THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL WORK STRESS ON JOB PERFORMANCE AMONG EMPLOYEES OF THE HIGH PLATEAUS TANNERY IN DJELFA PROVINCE, ALGERIA

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***Abstract*—The intensity of perceived stress and the ability to cope with it vary from one individual to another. Since human resources constitute the cornerstone of any organization, regardless of the nature of its activity, whether service-oriented or productive, and considering that the success of organizations depends on several variables, work stress is one of these variables and one of the most prominent topics of our time. It is also a challenge for all organizations striving to achieve their objectives and ensure their survival and continuity amid increasing competition in both local and global markets. Therefore, contemporary organizations are required to continuously consider the various factors affecting their human resources, as these factors may hinder employees' performance.**

Keywords—Social Work Stress; Cultural Work Stress; Job Performance.

I. INTRODUCTION

The work environment in contemporary organizations has undergone significant transformations and developments at various levels. These changes have compelled to work in ways that ensure their job stabilityin light of global growth and the advancement of knowledge, employees have been required to adapt to these changes in order to improve their job performance.

However, these transformations have also generated adverse consequences for employees' psychological and physical well-being. Workers increasingly experience anxiety, stress, and frustration in their professional lives. To address the various pressures encountered by individuals in the workplace, it is essential to understand the sources of stress to which they are exposed, as both the intensity of perceived stress and individuals' capacity to cope with it vary considerably from one person to another.

Certain forms of pressure can act as positive motivators, encouraging employees to perform better, strengthening their determination, and enabling them to accomplish their tasks efficiently and effectively. Conversely, other forms of pressure may hinder work performance, reduce efficiency, and even lead employees to consider withdrawing from or leaving their jobs.

In light of these considerations, the present study seeks to address the following research question:

To what extent do socio-cultural work pressuresaffect the job performance of employees at the High Plateaus Tannery in the Province of Djelfa, Algeria?

Given the considerable importance of the concept of work-related stress and its impact on performance within business organizations, this topic has attracted significant attention from researchers and specialists in management in general and organizational behavior in particular, with the aim of establishing a unified definition of the concept. Accordingly, the most prominent definitions are presented below.

Work-related stress is defined as any characteristic of the work environment that constitutes a threat to the individual. According to Cooper and Marshall, work-related stress refers to a set of adverse environmental factors—such as role ambiguity, role conflict, poor working conditions, and excessive workload—that are associated with specific performance outcomes.[1]

Ahmed Maher argues that work-related stress generates psychological and physical disturbances. These disturbances are generally attributed to various factors present in the workplace and its surrounding environment. The consequences of such disturbances manifest in multiple ways that impair job performance, thereby compelling modern organizations to address and effectively manage work-related stress. [2]

Stress is an internal experience that creates and generates psychological or physiological dysfunction within the individual. It results from factors originating from the external environment, the organization, or the individual himself or herself.[3]

According to Rawya Hassan, job performance refers to the extent to which an individual successfully accomplishes

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and completes the tasks and responsibilities associated with his or her job.[4]

According to Kamal Ahmed Rabah, job performance refers to the manner in which a particular activity is performed and accomplished, as well as the way in which it was carried out. In other words, it reflects an organization's competence to achieve its objectives and to utilize its resourcesin accordance with the criteria of effectiveness and efficiency. That is, job performance is what can be achieved, in terms of procedures and behaviors, to obtain a specific outcome in a particular task.[5]

1 Key Concepts Related to Performance:

Performance is often confused with several related concepts; however, important distinctions exist between them. Among the concepts most closely associated with performance are effectiveness and efficiency. Therefore, in order to provide a more precise understanding of the concept of performance, it is necessary to examine the differences between these terms.

