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***IMPACT OF STRESSORS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF
EMPLOYEES***

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Abstract

It is important to recognize workplace stress because workplace stressors badly affect people's mental as well as physiological health. Some of the reasons of stress at workplace could be the inability to meet out the demands of the job, relationship with colleagues and to control subordinate staff. After starting one's career the key stressors are related to work, environment and people. Stress is the reaction of body due to interaction with any stimulus in the environment. This study focuses on how workplace stressors effect the motivation of an employee and what it outcomes in term of employee performance. In this study, there are several variables relating to employee performance, motivation and job stresses, whose types of measurement are interval and simultaneously investigated the several variables through structural equation modeling (SEM). The result shows that role conflict, role ambiguity and performance pressure has positively effect the employee motivation and it leads to positively affect employee performance. This study indicates and highlights the intensity of those factors that are involved to create a stress environment in the organization. So this study is policy oriented to maintain a required level of stress in the organization.

Key Words: *Stress Management, Motivation, Employee Performance*

1. Introduction

It is important to recognize and address properly job stress because it badly affects the employee's mental and physiological health. As there is so many resources for employees to perform excellent in their jobs but there is also some factors that hinders in their way. These factors lead to be negatively to employee performance. Newman and Beehr (1979) defined job stress or workplace stress as "a situation wherein job-related factors interact with the worker to change his or her psychological and/or physiological condition such that the person is forced to deviate from normal functioning."

Some of the reasons of stress at workplace could be: inability to meet the demands of the job, building & maintaining amiable relationship with colleagues, management of subordinate staff, imparting training to others and taking work from them, support received from seniors, colleagues and juniors, excessive work pressure, to meet deadlines, to be creative, to produce new publications in research area, working overtime and on holidays, not being promoted, change of job, work against will, harassment, etc.

Members of the organization are showing to different kind of stressors like excessive work load, role conflicts, interpersonal conflicts with staff clients and the lack of progress or improvements exhibited by clients (Shinn et al, 1984). These kind of work related stressors results in bad performance by members of the organization.

Atkinson (2004) stress is a major factor in up to 80% of all work-related injuries and 40% of workplace turnovers.

Job stress is also a serious cause of mental health and health related injuries. Davidson and Cooper (1981) finds that workplace stress has been increasingly quoted as the main cause of accidents, job dissatisfaction, morbidity, and other physiological illnesses like

heart attack, alcoholism and hypertension. Research on work related stress by health and safety sector of UK (HSE) has highlighted the workplace and home stress as the main cause of stress among people. Presence of any of these gives a clear signal of presence of high level of stress in the environment.

- Increase in number of stress related worker compensation claims
- Employee complaints in which stress was listed as a contributory factor.
- Customer complaints about the employee as irritable or stressed.
- Recorded incidents of verbal or physical conflict among any employees.
- Recent increase in absenteeism associated with the filing of stress claims.
- Unusually high employee turnover rates that could be related to work place stress.

It can be estimated that work related stress costs more than to adopt the interventions to reduce it. It is observed that the main reason of job stress, when employee fail to cope with its job responsibilities. It can be result of different things i.e. performance pressure, work load pressure etc. Physical could be overwork, lack of rest, and poor diet. Mental stressors are related to the mental condition or health of the person. Situational could be due to the interaction with environment, people, etc. (Donovan and Kleiner, 1994).

There is a need to look for comprehensive stress management programs in view of success of few stress management programs and some failures also. As Murphy and Sorenson (1988) highlight the fact “as a primary strategy to reduce employee stress at work, stress management has significant limitations since no attempt is made to alter the sources of work stress. Attempts to effect organizational change through individual-centered methods necessarily invoke the 'psychological fallacy' of assuming that “since

the organization is made up of individuals, we can change the organization by changing its members”.

Life is full of stressful events whether it is from the society where you live or the organization where you work. Human beings are faced different kind of stressors with respect to their perception. After starting one's career the key stressors are related to the work, its environment and its people. Stress is the reaction of body due to interaction with any stimulus in the environment. It could turn out to be positive (eustress) in terms of good performance or negative (distress) in terms of high turnover, absenteeism and other so many manifestations. Stress and performance have a direct relationship when the stress is up to a moderate level whereas stress and performance are inversely related when stress increases that moderate level and then it becomes distress.

