



Relationship between Spiritual Experiences and Organizational Commitment with Perceived Stress at the staff of Tehran Oil Hospital

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DOI: 10.21859/anm-280210

Submitted: 20-11-2018

Accepted: 23-1-2019

Keywords:

Perceived Stress

Organizational Commitment

Spiritual Experiences

Nurses

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Abstract

Introduction: There have been numerous researches carried out in the field of organizational health with the aim of identifying ways to counteract the negative effects of stress. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between spiritual experiences and organizational commitment with the perceived stress of the staff of the Tehran Oil Hospital.

Methods: The research population of all Tehran Nursing Hospital nursing staff was stratified randomly based on the formula for determining the sample population in 2017. For data collection, standardized questionnaires were used to measure each variable and the extracted data were analyzed using SPSS 22 software.

Results: Statistical analysis of the research data showed that there was a significant relationship between spiritual experiences and its components such as meaningful work, sense of correlation and alignment of values, and the pillars of the organizational commitment such as emotional commitment, continuous commitment and normative commitment with perceived stress at a significant level of $P < 0.05$. According to the results of regression with multivariate correlation coefficient for linear combination of variables of spiritual experiences (work with meaning, sense of correlation and values alignment), organizational commitment and perceived stress were equal to $MR = 35.70$ and $RS = 0.19$, which is significant at $P < 0.0001$.

Conclusions: The results of this study showed that the spiritual experiences of employees have a positive and significant relationship with organizational commitment and reducing perceived stress. In other words, those with high spirituality feel less stress and more organizational commitment.

INTRODUCTION

Having dedicated and motivated human resources is highly desired by managers and planners of the manufacturing and industrial firms. One of the known causes of occupational burnout and demotivation is stress. There are several negative organizational impacts associated with stress; it affects the individuals' health, lowers the standards of living and increases the occurrence possibility of work-related injuries [1]. Moreover, there are multiple negative impacts on organizational results associated with stress, such as violence at workplace, increase in absence from work and occupational burnouts [2]. An intervening factor in improving and sustaining the employees working situation is organizational commitment. Organizational commitment affects the organizational outcomes, such

as desire to leave work, absence of employees and the companies' turnout. Organizational commitment is an important concept that attracts the attention of researchers in the organizational behavior and psychology field [3]. Another variable that has been investigated in this study is the effect of spiritual experiences on the level of perceived stress. One of the factors that benefits human resources is spirituality at work. The definition of spirituality at work used in this study is what Ashmos has defined as the acknowledgment of the existence of employees' inner life that thrives by contributing to the respective community via relevant and consequential work [4]. The fact that companies spend thousands of dollars yearly on addressing the issues rising due to stress at

work, allows the researchers to dedicate more of their attention to investigating the effect of spiritual experiences and organizational commitments on perceived stress.

In previous researches [5] carried out about organizations, three factors have mainly attracted the attention of researchers, namely, 1) Occupational satisfaction 2) occupational dependency 3) organizational commitment. Similar to other organizational concepts, organizational commitment has been defined in different ways. Most commonly, organizational commitment is described as an emotional attachment to the organization. Based on this definition, a very committed individual is one who gets a sense of identity from the organization and appreciates being part of it [6]. Organizational commitment is an independent concept and differs from occupational dependency and occupational satisfaction. For instance, nurses can enjoy their job but not be satisfied with the hospital they work at, which eventually would lead them to look for similar jobs in other working places [7]. The concept of spirituality is used for understanding organizational changes, describing value systems and development of management and leadership. Spirituality at workplace is used as a particular occupational feeling to give energy to individuals in order to do their tasks accurately. Spirituality at work can be identified by three factors, namely 1) meaningful work 2) feeling of solidarity 3) Conformity with values. Therefore the concept of spirituality at work includes individual, group and organizational aspects [8]. Perceived stress is one of the principal factors of the health belief model, which is based on psychological learning theory. Based on this model, intensity of the perceived stress is one of the main factors determining the possibility of adapting a coping strategy by individuals imposed to a stressful situation. Stress can originate from different sources for each individual in their personal life such as their workplace. Occupational stress can be defined as accumulation of stressful factors and situations related to work which most people agree on their stressful nature. In other words, occupational stress is a stress that affects a particular individual due to a particular job [9]. The importance of the effect of stress on people's lives as well as the issues that organizations face because of stress causing them to spend millions of dollars each year to address problems arising from the existence of stress at workplaces, motivated us to investigate the effects of spiritual experiences and organizational commitment on perceived stress.

