



EVALUATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB STRESS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL WITH PRESENTING A CONCEPTUAL MODEL

ZohrehEs,haghDavatgar *¹, RamazanMirzaei

1. Department of public Administration Chalous Branch, Islamic Azad University, Chalous, (IRAN).
2. Health promotion research, Zahedan University of Medical Science, IR, (IRAN).

Abstract

Background and objective: Job stress is a universal problem and the inescapable of working life, and it extensively affects physical, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions of human. Because social capital reduces the risks of stressors in life, therefore a comprehensive model of the relationship between social capital dimensions and the dimensions of stress seems to be effective.

Materials and methods: In this research, referring to the existing literature, In addition to the description of theoretical foundations of social capital and job stress, their dimensions have been introduced. In order to create model of article, the viewpoints of Nahapiet and Goshal on social capital and the combination of viewpoints of experts on psychology, industrial psychology, organizational and social psychology on job stress are used.

Results: A conceptual model of the relationship between dimensions of social capital with dimensions of job stress has been provided.

Conclusion: In this study relationships between Spiritual dimension of job stress and dimensions of social capital, relationship between mental dimension of job stress and Cognitive dimension of social capital and social dimension of job stress and dimension Communicative of social capital has been explain .

Keywords: Job stress. healthv nerson. Social capital: structural. cognitive. communicative.

For Correspondence:

zohreh.davatgar@yahoo.com

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Introduction

In this article the criteria of communicative dimension in social capital consists of: being open to criticism; mutual interactions, based on honesty, being truthful and plight; and being dedicated to a social group.

For cognitive dimension the criteria will be: cooperative and group-work drives, taking

roles in making decisions in goals of the corporation, being eager in the job, feeling secure in the job, having common values and goals in the corporation.

The structural dimension of social capital indicates the predictability of complex and volatile situation in the future, making policies in favour of the staff, making facilitating communicative structures, taking responsibilities, being bound to the values, facilitating access to the information, and making the information (1,2).

Some people consider human completely physical and the product of heredity while some others think that human is a social creature who acquires everything from the environment. There is also another group of people who acquire everything from the environment. There is also another group of people who believe human is a combination of biological, mental and social aspects. The theory of the personality of a healthy person deals with existential structure of humans with regard to biological, mental, social and spiritual aspects (3). Job stress, as a world epidemic (4) is a factor which influences all existential aspects of humans. The importance of dealing with job stress and reducing its effects is proved in many researches including the one which was carried out in Chicago University and showed that over 40 percent of Americans suffer from job stress (5). Besides, the results of another research estimated that between the years 2007 to 2009, a loss of more than 13.5 million working days and over 4 billion pounds per year were made as a result of job stress (5). With regard to the fact that eliminated stressful stimulators at work can improve physical and mental health of people (4), social capital can be introduced as a factor which reduces stress. Harpham, Grant and Thomas define social capital as a factor which reduces stress (9). Lynch and Kaplan suggest that social capital is a kind of accumulation of capital and networks that form social unity, social commitment and eventually self-esteem and health in people (8). This article does not aim to remove stress completely because this is impossible. On the

other hand, according to some scientists in the field of perfection, life dynamics are caused by stress. Our goal is to change the negative and harmful stress in to something that can direct people and organizations toward their goals.

Materials and methods:

In this study, we investigated social capital from the perspective of Nahapiet and Goshal (9). Then the theory of health personality with regard to human, job and stress is presented. Some theories concerning stress and the relationship between the dimensions of social capital and job stress were evaluated. Finally a conceptual model is presented.

Aspects of Social Capital

Nahapit and Gushal (1998) believe that the model of social and organizational capital is a collection of actual and potential sources hidden in, caused and accessible by network between people. Therefore, social capital, in their opinion, is both the network and the assets which may have been prepared by the network. Dividing the social capital into three groups, Nahapit and Gushal have exactly explained each one. These aspects, while separated from each other analytically, have features that closely relate them to each other (9).

Structural dimension of social capital

It refers to the overall patterns of connections between those who play roles in organizations and to the fact that with whom and how you communicate (8). The most important aspects of structural dimension of social capital are as follows: network connections between people, configuration of ties, and the appropriate organization (9).

Network connections

A network is a group of individual agents sharing the norms and values which are beyond values and norms necessary for common trade (9). A network consists of knots and bonds which are ties between knots. Knots can be individuals, groups and organizations and ties can have various forms ranging from physical communication to connections between people in their organizational life, interpersonal ties inside the organization, and inter organizational ties outside the organization (10). Bert states

that this advantage gained from information occurs in three ways:

Access (gaining valuable information from the process of screening information and distributing it among network members), timing (the ability of those who have personal contact to acquire the information more quickly), and referral (the process of information opportunities which are accessible to active members of the network) (9).

Configuration of ties

The main signs of configuration of ties include: structural gaps (a lack of communication between workers), concentration (communication between a small number of workers), and density (the number of ties between members of a network). These signs show formality and centralization.

Cognitive dimension of social capital

Cognition includes every kind of awareness of, idea or belief about environment, people or their behavior. Among various forms of cognition, those including prediction, planning, goal-setting, evaluation and creating behavioral standards are related to organizational behavior (13). Cognitive element of social capital refers to the sources providing emblems, interpretations and explanations, and systems of common concepts among groups (14). Based on studies done by Nahapiet&Ghoshal (1998), mutual understanding among workers is obtained through having a common language and exchanging common stories. When workers enjoy both the same language and the same stories, they can discuss everything more easily.

