Job Stress and Satisfaction among Academic Staffs in Private Universities: An Empirical Study in Bangladesh

S. M. FERDOUS AZAM[1]   **KHONDAKER SAZZADUL KARIM**[2]   **JACQULINE THAM**[1]

Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to measure the role of job stress among the academic staff of the private universities of Bangladesh. A survey was conducted among 150 academic staffs of the private universities across Dhaka and Chittagong city in Bangladesh, concerning the trends of job stress and satisfaction and the likely relationship between them. Primary data analysis revealed that the private universities showed different directions for varying forms of job stress. Moreover, five types of stressors were found to be significant for the academic staff in Universities of Bangladesh, which when tested on their job stress revealed the significant impact on job stress. More specifically, pay, growth stressors and work-related stressors were found to negatively and significantly influencing job stress for the academic staff. Future research of time series analysis can be conducted to understand the trends of stress under different situations over time for academic staff.

Key Words: *Academic staff; Bangladesh; Job stress; Performance; Stressors.*

1. Introduction

With the recent increase in pressure within the education system of Bangladesh to meet the demand for improving the standards as per the international levels, there has been a significant increase in policy changes within Universities. These policy changes along with the increase in pressure for a better quality of education and skills among graduates, the academic staff of private universities have been facing growing discontent and stress. Subsequently, this can interfere with their job and on the learning capabilities of the students. Furthermore, academic staffs are being expected to raise the skill sets of the students and meet the industry demand for skilled professionals. Also, a considerable amount of research has taken place in studying the causes and effects of job-related stress.

Fundamentally, there is a lack of a comprehensive and extensive analysis of the job satisfaction levels and workplace stress on academic staff in the universities of Bangladesh. Therefore, this

---
[1] *Senior Lecturers, Management and Science University, Malaysia*

[2] *Associate Professor, Faculty of Business Administration, American International University Bangladesh, Dhaka*

study is an attempt to distinguish the different aspects of job-related stress among the academic staff working in private universities in Bangladesh. There has been the loss of productivity within the educational institutes as well as a decrease in the quality of education which along with the increasing international standards of education as well as demand for high-quality education within Bangladesh.

The instructors, professors and lecturers face insecurity, especially being easily replaceable and because of the short-term nature of their contract or temporary employment in universities (Bodla et al., 2014). As a result, the educational institutions are facing severe issues of lack of loyalty and commitment on the part of staffs. The academicians are always on the move to find new jobs and relocate to new workplaces that question the level of commitment (Hundera, 2014). This study further explores the phenomenon of work-related stress and job satisfaction of academic staff in Bangladesh, especially in the context of private universities.

This study mainly provides detailed insight into the job stress factors that are present among the academic staffs in Bangladesh. This way the study would help in bringing in more changes in policies in the education system as well as it would help to understand and determine the factors that can reduce the job stress and improve the job satisfaction levels among the academic staffs of Bangladesh. This study would further help the educational institutions of Bangladesh to formulate ways in which they can retain their academic staffs and can make efficient use of their productivity. In addition to the personal issues faced by the academic staff, there is also a loss of productivity in the organisation (Maceda, 2012). The study, therefore, fills the existing gap in the literature and paves the way for further research in this field.

2. Literature Review

Stress has been regarded with different ways in a variety of context over the years. Considered as a socially acceptable form of mental illness, stress has been further described as pressure from the environment and strain within the person (Kundaragi, 2015). In the context of the present study, the research has been initiated intending to measure the impact of job stress among academic staff in universities acrossDhaka and Chittagong city inBangladesh. The study is aimed to conceptualise the association between the job stress of a person by screening maximum previous researchers and exploring different factors related to stress at work as well as various antecedents of job satisfaction.

Pervasive role of stress among educational institute staff have been recognized as a typical scenario, and the present study attempts to build an empirical framework of how stress leads to dissatisfaction towards job among academicians. The leading research in the concerned area relates by Chimanikire et al. (2007) in Zimbabwe. A total of 80 respondents were selected to determine job satisfaction among academician, of which higher proportion was identified to be not satisfied with their job. The reason quoted for this includes a high volume of work, which ultimate acts as stress and discourages academicians to work efficiently in academic institutes. However, apart from verifying the stress effect, the research was limited to explore factors behind the stress building.