Previous Studies

Although there have been a number of studies investigating the relation between the occupational stress, organizational commitment and spiritual experiences at work, most of these studies have been one dimensional and are limited to investigating just of the variables on others. The most important national and

international researches related to this study will be mentioned in this section. Cooper and Baglionif in their article titled "Understanding Nursing Student's Stress: A Proposed Framework" concluded that occupational stress is a strong predictor of organizational commitment [10]. Similarly Chen did his PhD research titled "A Study of Role Stress, Social Support and Organizational Commitment of Clinical Nursing Faculty" by taking a sample of nurses and concluded that occupational stress has a significant impact on organizational commitment of nurses [11]. A few evidence on the relationship between occupational stress and organizational commitment can be seen in studies conducted in developing countries. For example, a study conducted by Al-Hawajreh which was titled "Exploring the Relationship between Occupational Stress and Organizational Commitment among Nurses in Selected Jordanian Hospitals" concluded in the light of results that occupational stress had a significant relationship between occupational stress and employees' commitment [12]. In a study done by Nazim and Shahid in 2016 in Pakistan, the effect of organizational commitment and occupational stress on the employees of a pharmaceutical company were investigated. It was shown that the occupational stress is significantly reduced in employees with high organizational commitment [13] similarly Nouri and Soltani's research. Results of Their article on the effective factors on job stress and its relationship with organizational commitment of nurses in hospitals in Nicosia in 2017 showed that nurses with higher organizational commitment levels have lower occupational stress [14]. In a study done by Kang et al. in South Korea in 2016, the association between supervisors' behavior and wagers' job stress in Korea were investigated. The results indicate that organizational commitment is boosted, and occupational stress decreased in employees that benefit from the supervisors' support [15]. relation between spiritual experiences and the perceived stress is one of the studies that has been investigated by Hojati et al. in 2016 investigated the relation between spiritual experiences and the perceived stress in wives of the war veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in Kashan city in Iran. The results indicated that there is a significant relationship between the perceived stress and spiritual experiences, in such a way that with increase of the spiritual experiences, perceived stress is reduced [16]. The inference from this study is that spirituality has significant benefits that can lead to improved care through reduced perceived stress in the occupation. In a study performed in Bojnourd University by Nasayan et al. in 2015 the relationship between job stress and nurses' personality traits and spiritual experiences were examined. It was shown that there is negative relation between the components of spiritual experiences with occupational stress [17]. Yaghubi et al. in 2008 studied

the relation between the organizational commitment and occupational stress among managers of medical educational hospitals in Isfahan. It was shown that there is a significant relation between the organizational commitment and occupational jobs [18].

Main Aim of Project

This study has investigated the relation between the spiritual experiences and occupational commitment with perceived stress in the employees of the Tehran Oil Hospital.

Research Hypotheses

There is a relationship between spiritual experiences and perceived stress.

There is a relationship between meaningful work and perceived stress.

There is a relationship between solidarity feeling and perceived stress.

There is a relationship between alignment of values and perceived stress.

There is a relationship between emotional organizational commitment and perceived stress.

There is a relationship between normative organizational commitment and perceived stress.

There is a relationship between continuous organizational commitment and perceived stress.

METHODS

This is a correlational analytical descriptive study. Since the main goal of this study is identifying the relationship between the spiritual experiences and organizational commitment with perceived stress in employees of the Tehran Oil hospital, this search can be classified as applied research. The statistical population of the study includes all the employees of the Tehran Oil hospital, including both official and contract staffs, in 2017 and 2018. The sample size is calculated to be 124 based on Morgan table. It was decided to focus on nurses among different occupations with the aim of further homogenizing the study based on the kind and characteristics of the occupation and minimizing the potential bias. The criteria for entering the study include; age older than 23, longer than 6 months working experience, lack of chronic diseases and disabilities as well as not having a second simultaneous job in other institutes. The goal of the study was explained to the nurses taking part in the study, they were informed that participating in the study is completely voluntary and that the registered data in the questionnaires will remain anonymous. The nurses were asked to fill in the questionnaires at the beginning of their working shift with the aim of avoiding the influence of tiredness or potential problems during work.

