traits also influence the stress equation because what may be

overtaxing to one person may be exhilarating to another". (p. 671).

Stress is associated with impaired individual functioning in the workplace. Negative effects include reduced efficiency, decreased capacity to perform, dampened initiative and reduced interest in work, increased rigidity of thought, a lack of concern for the organization and colleagues, and a loss of responsibility. Stress has been associated with important occupational outcomes of job satisfaction, organizational commitment and employee withdrawal behavior. High levels of work stress are associated with low levels of job satisfaction and job stressors are predictive of job dissatisfaction and a greater propensity to leave the organization (Fairbrother & Warn, 2003).

Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, and Topolnytsky (2002) found that the Affective commitment correlated negatively with self-reported stress. In 2001, Elangovan studied causal ordering stress, satisfaction and commitment, and intention to quit, and found that the various models also provided information on the causal ordering among stress, satisfaction and commitment. Stress had a moderate negative effect on satisfaction, implying that higher levels of stress lead to lower job satisfaction. Stress did not have a direct causal effect on commitment. Analysis on the causal links from satisfaction and commitment to stress were also not supported (Elangovan, 2001).

Vakola and Nikolaou (2005) found that there were negative correlations between occupational stressors and attitudes to change, indicating that highly stressed individuals demonstrate decreased commitment and increased reluctance to accept organizational change interventions.

The results showed that there were inverse significant relationship between job stress and organizational commitment (Vakola, & Nikolaou, 2005).

Schmidt (2007) studied relationships between dimensions of organizational commitment and job stress, and found that highly committed employees experience the adverse effects of stress more than less committed employees, and revealed the effects of high stress on the burnout dimensions of exhaustion and depersonalization were reduced with increasing commitment to the organization (Schmidt, 2007).

In 2007, Lee study found that a negative relationship between job stress and organizational commitment (Lee, 2007).

One study (Mostert, Rothmann, Mostert, & Nell, 2008) found that occupational stressors impacted more on organizational commitment (rather than ill health). Three stressors, namely job control, resources, communication and work relationships, impacted significantly on organizational commitment (Mostert, Rothmann, Mostert, & Nell, 2008).

Khatibi, Asadi, and Hamidi (2009) found that negative significant relationship between job stress and organizational commitment, affective commitment and normative commitment, but there was not a significant relationship between job stress and continuance commitment. As the employees' job stress increases, their employees' continuance commitment can rise. In review of commitment to organization decreases and vice versa (Khatibi, Asadi, & Hamidi, 2009).

One study (Yaghoubi, Yarmohammadian, & Afshar, 2009) found that there was a significant correlation between job stress and organization

commitment (Yaghoubi, Yarmohammadian, & Afshar, 2009).

Wells, Minor, Angel, Matz, and Amato (2009) found a positive relationship between job stress and organizational commitment and a negative relationship between job stress and career commitment (Wells, Minor, Angel, Matz, & Amato, 2009).

Boyas and Wind (2009) found a negative relationship between job stress and organizational commitment (Boyas & Wind, 2009).

A recent study (Al-Hawajreh, 2011) has indicated that there is a statistically significant negative correlation between organizational commitment and occupational stress (Al-Hawajreh, 2011).

In this paper, we investigated the relationship between Organizational Commitment and Job Stress among Tax Organization's employees in the province of Mazandaran, Islamic Republic of Iran. The hypothesis of this study are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: there is significant relationship between Organizational Commitment and Job Stress among Tax Organization's employees.

Hypothesis 2: there is significant relationship between affective Commitment and Job Stress among Tax Organization's employees.

Hypothesis 3: there is significant relationship between continuance Commitment and Job Stress among Tax Organization's employees.

Hypothesis 4: there is significant relationship between normative Commitment and Job Stress among Tax Organization's employees.