Towards which, another study by Ahsan & Alam, (2009) assimilated the survey of various factors of stress. The determinants of work stress have been categorized as management role, relationship with co-workers, workload, role ambiguity and pressure performance. The results from the sample of 100 academicians construct showed a significant association among four determinants towards work stress and confirmed a negative impact on overall job satisfaction.

Acknowledging the prevalence of stress due to multiple factors, another study by Veronica, (2011) focused on investigating job stress among males and females and the role of tenure in job satisfaction. The study surveyed 70 university teachers, and the results generated by the responses advocated a substantial difference for male and female counterparts in experiencing job stress. Further, job tenure was also identified an important indicator is suggesting high job satisfaction level.

Therefore, the studies so far contributing to job satisfaction among educational institute's employees successfully identified the role of stress and various other factors leading to stress. However, there was a shortage of researchers binding an overall view of stress level at universities, and the commonality of the dissatisfaction from job among all institutes. With this respect, a study by Mkumbo, (2014) proposed to check commonality of stressful work environment in educational institutes in Tanzania. A total of 326 respondents were surveyed upon the general stress they overcame in a working environment, and the responses suggested that job stress is every day among educational institutes and also contribute towards low job satisfaction.

Reviewing the impact of stress on job satisfaction from the view of different studies held in many different countries, none of the above-described research refutes the negative relationship between stress and satisfaction. As the present study recounted stress as both a positive and negative energy, the next highlighted study meant to invalidate the above-determined association. A study commenced by Hans, (2014) suggested an altogether different outcome on job satisfaction and job stress. The research was undertaken on 40 headmasters of different bilingual schools in Muscat and the results from responses suggested that headmaster experience stress at work and also enjoy a high level of satisfaction due to challenging work.

Therefore, a comprehensive conclusion of the above empirical research indicates towards constructive as well as devastating effects of stress on employees in terms of job satisfaction, and also, more recent researchers have been exploring the positive contribution of stress at work than previous studies, further indicating towards changing pattern of stress handling and maintenance among workforce.

Further, apart from organisational factors of building stress level, personal and social factors were also explored through existing literature and a common thread among all the literature suggested significant impacts of personal and social factors towards job satisfaction. Therefore, an overall study has examined many useful and disparate findings regarding the job stress impacts and highlights most of the factors that were necessary to be studied within the framework of this research question.

3. Research Methodology

The study is primarily based on the private higher education institutes of Bangladesh. A structured and close-ended questionnaire was designed to survey academic staff on the trends of job stress and satisfaction among them as well as to determine the relationship between two, in the educational settings. The factors considered in the questionnaire were designed, based on the five identified job stressors, pay and growth stressors, work-family conflict stressors, work-relationship stressors, work role stressors and status of the job. The questionnaire was segregated into the demographic profile, general background questions related to the job satisfaction level as well as the amount of stress their job accounts for, and Likert scale-based questions to determine the role of different job stressors on job satisfaction. The demographic profile and general background helped to get an overview of the respondents' origin and experience to job satisfaction and job stress, whereas the rest of the

attributes would help to provide answers to the primary research question. The questionnaires were distributed among the academic staffs through Google Docs questionnaire and interactive meetings with the respondents. To test the hypotheses, several statistical analysis tests were run on the collected data by the researcher. Before conducting the tests, the collected responses were coded in SPSS 16.

4. Data Analysis and Findings
4.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents
The age wise distribution of the respondents shows that most of the academic staff included in the sample is in the age group of 31- 40 years. Similarly, results indicate that 21% of the respondents are in the age group of 41-50 years. 16% is less than 30 years of age whereas 8% of the academic staff was above the age of 51 years. As per the results, around 64% of the academicians are male, and rest of them as females. This shows the low rate of female participation in the educational sector.