In this study, data collection is performed through standard questionnaires such as Workplace Spirituality Questionnaire by Milliman et al., Organizational Commitment Scale Questionnaire by Allen and Meyer and Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) Questionnaire by

Sheldon Cohen et al. Workplace Spirituality Questionnaire was first devised in 2003 by Milliman et al. in order to effectively be used in health studies investigating different aspects of religion and spirituality. This questionnaire has been translated to multiple languages, used by numerous researchers and its reliability and validity have been investigated in various studies. In a study by Bik Zade et al. in 2012, the reliability of this questionnaire was estimated to be 89% and in another study by Farhangi, Vasegh and Fatahi in 2007, this value was estimated to be 87%. In a 2013 study by Godarzi and Karimi, Cronbach's alpha of the questionnaire was estimated to be 92%. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha of the Milliman questionnaire has been estimated to be 0.95%. Previous researchers in the field have also endorsed the validity of the questionnaire.

The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire was devised by Porter et al. in 1974, reviewed by Angel and Pery in 1981 and finalized by Allen and Mayer in 1991. This questionnaire was translated to Persian in the same year by Pakari and Shokrkon and since then has been used many times by various researches. The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire includes 31 questions and covers emotional commitment, normative commitment and continuous commitment factors. The results of performed studies show acceptable validity and reliability for each of the emotional, normative and continuous factors. Abdolahi, Karimian and Namdari Pezhman in 2014 determined the average alpha factor of the questionnaire to be 90% with a domain of 82% to 93% after studying the data from 2536 employees of the public and private sectors. Mirhashemi and Pashasharifi have determined the questionnaire's reliability based on the internal consistency of the questions to be 88% in 2008. In the present study, reliability was estimated using Cronbach's alpha method to be 95%. The validity of the questionnaire is determined based on previous studies. Perceived Stress Questionnaire was devised by Cohen et al. in 1983 and used to identify the general stress level experienced in one month. This questionnaire has been used and standardized in many counties and translated to various languages. This study has used the version 14 of the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha factor for the questionnaire's reliability is calculated to be 84%, 85% and 86% in three different studies (Cohen et al. 1983). In this study the Cronbach's alpha factor for the test's reliability is calculated to be 75%. Validity of the questionnaire is approved by analytical and conceptual methods.

The researcher was present at the workplace of the participants and explained the goals of the study to the nurses participating. Participants were reminded that taking part in the study is optional and all the data recorded is confidential and completely anonymous. In order to prevent tiredness and potential workplace problems affecting the answers, the participants filled in

the questionnaire at the beginning of their working shift. At the beginning of the questionnaires demographic data such as age, gender, education, type of employment and working experience were collected. At last the data were analyzed using the SPSS 22 statistical software after assessing the quantity of average and standard deviation and ensuring normal distribution of the data. In order to investigate the particular relation between the demographics of the test group and the spiritual experiences at work and organizational commitment on the perceived stress, statistical tests such as Independent T test and ANOVA were used. To investigate the relationship between the study's variables, Pearson Correlation and Linear Regression tests were used with

considering $P < 0.05$ as meaningful results. The researcher has been present at the workplace of the nurses, ensuring the confidentiality of the information disclosed.

RESULTS

The demographical characteristic of the participants shown that Of the 128 participants in this study, 94 people were females and 34 were males. 67 of them were official and 48 were Contract staff. For service history there were 45 less than years of service. 52 people were 20-20 years of service and 27 were above 20 years of service

Table 1: Relation between the Components of Occupational Spiritual Experiences with Perceived Occupational Stress

| Criterion Variable/Forecast Variable | Perceived Occupational Stress | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|-------|----------------|---------|
| | β | t | R | R ² | P-Value |
| Meaningful work | 0.44 | 3.167 | 0.271 | 0.8 | 0.03 |
| Solidarity Feeling | 0.382 | 4.959 | 0.61 | 0.13 | 0.001 |
| Values Alignment | 0.26 | 4.461 | 0.026 | 0.11 | 0.02 |

This study includes the following hypotheses that together with their analysis are presented in this section.

Hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between spiritual experiences and working with perceived stress.

Hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between meaningful work and the perceived stress.

Hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between feeling of solidarity and perceived stress.

Hypothesis 4: There is a relationship between alignment of values and perceived stress.