## Methodology

In present study, the scale used for the measurement of commitment is developed by Allen and Meyer (1990) describing three types of organizational commitment i.e. affective, normative and continuance commitment. Then, questionnaire was used to measure Job Stress of the employees. Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table was used to select statistical sample. Statistical population of this research included all employees (full time) of Tax Organization of Mazandaran ( $N=243$ ) and statistical sample was equal to ( $n=149$ ). In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to test the reliability of the questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis.

**Table 1: Reliability Statistics**

	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Job Stress	.874	19
Organizational Commitment	.764	24

## Data Analyses

The results of the descriptive statistics indicated that:

1. 110 employees (73/8%) were men and 39 employees (26/2%) were women.
2. 55 employees (36/9%) were between 30 and 40 years, 90 employees (60/4%) were between 41 and 50 years and 4 employees (2/7%) were more than 50 years.
3. 3 employees (2%) had diploma, 35 employees (23/5%) had undergraduate degree, and 111 employees (74/5%) had graduate degree.
4. 1 employee (0/7%) was less than 5 years, 11 employees (7/4%) were less than 10 years, 37 employees (24/8%) were

between 10 and 15 years, 86 employees (57/7%) were between 15 and 20 years, 14 employees (9/4%) were more than 20 years' experience.

The relationship between organizational commitment and job stress showed that job stress had a significant positive correlation with organizational commitment ( $p < 0.05$ ;  $r = 0.389$ ) (table 2). So hypothesis 1 of this study that there is significant relationship between Employees job stress and organizational commitment is accepted; as well, Correlation analysis establishes that affective commitment ( $p < 0.05$ ;  $r = 0.342$ ) (table 3) and normative commitment ( $p < 0.05$ ;  $r = 0.291$ ) (table 4) had a significant positive correlation with job stress. So hypothesis 2 and 3 of present study that there are significant relationship between employees job stress and affective commitment and normative commitment are accepted. Findings indicated that the correlation between continuance commitment and job stress, however, was negative but not significant ( $p < 0.05$ ;  $r = -0.046$ ) (table 5). So hypothesis 4 of this study that there is significant relationship between employees job stress and continuance commitment is not accepted. Tables show the correlation between job stress and three components of organizational commitment (table 2-5).

As there is a significant and positive relationship between job stress and organizational commitment ( $r = 0.389$ ), it means that an increase in job stress may increase organizational commitment.

**Table 2: Correlations Coefficient between Organizational Commitment and Job Stress**

		Job Stress	Organizational Commitment
Job Stress	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.389(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	149	149
Organizational Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.389(**)	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	149	149

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 3: Correlations Coefficient between Affective Commitment and Job Stress**

		Job Stress	Affective Commitment
Job Stress	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.342(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	149	149
Affective Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.342(**)	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	149	149

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 4: Correlations Coefficient between Normative Commitment and Job Stress**

		Job Stress	Normative Commitment
Job Stress	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.291(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	149	149
Normative Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	.291(**)	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	149	149

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 5: Correlations Coefficient between Continuance Commitment and Job Stress**

		Job Stress	Continuance Commitment
Job Stress	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.046
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.579
	N	149	149
Continuance Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	-.046	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.579	.
	N	149	149

### Discussion and conclusion

The purpose of present research was to study the relationship between job stress and organizational commitment in Mazandaran Tax Organization's employees, Islamic Republic of Iran. These relationships are important to managers today because they identify possible ways to increase organizational commitment. According to logic, stress should relate negatively to organizational commitment by employees, but the relationship between organizational commitment and job stress, in this present study, showed that job stress had a significant positive correlation with organizational commitment. As the employees' job stress increases, their commitment to organization increases and vice versa.

This result of present research is consistent with the research results of Marmaya et al. (2011), Schmidt (2007), Wells et al. (2009), and Ziauddin et al. (2011), but inconsistent with the research results of Al-Hawajreh (2011), Boyas and Wind (2009), Chen et al. (2011), Khatibi et al. (2009), Lee (2007), and Vakola and Nikolaou (2005).

