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**Occupational Stress and Turnover Intentions among the
Non-Governmental Organizations' Employees**

**Fauzia Khurshid, Ph.D., Zahir Uddin Butt, Ph.D. and
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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to explore the relationship between occupational stress and turnover intentions of the Non-governmental Organizations' employees of Pakistan. It is a descriptive correlation study.

For the measurement of occupational stress, the Revised Occupational Role Stress Inventory (OSI-R) based on 60 items and for the measurement of turnover intentions, continuance organizational commitment scale was used (sub scale of organizational commitment questionnaire).

Study was conducted in two parts; first part was concerned with the pilot study, for this purpose a random sample of 30 NGOs employees was collected from 3 NGOs, among them 10 males and 20 females.

In order to determine the psychometric properties of research tools data was analyzed with various statistical techniques such as, alpha reliability co-efficient, items total correlation, inter-scales correlation.

The result of the pilot study indicated that due to insignificant items total correlations, items no 11, 47, 52, and 53 of OSI-R were excluded from scale. Continuance organizational commitment scale is based on 6 items, all items have significant correlation with the total scale therefore, and all these were retained in the scale. In

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the Part II a stratified random sample of 100 NGOs employees were collected from 10 selected NGOs of Islamabad. Among them, 43 males and 57 females, the data was analyzed with various statistical procedures to test the results hypotheses. The result shows that there is significant positive relationship between occupational stress and turnover intentions.

Result shows that permanent employees experience less stress as compared with contract employees. Moreover, female employees have higher occupational stress than the male employees. Managers experience higher occupational stress as compared with other staff members.

INTRODUCTION

The present turbulent environment of NGOs requires managers and employees to reexamine their behavioural practices. Working in NGOs is an inherently a stressful profession with uncertainties, long working hours, ethical dilemmas, difficult community and conflicting work demands. The physical and psychological demands of this profession often make its employees more vulnerable to high levels of occupational stress and turnovers. Job stress can be defined as harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not harmonize the capabilities, wherewithal, or requirements of the employee's personality.

Occupational stress organizational and turnover intentions have long been concerns for employees and employers because of the impact and influence they yield on work performance. In today's world, stress has become a world's wide phenomenon, which is virtually there, in some form, in every work place. Nowadays employees are working for long hours, as the rising levels of responsibilities require them to exert themselves (Omolaro 2008).

The role of NGOs related to the development in different fields as in education, health, women welfare, etc., as was the case in most developing nations. This range of activities varies from one country to the other. The history of Pakistani NGOs has its roots back in the time of Partition. Although not directed to as NGOs at that time, many voluntary organizations were planning to provide humanitarian aid to refugees pouring into the country and to help victims of public riot.

During the first few years of Pakistan, many of these NGOs concentrated on rehabilitation and basic services as health and education. Some of these voluntary organizations are active even today, although their role may have changed today. The number of Nongovernmental Organizations within Pakistan is increasing day by day,

NGOs have evolved in different directions and they present a wide variety of programs and structures. More common activity of NGOs relate to charity, relief and welfare-oriented provision of services in health, education and financial support for the under privileged, handicapped, widows, orphans, etc.

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Some of these activities focus on provision of basic services where government facilities are either not available or are inadequate, with an emphasis on critical needs, not on community participation or long-term sustainability or empowerment for the beneficiary population. Some other activities of NGOs are more developmental in nature and involve attempts to address long-term needs, while dealing with specific community or sector problems (Zia, 1996).

Most of NGO employees are busy in the promotion of developmental initiatives at grassroots level, working in rural poor and urban slum areas. Their services include education, health, and provision of clean drinking water, disaster management, relief and rescue in order to help community members.

Taking into the account the nature of work NGO employees are engaged in, occupational stress is considered to be a part of their jobs that can sometimes lead to turnover, that is, permanent withdrawal from an organization. This results in increased recruiting, selection and training cost. The high turnover rate can disrupt the efficient running of the organization when knowledge and experienced personnel leave and replacement must be found and prepared to assume positions of responsibility (UNDP, 2002).

Beehr () defines role stress as ‘anything about an organizational role that produces adverse consequences for the individual’. Schuler () identified stress in organizations as an increasingly important concern in both organizational research and practice. Tucker-Ladd (1996) described common behavioral effects resulting from prolonged occupational stress including hyperactivity, outbursts of emotional preoccupation with a certain situation, holding a grudge, excessive worry, irritability, changing habits excessive sleeping, insomnia, poor memory, crying feeling, scare and irritation with delays. The pressure to perform often makes people self-conscious and this elevated self-consciousness disrupts their attention and increases occupational stress. It begins to deteriorate employees’ physical and mental health and some people choose to escape through absenteeism and turnover. Some workers face problems such as lack of social support, skepticism of local community, exposure to life threatening security risks. They feel that ultimately they themselves are responsible for their own safety and security, which contributes to their increased levels of stress.