Concerning the educational qualification of respondents included in the study, results show that more than 20% are doctorate holders, 4% are post-doctorate, 69% of them had Master's degree, and 7% of them had a graduate degree. While conducting the primary survey, the designation of the respondents was also recorded, and the results are presented. As a result, shows the majority of the respondents were working as Lecturer and Assistant professors in the universities. The proportion of the associate professors, professors and dean is 18%, 10% and 5% respectively.

4.2 General Background
Since the results show that most of the respondents included in the study feel stress in their job, they were asked whether they have ever left any job due to the high-stress level. The findings indicate that 56% of them have left their previous job due to the high-stress level, whereas 44% responded that they have not given up the job due to the stress level.

4.3 Exploratory Factor Analysis
Factor analysis helps to represent the observed variables regarding the number of standard factors. It only takes into consideration the standard variance among the variables which further contributes to extract few factors which are inter-correlated. Factors identified through factor analysis are independent of each other and can hence be considered for further analysis. In the current research, various factors have been identified as job stressors which may affect the job satisfaction of the academic staff in Bangladesh. To identify which factors are the most important among the selected factors in contributing to overall stress among academic staff, a factor analysis test has been conducted and the results are shown in the following section.

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.824
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	6906.562
	Df	496
	Sig.	0.000

Source: Estimated Result

A result from the KMO-Bartlett test indicates that the KMO measure of adequacy is 0.824. This indicates that further tests within factor analysis can be conducted. A KMO value higher than 0.5, is considered appropriate for further analysis. Similarly, the Chi-square value of 6906.562

is significant even at 1 % significance level. Also, the factors can be identified through the rotated component matrix.

Table 2: Rotated component matrix of factor analysis

Factors of Job Stressors	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Basic salary based on workload	.849				
Chances of salary increase	.832				
Career and growth opportunities	.632				
Promotional opportunities	.821				
No bonus	.556				
Training and development opportunities	.726				
Inadequate time for family		.787			
Inadequate time to relax		.823			
Inadequate time to enjoy the social life		.843			
Inadequate support from home		.725			
Non-cooperative spouse		.856			
Long commuting distance from home		.679			
Lack of enough sleep		.824			
Lack of finances		.785			
The high workload at home		.787			
High expectations at home		.725			
Strenuous working conditions at the university		.635			
Lack of support from supervisor			.725		
Poor relationship with colleagues			.850		
High work pressure			.825		
No recognition or reward of work well done			.648		
No support from colleagues			.834		
Not sure about role/responsibilities				.725	
Work overload				.720	
Politics within different groups				.775	
Multiple roles to be handled				.623	
Conflict about what to prioritise				.775	
Low job security					.635
Disturbed working environment					.728
Poor management					.683
No, advise from colleagues and supervisor					.729
Unfavourable working conditions					.672
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis; Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization; Rotation converged in 6 iterations.					

Source: Estimated Result

The factor analysis shows that there are five important factors which should be included in the analysis, the rotated component matrix above identifies those five factors. As per the results, the most critical factor is the Pay and Growth stressors, and the values are shown in the first

column. Similarly, the second most crucial factor was Work-Family conflict stressors, and the benefits are presented in the second column. Other important factors include Work Relationship stressors, Work Role stressors and Status of Job respectively.

4.4 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is performed to examine the relationship among the variables included in the analysis. The value of correlation ranges from +1 to -1, where the value of +1 shows that the two values are correctly and positively correlated whereas the correlation of –1 means that the two variables are perfectly and negatively associated. However, correlation does not guarantee causation. For any analysis, the correlation of the variables is essential. If the variables are not correlated, then further analysis cannot be conducted; however, perfect correlation is also not desirable. For the current research, the Pearson correlation coefficient (two-tailed) has been calculated to examine the correlation among the independent variables: Job Stressors and the Dependent Variable and Overall Job Satisfaction.

