Masood Nawaz Kalyar / Imran Shafique / Bashir Ahmad

Job stress and performance nexus in tourism industry: A moderation analysis

Abstract

The aim of this research was to examine the impact of job stress on performance (creativity and in-role performance) of employees working in tourism sector of Pakistan. Over and above the direct effect of stress on performance, this study also proposes and empirically tests the moderating effects of social support and perceived organizational politics. Social support is proposed to have positive moderating effect such that higher level reduces, whereas lower level of social support enhances the adverse effect of stress on performance. Contrary to this, perceived organizational politics is suggested as negative moderator where a greater level of perceived organizational politics increases the negative effect of stress on performance. Data were collected from 322 employees working in tourism organizations of Pakistan and were analyzed using hierarchical regression analysis. Findings suggest that employees with higher level of stress perform poor on both creativity and in-role performance. Further, if employees are provided low social support at workplace, it increases the detrimental effect of stress on employee creativity and in-role performance. In addition to that, the findings highlight that higher level of organizational politics catalyzes the detrimental effect of stress on performance. Findings imply that tourist firms can foster employee creativity and in-role performance by providing social support and facilitating workplace environment to cope with stress and organizational politics.

Key words: job stress; creativity; organizational politics; employee performance; tourism; Pakistan

Introduction

A hectic and nerve breaking workplace characterized by '*stress*' makes people feel burdened and causes in disparagement of their consideration from the allocated job. The increasing work pressures to get easy successes make workplace hectic, thereby increase stress-feedbacks and undermine employees' productivity under traditional work frameworks (Grant & Parker, 2009; Labrague et al., 2017). The contemporary economic decline led huge lay-offs and downsizing, which in turn pushed the people to ensure their survival merely through escalating extra work within less timeframe by consuming minimum quantity of resources. This situation of 'busyness' has become status-symbol for most of today's organizations (Avey, Luthans, Hannah, Sweetman & Peterson, 2012). However, job stress (*hereafter stress*) is a big challenge to achieve high performance standards. Hunter and Thatcher (2007) focused on practical implications of performance-related issues resolution and inferred that provision of learning opportunities can help employees to understand the causes of stress which ultimately affects their workplace performance.

A stressful environment puts employees into trouble when they are thought to meet performance expectations set by the organization. However, empathy and support from peers, colleagues, supervisor,

Masood Nawaz Kalyar, PhD, Assistant Professor, Lyallpur Business School, GC University Faisalabad, Pakistan; E-mail: masoodnawaz@gcuf.edu.pk

Imran Shafique, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Management Sciences, COMSATS University Islamabad, Lahore Campus, Pakistan; E-mail: imranshafique@ciitlahore.edu.pk

Bashir Ahmad, PhD, Assistant Professor, Lyallpur Business School, GC University Faisalabad, Pakistan; E-mail: ahmadbashir10@hotmail.com

Original scientific paper
Masood Nawaz Kalyar / Imran Shafique / Bashir Ahmad
Vol. 67/ No. 1/ 2019/ 6 - 21
UDC: 338.486.2-057+338.486.4(549.1)

and other organizational members make employees feel confident in overcoming stressful situations (Elmadağ & Ellinger, 2018). This confidence and comfort, coming from social support, also has potential to enable employees in yielding outstanding performance. Contrary to this, an ambiguous organizational climate allowing political environment, where individuals can reap benefits of their own interest even at the cost of others' progression and organizational goals, may create an environment (i.e. political environment) which discourages employees and reduces their confidence may result in poor employee performance (Li, Chen & Lai, 2017). Such negative environment may also foster job-related stress among employees. Consequently, it is imperative for academicians and practitioners to comprehend the conditions which either enable or disable employees to exhibit superior performance. Taking this into account, the present study is an initiative to understand the conditions which affect employee performance under stressful work environment. Employee performance can be evaluated from two perspectives: cognitive and behavioral (Avey, Reichard, Luthans & Mhatre, 2011). Cognitive performance refers to the effectiveness of "the mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses". These actions include problem solving, memory, attention, thinking, and creativity (Gerstadt, Hong & Diamond, 1994; Revlin, 2013). On the other hand, behavioral aspect of performance focuses on behaviors, actions, and activities individuals display at workplace (Kim & Brymer, 2011; Avey et al., 2011). These actions and behaviors can be further divided into two categories; those directly related with one's formal job (i.e. in-role) and those outside from one's formal job responsibilities (i.e. extra-role) (Hui, Law & Chen, 1999). Extra-role behaviors include helping coworkers, civic virtue, and sportsmanship, while in-role behaviors include job-related performance outcomes (Hui et al., 1999; MacKenzie, Podsakoff & Ahearne, 1998). The present study considers creativity and in-role job performance to measure employee performance, reflecting cognitive and behavioral aspects respectively.

Accordingly, the current study aims to analyze the nexus between stress and performance – creativity and in-role performance - of employees from tourism industry of Pakistan. The tourism sector of Pakistan provides suitable research setting to examining the stress-performance nexus because Pakistan's tourism industry has been reviving after a downfall from terrorism activities which were being carried out at most of tourism destinations. Therefore, tourism personnel are facing increasing pressures to outperform and make contributions in organizational success through engaging in creativity and performing extraordinary at job (in-role performance). Over and above the direct influence of stress on performance, the study also proposes and empirically tests the moderating effects of social support and perceived organizational politics. Social support is hypothesized to have positive moderating effect in such a way that higher level of social support diminishes the negative effect of stress on performance outcomes. In contrast, perceived organizational politics is proposed as negative moderator where a greater level of perceived organizational politics increases the negative influence of stress, thus enhancing detrimental effects on performance.