In this study effect of stressors existed in organization on the performance of employees are to be seen so it's important here to explain a little about the dimensions of the performance. Brumbrach (1988) has defined stress as performance means both behaviors and results. Behaviors emanate from performer and transform performance from abstraction to action. Not just the instruments for results, behaviors are also outcomes in their own right as the product of mental and physical effort applied to tasks, and can be judged apart from the results. Herman (2009) has defined performance as it is about behavior or what employee does and not about what employee produce or the outcomes. There are different approaches to measure performance like trait approach, behavioral and results approach. Trait approach measures performance only through traits. Behavioral takes into account only behavioral aspects. Result approach takes care of only the outcomes by the individual in the form of productivity.

This study focuses on how workplace stressors effect the motivation of an employee and what it outcomes in term of employee performance. It is therefore, highly important to make the people in the organization aware of the possible stressors and making them capable to cope with them and keep monitoring them.

2. Literature Review

Werner and Desimone stress has been defined in many ways but the most widely used definitions of stress are:

- Some environmental force affecting the individual which is called stressor
- Individual's psychology and response to stressor
- In some cases an interaction between stressor and individual's response.

Hans Selye (1956) states that stress is not all bad as it has two forms i.e. eustress and distress where eustress is positive and distress is negative. According to business week (2003) stress from the corner office to the factory floor, bloody Monday layoffs, mergers and acquisitions, etc., all are taking their toll in derailed careers, broken families and emotional disorders signs are everywhere. Employees drink to excess and slip disastrously in their performance, they erupt into fits of uncontrollable rage at work and abuse their families at home. A few commit suicide.

So, eustress is good for the progressive level of performance whereas situation is inverse in case of distress. To cope with distress organizations work a lot and go for interventions which are called stress management interventions (SMIs) in order to help people of the organization to cope with it in an effective way. There are different levels of these interventions i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary. Primary interventions attempt to alter the sources of stress at work (Murphy and Sauter, 2003). Examples of primary prevention programs include redesigning jobs to modify workplace stressors (Bond and Bunce, 2000), increasing workers' decision-making authority (Jackson, 1983), or providing coworker support groups (Carson et al., 1999; Cecil & Forman, 1990; Kolbell, 1995). In contrast, secondary interventions attempt to reduce the severity of stress symptoms before

they lead to serious health problems (Murphy and Sauter, 2003). Tertiary interventions, such as employee assistance programs (EAP), are designed to treat the employee's health condition via free and confidential access to qualified mental health professionals (Arthur, 2000). The most common SMIs are secondary prevention programs aimed at the individual and involve instruction in techniques to manage and cope with stress (Giga, Cooper, and Faragher et al., 2003). Examples are cognitive-behavioral skills training, meditation, relaxation, deep breathing, exercise, journaling, time management, and goal setting.

Several studies have highlighted the deleterious consequences of high workloads or work overload. According to Wilkes et al. (1998) work overloads and time constraints were significant contributors to work stress among community nurses. Workload stress can be defined as reluctance to come to work and a feeling of constant pressure (i.e. no effort is enough) accompanied by the general physiological, psychological, and behavioral stress symptoms (Division of Human Resource, 2000)

Al-Aameri AS. (2003) has mentioned in his studies that one of the six factors of occupational stress is pressure originating from workload. Alexandros-Stamatios G.A. et al. (2003) also argued that "factors intrinsic to the job" means explore workload, variety of tasks and rates of pay.

Due to rapidly change of globally network, it creates the pressure to employees to produce with effectively and efficiency. Indeed, to perform better to their job, there is a requirement for workers to perform multiple tasks in the workplace to keep abreast of changing technologies (Cascio, 1995; Quick, 1997). The ultimate results of this pressure have been found to one of the important factors influencing job stress in their work (Cahn

et al., 2000). A study in UK indicated that the majority of the workers were unhappy with the current culture where they were required to work extended hours and cope with large workloads while simultaneously meeting production targets and deadlines (Townley, 2000).

Role ambiguity is another aspect that affects job stress in the workplace. According to Beehr et al. (1976), Cordes and Dougherty (1993), Cooper (1991), Dyer and Quine (1998) and Ursprung (1986) role ambiguity exists when an individual lacks information about the requirements of his or her role, how those role requirements are to be met, and the evaluative procedures available to ensure that the role is being performed successfully. Jackson and Schuler (1985) and Muchinsky (1997) studies found role ambiguity to lead to such negative outcomes as reduces confidence, a sense of hopelessness, anxiety, and depression.

