Examining Stress, Job Satisfaction and Customer Satisfaction in a Transport Company (A Case from Pakistan)

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Abstract

Stress harms the employee attitude towards work and reduces customer satisfaction. The current study examines the relationship of negative stress experienced by the bus hostesses and their job satisfaction. The relationship of both the variables with customer satisfaction has also been examined among hostesses working in a transport company operating through different cities of Pakistan. A questionnaire was employed to gather responses which resulted in 105 final responses (65.4% response rate). The relationship is examined by employing Pearson's correlation and regression analysis. The results show that there is an opposite relationship of stress and job satisfaction among bus hostesses. This negative relationship ultimately effects the customer satisfaction which may encourage the management and employees of the company to curb out such factors prevailing among employees. Further suggestions are added to paper to maintain the satisfactory level of hostesses which leads to customer satisfaction which may help the management of the company to increase its market share. Additionally the results of the current study are compared with the previous studies.

Key words: Stress, job satisfaction, customer satisfaction, hostess, Pakistan.

1. Introduction

The word "stress" is a outcome of a Latin language word "Stringere", means 'to draw tight'. Stress is a vibrant condition encouraging individuals to tackle an opportunity, demand or resource related to the desires of an individual for which the outcome is perceived to be vague and vital (Cooper et. al. 2002). Stress has been a focus of study in medical science (Soleiman, Tahereh, Masiello, & Brommels, 2007; Chung, & Fong, 1990; Healy, & McKay, 1999; Pestonjee, & Mishra,1999) and other organizational studies (Chandraiah, Agrawal, Marimuthu, & Manoharan, 2003; Chaplain,2001; Ahmadi, & Alireza, 2006; Singh, 2007). Whereas, job satisfaction is the end state of feeling, the feeling that is experienced after a task is accomplished (Saiyadain, 2007). The bus service under study is one of the largest transport companies operating throughout the length and breadth of Pakistan providing quality services to the nation. The bus service is organized on scientific lines with corporate culture by setting new standards of safety, security, reliability, luxury, comforts and regularity, which makes it popular and first choice of the traveling public.

Curbing out stress and ensuring such standards requires satisfied staff and best quality customer services. For the same reason the current study examines the effect of stress on employee's satisfaction and simultaneously the effect of stress and job satisfaction on customer satisfaction. Satisfaction is a sense of joy after using goods or availing services and customer satisfaction is the sense or result of a customer's after using of a good or availing a service. It is one of the essential corporate goals handled by the top management to get better the quality of offerings. Further it has become imperative issue as a result of increased competition and believed to be an indispensable aspect for service sector competitiveness (Ahmad, Bashir, Humayoun, & Mubariz, 2010).

The current study will prove to be a milestone to curb out stress for the services providing businesses in general and for the transport companies, who employ hostesses for their bus service, in particular because achieving customer satisfaction has the central role to play in the success of service providers.

2. Literature review

There have been other studies on different professionals on their experiences of job satisfaction and role stress. Soleiman, Tahereh, Masiello and Brommels (2007) explored organizational role stress in a sample of medical school faculty members in Iran and come to know that role stress was intense among faculty members of the medical school, either male or female. Chandraiah, Agrawal, Marimuthu and Manoharan (2003) examined a causal relationship of occupational stress and job satisfaction in a sample of 105 managers having different age and came to the conclusion with a positive relationship between both among managers having more age. Richardson and Burke (1991) examined occupational stress and job satisfaction by considering a sample of physicians and mentioned the factors causing stress. Those factors include time pressures while doing job, and found key factors of satisfaction as relationships with patients and colleagues. The authors mentioned that for physicians (male and female), high levels of occupational stress was negatively related with satisfaction and high job satisfaction was related to fewer specific work stressors and more positive attitudes about health care. Similarly in another study, Healy and McKay (1999) in a study of nurses, found higher intensity of stress associated with lower job satisfaction.