Literature and hypotheses

Linking job stress with creativity and in-role performance

Stress is referred to a mental state that originates when an individual discerns that the requirements of a particular condition have surpassed from his/her perceived aptitude to manage them (Lazarus, 1996). Stress can be divided into two forms; challenge stress and hindrance stress (Cavanaugh, Boswell, Roehling & Boudreau, 2000). The challenge stress refers to the conditions which overwhelm one and might lead to one's personal advancement or benefit, while the hindrance stress surpasses from ones'

perceived aptitude and can harm one's personal advancement or benefit (Mawritz, Folger & Latham, 2014). In addition, challenge stress is characterized with positive emotions (e.g., excitement), whereas hindrance stress is characterized with negative emotions (e.g., anxiety) (Mawritz et al., 2014). At workplace, challenge stress stems from workload, work and time pressure, and role demands, thus fostering excitement and challenge among employees to accomplish job responsibilities. On the other hand, hindrance stress comes from workplace constraints such as insufficient resources, workplace conflict (i.e., role and interpersonal), role ambiguity, work overload, unfair treatment, and relationship with supervisor (LePine, Podsakoff & LePine, 2005). Irrespective of the type, every stressor is considered to be stressful, particularly when it is unpredictable and uncontrolled (Harms, Credé, Tynan Leon & Jeung, 2017). A key aspect in this line of research is that the stress should be linked to various work related outcomes. The effect of stress on in-role performance and creativity can be demonstrated by an inverted U-shaped relationship, curvilinear. Though, minor extent of stress (i.e. eustress) is possibly favorable to maintain acuity, excitement, and concentration up to a particular point or level of time. Nevertheless, in case, stress exceeds a certain level it is likely to become destructive, and can adversely influence the performance of employees (Nelson & Sutton, 1990) as well as creativity.

Considering hindrance form of stress, we address and operationalize the stress in the context where it has come to that level which puts adverse and detrimental effects on cognitive (e.g. creativity) and behavioral (e.g. in-role performance) achievements of employees. Hallowell (2005) suggests that employees in modern organizations are probably inadequate to reach targeted performance level due to the stress imposed by acute burden of work, which causes diminishing of creative abilities. Exceptional workload and time stress with continuous interference may erode employees' creative ability as half and reduce in-role job performance (Amabile, Hadley & Kramer, 2002; Elmadağ & Ellinger, 2018). Due to severe time constraints, employees may avoid creativity and apply previous ideas rather than exploiting time and cognitive resources to offer fresh and novel ideas to deal with work challenges. An individual's intelligence is damaged by stress and its harmful effects become more obvious under severe stress – a rapid, acute and quite short span of stress intruding objective-oriented behavior and include imminent reaction (Li et al., 2017; Salas, Driskell & Hughes, 1996).

Ellis (2006) stated that acute stress negatively affects the transactional memory and psychological models, elaborating lower performance via information-processing theory. Bunker (1986) indicated that employees with lower degree of stress in challenging environment were more confident, positive and had substantial tolerance level for uncertainty. This sort of challenging condition is likely to empower employees to manage stress where creative response is required with subsequent innovative ideas. Moreover, Ellis (2006) and Fredrickson (2001) also suggested adverse influences of stress stemming from unpleasant emotions that cause inflated cardiovascular response and attenuation of thought-action archives. These mental and physical comebacks might cause employees to acknowledge merely basic information and to neglect secondary prospects, therefore diminishing the creativity and reducing job performance. As stated earlier, stress lessens creativity because of increased mental-inflexibility (George & Zhou, 2001) and less risk taking propensity (Bunker, 1986). Similarly, when employees face noxious workplace environment they spend their sizeable time and energy to overcome the stress (Jamal, 2007), even involve in undesirable activities (Rhodes & Steers, 1981) rather than performing actions to accomplish tasks. Thus, we posit that:

Hypothesis1: Employees' stress level is negatively linked with their creativity.

Hypothesis2: Employees' stress level is negatively linked with in-role performance.

Moderating role of social support

Social support is described as the accessibility of assistance and help which one needs from one's relations like colleagues, supervisor etc. (Levy, 1983; Pow, King, Stephenson & DeLongis, 2017). More specifically, social support is the help that employees seek and expect from their peers, colleagues and other organizational members at workplace; thus making it one of the critical elements of social connections. Social support is a constant function proposed by the sender to make a supportive relationship so that self-recognition of individuals is enhanced in undesirable circumstances (e.g. furious feedback, bothering, undermining). Social support is a multidimensional idea which includes subjective concern, instrumental guide, data, or examination from several bases. The growing work pressure in the recent years to get time-based and quality achievements increases stress-feedbacks as well as undermine the productivity (Elsbach & Hargadon, 2006; Grant & Parker, 2009). In such hectic work routine, support from colleagues in overcoming work challenges and difficulties may make individuals feel relaxed. Because support from colleagues fosters positive energy and harmonizes emotional state which in turn drive mental stability. A mentally stable individual is more likely to use his/her energy to out-perform in formal job activities as well as to take initiatives to enhance creative performance. In the absence of social support, employees use their own time and energy to make themselves mentally stable instead of spending these resources to perform the job, thus it costs both quality and quantity of work (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015).

Nabi, Prestin and So (2013) advocated positive effects of social support on individuals' performance outcomes. Wang, Cai, Qian and Peng (2014) suggested that supportive workplace environment is expected to lessen the negative influences of stress by fostering positive energy among employees. Likewise, Halbesleben (2006) and Raffaelli et al., (2013) proposed social support as a factor reducing the impact of stress on employees. Moreover, social support is supposed to possibly reduce the impact of life stress on the quality of life such as bravery, recovery from illness etc. (Bishop-Fitzpatrick, Mazefsky & Eack, 2018). Thus, it is argued that provision of social support helps employees to overcome work-related stress in performance of job, whereas, absence or lower level of social support increases the adverse effect of stress on performance outcomes. On the basis of above discussion, it is anticipated that perceived social support from colleagues reduces the effect of stress on employees' creativity as well as on in-role performance. Thus we hypothesize that;

Hypothesis 3: Social support moderates the nexus of stress and creativity in such a way that higher level of social support reduces the effect of stress on creativity and vice versa.

Hypothesis 4: Social support moderates the nexus of stress and in-role performance in such a way that higher level of social support reduces the effect of stress on in-role performance and vice versa.

Moderating role of organizational politics

Organizational politics refers to the political behavior of employees which is outside the formal parameters of an organization (Mintzberg, 1985). It involves the activities to acquire, use and enhance individuals' own power capabilities plus other means to achieve favorable outcomes, even at the cost of organizational goals; according to their own desire beyond formal legislative framework of the organization (Meisler & Vigoda-Gadot, 2014). Thus, organizational politics is individual and group behavior that is informal in nature - normally disruptive - officially illegitimate use of power, and apparently narrow-minded (Vigoda, 2000; Yen, 2015). Therefore, these behaviors are neither legitimizing by any formal authority nor by specialized expertise, established beliefs, and thoughts.

