Investigating the Missing Linchpin Between Causes and Outcomes of Psycho-Somatic Stress

Syed Gohar Abbas
Ecole Universitaire de Management, IAE Lyon
Université de Lyon3, France
syed.abbas3@univ-lyon3.fr

Irfan Saleem
Institut de Recherche en Gestion des Organisations
Université de Bordeaux, France
irfan.saleem@u-bordeaux4.fr

Alain ROGER
Professor, Ecole Universitaire de Management, IAE Lyon
Université de Lyon3, France

Abstract
Higher education sector of Pakistan has witnessed a mushroom growth which has led to a higher competition particularly during the last decade. To qualify for accreditations and funds, a competitive environment has been witnessed not only among universities but also among the departments of the same university which has ultimately led to heavy workload and performance pressures on the teachers. Because of heavy workload coupled with dearth of resources and autonomy, faculty has been found more vulnerable to job stress and it negatively impacts on organizational commitment, quit intentions and performance. Study explores the sources and consequences of stress in a semi-government university of Pakistan. Study results show lack of resources and autonomy are not significantly related to stress, but job overload proved to be significantly associated with stress. Organizational commitment and turnover intentions revealed a direct significant relation with stress however performance show insignificant association with stress.

Keywords: Autonomy, Overload, Resources, Stress, Commitment & Turnover, Performance.

I. Introduction
Along with the corporate sector, the educational sector has also experienced severe competition and many other challenges during 21st century because of economic pressures all over the world. These challenges have compelled the captains of Higher Education Institutions (HEI’s) to change their strategies with reference to employee relationship management in order to achieve their long term goals effectively. The challenges mainly include the increase in the number of universities particularly in the private sector, increase in the number of departments and students in the already existing universities, dual degree programs offered by some universities and strict criteria by the
government and funding agencies to offer grants for universities both in public in private sector. This has created an atmosphere of competition not only among universities but also among the departments of the same universities which ultimately led to heavy workload and performance pressures on the faculty to attract external financing and made the education sector more vulnerable to stress (Kinman, 1998).

In this context Pakistan’s HEI’s is no exception as the challenges mentioned above have ultimately affected the higher education system in Pakistan (Saleem & Saleem, 2014). The university teachers are not only traditional teachers, but with many other responsibilities in parallel, the most important out of these is research. To overcome the challenge of financial crunch during the last decade, it is considered normal to assign the faculty members with multiple “additional responsibilities” which includes taking care of administrative issues, students’ extra-curricular affairs, promotional activities for the university to attract good pool of students and many others. Such responsibilities become a part of their job description thus increasing the workload and performance pressures for the faculty member, which ends in psychological or physiological (somatic) stress if not managed properly. High levels of occupational stress result in big costs to organizations and the community through health care expenses, compensation payments (Saleem & Khurshid, 2014), lost productivity and quit intentions (Cooper & Cartwright, 1994) which is a matter of high concern nowadays in many developed regions of the world, but less attention has been paid towards this issue in developing and underdeveloped countries. Some of the universities with clear strategic vision may have already addressed this challenge but many others are still in hot waters. The most important asset at a university is its “faculty”, and it is the need of the day to equip the faculty members with all the resources and provide a stress free congenial academic environment to increase their performance and reduce their intentions to quit. High job commitment, high performance and low turnover intentions can be guaranteed if the captains of HEI’s successfully address the job related issues/stressors which end up in chronic stress leading to strain with negative effects trickled down to community as a whole.

Keeping in view this premise, current study focuses on the important occupational stressors in academic context, their effects on faculty stress, commitment, performance and turnover intentions in a semi government university at Pakistan. After defining stress and reviewing the literature, research design and methodology are presented. The results are then analyzed, discussed and recommendations are be presented in the end.

II. Literature Review

Occupational stress is a growing problem and is “an unavoidable characteristic of life and work” (Kinman, 1998, p.3). Main components of the work-stress process are potential sources of stress which are known as stressors, factors of individual differences known as moderators/mediators, and consequences of stress which are also termed as strain (Kalyani et al., 2009).