Chandan (1997) states a very negative relation of stress and job performance. When increased from the level it results into different physical and psychological diseases. Ivancevich et al. (1990) examined that high effectiveness of secondary and tertiary stress management programs whereas temporary positive effect of primary stress management interventions. Roskies and Lazarus (1980) have used an example of bank account in order to describe the connection between coping resources and coping behavior: 'If coping strategies are conceptualized as the currency expended in a specific way stress transaction, coping resources constitute the bank account from which this currency is drawn'. Catherine et al (1995) finds that effect of these stressors on employees depends upon the employees' cognitive and behavioral responses to them. Employee resources and cognitive behavior are determined in turn, by the amount and the quality of resources

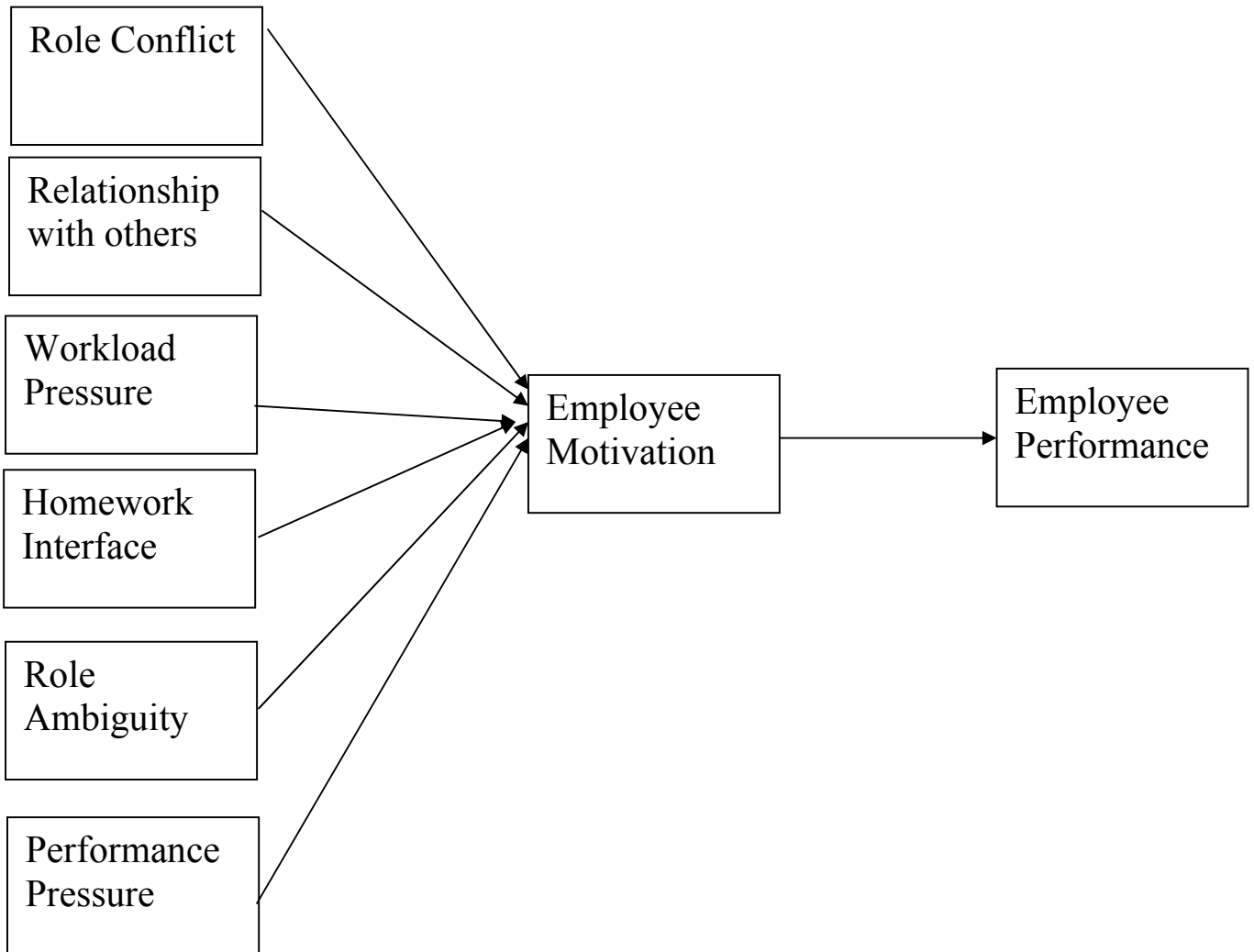
that the employee can draw upon when faced with problem or potential stressor at work. For a more stressor free environment it is important to focus on stress management interventions (cooper; 1998).