In a human resources management context, turnover is the rate at which an employer gains and loses employees. Simple ways to describe it are “how long employees intend to stay” or “the rate of traffic through the revolving door”. Turnover is measured for individual companies and for their industry as a whole. If an employer is said to have a high turnover relative to its competitors, it means that employees of that company have a shorter average tenure than those of other companies in the same industry. High turnover can be harmful to a company’s productivity if skilled workers are often leaving and the worker population contains a high percentage of novice workers. Recognition, this is the most common way of separation. Employee leaves his job and employment with his employer to pursue better opportunities. The process of terminations usually perceived negatively by employees. There can be many reasons for an employer to terminate the contract of employment but some of

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the common reasons are non-performance, indiscipline, misconduct and theft (Robbins, 2010).

When we study the NGOs employees in the Pakistani context, keeping in view the phenomena of stress and turnover intentions, we may find that NGOs employees are expected to work selfless and face pressures due to threatening work environment and high degree of occupational stress. Moreover the salaries and facilities provided to NGOs employees are not so attractive as compared to other sectors this may be the major cause of turnover in the NGOs sector (TVO, 2004).

Previous researches established that occupational stress is positively related to turnover intentions, absenteeism and tension Van de Ven (2002). In the Pakistani context no direct study is found which investigate the occupational stress is relation of employees turnover intentions in the NGOs sector. Therefore, through this study researchers intend investigate the occupational stress in relation to NGOs employee turnover intentions.

Problem Statement

The study examined the relationship of occupational stress and turnover intentions in non-governmental organizations' employees. Another aim is to explore the role of certain demographic variables such as gender, age, qualification, job experience, nature of job and job position in determining the level of stress and turnover intentions among the NGO employees of Pakistan.

Objectives

1. To study the relationship between occupational stress and turnover intentions of NGO employees.
2. To find out level, causes and dimension of occupational stress experienced by NGO employees.
3. To investigate the role of certain demographic variables including, gender, age, qualification, job experience, nature of job and job position in determining the level of stress and turnover intentions among the NGO employees.

Hypothesis

1. There is positive relationship between occupational stress & turnover intentions.
2. Female NGOs employees have higher occupational stress and turnover intention than male NGOs employees.
3. Highly educated and experienced NGO employees have higher occupational stress and low turnover intentions than the less educated and less experienced ones.
4. Employees working on permanent basis have low stress and lower turnover intentions than the employees working on the contract basis.

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5. Managers experience higher stress and lower turnover intentions than other the staff members.
6. Higher income level is inversely related with occupational stress and turnover intentions.

METHODOLOGY

The present research is a descriptive correctional study that seeks to explore the relationship between stress and turnover intentions.

Research Instruments

In this present study for the measurement of occupational stress of NGOs employees, OSI-R adapted by Butt (2009) was used and for the measurement of turnover intentions Continuance Commitment Scale of OCQ was used to measure (sub scale of organizational commitment questionnaire developed by Mayer and Allen).

The OSI-R is a self-report inventory consisting of three questionnaires.

Occupational Role Questionnaire: It consists of 15 items; this scale measures the role overload, role insufficiency, role ambiguity, role boundary, responsibility and physical environment

Personal Strain Questionnaire: It consists of 16 items, this scale measures vocational strain, psychological strain, interpersonal and physical strain.

Personal Resources Questionnaire: It consists of 29 items, this scale measures coping mechanism utilized by the subjects, creation self-care, social support, and rationale /cognitive coping.

Respondents were asked to rate of the each of 60 item on five point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

For the measurement of turnover intentions the Continuous Commitment scale of OCQ was used which was comprised of 6 items.

Establishment of Reliability and Validity of Research Instruments

In order to determine the reliability and validity of research instruments, pilot testing was conducted on a sample of 30 employees of registered NGOs .Among them 13 male and 17 female employees, their ages ranged from 20 to 40 years, income level ranged from 10,000 to 50, 000.In order to check the items effectiveness the item total correlations were computed. The correlation coefficient ranges from.11 to .84 **. It was found that item no.11, 47.52,53 were not significantly correlated with total scale. Therefore these insignificant items were excluded from the scale and rest of 56 items were retained for the main study

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Main Study

The main study was designed to explore the relationship between occupational stress and turnover intentions in the NGOs employees of. It further investigate the effects occupational stress on turnover intensions due to demographics variations such as job position qualification, job experience, gender, age, nature of job and monthly income.