Stress has been defined differently by various authors, sometimes as the stimulus, sometimes as the response. Stress is considered to be an internal state or reaction to anything consciously or unconsciously perceived as a threat, whether real or imagined (Clarke & Watson, 1991). Selye (1956) defined stress as the nonspecific response of the body to any demand or stressor. Stress is a phenomenon used to describe feelings of
tension linked with work overload but is highly individualistic in nature (Iqbal and Kokash 2011, p. 137). Motowidlo et al. (1986) has characterized stress as a disturbing emotional experience puzzled with nervousness, frustration and negative emotions. Similarly according to Cooper & Cartwright (1994), stress is a negatively perceived quality which stems from inadequate coping with sources of stress and which results in negative consequences in terms of mental as well as physical health.

Selye (1956) defined a stressor as a stimulus with the potential of triggering the fight-or-flight response. According to him stressor is simply the factor that produces stress. Acute stress is the stress because of the short term reasons. Acute stress is quite intense but disappears quickly. Chronic Stress is because of long term stressors and usually results from such problems which don’t seem to go away. The danger of chronic stress is that people just get used to it and try to search solutions on their own, which further creates problems. Distress is a harmful/negative stress that may have a short-term or long-term effect on individuals if they fail to cope with or adapt to the effect of stress. Eustress is a beneficial/positive stress that enhances performance, and leads to a positive outcome (Selye, 1956). Some researches argue, not all stress is dysfunctional and in fact, stress is not naturally bad, and a limited amount of stress combined with appropriate responses actually can benefit both the individual and the organization (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008). Namely, as low and high stress predict poor performance, and moderate stress predicts maximum performance (Yerkes & Dodson, 1908) so the total elimination of stress should not be the objective of the organizations.

Literature on occupational stress at various points of time attests that teachers during the course of their careers come across a great deal of stress which has negative implications (Guglielmi and Tatrow, 1998; Saleem, Almadi & Saleem, 2013) and the traditionally conceived “stress free profession” (Fischer 1994), is now labeled as “stress factories” (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008:p321). Research conducted in various parts of the world including Netherlands, Australia, China, South Africa, Turkey, India, Japan, Sri Lanka, UK and many other countries has acknowledged several variables associated with stress, burnout, performance and coping mechanisms with particular reference to academic staff.

Kalyani et al., (2009) studied the contribution of occupational stress and coping on teachers’ work performance and found a significant influence of occupational stress and coping styles on work performance. However in their results male and female teachers did not reveal significant differences in occupational stress, coping styles and performance. A research on sources of occupational stress on employees of a Quebec university by Biron et al. (2005) revealed that work overload, relationship with seniors and participation in decision making were systematically reported as high risks to employees’ health. Dick & Wagner (2001) while studying the “Stress and strain in teaching” revealed that workload and mobbing lead to physical stress and the support from the principal (in-charge) reduces the negative perceptions related to workload and mobbing. Barkhuizen & Rothmann (2008) in their studies on occupational stress of academic staff in South Africa reported that work overload and work-life balance contributed significantly towards psychosomatic stress of teachers. Ahsan et al. (2009) also identified stress inducing factors in academic staff which mainly included work overload, home work interface, role ambiguity and performance pressures and Abouserie
(1996) found workload and conducting research as factors of stress. These factors are termed as organizational stressors since they serve as agents that activate the different stress/strain reactions (Ongori & Agolla, 2008). According to Karasek’s (1979) Demand–Control theory of job stress, even if the nature of jobs are quite demanding but the jobs in which there is a high level of control or autonomy, these should not be stressful and stressful jobs, according to the theory, are those that combine high demands with low control. Kinman (1998) revealed concerns of university staff pertaining to their levels of accountability which are getting higher and at the same time personal autonomy has gradually decreased which might contribute to stress as professionals value independence in their jobs. On the other hand Winefield and Jarrett (2001) found that generally, academics are most satisfied about autonomy. Another interesting finding by Ballamy et al., (2003) shows that academics report that they are attracted to university careers (Saleem, Almadi & Saleem, 2013) because of academic valuing of intrinsic motivators such as flexibility and autonomy, and these two factors have been considered as key factors in “becoming and remaining” an academician. It is also found that stress and burnout is higher for employees who have less involvement in decision making and lack job autonomy although they found the strength of the relationship relatively weaker (Kalyani et al, 2009). Thus it is concluded that academic staff was most stressed by work relationships, resources and communication’ which ultimately effects organizational commitment and quit intentions (Barkhuizen & Rothmann, 2008).