The study conducted by Lawson and Luks (2001) has investigated the relationship between empowerment, job satisfaction and reported stress levels. They have favored the idea of empowering employees in order to reduce stress level. In their study they have concluded that if influence of employees on their areas of work is more, then there is greater level of satisfaction and eventually decreased level of job stress. In this study, inverse relation of empowerment and stress has been focused through positive relation of empowerment and job satisfaction.

Kathryn and Cary (1995) have compared the stress level of the two emergency service providers. They have used occupational stress indicator (OSI) as the investigating tool. In it the independent variables selected are the sources of stress and they are factors intrinsic to the job, managerial role, relationship with others, careers and achievement, organizational structure, home-work interface.

In this study few of the above mentioned variables have been selected and will serve as independent variables.

3. Theoretical Framework



After conducting the extensive literature review, the theoretical framework is designed.

This framework consists of eight constructs comprised of two parts. In the first part, job stress is explained by six stressors such as role conflict, relationship with others, workload pressure, homework interface, role ambiguity and performance pressure treated as independent variable having its effect on employee motivation. In the next path,

employee motivation treated as an independent variable and having its effect on employee performance.

3.1. Hypothesis

- Hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between role conflict and employee motivation.
- Hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between relationship with others and employee motivation.
- Hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between home-work interface and employee motivation.
- Hypothesis 4: There is a relationship between workload pressure and employee motivation.
- Hypothesis 5: There is a relationship between job role ambiguity and employee motivation.
- Hypothesis 6: There is a relationship between performance pressure and employee motivation.
- Hypothesis 7: There is a positive relationship between employee motivation and employee performance.

4. Methodology

The method through which effectiveness of SMIs is going to be measured in this study is a combination of steps followed in different studies but have authentic sources. This study is aimed to explore the causal relationship among variables through hypothesis defined.

4.1. Instrument Development:

In this study effectiveness is measured with the help of six stressors (stress causing factors) which are present at workplace, and served as independent variables. A close ended questionnaire based survey having five point Likert scale was designed and adapted after the support from literature. The questionnaire is comprised of total 60 items and all responses were given to the scale anchored by 1 indicate “Strongly Disagree”, 2 as “Disagree”, 3 as “Neutral”, 4 as “Agree” and 5 as “Strongly Agree”.

The questionnaire consists of four parts. First part deal with job stress which was adapted from United States National Institute of occupational safety and health (NIOSH) consequently used by Caplan et.al (1975), Shahu and Gole (2008) and Ahsan, et.al (2009). Second part of the questionnaire deal with employee motivation adapted by Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS), developed by Hackman and Oldham (1974, 1975), the instrument has been used in many organizations and subjected to several empirical tests (Cathcart, Goddard, & Youngblood, 1978; Dunham, 1976; Dunham, Aldag, & Brief, 1977; Oldham, Hackman, & Stepina, 1979; Pierce & Dunham, 1978; Stone, Ganster, Woodman, & Fuslier, in press; Stone & Porter, 1977; Barr& Aldag, 1978). Third part of the questionnaire was developed and after the content validity with management scholars and business professionals, it was finalized. Fourth part of the questionnaire based on

demographic questions such as gender, marital status, age, educational level, designation etc.

4.2. Reliability

The degree of consistency of a measure is referred to as its reliability or internal consistency. The reliability coefficient, Cronbach's α (Cronbach, 1951), is generally used to test the reliability of a scale values of 0.70 or greater are considered good scale reliability. Content validity depends on how well the researcher created measurement items using the relevant literature to cover the content domain of the variable that is being measured by Sila and Ebranhimpour, (2005).

4.3. Content validity

All variables was pilot tested by conducting interviews from the management researcher of academia and also consult with management professionals. The instrument was finally reviewed by expert panel of management researchers and professionals.

4.4. Sample:

The data will gained through direct interviews and questionnaire from respondents. The sample was selected the bank which are operating in Pakistan. The data was collected on the basis of random sampling. Total 400 questionnaires circulated to employees of different banks and the response rate is 42.5% i.e. 148 was received back.

