The mediating role of individual differences in the interaction between specific socioprofessional pressures and job satisfaction

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Abstract

Previous research suggests that individual differences play an essential role in the complex process of organisational stress. The mediator role of specific individual differences and coping strategies, in the stressor – strain (effect) relationship is investigated in the present research. One sample of romanian employees (N=311) from an administrative-public service organisation participated in the study. Using the Pressure Managment Indicator (PMI, Williams & Cooper, 1998; PMI-RO, Brate, 2004, 2008), findings revealed significant mediating interactions between specific socioprofessional pressures and job satisfaction. The results have practical implications for the future research about the diagnosis, prevention, and intervention of stress in organisations.

Keywords: organisational stress, sources of pressure, individual differences, coping strategies, effects, mediating role, job satisfaction

1. Introduction

In the dynamic process of organisational stress, the role of personality, of individual differences and of management/ coping strategies in moderating or mediating the impact of socioprofessional pressures on the different effects of organisational stress is still a present theme (Pitariu, 2004; Brate, 2009, 2010a,b, 2011). Personality and individual differences play an essential role in the perception of the sources of occupational stress (socioprofessional
pressures) and for the awareness and recognition of the effects of organisational stress (Williams & Cooper, 1998). The research assumption in investigating this topic is that specific individual differences in perceiving socioprofessional pressures and adapting to effects of organisational stress have a mediating role (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Sava, 2004), depending also on the specific work setting, organisational context and other factors.

2. The Objective

The objective of this study is to identify significant interactions with mediating role, of specific individual differences and coping strategies, in the relationship between specific stressors (socioprofessional pressures) and job satisfaction, within a tested model;

3. Method

3.1. The Procedure

The Romanian version (PMI-RO, Brate, 2004, 2007a,b, 2008) of the Pressure Management Indicator (PMI, developed by Williams & Cooper, 1998) was distributed to a sample of N=311 employees from an organization with administrative and services activities. At the time of completion, participants were informed about the objectives of the study and give their consent to participate to the study. The data were computed with specific statistical programs and a mediational model was tested.

3.2. The Participants

We have selected the following demographic characteristics, derived from a comprehensive biographic data inventory:

- Age $m = 37.29$ years, std. dev. = 10.44, min = 18 years - max = 59 years
- $N_{1m} = 148$ male subjects (47.6%);
- $N_{1f} = 163$ female subjects (52.4%);
- Experience in organization: $M = 10.11$ years, std. dev. = 8.70;
- 32.8% report a major event in the last three months;
- 12.9% say they have suffered or are suffering from a major illness in the last three months;
- 75.6% report that their health is good at the moment;
- 28.3% say that they are subject to socio-professional pressures;
- 27% do not practice physical exercise;
- 44.1% smoked on average 11.08 cigarettes / day (females 8.8 and males 13.25);
- 31.2% consumed alcohol on average 18.02 units / week (women 7.71, men 28.33);
- On a performance selfevaluation scale from 0-100: $m = 81.74$, std. dev. 12.54;

3.3. The Instrument

The Pressure Management Indicator (PMI, Williams & Cooper, 1998, translated and adapted for Romanian subjects by the author: PMI-RO) is a 120 item self-report questionnaire developed from the Occupational Stress Indicator (OSI). The instrument contains a biographic questionnaire and provides an integrated multidimensional diagnosis of the major dimensions of occupational stress, which measure the stressors’ level, coping strategies, individual differences and stress effects:

- Socio-professional sources of pressure: Workload (PW), Relationships (PR), Recognition (PC), Organizational climate (PO), Personal responsibility (PP), Managerial role (PM), Home/work balance (PH), Daily hassles (PD) – frequently operationalised as independent/ predictor variables;
- Personality (individual differences): Drive (TD), Control (LC), Impatience (TI), Personal influence (LI) - as moderator/ mediator variables;
Coping mechanisms: Problem focus (CO), Life/work balance (CD), Social support (SS) - as moderator / mediator variables;

Effects: Job satisfaction (JI), Organizational satisfaction (JO), Organizational security (OS), Organizational commitment (OC), State of mind (MA), Resilience (MR), Confidence level (MW), Physical symptoms (PA), Energy levels (PE) - as dependent/ criteria variables

This multidimensional and comprehensive diagnostic tool permits to extract a stress profile for the individual, groups, socioprofessional categories, departments, institutions, firms or corporations, organized by different criteria. Also on its base, specific intervention (management) strategies and programmes can be initiated and developed.