Table 3: Chi-Square tests for pay and growth stressors

		Overall Job Satisfaction
Mean Pay and Growth Stressors	Pearson Chi-square	.625**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	150

Source: Estimated Result

As presented in the above Table 3 the Chi-square test was performed at a 5% level of significance. The person chi-square test significance value for pay and growth stressors is 0.000. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and hence, it is found that there is a significant association between pay and growth stressor and the job satisfaction level. It might also be concluded that pay and growth stressors and the job satisfaction are not independent of each other. In other words, these two variables are significantly associated with each other.

Table 4: Chi-square tests for work-family conflict stressor

		Overall Job Satisfaction
Mean Work-Family Conflict Stressors	Pearson Chi-square	.655**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	150

Source: Estimated Result

As indicated in the above Table 4, the Chi-square test was performed at a 5 % level of significance. The person chi-square test significance value for work-family conflict stressors is 0.000. Therefore, a null hypothesis is rejected and hence, it is found that there is a significant association between work-family conflict stressor and the job satisfaction level. It might also be concluded that work-family conflict stressors and the job satisfaction are not independent of each other. In other words, these two variables are significantly associated with each other.

Table 5: Chi-square tests for work relationship stressors

		Overall Job Satisfaction
Mean Work Relationship Stressors	Pearson Chi-square	.715**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	150

Source: Estimated Result

As shown in the above Table 5, the Chi-square test was performed at 5 % level of significance. The person chi-square test significance value for work relationship stressors is 0.000; therefore, a null hypothesis is rejected and hence, it is found that there is a significant association between work relationship stressor and the job satisfaction level. It might also be concluded that work relationship stressors and the job satisfaction are not independent of each other. In other words, these two variables are significantly associated with each other.

Table 6: Chi-square tests work role stressors

		Overall Job Satisfaction
Mean Work Role Stressors	Pearson Chi-square	.785**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	150

Source: Estimated Result

As presented in the above Table 6, the chi-square test was performed at a 5 % level of significance. The person chi-square test significance value for work role stressors is 0.000. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and hence, it is found that there is a significant association between work role stressor and the job satisfaction level. It might also be concluded that work role stressors and the job satisfaction are not independent of each other. In other words, these two variables are significantly associated with each other.

Table 7: Chi-square tests for status of job stressors

		Overall Job Satisfaction
Mean Status of Job Stressors	Pearson Chi-square	.621**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005
	N	150

Source: Estimated Result

As shown in the above Table 7, the Chi-square test was performed at a 5 % level of significance. The person chi-square test significance value for the status of job stressors is .005. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and hence, it is found that there is a significant association between the status of job stressor and the job satisfaction level. It might also be concluded that the status of job stressors and the job satisfaction are not independent of each other. In other words, these two variables are significantly associated with each other.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

A total of nine different parameters namely the total working hours, chance of promotion, attention paid to suggestion, amount of responsibility given to handle, recognition and reward for the work done, support from senior, opportunities to use abilities, variety in job, salary and support from colleagues were studied and for the majority of the parameters more respondents from private universities favour their universities with respect to job satisfaction. Only one parameter does not reflect higher job satisfaction for private universities, which was the total number of working hours that were put in by the academicians.

The null hypothesis of the present study was rejected, and its alternate, i.e. job stress does have a considerable impact on the job satisfaction has been accepted. The factor analysis determined five components that aggravated the problems of stress, i.e. work-related stressors; work role stressors; pay and work growth stressor; status of the job, and work-family conflict among the academic staff of Bangladeshi universities. Further correlation

analysis revealed a considerable cumulative impact of the pay and growth stressors and the work relation stressor have negative and a considerably significant impact on job satisfaction, suggesting that pay and growth-related pressure alone with relationships at work decreased job satisfaction for academic staff. Moreover, the conclusions of the present study bring out many practical implications for universities in Bangladesh and also specific policy measures for the regulatory framework for improving job satisfaction and reduce turnover intention among these universities.