Pearson correlation (R) coefficient

Table 2: Correlation Coefficient of Total Grade of Spiritual Experiences at Work and its Components with Perceived Stress

| Forecast Variable | Perceived Variable Stress | Pearson correlation (R) coefficient | Meaningfulness (P) |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Spiritual experience | | 0.21 | 0.01 |
| Meaningful work | | 0.26 | 0.03 |
| Solidarity feeling | | 0.73 | 0.05 |
| Values alignment | | 0.16 | 0.02 |

Based on the statistical data, there is a negative relationship (0.01) between the spiritual experiences at work and perceived stress. Hence, the first hypothesis is confirmed.

Based on the statistical data, there is a negative relationship (0.03) between meaningful work and perceived stress. Hence, the second hypothesis is confirmed.

Based on the statistical data, there is a negative relationship (0.05) between solidarity feeling and perceived stress. Hence, the fourth hypothesis is confirmed.

Based on the statistical data, there is a negative relationship (0.02) between the alignment of values and perceived stress. Hence, the fourth hypothesis is confirmed.

Table 3: Relation between the Components of Organizational Commitment with Perceived Occupational Stress

| Criterion Variable/Forecast Variable | Perceived Occupational Stress | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|------|----------------|---------|
| | β | t | R | R ² | P-Value |
| Emotional commitment | 0.366 | 4.608 | 0.62 | 0.13 | 0.02 |
| Normative commitment | 0.422 | 5.7 | 0.2 | 0.14 | 0.00 |
| Continuous commitment | 0.348 | 3.982 | 0.37 | 0.09 | 0.00 |

Hypothesis 5: There is a relationship between emotional commitment and perceived stress.

Hypothesis 6: There is a relationship between normative commitment and perceived stress.

Hypothesis 7: There is a relationship between continuous commitment and perceived stress.

Based on the statistical data, there is a negative relationship (0.02) between emotional commitment

and perceived stress. Hence, the fifth hypothesis is confirmed.

Based on the statistical data, there is a negative relationship (0.03) between normative work and perceived stress. Hence, the sixth hypothesis is confirmed.

Based on the statistical data, there is a negative relationship (0.03) between continuous commitment

and perceived stress. Hence, the seventh hypothesis is confirmed.

Table 4: Correlation Coefficient of the Components of Organizational Commitment (Emotional Commitment, Normative Commitment, Continuous Commitment) with Perceived Occupational Stress

| Forecast Variable | Perceived Variable Stress | Pearson correlation (R) coefficient | Meaningfulness (P) |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Emotional commitment | | 0.48 | 0.02 |
| Normative commitment | | 0.37 | 0.03 |
| Continuous commitment | | 0.53 | 0.03 |

DISCUSSION

Medical personnel are prone to various pressures due to the nature of their job. Occupational stress should be identified quickly and fought against by identifying the contributing factors to it. The results of this study showed that the organizational commitments and its components have an opposite and meaningful relationship to occupational stress, i.e. the higher the organizational commitment of an employee, the lower occupational stress. In the present study the mean calculated grade for the organizational commitment components were 35 for emotional commitment, 45 for continuous commitment and 35 for normative commitment, which are classified as average. Sajadi et al. found the organizational commitment of nurses to be average as well [19]. The results of the study showed that occupational stress has an opposite relationship with all the components of organizational commitment. The meaningful relationship that has been identified between the occupational stress and emotional commitment can be due to the fact that organizational commitment is more related to the individual and their identity as well as being known within the organization. These in turn cause the individuals to consider themselves as part of the organization, which identifies as emotional commitment. The meaningful relation that is seen between the occupational stress and normative commitment can indicate that with less occupational stress, individuals feel more responsible towards their organization. Examining the relation between organizational commitment and occupational stress and demographic variables in this study, a significant relation was observed between organizational commitment and gender as well as occupational stress and the type of employment. Higher organizational commitment was observed among men. This agrees with the outcome of the study by Jahangir et al. in 2007 [20]. Higher organizational commitment among men can be due to the fact that in general men are responsible for supporting their family financially and therefore have higher incentives for keeping their job, looking for promotion and ensuring having an income. Another outcome of the present study was having statistically meaningful relationship between the type of employment and occupational stress, so that permanent employees in general have lower stress levels. Permanent employees are more likely to voice out their