4. Results

4.1. Mediators of the relationship between specific stressors and specific measured effects of organizational stress

To identify that variables, those who play a mediator role in the relationship between specific predictor variables (stressors) and certain organizational stress effects (job satisfaction), we present a graphical tested model and his interpretation, by using a graphic figuration of these mediational interactions.

Note: in the following table and figured model are presented matching/ fit indicators / indices, ie standardized coefficients (Sava, 2004), whose legend is as follows:

Absolute indicators:
RMSEA = root mean squared error of approximation;
GFI = index of goodness fit;
AGFI = adjusted index of goodness fit.

Indicators for comparing models generally
NFI = Normed fit index;
CFI = comparative fit index.

Indicators for comparing parsimony of models
PNFI = Parsimony Adjusted NFI;
PCFI = Parsimony Adjusted CFI.

ns = not significant;
* = p ≤ .05, ** = p ≤ .01, *** = p ≤ .001

4.2. Mediators of the relationship between predictor variables and job satisfaction

According to Table 1, the corresponding values of the indicators show a good model: it is noted that RMSEA ≤ .08, GFI ≥ .90, respectively ≥ .85 AGFI, NFI and CFI ≥ .85, and between the [0, 1] and PCFI PNFI recorded averages.
Table 1. The values of key indicators for the recursive model, tested on job satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator(s)</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
<th>GFI</th>
<th>AGFI</th>
<th>NFI</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>PNFI</th>
<th>PCFI</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job satisfaction</td>
<td>.076 [0.054-.100]</td>
<td>.964</td>
<td>.893</td>
<td>.874</td>
<td>.893</td>
<td>.408</td>
<td>.421</td>
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</table>

Following Figure 1, we observe that for the sample of 311 participants, the variables personal influence and control mediate the relationship between organizational climate and job satisfaction, in addition, more intensive perceived control mediates the relationship between social-professional recognition and job satisfaction. Also, the focus on the problem, as a stress coping strategy, will influence positively job satisfaction.

Figure 1. Graphical representation of the tested model and standardized parameter values estimated for the variable job satisfaction (N1 = 311 participants)

Description of variables:
- organizational climate, operationalised by the ‘feel’ or ‘atmosphere’ within the place of work;
- recognition, operationalised by the extent to which people feel they need to have their achievements recognized;
- control: operationalised by how much you feel able to influence and control events;
- personal influence: operationalised by the extent to which someone is able to exercise discretion in their job;
- problem focus, operationalised by the extent to which people plan ahead and manage their time to deal with problems;
- job satisfaction, operationalised by how satisfied someone feels about the type of work they are involved in, in terms of tasks and functions;
Estimations of standardized coefficients and their correlations (N = 311 participants):

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<tr>
<td>lc</td>
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<td>po</td>
<td>-.338***</td>
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<tr>
<td>lc</td>
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<td>pc</td>
<td>-.126*</td>
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<td>li</td>
<td>.266***</td>
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<td>pc</td>
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<td>po</td>
<td>.388***</td>
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Legend: ns = nonsignificant; * = p ≤ .05; ** = p ≤ .01; *** = p ≤ .001.

5. Conclusion

According to the obtained model, we have identified a significant mediating influence of control and personal influence (as individual differences), in the complex interaction between specific organisational stressors (organisational climate and recognition) and job satisfaction, as an indicator of occupational stress. The results have practical implications for the future research, about the diagnosis, prevention and intervention of stress (see also Brate, 2007a,b), for different socio-professional categories and organisational contexts.

References