II. Effectiveness

Researchers in management science consider the term effectivenessas a tool for monitoring management within the organization, on the premise that effectiveness is a criterion reflecting the extent to which the set objectives are achieved.[6]

Effectiveness can also be defined as an organization's ability to achieve its predetermined objectives, irrespective of the amount or type of resources employed in attaining those objectives.[7]

Effectiveness may also be defined as the extent to which an organization achieves its objectives completely and within the required timeframe while generating positive outcomes for its external environment. From this perspective, effectiveness is measured by the ratio of objectives actually achieved to those that were initially planned. At the individual level, effectiveness refers to an individual's ability to attain the objectives assigned to him or her.[8]

Some researchers have extended this view by suggesting that effectiveness is the product of the interaction among the different components of an organization's overall performance, including its managerial activities and the internal and external factors that affect it.[9]

III. Efficiency

Most studies on efficiency indicate that it refers to the optimal utilization of available material and human resources to achieve a specified level or volume of output. Accordingly, efficiency is either confined to the effective use of an organization's available productive resources or associated with the cost element and the relationship between inputs (factors of production) and outputs. In general, efficiency can be measured as follows[10]:

$$\text{Efficiency} = \frac{\text{Outputs (quantity or value)}}{\text{Inputs (quantity or value)}}$$

Despite the close relationship between efficiency and effectiveness, a distinction can be made between the two concepts. An organization may be effective but inefficient, and vice versa; that is, it may be highly efficient without being effective. Effectiveness refers to the extent to which predetermined objectives are achieved, whereas efficiency refers to the economical manner in which the activities and processes related to those objectives are carried out. The concept of effectiveness is broader than that of efficiency, as effectiveness takes into account a wide range of internal and external factors, whereas efficiency focuses exclusively on the internal operations of the organization.[11]

IV. Productivity

Productivity is an indicator used in management to enhance effectiveness through setting objectives using the available productive resources.

2 Determinants of Job Performance

Human behavior is considered the primary determinant of an individual's job performance. It is the product of the interaction between hereditary factors, environmental influences, and individual circumstances. Performance does not arise solely from internal forces or pressures; rather, it results from the interaction and harmony between an individual's internal forces and external environmental factors. Therefore, understanding an individual's level of performance requires identifying the factors that influence it and examining the interactions among them.

Some researchers distinguish three major determinants of job performance:

a. Effort: Effort refers to the amount of physical and mental energy exerted by an individual in carrying out a task.

b. Abilities: Abilities refer to the personal characteristics that an individual uses in performing his or her job or assigned tasks.

c. Role Perception: Role perception refers to the direction that an individual believes is necessary to guide his or her efforts at work and that he or she considers important for his or her performance. [12]

In this context, Ali Al-Salmi argues that ability and willingness to work interact in determining the level of performance. In other words, the effect of ability on performance depends on the individual's degree of willingness to work, and conversely, the effect of willingness on performance depends on the individual's ability to perform the job. This relationship can be illustrated by the following equation[13] :

$$\text{Performance Level} = \text{Ability} \times \text{Motivation}$$

The preceding discussion indicates that no unified consensus exists among scholars and researchers concerning the determinants or criteria of performance. This divergence in viewpoints may be attributed to several factors, including:[14]

a. The determinants of performance may differ from one group of individuals to another.

b. The determinants of performance among individuals in one organization may differ from those of individuals in another organization.

c. External environmental factors influence the determinants of performance.

Finally, it can be argued that individual performance is characterized by several determinants, including the effort exerted by the individual in carrying out various tasks, his or her abilities (the extent to which personal characteristics are utilized in performing these tasks), and role perception (the individual's orientation and understanding of the importance of the role assigned to him or her while performing these tasks).

3 Interpretations of Work Stress and Its Impact on Job Performance

Work-related stress affects job performance at three different levels: low, moderate, and high. The following figure illustrates the effects of work-related stress on job performance.[15]