Politics and political behavior in organizations are very common, and often hurts employees' efficiency and effectiveness (Yen, 2015). Political climate of organizations has always been seen as a negative element for their smooth functionality. Zivnuska, Kacmar, Witt, Carlson and Bratton (2004) noted that perception of organizational politics has detrimental effects on employees' attitudes and behaviors like job satisfaction, job involvement, and performance. Moreover, organizations have not clearly described organizational policies to discourage such behaviors at work, therefore it leaves room for opportunist workers. As a results employees encounter uncertainty regarding behaviors of their colleagues in situations where precision of directions is not ensured. In such circumstances, workers are expected to behave for the best interest of their own thus increasing the likelihood of manipulating and exploiting their co-workers. In political organizations, rewards and recognitions are usually associated with personal relationships, power, and other subjective benefits which make individuals less confident in showing strong productive work behaviors. Thus, organizations with highly political environment reduce employees' autonomy and consciousness, and lead them towards less predictable outcomes (Hochwarter, Witt & Kacmar, 2000). Organizational politics creates such a climate which fosters feelings of insecurity among employees and demotivates them in carrying out formal job responsibilities (Bai, Han & Harms, 2016). Thus, absence of normatively appropriate guidelines opens up room for perception of organizational politics among employees, promotes work-related stress, and results in poor performance (Naseer, Raja, Syed, Donia & Darr, 2016). Of particular, in situations where workplaces are characterized by stress, organizational politics increases the likelihood of poor in-role and creative performance over and above negative effect of stress. On the basis of above discussion, we propose that;

Hypothesis 5: Perceived organizational politics moderates the relationship of stress and creativity in such a way that higher level of perceived organizational politics increases the effect of stress on creativity and vice versa.

Hypothesis 6: Perceived organizational politics moderates the relationship of stress and in-role performance in such a way that higher level of perceived organizational politics increases the effect of stress on in-role performance and vice versa.

Research methodology

Participants and procedure

In recent years, Pakistan is restoring its tourism industry long after a war on terrorism; which needs employees to work extraordinary to make the businesses successful. In addition, tourism industry is highly creative and expects employees to bring novel ideas to offer unique and bring forward competitive services to the customers (Horng, Tsai, Yang & Liu, 2016; Richards & Wilson, 2006). Given to the objective of the study, tourism sector is appropriate research context because it plays critical role in economic and socio-cultural development of a country (Henderson, 2007). In this respect, we particularly focused those firms which are located in the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) provinces of Pakistan. Due to underdeveloped context of the country, we experienced several hurdles such as unavailability of/ or incomplete lists of tourism firms during data collection; thus created significant obstacles in defining the sampling frame of the study. As a result, we used personal and professional links to contact the target firms which led us to adopt snowball sampling technique. This method is effective in such contexts, particularly in collective societies (Bouckenooghe, Zafar & Raja, 2015; Shafique, Kalyar & Ahmad, 2018). Initially, human resource managers in one hundred tourism firms were contacted to distribute the survey-questionnaires among at least ten respondents from each hotel/firm; consisting of assistant managers, front-desk supervisors and shift in-charges/ managers. Each participant received a questionnaire and responded voluntarily. The respondents were

assured anonymity and confidentiality of the data collected. Respondents rated perception of stress, creativity, in-role job performance, perceived social support, and perceived organization politics on a 5-point likert type scale. Out of one thousand delivered questionnaires, we received back three hundred and thirty-eight (33.8%). After discarding sixteen incomplete questionnaires, we had three hundred and twenty-two valid cases for further data analyses. Among employees' respondents, two hundred and seventy-seven (86.05%) were males, and forty-five (13.95%) were females. The participants' ages ranging from 28 to 59 (mean = 36.5).

Measures

The study adapts pre-developed scales relevant to each construct. The short form of Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS) of *stress* was adopted from the work of Lovibond and Lovibond (1995). The short version of DASS includes seven items. The participants were requested to mention their level of agreement or disagreement with each item (5 = strongly agree, 1=strongly disagree). *Employee creativity* was taped by thirteen-item scale developed by Zhou and George (2001). Each of the item was anchored with five-point response format, ranging from 5=strongly agree to 1=strongly disagree. *In-role performance* was operationalized by seven-item scale from Williams and Anderson (1991), using a Likert-type scale (5=strongly agree, 1=strongly disagree). *Social support* was measured using eight items, with two social support items extracted from the Siu, Spector, and Cooper (2006), and six items from Evers, Frese and Cooper (2000). Respondents were asked to rate social supports from peers, colleagues, supervisor, or directors on a five-point Liker-type scale, ranging from 5=strongly agree to 1=strongly disagree. *Perceived organizational* politics was measured with seven-item scale developed by Kacmer and Ferris (1991), using five-point Likert-type scale (5=strongly agree, 1=strongly disagree). All the items were comprehensive and understandable, and no complaints with regard to contents ambiguity, and time were noted.

Literature suggests that several employees' demographic and personality attributes might play role in determining their workplace creativity (Wolfradt & Pretz, 2001). In order to restrain the contribution of such variables in explaining variance in our outcome variables, we controlled for the effects of respondents' age, gender, experience, and tenure with current organization (see Table 2).

Analysis and results

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to check construct validity to ensure that all items converge on their respective factors. Factor loadings confirm convergent validity while comparison of square-root of AVEs, CR, and constructs' correlations supports discriminant validity (see appendix). Moreover, the values of Cronbach's alpha (α) show that all construct reliable and present internal consistency (see Table 1). The values suggest that constructs meet the thresholds of validity and reliability thus allowing us to perform further analysis. Table 1 presents means, standard deviations, Pearson coefficients of correlations, and Cronbach's alpha for each variable in this study. These results provide an initial support for negative relationship between stress and creativity ($r=-0.544$, $p<0.01$), and between stress and in-role performance ($r=-0.478$, $p<0.01$). However, these correlations are simple one-to-one linkages between variables. This led us to test these preliminary results by using more reliable statistical models. We employed hierarchical regression technique, which helps to document the incremental changes in the level explained variance of dependent variable before and after the addition of a set of independent and control variables (Cohen & Cohen 1983).