The questionnaires were distributed through email and by post and in a similar way were collected from the respondents.

4.5 Data Analysis

Various statistical methods have been employed to compare the data collected from respondents. These methods include descriptive and regression analysis. Each method has used to analysis the relationship of different variables. SPSS 16 software was used to get the mean and variance of the data and also calculated the reliability analysis.

AMOS 16 software used by Lucy, (2003) and Tsiglis, et.al (2004) recommended the two stage approach in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) where at first representing confirmatory measurement model and then secondly testing the complicated structural model was further implemented to examine credibility of the postulate model and to strengthen the research.

5. Results

Structural equation model using AMOS is used to examine the hypothesized relationships in the study. A distinct advantage of structural equation models is the inclusion of latent variables, making possible the measurement of abstract concepts that are not measurable directly.

5.1 Reliability and SEM Results

The internal consistency of the instrument checked through Chronbach's alpha. It is considered good if it would be in range 0.6 - 0.9 (Cronbach, 1951). Table 1 shows that all values are in good range and acceptable.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis

Variables	No. of Items	Chronbach's Alpha
Stressors:		
1.Role Conflict	6	.690
2. Relationship with Others	7	.730
3. Workload Pressure	6	.787
4. Home-work Interface	7	.890
5. Role Ambiguity	6	.659
6. Performance Pressure	8	.730
Employee Motivation	11	.872
Employee Performance	7	.701