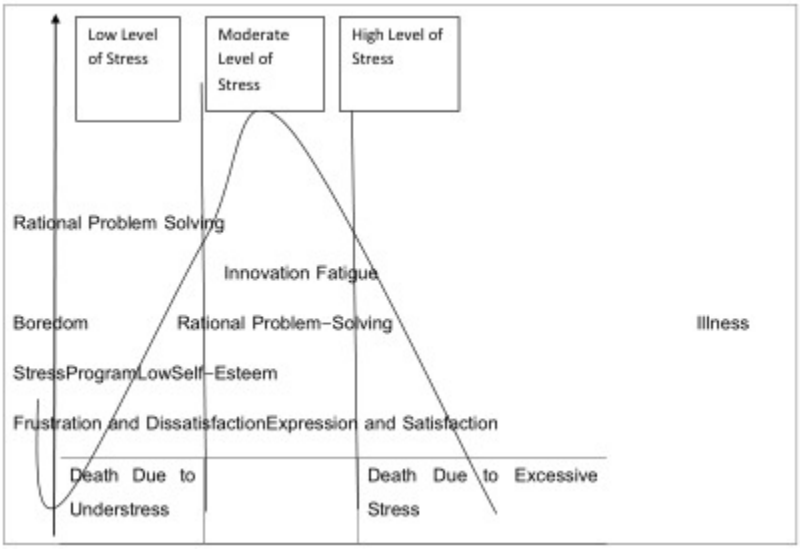


Fig. 1. illustrates the effect of work-related stress on job performance.

Source: Mohammed Hassan Mohammed Hamadat, op. cit., p. 181.

The figure illustrates the following:

1. **At low levels of stress**, individuals tend to maintain their current level of performance. At this level, they neither experience nor generate stress. Consequently, they often perceive no need to improve their level of performance, and the absence of stress rarely leads to behavioral or performance changes. However, when stress levels become excessively low, problems associated with under stimulation and insufficient stress begin to emerge.
2. **At moderate levels of stress**, individuals are sufficiently motivated to enhance their level of performance. Moderate stress serves as a positive stimulus that increases alertness, concentration, and motivation, thereby contributing to improved performance.
3. **At high levels of stress**, negative consequences begin to appearsuch as fatigue and dissatisfaction. As a result, performance starts to decline. Excessive stress depletes an individual's attention and energy because considerable effort is directed toward coping with and reducing the sources of stress, leaving limited resources available for work performance.

Nevertheless, the relationship between stress and performance more complex, as it is influenced by the degree of task difficulty. Beer and Newman observed that accurately determining the relationship between stress and performance requires consideration of various stressors, the type of performance being measured, and other personal and situational variables.

4 Sources of Work-Related Stress:

The antecedents of work-related stress are varied and multifaceted. Virtually any aspect of the work environment may serve as a potential source of stress. Consequently, the identification of stressors represents the first step toward effective stress management. Nevertheless, no universal agreement exists among researchers regarding the classification of stress factors and their underlying sources.[16]

According to Hassan Hareem, the major sources of stress can be classified as follows:

5 Individual-Related Sources of Stress:

These include factors such as receiving ineffective supervision, losing control over one's work in terms of pace,

workflow, and decision-making, bearing responsibility for supervising others due to the need for extensive interaction with them, working in an unsafe environment, and experiencing incompatibility between the individual's values and those of the organization.

6 **Work Group-Related Stressors:**

These stressors arise from the work group itself and include a lack of group cohesion, insufficient support and assistance from other group members, and conflicts and disagreements among team members.

7 **Organization-Related Factors:**

These include factors associated with the organization, such as performance appraisal systems, organizational structure, communication processes, and leadership practice.[17]

Generally, sources of work-related stress can be categorized into the following major dimensions:

V. EXTERNAL SOURCES OF WORK-RELATED STRESS

VI. INTERNAL SOURCES OF WORK-RELATED STRESS

8 **Sources of Work-Related Stress Related to the External Environment**

An organization's external environment consists of a range of environmental factors that surround and influence it, either directly or indirectly. These factors include broad environmental changes and external variables, such as economic fluctuations, technological changes, and other macro-environmental forces that may affect organizational performance and employees' work experiences.[18]

Fig. 2. presents the principal components of the organization's external environment.[19]

The components of the external environment will be discussed, with special emphasis placed on the general environment because of its critical role as a major source of work-related stress among employees, thereby influencing their job performance. The general environment of an organization comprises a wide range of economic, technological, political, legal, and cultural variables, as well as other macro-environmental factors that indirectly affect organizational activities and operations.[20]

These variables play a significant role in generating work-related stress because of their substantial influence on the work environment in which individuals operate.