Table 1
Means, standard deviations, and correlations

Variables	α	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age	--	36.44	6.93								
2. Gender	--	1.58	0.49	0.058							
3. Experience	--	8.56	5.62	0.950**	0.019						
4. Tenure[a]	--	4.18	2.95	0.516**	0.053	0.60**					
5. Stress	0.92	3.99	0.63	0.054	0.006	0.031	-0.098[†]				
6. Creativity	0.78	4.26	0.77	-0.055	0.011	-0.061	0.018	-0.544**			
7. IRP	0.85	3.06	0.99	-0.064	-0.041	-0.051	-0.038	-0.478**	0.449**		
8. Social support	0.88	3.91	0.90	-0.031	0.025	-0.028	0.059	-0.115*	0.236**	-0.067	
9. POP	0.76	3.34	1.13	0.041	-0.032	0.027	-0.053	0.376**	-0.511**	-0.341**	-0.039

N=322, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, [†]p<0.10; [a]Tenure with current organization; α=Cronbach's alpha; IRP=In-role performance; POP=Perceived organizational politics

Hypotheses testing

As shown in the Table 2, for the control variables, tenure is the only variable that has significant negative impact on in-role performance in the Model 4. That is, more the years an employee spends in organization, lower is his/her in-role performance. The β values from the Model 2 in Table 2 confirm that stress influences negatively and significantly both creativity (β = -0.547, p < 0.01) and in-role performance (β = -0.487, p < 0.01) suggesting that employees with lower level of stress do perform better than those with higher level of stress. Stress explicates about 30 percent variance in creativity and 23 percent in in-role performance. Results support first two hypotheses and prove that stress is an obstacle and detrimental element in achieving superior performance outcomes.

Moderation analysis

In the Table 2, Model 3b demonstrates that stress and social support are significant predictors of creativity (β = -0.528, p < 0.01; β = 0.176, p < 0.01) and in-role performance (β = -0.499, p < 0.01; β = -0.118, p < 0.01). Interaction term of stress and social support in the Model 4b had significant impact on creativity (β = 0.283, p < 0.01) and in-role performance (β =0.446, p < 0.01), with significant values of ΔR^2. Thus, hypotheses 3 and 4 are supported.

As can be seen in the Model 3a from Table 4, stress and POP were negatively and significantly related with creativity (β = -0.414, p < 0.01; β = -0.358, p < 0.01) and in-role performance (β = -0.416, p < 0.01; β = -0.192, p < 0.01). Interaction term of stress and POP in the Model 4a were negatively significant for creativity (β = -0.397, p < 0.01) and in-role performance (β = -0.359, p < 0.01), with significant values of ΔR^2. Hence hypotheses 5 and 6 are supported.

Table 2
Moderated hierarchical regression analysis (standardized coefficients) for relationship between stress and performance outcomes

	Creativity						In-role performance					
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3a	Model 4a	Model 3b	Model 4b	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3a	Model 4a	Model 3b	Model 4b
Age	0.074	0.157	0.179	0.208	0.152	0.176	-0.154	-0.080	-0.068	-0.042	-0.077	-0.037
Gender	0.006	0.009	-0.004	0.000	0.005	0.017	-0.033	-0.030	-0.037	-0.033	-0.028	-0.009
Experience	-0.186	-0.191	-0.201	-0.183	-0.172	-0.209	0.109	0.104	0.099	0.115	0.091	0.028
Tenure[a]	0.091	-0.002	-0.013	-0.041	-0.020	0.004	-0.023	-0.106	-0.112[†]	-0.137*	-0.094	-0.054
Stress		-0.547**	-0.414**	-0.412**	-0.528**	-0.417**		-0.487**	-0.416**	-0.414**	-0.499**	-0.315**
POP			-0.358**	-0.392**					-0.192**	-0.223**		
Stress*POP				-0.397**						-0.359**		

Table 2 **Continued**

	Creativity						In-role performance					
	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3a**	**Model 4a**	**Model 3b**	**Model 4b**	**Model 1**	**Model 2**	**Model 3a**	**Model 4a**	**Model 3b**	**Model 4b**
Social support					0.176**	0.056					-0.118*	-0.315**
Stress* Social support						0.283**						0.446**
R^2	0.009	0.300**	0.410**	0.565**	0.331**	0.382**	0.006	0.238**	0.269**	0.396**	0.251*	0.390**
ΔR^2	0.009	0.292**	0.110**	0.155**	0.030*	0.051**	0.006	0.231**	0.031**	0.127**	0.014*	0.138**

N=322, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, †p<0.10; [a]Tenure with current organization.

In order to determine if interaction followed the expected pattern, simple slope test, as suggested by Aiken and West (1991), was perform considering one standard deviation high and low values from mean values of both social support and organizational politics. Simple slope test is useful in determining the specific effect of predictor on outcome variable at different values of moderator. Figures 1-4 present two-way interaction slopes and support the presence of moderation. We found support for hypotheses 3 and 4 stating low social support increases the detrimental effect of stress on creativity (b= -0.700, p<0.01) and in-role performance (b=-0.761, p<0.01).

Table 3
Condition effect of stress on creativity and in-role performance at ±1 SD of organizational politics and social support

	Creativity			In-role performance		
	Estimate	**t-value**	**p-value**	**Estimate**	**t-value**	**p-value**
-1 SD POP	-0.015	-0.075	0.940	-0.055	-0.223	0.824
0 SD POP	-0.412	-2.989	0.003	-0.414	-2.474	0.014
+1 SD POP	-0.809	-4.045	0.000	-0.773	-3.238	0.001
-1 SD SS	-0.700	-12.780	0.000	-0.761	-13.894	0.000
0 SD SS	-0.417	-9.324	0.000	-0.315	-7.044	0.000
+1 SD SS	-0.134	-1.602	0.110	0.131	1.566	0.118

POP=Perceived organizational politics; SS=Social support.

However, the slopes for high social support are insignificant thus no empirical support is found to argue that higher level of social support (above mean) helps employees to get relief from stress in seeking creativity (b=-0.134, n.s.) and to perform job (b=0.131, n.s.). Hypotheses 5 and 6 stated that higher degree of perceived organizational politics enhance the effect of stress on both creativity and in-role performance. Both hypotheses are supported by the data as slope above 1 standard deviation is significant for creativity (b=-.809, p<0.01) and in-role performance (b=-0.773, p<0.01). For perceived organizational politics, slopes below the mean are insignificant i.e. for creativity b=-0.015, n.s. and for in-role performance b=-0.055, n.s.; which suggests that no matter if organizations invest to reduce the extent of politics below mean it doesn't help employees to rescue from overarching workload burdens. Table 3 presents detailed results for the relationship between stress and creativity and performance at ±1 SD of moderators.