Table 2: Summary Statistical significance of path coefficients

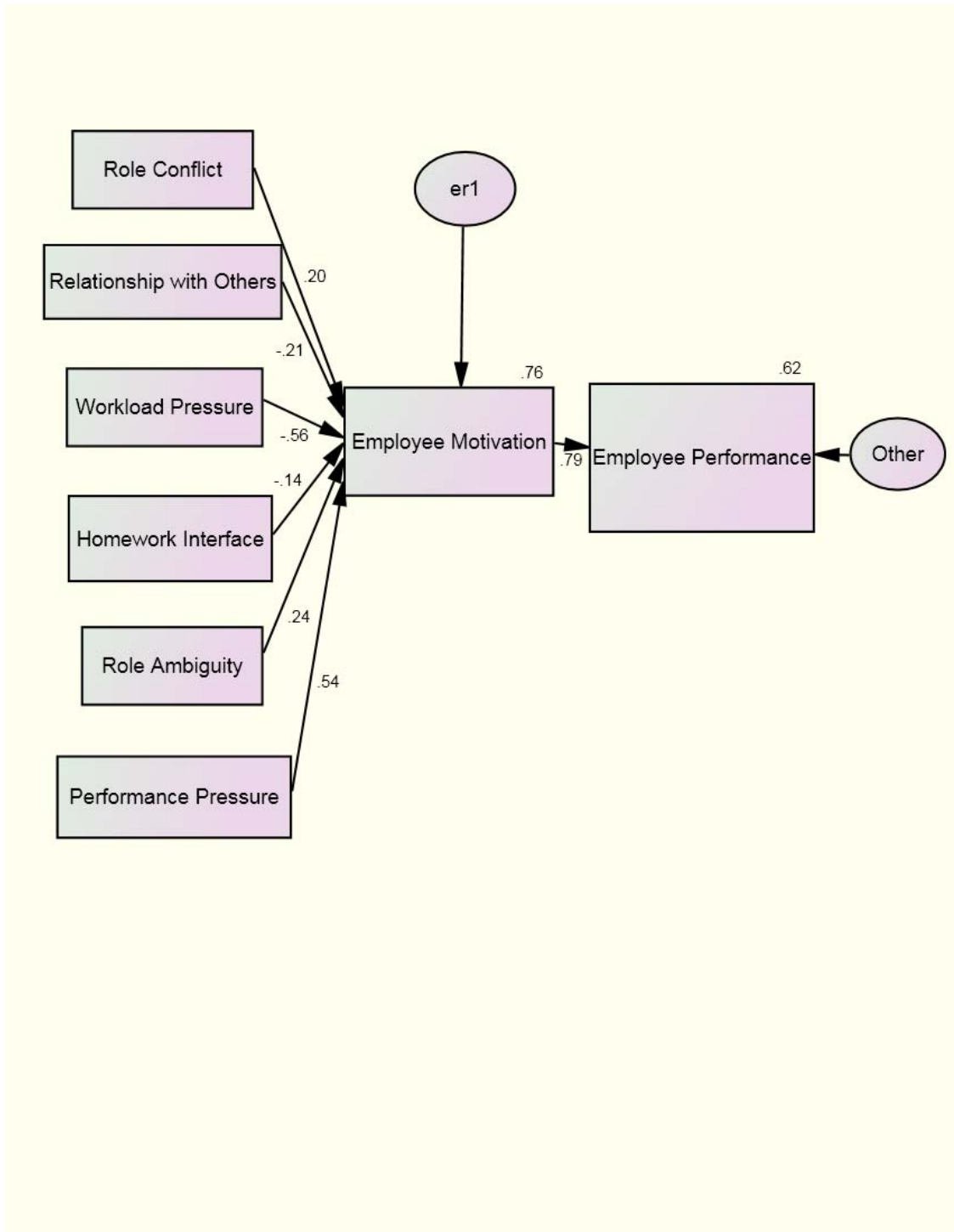


Table 2 shows the results of the estimated model with standardized estimates. The values of parameter with standard errors. and critical ratio are presented in table 3. For a good fit of the model χ^2 statistics must be lower so that null hypothesis will accepted, the p-value is 0.24, which shows a good fit of the model (table 4). Squared multiple correlations are also presented in table 4, which shows the explanatory power of the model

Table 3: Significance of Parameter values

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.
Employee Motivation	<--- Role Conflict	.316*	.064	4.912
Employee Motivation	<--- Relationship with Others	-.268*	.050	-5.357
Employee Motivation	<--- Workload Pressure	-.752*	.054	-13.979
Employee Motivation	<--- Homework Interface	-.227*	.064	-3.548
Employee Motivation	<--- Role Ambiguity	.362*	.061	5.969
Employee Motivation	<--- Performance Pressure	.665*	.049	13.460
Employee Performance	<--- Employee Motivation	.863*	.055	15.795

* $p < .05$

Table 4: Model fit summary:

χ^2	22.19
p	0.24

Table5: Squared Multiple Correlations

	Estimate
Employee Motivation	.757
Employee Performance	.620

5.2 Result of Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1:

The analysis shows that there is a positive relationship between role conflict and employee motivation. It rejects the background of the research paper because the previous research indicates the negative relationship between these variables. The result

indicates that due to conflict in role to perform the task, people have a little bit motivated. Role conflict has significant and positive relationship with employee motivation (table 3).

Hypothesis 2:

The analysis shows that there is a negative relationship between relationship with others and employee motivation. It supports the research; the previous research indicates a negative relationship between them. The relationship with others has negative effect on employee motivation. Relationship with others has significant impact on motivation but with a negative relationship (table 3).

Hypothesis 3:

The workload pressure has a negative relationship with employee motivation. The result shows that when employee has workload pressure, he/she does not motivate. The workload pressure has significant impact on employee motivation but with a negative relation.

Hypothesis 4:

Home work interface has also a negative relationship with motivation. If an employee is disturbed due to his/her family problem, it badly affects their performance. So it is very necessary to manage the home work interface and the official problems. Our results also resemble it; home work interface has a negative and significant impact on employee motivation.

Hypothesis 5:

Role Ambiguity has a positive relationship with employee motivation. It indicates that people have more motivation to do multi-tasks. It has positive and significant impact on employee motivation.

Hypothesis 6:

Performance Pressure has a strong positive relationship with employee motivation. It supports the background of the study. It indicates that the employees feel more motivated when they have pressure due to perform well. Performance pressure has a strong positive impact on employee motivation.

Hypothesis 7:

Employee motivation has positive and significant impact on employee performance. If employee has some motivation factors whether positive or negative they ultimately impact the performance in the same direction with a significant impact.

6. Recommendations and Future Research

This study indicates and highlights the intensity of those factors that are involved to create a stress environment in the company. So this study is a policy oriented towards to maintain a required level of stress in the culture. It is also identified the problems who are faced by the employees because of stress. The organizations will able to develop the different interventions to control the stress.

For future research I suggest that to include more variables that are the cause of stress on employee performance some other variable should also be included who creates stress indirectly e.g. upbringing, children, religion, social activities, sexual harassment, social norms and values, etc. Another suggestion is to use some quantitative variables which measure the actual impact of stress on performance then actual impact of stress on performance should be more clear and appealing.

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