Numerous research findings verify the relationship between stress and absenteeism, burnout, turnover, performance, organizational commitment, missing deadlines and making careless mistakes (Jacobs et al., 2007; Jamal and Baba, 1992). Employees with high levels of burnout show withdrawal behaviors in the form of absenteeism and turnover before they seriously impact on job demands i.e. they start committing mistakes. Furthermore, stress has been implicated as a causal factor of impaired work performance, decrease in faculty productivity, absenteeism, propensity to leave and higher staff turnover (Kinman, 1998).

Organizational commitment is one of the most important job-related outcomes. Barkhuizen & Rothmann, (2008) identified few factors that contributed significantly to job commitment of university staff to their institutions which included high stress because of overload, job control, resources and communication. According to them when the faculty members find the intrinsic factors of their jobs stress full, their organizational commitment gets lower, and this may result in faculty turnover. Dorman (2003) found that teachers operating under high levels of stress for significant periods of time can develop burnout characteristics including less sympathy towards students, reduced tolerance of students, failure to prepare lessons adequately and a lack of commitment to the teaching.

Though majority research studies concluded that high levels of stress have a direct negative relationship with performance (Jacobs et al. 2007) but some view stress as essential for improving performance for example a study termed stress as a challenge for employees and talked about a positive linear relationship between stress and performance. Yerkes and Dodson (1908) suggested low performance at high and low levels of stress, and optimum performance at medium stress levels. Jamal and Baba...
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(1992) tested four different models of the stressor-performance relationship and direct linear negative relationship between stress and performance was found. In other words those reporting higher levels of stress reported lower levels of productivity. Moreover Halpern (2005) reported a strong link between stress levels and psychosomatic ill health followed by reduced performance. This can be viewed as workers more vulnerable to psychosomatic ill health because of any reason definitely have high absenteeism rate and thus a reduced capability to perform well, however “still the relationship between psychological well-being and performance is less clear” (Jacobs et al. 2007, Kinman 1998).

Classical literature shows that long-term physical effects of stress and burnout such as fatigue, migraines, irregular sleeping patterns, insomnia, high blood pressure or heart diseases are ultimately very harmful for the individual and the organization (Guglielmiv & Tatrow, 1998). Research has also shown that stress and burnout result in adding substantial costs to organizations through health care claims, compensation payments, low performance & productivity and high turnover (Cooper & Cartwright, 1994). Dick & Wagner (2001) found that “Teacher stress is seen mainly as a negative affect with diverse psychological (e.g., job dissatisfaction), physiological (e.g., high blood pressure), and behavioral (e.g., absenteeism) correlates”. According to them, these negative stress outcomes in the long run lead to psychosomatic and even chronic problems like heart diseases. Distress has quite a negative effect particularly when the employees who perform outstanding start experiencing it and start searching for new jobs (Grigoryan, 2008), which thus affects the organization badly in increasing the recruitment & selection costs (Ongori & Agolla, 2008). Even employees may not quit because of any reason but still stress can cause psychosomatic health issues including depression, hypertension, heart diseases, suicidal tendencies, and many other problems (Boyd & Wylie, 1994). Therefore it important to develop appropriate proactive interventions to manage stress (Grigoryan 2008, Ongori & Agolla 2008) before it reaches the stage of burnout.

III. Research Framework & Methodology

Some past studies in the same domain were taken as the basis for research framework for this study1. The framework for this study consists of two phases. The first phase illustrates the relationship between job related sources of stress/stressors and psychosomatic stress. The second phase illustrates the relationship between stress, performance, organizational commitment and turnover intentions. Demographic factors have been used as control variables in this study. Based on classical studies following hypotheses are developed:

H1a: Work overload is positively related to stress.
H1b: Lack of resources is positively related to stress.
H1c: Lack of Autonomy is positively related to stress.
H2a: Negative correlation exists between stress and organizational commitment.
H2b: Negative correlation exists between stress and performance.
H2c: Positive correlation exists between stress and employee turnover intentions.