Figure 1
Simple slopes for interaction effects of stress and POP on creativity

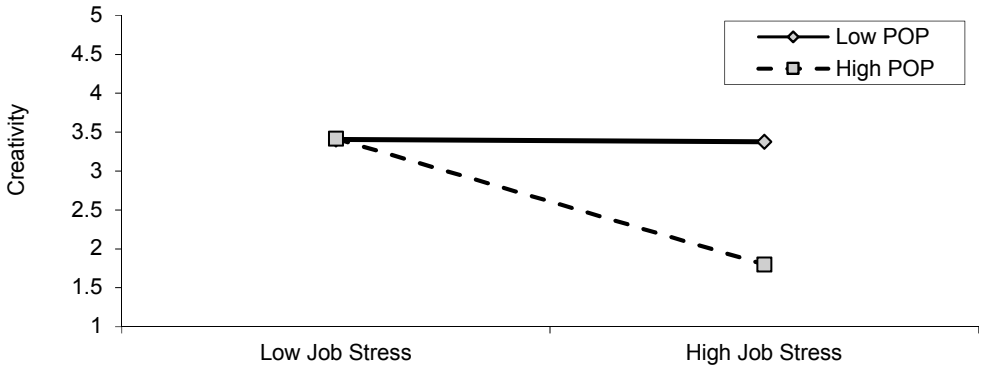


Figure 2
Simple slopes for interaction effects of stress and social support on creativity

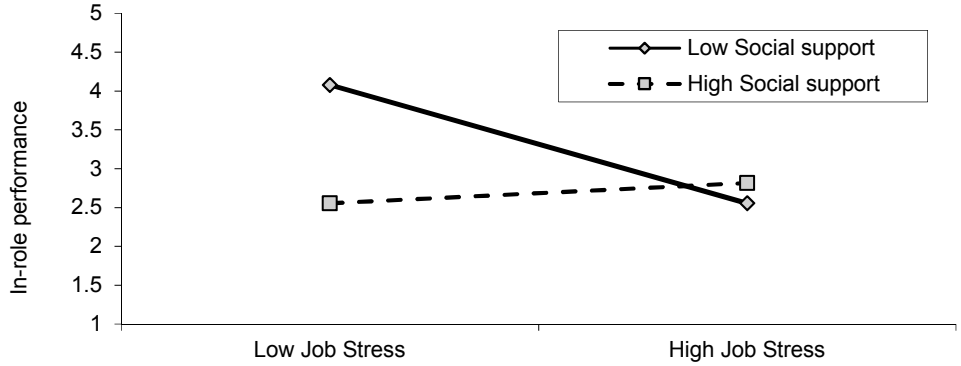


Figure 3
Simple slopes for interaction effects of stress and POP on IRP

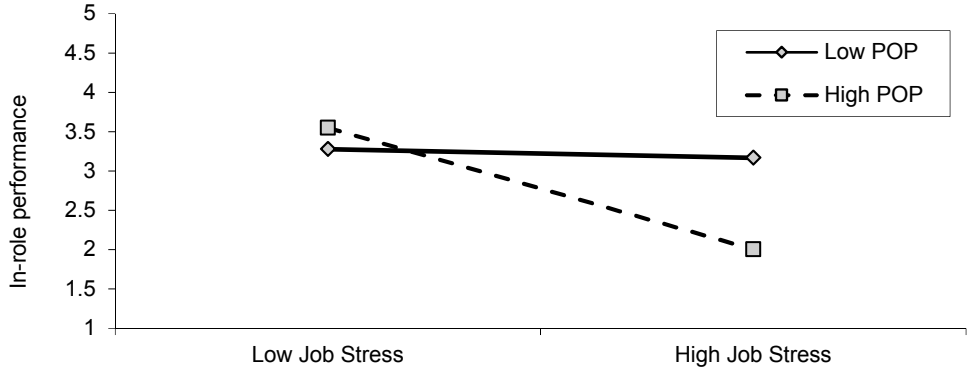
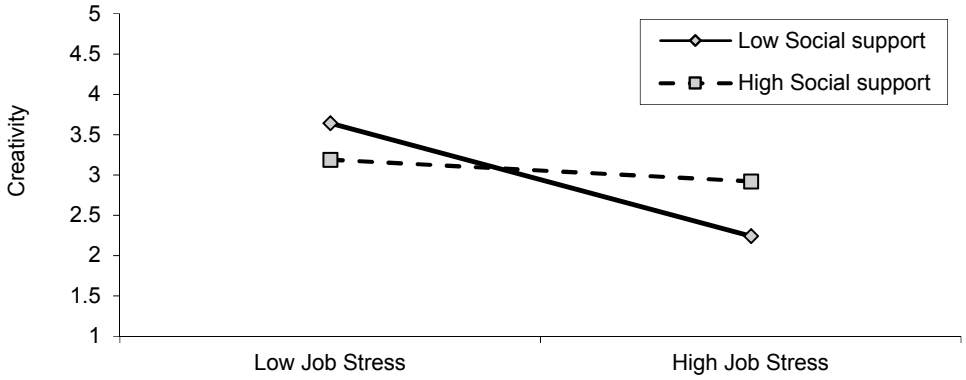


Figure 4
Simple slopes for interaction effects of stress and social support on IRP



Discussions

This study had two vital targets. First, it aims to explore the influence of job stress on employee performance outcomes. Second objective of this research is to examine if social support and organizational politics moderate the influence of stress on in-role performance and creativity. In current study, we concentrated on '*distress*' (i.e. hindrance stress) instead of '*eustress*' and results incredibly coincides with the suggestions that stress is a detrimental element having negative impacts on employee creativity and in-role job performance. Further, findings also suggest that individuals getting more social support (up to the mean level) do perform better on in-role performance and creativity as compared to those getting less social support. On the other hand, organizational politics was found as a negative moderator which increases the detrimental effects of stress on creativity and performance. Moreover, these findings are consistent with earlier studies. For instance, Brand et al. (2011), Falavarjani and Yeh (2017) investigated negative association of stress with creativity among adolescents and Iranian immigrants, respectively. In Pakistani context, Naseem (2017) also found the similar results. The study of Pow et al. (2017) advocated that social support reduces the harmful impacts of several employee level outcomes. Findings of Wittig et al., (2016) are also consistent regarding moderating role of social support. In their study, Labrague et al., (2017) proved that organizational politics is detrimental condition which catalyzes harmful impacts of stress among tourism employees.