Conveniently the researchers have found an converse relationship between job stress and satisfaction by examining different populations (Cotton, Dollard, & de Jonge, 2002; Heslop, Smith, Metcalfe, Macleod, & Hart, 2002) Ahmadi and Alireza (2006) reported that in Iran, 13.5 % pilots out of 89 military pilots faced severe stress even in peace times. Stress is believed to cause depression, irritation, anxiety, fatigue and thus lower self esteem and reduce job satisfaction (Manivannan, Saravanaraj & Sumathi, 2007). Job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction is often included in stress research as a consequence of stress and a negative relationship between stress and job satisfaction is frequently reported. Sheena, Cary, Sue, Ian, Paul, and Clare (2005) considered a sample from UK and examined factors like physical health, psychological well-being, and job satisfaction. The authors revealed that there are some professions that are reporting not as good scores as others. The relationship between variables can be very essential to academician. If a clear-cut connection exists between two variables (stress and job satisfaction). The literature reviewed on stress and satisfaction across various samples show an opposite correlation between the variables. This study is an extension of literature on the relationship between role overload and job satisfaction and their relationship with customer satisfaction amongst the hostesses working at a transport company.

3. Hypothesis

H1: Job stress is negatively related to job satisfaction of the hostesses working in a transport company.
H2: Job stress of hostesses working in a transport company is negatively related to customer's satisfaction.
H3: Job satisfaction of hostesses working in a transport company is positively related to customer's satisfaction.

4. Methodology

Sample

A sample of 110 hostesses was selected for the current study. Out of the total distributed questionnaires 105 questionnaires complete in all respects, are included for testing and analysis purpose. Data was collected on a convenient sampling method from the bus hostesses working in one of the reputable bus service company in Pakistan..

Instrument used

Seven items from Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) short form developed by Weiss et al., (1967) are used for the current study including, job authority, employee recognition, having fun at work, social support, relationship with supervisor and colleagues, job security, working conditions. The scales was rated at 05 point Likert type scale, 1 = 'strongly dissatisfied' and 5 = 'strongly satisfied'. Job stress is assessed by employing "Job Stress Questionnaire, JSQ" recommended by Caplan et al. (1975) and Sahu and Gole (2008). The scale had four aspects from Caplan et al (1975), such as workload, role conflict, role ambiguity and performance pressure. Each item was measured by single item by using five-point Likert Scale in which 1= "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree". One of the motivations to adopt this scale was that it has been widely used by the researchers worldwide.

Reliability of the instrument is confirmed by calculating Chronebach's alpha scores that confirmed the reliability by showing alpha score = 0.70. Normality of the data is ensured by checking the skewness and kurtosis which resulted within the acceptable range of ± 2 (SPSS Inc., 1998).

Procedure

The questionnaires were distributed among bus hostesses working in a transport company in Pakistan. The motive of the study is to determine the relationship of job stress and job satisfaction which ultimately effects the customer satisfaction. The research team made use of Pearson's correlation and regression analysis to test the above mentioned relationship. The data accumulated was refined via Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The process of data collection took more than 120 days, as personal visits were made at different bus terminals and data was collected while travelling through the bus service. Limited number of hostesses felt free to respond to the questionnaire whereas other hostesses showed disability due to their workloads or hesitation to fill in questionnaires.

5. Results

The demographic information of the bus hostesses is shown in table 1.

Insert table (1) about here

The data was collected from female hostesses having Higher Secondary School Certificates (HSSC). The mean age of the respondents is 19 years ranging from 18 to 25 years. All the respondents are unmarried having average tenure of 03 years. The results of table 2 mention the correlation of the variables by employing Pearson's correlation.

Insert table (2) about here

The results of the Pearson's correlation analysis show that stress faced by the hostesses is negatively and significantly related to their satisfaction with their work (-0.885, *0.000*) and customer satisfaction (-0.889, *0.000*). it is also evident that if the hostesses are satisfied from their job it has a strong positive effect on the customer satisfaction (0.960, *0.000*). Further the relationship of the independent and dependent variables are examined by applying multiple regression analysis. Table 3 shows the results of the multiple regression analysis for stress, job satisfaction (independent variables) and customer satisfaction (dependent variable).