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Participants

The survey is carried out on a random sample of 159 lecturers and assistant professors from four campuses of a semi-government university of Pakistan. Each potential respondent was sent a questionnaire through a representative from his/her campus with a cover letter mentioning the general purpose of the research and guaranteeing respondent anonymity. The faculty members were asked to return the complete questionnaires directly to the representative/investigator. Strict confidentiality was insured as no personal identifiable information was mentioned on the questionnaire. All respondents participated voluntarily and received no monetary reward. Out of 159 respondents, 10 subjects had been excluded due to incomplete questionnaires and/or other biases in their responses. Respondents have been categorized on the basis of gender, post and type of teaching based on their specialization (departments). Courses with no extensive lab work e.g. management & humanities related courses has been considered as Non-Technical Teaching (NTT) and others e.g. Engineering, Pharmacy, Computer Science related courses has been termed as Technical Teaching (TT). Table 1 shows these demographic details of the respondents.

Table 1: Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Characteristic</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GENDER Female</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>23 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>77 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POST Assistant Professor (OG-II)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer (OG-I)</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>76.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type Technical Teaching (TT)</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>57 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(NTT) Non-Technical Teaching</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: (n=149)

Measurement of concept

Keeping in view the problems mentioned in literature pertaining to measurement of stress, utmost care has been taken to overcome such problems in this study, firstly by selecting appropriate questions from already existing scales by Cooper & Cartwright, (1994), Porter et al. (1974) and Hunt et al. (1981) and secondly by rephrasing the questions in understandable/easy format. To elicit qualitative information regarding sources and consequences of stress, thorough interviews with 39 faculty members were conducted (before finalizing the questionnaire contents). Faculty members were interviewed regarding the different job stressors & strains which are mentioned in some most popular instruments/tools to measure job-related stress e.g. Pressure Management Indicator (PMI) by Williams & Cooper & Cartwright (1994) which is a 120 item self-reported questionnaire are developed from Occupational Stress Indicator (OSI) by Cooper & Cartwright (1994). The interviewees during the preliminary qualitative survey have responded to many open ended questions, which are tape-recorded and later on jotted down in a systematic way which gave us an exact idea regarding the most prominent/prevailing job stressors in that sample. This has helped to adapt the existing scales to contextualize and shorten the questionnaires to bare minimum, thus mentioning only the stressors which has been identified as a potential stressor by most of the respondents. For Job related stressor scale Respondents are asked to rank some of the job...
related stressors using a scale 1-5 (one for least effect on stress and 5 for highest impact on stress). The listed stressors included job insecurity, feeling of inequity, communication problems, work overload, harassment, lack of job autonomy, lack of resources, lack of training/skills and lack of aptitude. More than 70 percent reported work overload as one of the factors among all, followed by job autonomy and lack of resources. Very few faculty members indicated the other factors to have high impact on stress. Therefore, only three important job-related stressors have been considered in this study and questionnaires are designed accordingly to measure the relationship of these stressors with psychosomatic stress. Their reliability is mentioned in table 2. Performance indicators/results are solicited from the respondents based on their annual performance appraisal. The questionnaire included questions regarding the performance feedback which they have received formally from different sources including performance appraisal committee, reporting officers and students. It is worthwhile to mention that the questions used to measure the performance are not based on “self-appraised performance”. The questionnaire on organizational commitment included questions adapted from Porter et al. (1974) and Cooper & Cartwright (1994) on personal commitment with the university. Turnover intention is measured by using four items adapted from Hunt et al. (1981) concerning plans to leave or remain in same the organization. The items measure the quit intentions with reference to “change the university” and do not make any reference to change. The other details pertaining to turnover intentions, organizational commitment and performance are mentioned in table 2. All variables are measured on a five point Likert scale.

Table 2: Reliability Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Name</th>
<th>Total Items</th>
<th>items Dropped</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work Overload</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Resources</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Autonomy</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Commitment</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnover Intentions</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Variables with Cronbach’s alphas above 0.70 were considered reliable.