The results of this research have several significant implications to applied and academic literature, particularly for human resource management. Theoretically, it was proposed that hindrance form of job stress puts severe negative impacts on employees' workplace outcomes. Stress serves as adverse force which hinders employees from doing their jobs effectively. It also makes work-related outcomes difficult to achieve which ultimately harm employees as well as firm performance. This study also contributes to positive organizational scholarship through proposing and empirically testing the potential contingent role of workplace social support in coping with stress. As suggested by results, employees receiving less support from their colleagues, peers, and supervisors/managers experience catastrophic outcomes on stress in the form of decreased levels of creativity and in-role performance as compared to those who receive no social support. However, a higher amount of social support does not deplete the adverse effect of stress. Findings suggest that perceived organizational politics worsen the detrimental effects of stress for both creativity and in-role performance.

Despite the development of theoretical contribution, our findings also have applied suggestions for HRM. For example, as creativity is an established indicator to attain and retain competitive edge in

worldwide, an enhanced comprehension of facilitators and undermining factors of new and useful ideas are requisite. Of specific, these results may assist individuals for the tasks which require high creativity and individuals' resilience counts. Thus, a compulsive implementation might be the concern of social support and probably additional workplace resilience in fostering outstanding employee performance. In addition, leaders in an organization should aspire such atmosphere which pursues to thrive and strengthen the creative employees. For sure, companies may acquire an intended path to promote creativity of employees (Luthans & Avolio, 2009). The results demonstrating positive moderating role of social support for respondents' stress and accomplishment nexus highlights the importance of promoting such an atmosphere that reduces stress which in turn helps to avoid anti/non-creative performance. Finally, presence of conditions fostering stress i.e. organizational politics doesn't lead employees to accomplish other required outcome e.g. enhanced group performance (Driskell & Salas, 1991; Labrague et al., 2017). Further, tourism firms seek to enhance their operational as well as financial performance through increased employee creativity and job performance (Avey et al., 2012; Labrague et al., 2017), our results can provide the possible interventions for such firms to enhance performance and creativity. Particularly, the findings highlight the conditions which trigger stress. Our study suggests the management seeking high performance and creativity of their employees must ensure such a workplace environment characterized by less hindrance stress (distress). Further, work-overload, unpleasant work environment, person-job misfit might cause job stress among employees. In such circumstances, management should maximize workplace social support (Nabi et al., 2013) and try to eliminate workplace politics (Naseer et al., 2016). In addition, managers can increase employees work outcome by providing healthy working environment (i.e., politics free).

Conclusion

Since organizations pursue the ways to make human resources competitive advantage, the results suggest the potential value of social support and organizational politics in due course. Of particular, the research findings present favorable link between respondents' stress and their task accomplishments under social support, specifically in stressful conditions if employees do not get social support they do perform worst. Reckoning the eminent implication of creativity for organizations' success, these preliminary study results on the probable nexus of stress and creativity of employees should get recognition of management practitioners and scholars, specifically by those of HRM. They should investigate these nexuses to establish and promote strengths (e.g. social support) in order to eradicate detrimental effects of stress and to promote opportunities for creativity. This research gives empirical results emphasizing the significant role of social support in promotion of employee performance, and detrimental role of organization politics which creates such an environment that enhances harmful impact of stress. Thus, by promoting a culture of collaboration and eradicating political environment, managers and leaders can make employees more productive.

Certainly, this research has vital suggestions and implication to the literature as it investigates and gives directions to undertake social support in dealing with stress and empowering employees to enhance their creativity and job accomplishments. Current research also has few limitations which are necessary to be accounted while interpreting the findings. Firstly, the procedure was cross-sectional inhibiting our apprehensions regarding creativity and stress controlled by individuals' inventive manipulations. In future researchers may regard individuals' inventive manipulation and varied situations of stress that one may make better causal understanding of the outcomes. Secondly, the creativity employed in this research was of common nature concentrating on merely one type i.e. ideation and did not considered

creativity in work related setting, like the individuals occupied in marketing section maybe appraised in ideas generation associated to new production or sales policy. In case this study is further carried out scrutinizing work related context, it could expand our conception on the above mentioned area. Further, the upcoming researchers can make important implications employing various functionalities for creativity. Forth, current study proposes solely unidirectional causal link suggesting lower stress causes high creativity and performance and vice versa, instead to mind potential corresponding reasoning i.e. being exceedingly creative might cause decreased stress. Fifth, this study tested the contingent effect of only workplace-environment variables and didn't investigate if social-environment variables play any significant role in fostering creativity and in-role performance. Finally, since employee performance was self-reported, therefore social desirability bias is another potential limitation to this study. Future research can use alternative methods such as peer evaluation or objective measures of employee performance to address this limitation.

Appendix 1
Results for construct validity

Item	Stress	EC	IRP	SS	POP
S1	0.807				
S2	0.808				
S3	0.842				
S4	0.835				
S5	0.828				
S6	0.833				
S7	0.804				
EC1		0.731			
EC2		0.800			
EC3		0.823			
EC4		0.779			
EC5		0.800			
EC6		0.825			
EC7		0.758			
EC8		0.853			
EC9		0.867			
EC10		0.848			
EC11		0.857			
EC12		0.810			
EC13		0.760			
IRP1			0.712		
IRP2			0.784		
IRP3			0.825		
IRP4			0.774		
IRP5			0.811		

Appendix 1 **Continued**

Item	Stress	EC	IRP	SS	POP
IRP6			0.862		
IRP7			0.747		
SS1				0.850	
SS2				0.881	
SS3				0.844	
SS4				0.820	
SS5				0.850	
SS6				0.824	
SS7				0.840	
SS8				0.846	
POP1					0.760
POP2					0.792
POP3					0.833
POP4					0.763
POP5					0.698
POP6					0.756
POP7					0.635
CR[a]	0.936	0.961	0.920	0.952	0.900
AVE[b]	0.677	0.656	0.623	0.713	0.563
Sqrt of AVE[c]	0.823	0.810	0.789	0.844	0.750
Model-Fit Indices χ^2/df = 2.09; GFI=0.934; TLI=0.977; CFI=0.918; NFI=0.926; RMSEA=0.061					

[a]Composite reliability; [b]Average variance extracted;
[c]Square-root of AVE; all factor loadings are significant at $p<0.01$.

References

Aiken, L. S. & West, S. G. (1991). *Multiple regression: Testing and interpreting interactions*. Sage, Newbury Park: London.

Amabile, T. M., Hadley, C. N. & Kramer, S. J. (2002). Creativity under the gun. *Harvard Business Review, 80*(8), 52-61.