Insert table (3) about here

The results of the regression analysis shows that the stress experienced by the hostesses has a significant negative effect on customer satisfaction (Beta = -0.238, sig. = *0.002*). At the same time job satisfaction is found to be the stronger significant predictor of customer satisfaction (Beta = 0.875, sig. = *0.000*). The reasonably high value of **R^2 (0.929)** shows variance of dependent variable due to independent variables. The value of **F** - statistic (**668.516**) which shows the overall significance of the relationship, is very high and statistically significant which confirms the fitness of the model. The rate of **R (0.964)** shows a strong relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The R^2 shows that the independent variables such as stress and job satisfaction account for 92.9% variation in the dependent variable that is customer satisfaction.

6. Conclusion and discussion

The results of the study reveal that stress is the negative predictor of customer satisfaction whereas job satisfaction of the hostesses has the positive effect on the customer satisfaction. The results of the current study support the findings of the earlier research studies (Richardson & Burke, 1991; Healy & McKay, 1999; Cotton, Dollard, & de Jonge, 2002; Heslop, Smith, Metcalfe, Macleod, & Hart, 2002). Whereas Chandraiah et al. (2003) found a positive relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction. There can be several reasons for stress in a service providing organizations. In a study of service sector Montgomery and Rupp (2005) assessed a relationship of stress and various variables like coping, burnout, emotional response, personality, personal support, environment and demographic characteristics and acknowledged that on average, external stressors of work demands are highly correlated with stress.

Additionally, in another study of industrial technology teachers, Brewer and McMahan (2004) acknowledged stress linked to lack of organizational support and difficulties with supervisors or coworkers as being more stressful than job pressures. Lastly, a study of rural and urban secondary school teachers revealed that, urban school teachers experienced larger sources of stress due to poor working conditions, inadequate salary, poor promotion, and lack of recognition for teaching, and poor staff relations (Abel & Swell, 1999).

Ahmad, Bashir, Humayoun and Mubariz (2010) concluded that customer satisfaction is one of the sources of better performance of the service providing organizations. There is a need is to curb out stress for better job satisfaction and customer satisfaction. Keeping in mind the relationship of stress and satisfaction among hostesses the support from the organization can proves to be a anecdote to the problem. Moreover the adequate salary, recognition for efforts made and maintaining good relations with colleagues I – e while on the drive hostesses has to keep acceptable level of good relations to divers for better customer (passengers) satisfaction.

7. Limitations and recommendations

The study is based on the data gathered from the female bus hostesses working at a transport company operating in Pakistan. One time data is collected representing a cross – sectional design of the study. The study with a longitudinal research design may present different results. The sample for the current study consisted of one Transport Company operating in Pakistan which may bound the generalisability of the results. The study can be supported by increasing the sample size as the data analysis results and findings may differ considerably when the sample size is increased or decreased. The staff experiencing stress show dissatisfaction at work may result in lowering trends in customer satisfaction. To avoid such dissatisfaction the company may introduce work.

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Appendices

Table 1
Demographic information of the respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Education	SSC	00	0.00 %
	HSSC	85	80.9 %
	Bachelors	20	19.1%
Marital status	Married	00	0.00 %
	Unmarried	105	100.00 %

Table 2

Correlations

		STRESS	JS	CS
STRESS	Pearson Correlation	1	-.885**	-.889**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	105	105	105
JS	Pearson Correlation	-.885**	1	.960**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	105	105	105
CS	Pearson Correlation	-.889**	.960**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	105	105	105

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

Table 3
Regression Model
Regression coefficient, st. error in parenthesis, t- values in brackets and p - values in italics

Constant	STRESS	JS	R^2	F - Statistic
1.157	-0.238	0.875	0.929	668.516
(0.436)	(0.088)	(0.062)		
[2.653]	[-3.217]	[14.134]		
0.009	*0.002*	*0.000*		*0.000*

*Dependent variable: Customer satisfaction (CS).
*Independent variables: Stress (ST), Job satisfaction (JS).