complaints in order to improve their working place, due to having the assurance that they will not be fired easily. Studies among health care employees by Yaghoobnia et al. in 2008 [21] and Taei et al. in 2009 [22] have also shown that there is a meaningful relationship between the type of employment and occupational stress. Higher organizational commitment shows acceptance of the organizational goals and values by the staff. Dedicated employees have better performances at work and experience lower level of occupational stress as well. Another variable investigated in this study is the relation of spiritual experiences at work and the occupational stress. Spiritual experiences are one of the main contributing factors in reducing stress of the employees. The organizations board and managers should utilize this in order to lower the employees' stress and in turn increase the efficiency of the organization. The average correlation coefficient between organizational spirituality and stress indicate a meaningful and negative relationship between these two variables. In other words, the higher spirituality in an organization, the less stress among the staff. This result agrees with studies by Claude in 2003 [23] and Milliman in 2003 [24]. Claude concluded that a spiritual working place directly affects the success of the organization. Since there will be fewer instances of employees relocating, stress, fatigue and absence of employees from work. Milliman et al. investigated the relation between workplace performance and employees work attitude and concluded that meaningful work results in emotional commitment and job satisfaction. Based on Cuhen et al. study in 2000, spiritual experiences can have a significantly positive psychological impact on employees by helping the individuals when facing critical situations. Faith and spirituality are considered positive factors when dealing with stressful situations and provide the ability to have better control over unwanted and difficult situation [25]. Kathleen (2008) in a study examining the relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment under the influence of stress concluded that there is no positive relationship between them. He considered stress as an mediator. Regarding the relationship between organizational commitment and stress, their results were different from the present study [26]. At present, organizations need to effective and efficient people in

order to achieve their goals and develop comprehensively.

On the other hand, commitment improves managers' performance; therefore, the organizational commitment as an important issue should be expanded and drawn more attentions in organizations. In addition, in today's world, stress is the most important issue among managers and employees.

Organizations should provide grounds for reducing and managing stress. Certainly, stress affects other organizational issues in addition to organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job performance. We hope that researchers interested in this field study further.

CONCLUSIONS

High levels of stress are present among health care employees, particularly nurses, due to the complications of their jobs. The hospital environment is a very stressful and tense working place.

There are various factors affecting the mental and physical health state of nurses and subsequently their families, such as the presence of frail patients with physical and/or mental problems and their visitors who are often extremely worried and under a lot of pressure, lack of sleep during the night shifts as well as having high volume of responsibilities and assigned tasks in a working shift. These factors have a strong impact on organizational and occupational motivations of the nurses and naturally in turn affect the quality of the work done by them.

Considering the importance and the relation between the daily spiritual experiences and organizational commitment with occupational stress among nurses, especially in relation to the attachment and commitment that they feel towards continuing their profession, more effort should be put into encouraging these feelings. In order to achieve this, the organizations can utilize specific methods such as:

Appropriate promotion scheme: An appropriate promotion scheme that does not solely rely on the number of working years and is based on the amount of effort and productivity of the employees, in such a way that more opportunities are given to more ambitious and hardworking individuals.

Acknowledgment and appreciation: Acknowledgment and appreciation of the more experienced staff is another method for boosting organizational commitment. In certain companies an annual ceremony is held with the purpose of acknowledging the effort of these employees.

Social services: Clubs and places that gather the staff outside the working place can boost the organizational commitment. To this end many organizations offer special services to their employees and in addition to building workplaces, build facilities such as libraries, gyms and entertainment halls.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Free and informed consent is given to the participants the research objectives included explanation about the plan, the voluntariness of the company in the plan, the lack of a need for a family name and the confidentiality of information received. Information about the method of implementation and the purpose of the study, the benefits, nature and duration of the research were made available to each participant in the study. The authorities of Islamic Azad University Tehran Branch Faculty of Humanities, Tehran Oil Hospital, hospital metronome, head nurses and nurses participating in the study were assured that the information was generally analyzed and not used elsewhere in the research.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The study was part of MA thesis (Project code: IR.IAU.CTB:10120704952001 confirmed by the Ethics Committee of Islamic Azad University Tehran Branch Faculty of Humanities at date 2018-2-4, and registered by the Iranian Research Institute for Information Science and Technology (IranDoc) (No.7786860 at date 2018-2-12). Also, authors appreciate the Deputy of Research Islamic Azad University Tehran, and the authorities of Tehran Oil Hospital and all the nurses who participated in the study.

CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflicts of interests.

FUNDING

This research has been performed with the support of the Deputy Director of the Islamic Azad University of Tehran, Iran and with no financial aid.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Study design: Soraya Zarrini, Statistical analysis of data: Mohammadreza Yavari and Soraya Zarrini, revision of the Manuscript: Mohammadreza Yavari, Technical and material support: Hossain Shokrkon and Mohammadreza Yavari

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