Avey, J. B., Luthans, F., Hannah, S. T., Sweetman, D. & Peterson, C. (2012). Impact of employees' character strengths of wisdom on stress and creative performance. *Human Resource Management Journal, 22*(2), 165-181.

Avey, J. B., Reichard, R. J., Luthans, F. & Mhatre, K. H. (2011). Meta-analysis of the impact of positive psychological capital on employee attitudes, behaviors, and performance. *Human resource development quarterly*, *22*(2), 127-152.

Bai, Y., Han, G. H. & Harms, P. D. (2016). Team conflict mediates the effects of organizational politics on employee performance: A cross-level analysis in China. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *139*(1), 95-109.

Bishop-Fitzpatrick, L., Mazefsky, C. A. & Eack, S. M. (2018). The combined impact of social support and perceived stress on quality of life in adults with autism spectrum disorder and without intellectual disability. *Autism*, 22(6), 703-711. DOI:10.1177/1362361317703090.

Bouckenooghe, D., Zafar, A. & Raja, U. (2015). How ethical leadership shapes employees' job performance: The mediating roles of goal congruence and psychological capital. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *129*(2), 251-264.

Brand, S., Beck, J., Kalak, N., Gerber, M., Kirov, R., Pühse, U., ... & Holsboer-Trachsler, E. (2011). Dream recall and its relationship to sleep, perceived stress, and creativity among adolescents. *Journal of adolescent health, 49*(5), 525-531.

Brown, J. A., Woodward, C. A., Shannon, H. S., Cunningham, C. E., Lendrum, B., McIntosh, J. & Rosenbloom, D. (1999, April). Determinants of job stress and job satisfaction among supervisory and non-supervisory employees in a large Canadian teaching hospital. In *Healthcare management forum* (Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 27-33). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.

Bunker, B. B. (1986). *Management training in Japan: lessons for Americans*. Paper presented at the OD Network Conference. New York.

Cavanaugh, M. A., Boswell, W. R., Roehling, M. V. & Boudreau, J. W. (2000). An empirical examination of self-reported work stress among U.S. managers. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 85*, 65–74.

Cohen, J. & Cohen, P. (1983). *Applied multiple regression/correlation analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Driskell, J. E. & Salas, E. (1991). Group decision making under stress. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 76*(3), 473-478.

Ellis, A. P. J. (2006). System breakdown: the role of mental models and transactive memory in the relationship between acute stress and team performance. *Academy of Management Journal, 49*(3), 576-589.

Elmadağ, A. B. & Ellinger, A. E. (2018). Alleviating job stress to improve service employee work affect: the influence of rewarding. *Service Business*, *12*(1), 121-141.

Elsbach, K. D. & Hargadon, A. B. (2006). Enhancing creativity through "mindless" work: A framework of workday design. *Organization Science, 17*(4), 470-483.

Evers, A., Frese, M. & Cooper, C. L. (2000). Revisions and further developments of the Occupational Stress Indicator: LISREL results from four Dutch studies. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *73*(2), 221-240.

Falavarjani, M. F. & Yeh, C. J. (2017). The impact of acculturation identification and acculturative stress on creativity among Iranian immigrants living in Malaysia. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 1-21.

Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The role of positive emotion in positive psychology: the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *American Psychologist, 56*(3), 218-226.

George, J. M. & Zhou, J. (2001). When openness to experience and conscientiousness are related to creative behavior: an interactional approach. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 86*(4), 513-524.

Gerstadt, C. L., Hong, Y. J. & Diamond, A. (1994). The relationship between cognition and action: performance of children 312–7 years old on a stroop-like day-night test. *Cognition*, *53*(2), 129-153.

Grant, A. M. & Parker, S. K. (2009). 7 redesigning work design theories: The rise of relational and proactive perspectives. *The Academy of Management Annals, 3*(1), 317-375.

Halbesleben, J. R. (2006). Sources of social support and burnout: a meta-analytic test of the conservation of resources model. *Journal of applied Psychology*, *91*(5), 1134-1145.

Hallowell, E. M. (2005). Overloaded circuits. Why smart people underperform. *Harvard Business Review, 83*(1), 54-62.

Hamann, D. J. & Foster, N. T. (2014). An exploration of job demands, job control, stress, and attitudes in public, nonprofit, and for-profit employees. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, *34*(4), 332-355.

Harms, P. D., Credé, M., Tynan, M., Leon, M. & Jeung, W. (2017). Leadership and stress: A meta-analytic review. *The leadership quarterly*, *28*(1), 178-194.

Henderson, J. C. (2007). Corporate social responsibility and tourism: Hotel companies in Phuket, Thailand, after the Indian Ocean tsunami. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *26*(1), 228-239.

Hochwarter, W. A., Witt, L. A. & Kacmar, K. M. (2000). Perceptions of organizational politics as a moderator of the relationship between consciousness and job performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *85*(3), 472.

Horng, J. S., Tsai, C. Y., Yang, T. C. & Liu, C. H. (2016). Exploring the relationship between proactive personality, work environment and employee creativity among tourism and hospitality employees. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *54*, 25-34.

Hui, C., Law, K. S. & Chen, Z. X. (1999). A structural equation model of the effects of negative affectivity, leader-member exchange, and perceived job mobility on in-role and extra-role performance: A Chinese case. *Organizational behavior and human decision processes*, *77*(1), 3-21.

Hunter, L. W. & Thatcher, S. M. B. (2007). Feeling the heat: effects of stress, commitment, and job experience on job performance. *Academy of Management Journal, 50*(4), 953-968.

Jamal, M. (2007). Job stress and job performance controversy revisited: An empirical examination in two countries. *International Journal of Stress Management, 14*(2), 175-187.

Jung, H. S. & Yoon, H. H. (2014). Antecedents and consequences of employees' job stress in a foodservice industry: Focused on emotional labor and turnover intent. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *38*, 84-88.

Kacmar, K. M. & Ferris, G. R. (1991). Perceptions of organizational politics scale (POPS): Development and construct validation. *Educational and Psychological measurement*, *51*(1), 193-205.

Kim, W. G. & Brymer, R. A. (2011). The effects of ethical leadership on manager job satisfaction, commitment, behavioral outcomes, and firm performance. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *30*(4), 1020-1026.

Kuncel, N. R., Hezlett, S. A. & Ones, D. S. (2004). Academic performance, career potential, creativity, and job performance: Can one construct predict them all?. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *86*(1), 148-161.