Accordingly, the most important variables of the general environment can be discussed as follows:

A. a. Economic Factors:

The environment, in its broadest sense, constitutes an inexhaustible source of work-related stress. Indeed, no one can deny the impact of the general economic situation, wage levels, inflation, price trends, economic openness, and specialization on individuals' behavior as they strive to secure their livelihoods, satisfy their basic needs, and meet their material and social obligations.

In fact, it is not an exaggeration to state that economic conditions represent the main source of psychological stress experienced by individuals today.Likewise, alongside economic and environmental conditions, concerns about work and livelihood have emerged, leading to negative or unacceptable patterns of behavior.

Conversely, periods of economic prosperity may also constitute a source of stress, albeit from a different perspective. During such periods, management may become preoccupied with issues such as expansion opportunities, investment alternatives, expenditure priorities, and the development of appropriate competitive strategies. [21]

B. b. Political and Legal Factors:

Political changes can represent a significant source of work-related stress. Managerial stress often intensifies during periods of political transition, particularly during elections, due to uncertainty regarding the policies and decisions of newly elected leaders, such as fiscal policies, attitudes toward foreign investment, and other strategic issues.

Likewise, changes in the legal and regulatory environment may constitute important sources of stress. Environmental protection laws, labor legislation, and consumer protection regulations frequently impose additional constraints on organizational activities. Consequently, few organizations can perform their functions without being affected by legal requirements that shape and, at times, restrict their operations and strategic choices.[22]

C. c. Technological Factors:

Technological developments represent a key determinant of organizational competitiveness, as they enable organizations to enhance productivity and reduce operational costs while maintaining product quality standards.[23]

In contrast, technological advancements have also increased the demands placed on human resources. Several studies have shown that the introduction of computers into the workplace, despite their advantages in terms of speed and efficiency, has substantially increased employees' workloads. This is because computer-based work requires high cognitive capacity and sustained attention to keep pace with continuous developments in both software and hardware systems.

Moreover, empirical evidence suggests that the widespread use of computers in the workplace has contributed to a greater sense of social isolation among employees. Computer-based tasks often require prolonged periods of concentration and solitary work, thereby limiting opportunities for social interaction and communication with coworkers.[24]

D. d. Social and Cultural Factors:

The family represents a fundamental institution of social cohesion and interpersonal interaction. Social norms and cultural values impose expectations and obligations on individuals, and nonconformity is often perceived as a departure from established customs and traditions. Consequently, social and cultural factors may constitute significant sources of work-related stress.

This is particularly evident in the influence of human rights movements, anti-poverty initiatives, and the support or opposition of governments toward individuals' beliefs, actions, and behaviors. Furthermore, the family itself can be

an important source of stress due to the expectations it places on individuals, the conflicts that may arise between family responsibilities and work demands, and major life events such as the death or illness of a family member.[25]

TABLE I.

SHOWS THE ARITHMETIC MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND LEVELS OF AGREEMENT RELATED TO THE SOCIAL STRESS DIMENSION.

No.	Items Related to the Social Stress Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Level of Agreement
16	My family is dissatisfied with my field of work.	2.6809	1.19975	2	Neutral
17	I experience family problems because of my working hours.	2.7660	1.12700	1	Neutral
18	The social services provided by the organization do not meet my needs.	2.6170	1.31137	3	Neutral
Overall Mean of the Social Stress Dimension	—	2.6879	0.89929	—	Moderate

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS output.

The results presented in Table 1 indicate that the study participants demonstrated a moderate level of agreement with the overall items of the social stress dimension. The weighted mean score reached 2.687, with a standard deviation of 0.899, indicating a relatively low degree of variation in the respondents' answers regarding this dimension.