Also Mostert et al. (2008) and Yaghoubi et al. (2009) found that a

relationship between job stress and organizational commitment, neither positive nor negative, and Elangovan (2001) found that stress did not have a direct causal effect on commitment.

Findings indicated that affective commitment had a significant positive correlation with job stress which is consistent with the research results of Ziauddin et al. (2011), but inconsistent with the research results of Khatibi et al. (2009) and Meyer et al. (2002).

Findings showed that there was the positive correlation between continuance commitment and job stress but not significant. This findings is consistent with the research results of Khatibi et al. (2009), but inconsistent with the research results of Meyer et al. (2002), Yaghoubi et al. (2009) and Ziauddin et al. (2011).

Finally, finding showed that normative commitment had a significant positive correlation with job stress which is consistent with any research results, but inconsistent with the research results of Khatibi et al. (2009) and Ziauddin et al. (2011).

Therefore, it is highly recommended for the management invest time and resources toward discovering how job stress might be managed for better job performance, as well as for the general well-being of employees (Jamal, 2011; Schmidt, 2007).

Allen and Meyer (1990) stated that the conceptual framework provided here suggests an important consideration for the future study of the consequences of commitment. In all three approaches to organizational commitment, commitment is seen as a negative indicator of turnover (Allen and Meyer, 1990).

The reasons for stress are negative working environment plenty; long working

hours, lack of time for family, irregular eating habits, need to take tough decisions, sleepless nights, poor living conditions, torture by seniors, disturbed personal life. In addition, stress may occur because of organizational factors like management style, poor communication, lack of support, inadequate resources, work overload (Bano, 2011), overload, competitiveness, self-worth demands, and difficulties in decision-making, impossible duties, responsibilities, organizational characteristics, the role in an organization, interpersonal relationships, and career development, and organizational spontaneity and the way individuals appraise and perceive their relationships with the environment might inflict a great deal of stress on them (Chen et al., 2011).

One of ways by which managers could reduce the stressor affects is positive emotions. Positive emotions will promote individuals' flexibility in thinking and problem solving. The experience of positive emotions may contribute to their belief of stress resistance when they are surrounded by challenges and adversity. In addition to the effect of offsetting the immediate adverse consequences of stress, positive emotions also play an important role in recovery processes (Chen et al., 2011).

Managers can help relieve employee stress by providing structured environments with few interpersonal conflicts. Also, through disseminating information through seminars and written material, managers can help employees learn to alleviate their own stress. Less stressful employees tend to be more organizationally committed, providing many benefits to the company.

There are some recommendations to promote organizational commitment and manage work stress:

1) To make friendly atmospheres in work groups in order to have a convenient psychological space in the organization,

2) To create conditions for employees which they could act with lowest stress,

3) To reduce of effect of useless and dysfunctional stressors on employees and their work condition,

4) To increase job security of employees,

5) To create social networks in work condition and involve employees in decision making, and

6) To reduce or eliminate the unreasonable gender, racial, and educational discriminations.

One of the best ways to promote of employees' commitment is employee involvement in organization affairs and matters. As Artley and Stroh (2001) stated:

“Employee involvement is one of the best ways to create a positive culture that thrives on performance measurement. When employees have input into all phases of creating a performance measurement system, buy-in is established as part of the process. Involvement creates ownership which increases loyalty and commitment which increases accountability. Involved employees generally are happy employees, and happy employees contribute to the success of the organization. Make sure the employees understand the? assignment” and the extent of their involvement”. (p. 15).

A manager may be able to provide the needed impetus to increase organizational commitment. Therefore, if a manager can somehow decrease the stressful characteristics of the job environment, a

corresponding increase in organizational commitment could be expected. Managers should try to provide the least stressful work environment as possible. There are many ways that managers could help accomplish this. HRM policy and practice could be contributed significantly to organizational commitment.

The more committed they employees are, the more useful and profitable they are for organization.

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