Labrague, L. J., McEnroe-Petitte, D. M., Gloe, D., Tsaras, K., Arteche, D. L. & Maldia, F. (2017). Organizational politics, nurses' stress, burnout levels, turnover intention and job satisfaction. *International nursing review*, *64*(1), 109-116.

Lazarus, R. S. (1996). *Psychological stress and the coping process*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

LePine, J. A., Podsakoff, N. P. & LePine, M. A. (2005). A meta-analytic test of the challenge stressor–hindrance stressor framework: An explanation for inconsistent relationships among stressors and performance. *Academy of management journal*, *48*(5), 764-775.

Levy, R. L. (1983). Social support and compliance: A selective review and critique of treatment integrity and outcome measurement. *Social science & medicine*, *17*(18), 1329-1338.

Li, F., Chen, T. & Lai, X. (2017). How Does a Reward for Creativity Program Benefit or Frustrate Employee Creative Performance? The Perspective of Transactional Model of Stress and Coping. *Group & Organization Management*, 1059601116688612.

Lovibond, P. F. & Lovibond, S. H. (1995). The structure of negative emotional states: comparison of the depression anxiety stress scales (DASS) with the beck depression and anxiety inventories. *Behaviour research and therapy, 33*(3), 335-343.

Luthans, F. & Avolio, B. J. (2009). The point of positive organizational behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 30*(2), 291-307.

MacKenzie, S. B., Podsakoff, P. M. & Ahearne, M. (1998). Some possible antecedents and consequences of in-role and extra-role salesperson performance. *The Journal of Marketing*, 87-98.

Mawritz, M. B., Folger, R. & Latham, G. P. (2014). Supervisors' exceedingly difficult goals and abusive supervision: The mediating effects of hindrance stress, anger, and anxiety. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *35*(3), 358-372.

Meisler, G. & Vigoda-Gadot, E. (2014). Perceived organizational politics, emotional intelligence and work outcomes: empirical exploration of direct and indirect effects. *Personnel Review*, *43*(1), 116-135.

Mintzberg, H. (1985). The organization as political arena. *Journal of management studies*, *22*(2), 133-154.

Nabi, R. L., Prestin, A. & So, J. (2013). Facebook friends with (health) benefits? Exploring social network site use and perceptions of social support, stress, and well-being. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, *16*(10), 721-727.

Naseem, K. (2017). Job Stress and Employee Creativity: The mediating role of Emotional Intelligence. *International Journal of Management Excellence*, *9*(2), 1050-1058.

Naseer, S., Raja, U., Syed, F., Donia, M. B. & Darr, W. (2016). Perils of being close to a bad leader in a bad environment: Exploring the combined effects of despotic leadership, leader member exchange, and perceived organizational politics on behaviors. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *27*(1), 14-33.

Nelson, D. L. & Sutton, C. (1990). Chronic work stress and coping: a longitudinal study and suggested new directions. *Academy of Management Journal, 33*(4), 859-869.

Pow, J., King, D. B., Stephenson, E. & DeLongis, A. (2017). Does social support buffer the effects of occupational stress on sleep quality among paramedics? A daily diary study. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, *22*(1), 71-85.

Raffaelli, M., Andrade, F. C., Wiley, A. R., Sanchez-Armass, O., Edwards, L. L. & Aradillas-Garcia, C. (2013). Stress, Social Support, and Depression: A Test of the Stress-Buffering Hypothesis in a Mexican Sample. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *23*(2), 283-289.

Revlin, R. (2013). *Cognition: Theory and Practice*. New York, NY: Worth Publishers.

Rhodes, S. R. & Steers, R. M. (1981). Conventional vs. worker-owned organizations. *Human Relations*, *34*(12), 1013-1035.

Richards, G. & Wilson, J. (2006). Developing creativity in tourist experiences: A solution to the serial reproduction of culture? *Tourism management*, *27*(6), 1209-1223.

Salas, E, Driskell, J. E. & Hughes, S. (1996). Introduction: the study of stress and human performance. In J. E. Driskell & E. Salas (Eds.), *Stress and Human Performance*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Şantaş, G., Uğurluoğlu, Ö., Özer, Ö. & Demir, A. (2018). Do Gossip Functions Effect on Organizational Revenge and Job Stress Among Health Personnel?. *Journal of Health Management*, *20*(1), 64-72.

Shafique, I., N Kalyar, M. & Ahmad, B. (2018). The Nexus of Ethical Leadership, Job Performance, and Turnover Intention: The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction. *Interdisciplinary Description of Complex Systems: INDECS, 16*(1), 71-87.

Siu, O. L., Spector, P. E. & Cooper, C. L. (2006). A three-phase study to develop and validate a Chinese coping strategies scales in Greater China. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *41*(3), 537-548.

Sonnentag, S. & Fritz, C. (2015). Recovery from job stress: The stressor-detachment model as an integrative framework. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *36*(S1), 72-103.

Vigoda, E. (2000). Organizational politics, job attitudes, and work outcomes: Exploration and implications for the public sector. *Journal of vocational Behavior*, *57*(3), 326-347.

Wang, X., Cai, L., Qian, J. & Peng, J. (2014). Social support moderates stress effects on depression. *International journal of mental health systems*, *8*(1), 41-49.

Williams, L. J. & Anderson, S. E. (1991). Job satisfaction and organizational commitment as predictors of organizational citizenship and in-role behaviors. *Journal of management*, *17*(3), 601-617.

Wittig, R. M., Crockford, C., Weltring, A., Langergraber, K. E., Deschner, T. & Zuberbühler, K. (2016). Social support reduces stress hormone levels in wild chimpanzees across stressful events and everyday affiliations. *Nature communications*, *7,* 13361. http://doi.org/10.1038/ncomms13361.

Wolfradt, U. & Pretz, J. E. (2001). Individual differences in creativity: Personality, story writing, and hobbies. *European journal of personality*, *15*(4), 297-310.

Yen, W. W. (2015). Relationships among perceptions of organizational politics (POPs), work motivation and salesperson performance. *Journal of Management & Organization*, *21*(02), 203-216.

Zhou, J. & George, J. M. (2001). When job dissatisfaction leads to creativity: Encouraging the expression of voice. *Academy of Management journal*, *44*(4), 682-696.

Zivnuska, S., Kacmar, K. M., Witt, L. A., Carlson, D. S. & Bratton, V. K. (2004). Interactive effects of impression management and organizational politics on job performance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *25*(5), 627-640.

Submitted: 19/06/2018
Accepted: 6/12/2018