Based on the results reported in Table 1, the items constituting the social stress dimension can be ranked in descending order, from the strongest to the weakest, according to the mean scores and standard deviations of the respondents' answers, as follows:

- Item (17), which states, "I experience family problems because of my working hours," ranked first. Respondents' level of agreement with this item fell within the "Neutral" category, with a mean score of 2.766 and a standard deviation of 1.199. This indicates that most respondents maintained a neutral position regarding this statement.
- Item (16), which states, "My family is dissatisfied with my field of work," ranked second. The respondents' level of agreement also fell within the "Neutral" category, with a mean score of 2.680 and a standard deviation of 1.127, indicating that the majority of respondents expressed a neutral opinion regarding this statement.
- Item (18), which states, "The social services provided by the organization do not meet my needs," ranked third. Respondents' level of agreement remained within the "Neutral" category, with a mean score of 2.617 and a standard deviation of 1.311, suggesting that most respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

VII. Cultural Stress

This dimension consists of three items, which were included in the questionnaire under items (19, 20, and 21). To analyze this dimension, means and standard deviations were calculated, as presented in the following table.

TABLE II.

SHOWS THE DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS, INCLUDING THE MEAN SCORES, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND LEVELS OF AGREEMENT FOR THE CULTURAL STRESS DIMENSION.

No.	Items Related to the Cultural Stress Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Level of Agreement
19	I experience racial discrimination in my workplace.	2.5745	1.21126	3	Disagree
20	There is gender discrimination (male–female) in the workplace.	2.6809	1.10545	2	Neutral
21	There are differences in thinking styles among colleagues regarding the handling of work-related problems.	2.6809	1.21774	1	Neutral
Overall Mean of the Cultural Stress Dimension	—	2.6454	0.98148	—	Moderate

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS output.

The results presented in Table 2 indicate that the study participants demonstrated a moderate level of agreement with the overall items of the cultural stress dimension. The weighted mean score reached 2.645, with a standard deviation of 0.981, indicating a relatively low degree of variation in the respondents' answers regarding this dimension.

Based on the findings reported in Table 2, the items constituting the cultural stress dimension can be ranked in descending order, from the strongest to the weakest, according to the mean scores and standard deviations of the respondents' answers, as follows:

- Item (21), which states, "There are differences in thinking styles among colleagues regarding the handling of work-related problems," ranked first. Respondents'

level of agreement with this item fell within the "Neutral" category, with a mean score of 2.680 and a standard deviation of 1.217, indicating that most respondents maintained a neutral position regarding this statement.

- Item (20), which states, "There is gender discrimination (male–female) in the workplace," ranked second. The respondents' level of agreement also fell within the "Neutral" category, with a mean score of 2.680 and a standard deviation of 1.105, suggesting that the majority of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.
- Item (19), which states, "I experience racial discrimination in my workplace," ranked third. Respondents' level of agreement with this statement fell within the "Disagree" category, with a mean score of 2.574 and a standard deviation of 1.211. This finding indicates that employees within the organization generally do not experience racial discrimination, which may be attributed to the fact that most employees belong to the same geographical region and share similar social and cultural backgrounds, customs, and traditions.

VIII. Conclusion:

The issue of work-related stress deserves considerable attention because of its significant effects on the psychological well-being of human resources and, consequently, on employees' levels of job performance. The stress experienced by individuals may arise from the work environment itself, the conditions under which they perform their duties, and the people with whom they interact. It may also result from external pressures encountered through interactions with the organization's external environment, including society and the family.

Accordingly, it is essential to identify the sources of stress experienced by human resources and to examine the consequences of such stress at both the individual and organizational levels. Certain forms of stress may encourage individuals to work more effectively, motivating them to improve their performance and accomplish their assigned tasks with greater efficiency and effectiveness. Conversely, other forms of stress may hinder employees' work, reduce their efficiency in performing their duties, and even lead them to consider leaving their jobs.

In conclusion, work-related stress is the outcome of the interaction between internal factors within the work environment and external factors surrounding the organization. This interaction leads to a state of psychological and physical imbalance in individuals, which is ultimately reflected in their performance within the workplace.

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