VI. Data Analysis

The statistical tools used in this study for data analysis are mean score analysis, Pearson’s correlations, ANOVA and T-tests using SPSS v.19. Associations among different variables are examined by Pearson’s correlation analysis. Refer to Table 3, results reveal that overload is positively related to stress ($r=0.255$, $p<0.01$). It is further revealed that organizational commitment ($r=-0.412$, $p<0.01$) and turnover intentions ($r=-0.343$, $p<0.01$) are related to stress.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. WO</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.194*</td>
<td>.299**</td>
<td>.251**</td>
<td>-.062</td>
<td>-.075</td>
<td>.089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. LOR</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.283**</td>
<td>.104</td>
<td>.205*</td>
<td>-.019</td>
<td>-.200**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. LOA  1  .018  .135  .070  -.054
4. STRESS  1  .061  -.412**  .343**
5. PER  1  .140  -.007
6. OC  1  -.213**
7. TO  1

Note: *, p< 0.05  ** p< 0.01
WO: Work Overload, LOR: Lack of Resources, LOA: Lack of Autonomy, PER: Performance, OC: Org; Commitment, TO: Turnover Intentions

To test the hypothesis H1 (a,b,c), standard multiple regression analysis is conducted. Table 4 reveals the results of multiple regressions between stress and job related stressors. The adjusted R-square value .257 is calculated. Data shows that independent variables have 25.7% influence on stress (dependent variable). The only job related factor are significantly (positively) correlated i.e. stress is related work overload which shows a positive significant relationship with stress (with a beta score of 0.251). Rest of the job related factors showed no significant relationship with stress. However two of the demographic (control) variables namely grade & gender shows significant correlation with stress.

Table 4: Regression analysis for stress and job related variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>S.B</th>
<th>t-test</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>-1.138</td>
<td>.257</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.479</td>
<td>6.367</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>.203</td>
<td>2.770</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Type</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>1.048</td>
<td>.296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Overload</td>
<td>.251</td>
<td>3.352</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>1.220</td>
<td>.225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>-.015</td>
<td>-.197</td>
<td>.844</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R² = .287  Adjusted R² Square = .257  F = 9.537  p< 0.01

Note: Dependent Variable: Stress; Standardized Beta (S.B)

Tables 5, 6 and 7 reveal the results of regressions between stress-organizational commitment, stress-performance and stress- turnover intentions after controlling for Gender and Grade (to validate hypothesis H2a&b and H3)

Table 5: Regression analysis for OC and Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>S.B</th>
<th>t-test</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
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Regression analysis for Performance and Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>S.B</th>
<th>t-test</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>6.157</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.070</td>
<td>-.724</td>
<td>.470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.301</td>
<td>.764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Type</td>
<td>-.117</td>
<td>-1.388</td>
<td>.167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>.082</td>
<td>.887</td>
<td>.377</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R\(^2\) = .020  
Adjusted R\(^2\) Square = -0.007  
F = 0.752  
p=0.559

Note: Dependent Variable: Performance; Standardized Beta (S.B)

The regression results between stress and turnover intentions in the table mentioned below revealed that these variables are significantly positively related with each other (Beta = .250, Adjusted R\(^2\) = .154), thus supporting hypotheses H3.

Regression analysis for Turnover and Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>S.B</th>
<th>t-test</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>2.789</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.249</td>
<td>2.820</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>-.021</td>
<td>-.264</td>
<td>.792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Type</td>
<td>.112</td>
<td>1.458</td>
<td>.147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRESS</td>
<td>.250</td>
<td>2.933</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R\(^2\) = .177  
Adjusted R\(^2\) Square = .154  
F = 7.723  
p<0.01

Note: Dependent Variable: Turnover Intentions; Standardized Beta (S.B)
“Gender” which is one of the control variable, shows significant relationship with turnover intention, but not with performance or organizational commitment. The results are visually summarized in figure 2.