Population

All the employees working in the NGOs sector of Islamabad were included in population of this study but due to limited time and resources it was not possible to collect data from them.

Sample

The target population of this study was all graduates and post graduates employees of NGOs. The sample of this study was collected through stratified random sampling from the ten NGOs, located at Islamabad such as, MAID, Nusrat Jan Trust, Pakistan Girls Association, BRAC, AGA Khan Health Center Islamabad, Focus Humanitarian, Hashoo Foundation, AKRSP Mountain School Trust and Action Aid Pakistan (10 employees from each organization). Workers those involved in unskilled labors were excluded from the sample.

The sample consisted of 100 respondents among them 43 were male and 57 female employees, their age ranged from 20 to 40 years. The qualification level ranged from graduation to M Phil.

Procedure

The respondents contacted at their NGOs and information about the purpose of study was provided to them. After that OSI-R and continuance organizational commitment scale were given to them with request to complete these scales in one sitting by selecting appropriate response category which they considered more appropriate.

Results

After data collection, the whole data were transferred to the computer and analyzed with the help of SPSS .16.

Table 1

Correlation of Subscales and Total scale of OSI-R with Turnover Intensions					
Subscales	ORQ	PSQ	PRQ	OSI	Turnover

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ORQ			
PSQ	.59		
PRQ	.49	.56	
OSI-R Total	.84	.87	.76
Turnover	.89	.74	.94

Table 1 describes the inter-correlations of the subscales and total scale of OSI-R with the continuous commitment scale. It illustrates that there is a positive relationship between the occupational role stress and turnover intention, meaning that higher occupational stress leads to higher turnover intentions in the employees.

Table 2

Levels of Occupational Stress Experience by the NGO Employees (N=100)

Level of Occupational Stress	n	Percentage
Mild Stress	25	25%
Moderate Stress	46	46%
High Stress	29	29%

Table 2 portray levels of occupational stress experienced by the NGOs employees, 25 % employees experience mild stress, 46% experience moderate occupational stress whereas 29% employees experience high level of occupational stress.

Table 3

Gender Wise Comparison of Respondents Scores on OSI and Turnover Intentions (N=100)

Subscales	female (n=43)	Male (n=57)
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	M	SD	M	SD
Occupational Role Questionnaire 8.51		48.91 9.62		45.21
Personal Strain Questionnaire	124.37	8.13	122.53	7.17
Personal Resources Questionnaire 229.54 9.81		231.30 16.19		
OSI-R Total 25.49	404.58	33.94		397.28
Turnover 3.125	21.57		2.62	16.81

Table 3 represents the gender wise differences of NGO employees. The result shows that female employees have higher mean score on all subscales of OSI-R than the female NGOs employees. The result further illustrates that female employees have also higher turnover intentions than the male employees.

Table 4

Age Wise Comparison of Employees of NGOs Sector on OSI and Turnover Intentions (N=100)

Subscales above	20 -30 (n=44)		30-40 (n=45)		40 & (n=11)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Occupational Role Questionnaire 48.27 7.90		44.73 9.34		44.64 8.84		
Personal Strain Questionnaire 13.26	122.39	4.48	124.09	5.42	128.00	
Personal Resources Questionnaire 231.18 5.32		228.64 10.93		231.71 15.64		
OSI-Total 26.48	395.65	20.27	400.44	29.9	407.45	
Turnover 3.435	21.41	3.068	19.91	2.859	16.00	

Table 4 shows the age wise differences. The result indicates that the older employees have higher mean score on all sub scales OSI-R than the younger employees. As far as the turnover intentions are concerned that younger NGOs employees have higher turnover intentions than the older NGOs' employee.

Table 5

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Qualification Wise Comparison of Respondents Scores on OSI and Turnover Intentions (N=100)

Subscales	M Phil (n=7)		Master (n=69)		Graduation (n=24)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Occupational Role Questionnaire 10.57		45.33	4.67	44.88	8.82	42.80
Personal Strain Questionnaire	120.50	6.28	123.65	7.10	125.08	5.53
Personal Resources Questionnaire 210.12 11.97		234.14	9.99		229.96	13.56
OSI-R Total 28.07		399.97	20.94		398.49	29.48 378
Turnover 1.949		19.17	3.656		18.18	2.940 15.01

Table 4 represents the qualification wise comparison on occupational stress and turnover intentions. Result shows that M Phil degree holder employees have higher occupational stress, while graduate employees have least stress. As far as the turnover intentions are concerned the graduate employees have lowest turn over intentions and M.Phil degree holders have higher turnovers intensions.