The following recommendations were made by the researcher for the academic staff of Bangladeshi universities. While the management of private universities in Bangladesh needs to spread awareness regarding the impact of job stress on the performance and satisfaction among the academicians in Bangladesh, they are also required to form teaching associations for greater access to ideas and resources for the staff. Moreover, particular attention is needed to be paid to the part-time and adjunct teaching staff, along with librarians for the different levels of stress they face, which combined with their lack of job security, contributes to low satisfaction. To well-being of the academic staffs, the institutions should have proper guidelines laid down for the staff starting with taking appropriate care of health, hygiene and food habits and measures of coping stress with the help of alternate techniques like yoga and meditation. Continuous evaluation of mental and physical well-being of academic staff is needed in all universities, to detect stress exceeding permissible limits among the academic staff. The universities should conduct timely workshops and seminars promoting the well-being of academic staff and providing avenues of sharing the common problems faced and methods to resolve them.

Through this study, a significant relationship has been established between levels of job stress and job satisfaction among private universities of Bangladesh and most importantly, the role job stress has played in job satisfaction of academic staff. A direct practical contribution of such a study is that the universities in Bangladesh can acknowledge this presence of job stress among their academic staff, and how it impacts their performance and the performance of the university. Subsequently, universities can devise programs and policies to curb stress and ensure satisfaction among staff. Since Bangladesh aims to elevate its education sector's standards to meet the international level, a stress-free faculty would help accelerate growth, research and innovation within the system, and also assist in developing skilled graduates.

Regarding theoretical contributions, this study significantly contributes to the existing literature on job stress-job satisfaction relationship, more specifically for studies in Bangladesh, which up until now has not been done. Additionally, this study contributes to the significance of different stressors among teaching staff and higher studies academicians of Universities.

Lastly, this study is a prominent contribution to the knowledge in the academic world nationally and internationally as it tries to infer and analyses the contributing stress factor concerning academician's job responsibility. It is a new topic yet to be discovered by any previous scholars in the country; however, the present study like any other study has certain limitations that need to be mentioned. The foremost concern is that sample size is comparatively smaller due to the tight work schedule and involvement in different institutional activities of the academicians. Moreover, qualitative data like focus groups or nominal group techniques were not adopted in this study, which would have given an in-depth view of the different dimensions of stress faced by academic staff at all levels.

References:

1. Ahsan, N., & Alam, S. (2009). A Study of Job Stress on Job Satisfaction among University Staff in Malaysia: Empirical Study. *European Journal of Social Science*, 8(1), 121–131.

2. Bodla, A. A., Hussain, M., & Chen, C. (2014), Determinants of Job Satisfaction in Academic Professionals of Pakistan, Sukkur Institute of Business Administration, 1, 20–39

3. Chimanikire, P., Mutandwa, E Gadzirayi, C. T., Muzondo, N., & Mutandwa, B. (2007), Factors affecting job satisfaction among academic professionals in tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe, 1(6)

4. Hans, A. (2014). A Study on Work Stress and Job Satisfaction among Headmasters: A Case Study of Bilingual Schools in Sultanate of Oman - Muscat. *Journal of Sociological Research*, 5(1), 40–46. http://doi.org/10.5296/jsr.v5i1.5426

5. Hundera, M. B. (2014). Factors affecting academic staff turnover intentions and the moderating effect of gender, *International Journal of Research in Business Management*, 2(9), 2321-886.

6. Kundaragi, P. B. (2015). Work Stress of Employee: A literature review. *International Journal of Advanced Research and Innovative Ideas*, 1(3), 18–23.

7. Maceda, C. (2016). Low salary: The Top cause of stress for workers in Bangladesh, other Mena countries. Retrieved from http://gulfnews.com/business/sectors/employment/low-salary-top-cause-of-stress-for-workers-in-Bangladesh-other-mena-countries-1.1898394

8. Mkumbo, K. (2014). Prevalence of and Factors Associated with Work Stress in Academia in Tanzania. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 3(1), 1–11. http://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v3n1p1

9. Veronica, D. (2011). Stress and Job Satisfaction among University Teachers, International Conference of Scientific Paper AFASES, 2(2011), 320