![Contextual model of job stress](image)

Figure 2: Contextual model of job stress

V. Discussion

Objectives of study are to test the influence of job related stressors on psychosomatic stress in academic staff of a semi government university of Pakistan and to study the consequences of stress on performance, organizational commitment and turnover intentions in an academic context. As hypothesized, work overload shows significant impact on psychosomatic stress. However work overload has been identified as the only significant job related factor which predicted stress among faculty. Result corroborate with studies conducted in past, While many universities have high research expectations for faculty, the latter also have to allocate time for teaching and administrative duties, which considerably decreases time for research. Other researchers also found work overload as highly related to stress including Biron et al., (2005), Iqbal & Kokash (2011) and Barkhuizen & Rothmann (2008). In a survey by Boyd and Wylie (1994), 80 percent of the academicians mentioned that their workloads have increased consistently during the preceding years. Similarly in response to Kinman’s (1998) survey, more than 50 percent of the sample revealed that more than 20 percent of their job was done “after office hours” at home and weekends even. The results are inconsistent with this study, thus it can be argued that in academic environment job related factors like job autonomy and lack of resources may not be a source of stress but might hinder performance and weaken job commitment. However if not addressed, these factors may crop-up as potential stressors in the long run. It is worthwhile to discuss that more than 50 percent of the faculty members in the preliminary interviews mentioned that they
intentionally and willingly used their leisure time after office hours to complete some of the jobs including academic writing, preparing results, preparation for the lectures, working on research articles etc. This may be due to the reason that office environment is not so congenial to concentrate on these academic activities or because they are overwhelmed by other administrative tasks that now become part of the job description of many faculty members. The result pertaining to stress and organizational commitment show negative relation. Moreover the relationship between stress and turnover intentions is also found significant. Both results are in conformity with some past studies including Barkhuizen & Rothmann (2008), Dorman (2003) and Ongori & Agolla (2008). Numerous studies have shown that organizational commitment is one of the most important job-related outcomes and is negatively related to work stress and may end in turnover intentions. Thus it can be argued that job related factors which contribute to stress, in actual also contribute towards job commitment and turnover intentions. Results show a significant impact of gender on stress and turnover intentions. The results support the findings of Barkhuizen & Rothmann (2008) who found that female faculty reported higher levels of somatic stress than male faculty. However Kalyani et al. (2009) found no significant differences between male and female counterparts. In view of this, the results showed that work overload is one of the most significant factor defining stress among faculty members and the relationships between stress, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions are highly significant.

Research reports that scholars are attracted to university career because of academic value of inherent motivators such as flexibility and autonomy (Bellamy et al., 2003). The universities which are considered as good paymasters and have overall good ranking expect high outcomes from the faculty. Academicians are mentally ready for the long work hours and challenges pertaining to variety of tasks they will perform in a university particularly if the university ranks among the top ones. Keeping in view this premise, work overload is usually not a big issue for such academicians who have sufficient resources at their disposal and in addition if the top management acknowledge/appreciate their outputs. However it is the responsibility of the university to ensure proper distribution of work load and required resources. It is suggested that particularly for the faculty members who are voluntarily doing additional duties along with teaching and research should be assigned with research associates/assistants to help them out in various assignments. Interestingly during the initial interviews as well, the faculty members showed their concern regarding heavy workload and also mentioned unequal distribution of jobs/tasks by their bosses. It was clear from the feedback that there were many faculty members who never contribute in “additional tasks”, and just focus on teaching. Even the head of departments feel reluctant to assign such faculty members with additional responsibilities. Ultimately, the jobs of such faculty members who avoid new responsibilities are shifted to few others who take it as a challenge, but in long run it becomes a source of stress for them and they do it at the cost of their work-life imbalance. Moreover if there is no appreciation for their outputs by the performance management committees or top management, the organizational commitment also drops down which may end in turnover of those who are good performers. Thus it is recommended that management should take appropriate measures to make sure that the negative effects of work load mismanagement should not be trickled down to good performers as it is one of the major sources of occupational stress, which may lead to quit intentions. Job commitment is a two way process. If employees perceive that their
organization cares for them and is committed to them, in return employees show same
attitude else professionals are more committed to their profession rather than
organizations. For such academicians, seeking new job is not a big challenge but for the
organization where valued workers are leaving, it is no doubt a big challenge so proactive
interventions/measures should be taken to increase employees’ organizational
commitment. It is thus suggested that universities should regularly organize stress
management seminars and make sure that faculty members should attend such
workshops. On the individual level employees can take care of stress themselves. Making
their roles clear, practicing time management tactics, carefully distributing the work load
to others, increasing the social support resources are few of the workplace tactics which
can help the employees to overcome stress through careful planning.

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