Table 5

Job Experience Wise Comparison of Employees of NGOs Sector on OSI and Turnover intentions (N=100)

Subscales above 7year (N=12)	1-3year (n=38)		3-7year (N=50)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Occupational Role Questionnaire 52.73 6.30	45.08	9.53	44.40	9.08
Personal strain Questionnaire 13.21	121.79	5.11	126.26	5.16 124.25
Personal Resources Questionnaire 230.50 15.52	229.87	16.53		233.58 8.63
OSI-R Total 407.48 35.03	396.74	31.17	404.24	22.87

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Turnover	19.18	3.092	17.70	2.915
15.85	2.539			

Table 5 shows the job experience wise comparison, the result indicates employees with less work experience have lower stress and higher turnover intension as compared with employees with more work experience.

Table 6

Type of job –wise Comparison of Employees of NGOs sector on OSI and turnover intentions (N=100)

Subscales	Permanent (n=25)		Contract (n=75)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Occupational Role Questionnaire		44.64	7.61	45.23
9.87				
Personal Strain Questionnaire	122.28	5.74	123.67	6.81
Personal Resources Questionnaire		223.12	11.99	
231.03	13.19			
OSI-R Total	389.92	232.95	399.93	29.87
Turnover	15.72	3.458	19.43	2.844

Table 6 shows the type of job wise comparison between permanent and contract employees of NGOs, result shows that presents that contract employees have higher occupational stress than permanent employees. The result also indicates that turnover intentions are also higher in the contract employees as compared with permanent ones.

Table 7

Income-Wise Comparison of Respondents Scores on OSI-R and Turnover Intentions (N=100)

Subscales and above	Up to 10000 (n=20)		20000-30000 (n=43)		30000 (n=37)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Occupational Role Questionnaire	57.15	6.302	45.84	9.803		
44.32	9.357					
Personal strain Questionnaire	125.75	6.060	121.02	5.289		
120.51	8.112					
Personal Resources Questionnaire	231.10	13.768	231.58	15.296		
228.38	8.877					

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OSI-R Total	410.00	20.586	399.44	24620
397.22	18.691			
Turnover	22.70	3.702	18.63	2.829
16.57	2.824			

Table 7 shows the income wise comparison between NGOs employees' score on OSI scale. The result indicates that the employees with the income of up to 10,000 experience higher stress and higher turnover intentions as compared with employees with higher the income groups.

Table 8

Job Position- wise Comparison of Respondents Scores on OSI-R and Turnover Intentions

Subscales	Managers (n=24)		Trainers (n=31)		Staff (n=45)
	M	SD	M	SD	M
Occupational Role Questionnaire	44.92	5.96	40.19	11.03	
39.93	8.02				
Personal strain Questionnaire	125.96	4.29	124.00	9.47	123.04
5.26					
Personal Resources Questionnaire	230.21	7.40	231.42	18.26	
229.58	10.77				
OSI-R Total	401.09	17.65	395.61	38.76	392.55
32.07					
Turnover	13.92	2.603	16.77	2.883	15.07
3.292					

The table 8 shows job position wise comparison of the NGOs employees. The results indicate that managers have higher mean scores on all subscale of OSI. As far as the turnover intentions are concerned trainers scored higher on this dimension. Manager experience higher stress due to the nature of their job, but they have lower turnover intentions as compared to the other staff members.

Discussion

A stress is dynamic condition in which one is confronted with an opportunity or demand related to what he one desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be uncertain and important. Although all type of stress is not bad it can have a positive , value when it offers potential gain, such as pressures of heavy workload and deadlines a positive challenge that enhance the quality of their work and the satisfaction they got from job. Stress is bad when it keep employees from reaching their goals. Most of the occupational stress is associated with demands and resources, demands are usually responsibilities, pressure, obligations and uncertainties that employees face in their work place whereas resources can use to resolve the demands (Robbins & Judge).

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The first objective of the study was to study the relationship between occupational stress and turnover intentions of NGO employees. Second objective of the study was to find out level of occupational stress experienced by NGO employees. The third objective was to investigate the role of certain demographic variables including, gender, age, qualification, job experience, nature of job and job position in determining the level of stress and turnover

In this study various hypothesis were formulated to test the research objectives. The first hypothesis of the present study was that there is positive relationship between occupational stress and turnover intentions. The result of present study shows that occupational stress and turnover intentions have a positive relationship. So, stressful situation can become of the cause of the turnover intentions. Both stress and turnover intention effects psychological adjust of the employees.

Gender wise comparison of occupational stress and turn intensions reveals that female NGOs employees have higher occupational stress and turnover intention as compared to male NGOs employee.

Age is an important variable which is directly related various behavioural outcomes. Age is inversely related with absenteeism and turnover. In this research the phenomena of age was also explored and it was found that aged employees have higher score on all sub scales of OSI-R than the younger employees as far as the turnover intentions are concerned in the NGOs sector aged employees possess a higher turnover intentions than the younger employees.

Qualification and Job experience are potent variables in explaining turnover intensions therefore fourth hypothesis of present study was related to this variable that highly educated and experienced NGO employees have higher occupational stress and low turnover intensions than the less educated and less experienced ones. Results shows that experience workers are less likely to quit their job as compared with the younger ones. Whereas qualification is concerned, more qualified employees have higher turnover intentions as compared with the less qualified one.

The employees, working on permanent basis, experience lower stress and lower turnover intensions than the employees working on contract basis. The result confirms that contract employees have higher mean scores on all subscales of occupational stress inventory than permanent ones. The result also indicates that turnover intentions are also higher in the contract employees as compared with permanent ones. This may be due to the factor that contract employees are committed for short time period.

The results indicate that manager have higher mean scores on all subscales of OSI-R. Managers experience higher stress due to the nature of their job, as far as the turnover intensions are concerned managers have lower mean score as compared to the other staff members.

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Results for the variable income show that stress level is higher among the employees with low-income level and least reported stress was found among the employees with higher income group. Higher income is negatively related with turnover intentions. Employees with low income have higher score on the turnover intentions.

Findings

1. Female NGOs employees have higher occupational stress and higher turnover intentions as compared to male employees.
2. Aged NGOs employees have higher occupational stress and turnover intentions as compared to younger one.
3. Employees having M. Phil degree have higher occupational stress and turnover intentions as compared to the employees having less qualification.
4. Employees with more work experience have higher stress as compared to employees with less work experience.
5. Employees working on contract basis have higher occupational stress and turnover intentions as compared to employees working on permanent basis.
6. Level of income affects the stress and turnover intentions of NGOs employees. Employees having low income have higher stress and lower turnover intentions as compared to employees having high income.
7. Managers have higher occupational stress and lower turnover intentions as compare to the other employees of NGOs sector.

Conclusion

On the basis of finding of study following conclusion were drawn.

1. There is positive relationship between occupational stress and turnover intentions.
2. The demographic variables such as gender age, marital status, and qualification, and job experience, type of job, job position and income affect the occupational stress and turnover intentions of NGOs employees.

Recommendations

The result of study portray that gender affects the stress and turnover intentions employees. Findings show that female employees experience high stress and turnover intentions as compared to male employees. It could be due to their multiple roles which they are playing especially compounded by the homework interface (Copper Bright, 2001, Siu, 2002). It is recommended that organization may carefully design the tasks related to female keeping in view the socio-cultural environment of the area. Moreover management may provide the stress management training to female employees in order to reduce the occupational stress and turnover intentions.

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Result showed that contract employees have higher stress and turnover intentions as compared to permanent employees. So it is recommended that organization may provide job security and moderate workload of contract employees in order to reduce the occupational stress and turnover intentions.

Level of income also affects the occupational stress and turnover intentions of NGOs employees. Employees having low income have higher stress and higher turnover intention as compared to employees having high income. So it is recommended that organization may start employee's assistance program to the needy employees.

It is recommended that management may provide a comfortable work environment to all employees and counseling and guidance service may be provided to all employees this would help to deal with stress related to work or family.

It is recommended that NGOs management may provide a supportive work environment which may help the employees to perform their job effectively moreover clarity about the role d responsibilities are required which can facilitate coping and reduce turnovers intentions of NGOs employees.

Results indicated that managers have high stress but low turnover intentions as compared to other employees of NGOs. So it is recommended that organization may provide stress management training so that they may able to handle stressful situation effectively.

Significance of the Study

Stress is detrimental for the affective psychological functioning and work performance of the employees. This research is exclusive that relationship between occupational stress and turnover intension was first time explored in the NGOs settings. Turnover is one of the negative consequences of occupational stress. In this study occupational stress was measured studying relation to turnover intentions of the employees. Results make it clear that most of the NGOs employees experiencing high or moderate level of stress, as stress can have very serious effects not only on the psychological and physical functioning on the employees, which can consequently leads to low productivity and conflict prone behavior. Therefore, the finding of this study may help NGOs management to develop a strategy for stress management which will eventually reduce the turnover in their organizations.

This study also provides knowledge of existing literature of stress and turnovers intentions in the context of NGOs sector of Pakistan the finding can use to enhance the organizational effectiveness and productivity.

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