Communicative dimension of social capital

It refers to the asset resulting from communications (15). The communicative element of social capital describes a kind of personal communication between people which is based on their communication background with each other (16). Confidence acts as a factor leading to creation of social capital (17). Occupational social capital lies within social relationships existing in an organization (1). The relationships in which a person is involved create an important source by means of mutual

social communication and provide the members with the capital which has accumulated (18). This capital can improve individual's opportunities and imaginations (1). Studies show that when there is a high degree of confidence in people's relationships, people are really interested in communicating and cooperating with each other. Confidence brings about communication (18). Social norms such as honesty and teamwork are regarded as key features in knowledge-based organizations (20). These requirements show commitment to and responsibility for doing something in the future (21). In working environments, confidence suggests that people working in an organization are expected to comply with social norms and morals and regulations (1), and that an employee acts justly (1). Besides, organizational commitment shows employee's dependence on organization and not merely on job (1). Organizational commitment also shows that an employee has been identified by the organization and its goals (1).

Healthy Personality Theory

This theory knows human with his physiological, mental, social and spiritual dimensions. It focuses on three styles of communication that people experience simultaneously: 1- Living in the biological world (physical and physiological environment), 2- Living in the world of human communications (social environment of other people), 3- living in the world of personal relations (humans' relations with their inner essence). Every moment, human is in biological world, human relationships world and self-awareness world simultaneously. In these three ways of communication, humans should be aware of all their abilities and utilize them to be responsible for what they choose and what they do. Furthermore, Allport, Fromm, Maslow, Rogers and Perls put great emphasis on responsibility, freedom (having the right to choose), and human's commitment to know and improve their own personality. Allport says: "having a fixed picture of self, the ability to express love and affection unconditionally and clearly, emotional safety and also having a

goal which gives life a sense of direction are signs of mental health.”

Being literally creative is one of the features which a healthy character is expected to possess. Creativity is related to innovation, imagination and even inclination toward a kind of perception and reaction to world rather than creating an artwork. Therefore, everyone can have creativity in every job. Frankl discusses this in three fundamental systems of values that can make life meaningful: creative values, experimental values and inclination values. Healthy people do not seek to get to a protected and comfortable place. Reaching is not their mere goal. They enjoy doing their job and travelling reads of life just as much as they enjoy reaching the destination. Healthy people constantly need to have variation and become involved in new situations and challenges. Allport believes that what makes the exciting life is chasing not conquering, the way not the destination, the quest not the success. They set aside their daily routines and seek new experiences. They take risk and explore new things. All these activities can cause tension. In Allport's opinion, the only way to grow is doing these dangerous and stressful things. A lack of tension can be just as threatening to mental health as a high level of tension. When we say every human is in search of tension, we mean that humans are trying to do tasks that may add meaning to their existence. If human don't find such tasks in their life – which results in being deprived of some specific tension- , they will not be able to stand them anymore and will get a kind of nervous disease. Perfecting is not possible within being committed to job. Job can be a factor which results in either realizing or hindering perfection. The job which can set human on the road to perfection is what they can do as they wish. An exception to this could be working in production lines of factories where workers do not interfere in what they do, its quality or speed. Maslow believes that they don't regard their job as a way to make a living. They simply love their job and consider it suitable for themselves as if horses for courses. A job

can meet all person's needs and challenge their skills. Success in work implicitly means growing special skills and abilities. It means reaching a level of eminence. With regard to the fact that healthy people are on the road of perfection, they admit others' strengths and weaknesses as they admit those of their own. In addition, they feel responsibility for other humans (3).

Job Stress and Related Theories

Job stress is a situation resulting from relationships between people and jobs. Its distinguishing feature is changes that occur inside people and make them turn away from what is morally right.(17). Tense and stressful factors are caused by organizational structure, conditions and style of management (1). Sometimes such factors are impossible to eliminate (1). However, when the number and type of these stressful factors exceed personal abilities so that they cannot be dealt with easily, employees will be prone to stress. Eventually they decide to leave such a stressful place (1).

Hans seale's viewpoint

Seale, the well-known psychologies, believes that tension (stress) is body's response to any defined harm that can be enjoyable (useful stress) or annoying (harmful stress). Here are some points to introduce this phenomenon:

1. Tension is caused by some stimulators.
2. Tension is caused by people's frequent requests which are in contrast with each other.
3. Tension is a type of reaction to environment which is caused by environmental interactions.
4. Tension is a sign of human's health and his awareness of the environment because people are either sensitive or indifferent to the environment. Indifference is typical of unaware and irresponsible people while sensitivity is an indication of commitment and responsibility, which is consequently followed by tension and stress. In such cases, scientists try to moderate and prevent negative and harmful effects of stress.
5. Finally, stress is a part of the motive process and is not related to what an individual dose in order to reach his or her goal. When there is

something wrong with the process, stress appears (4).

Elstad

Elstad uses mental-social viewpoint in order to study factors affecting people's health and suggests three theories: 1. Distributing stress is one of significant factors which determine imbalance in people's health. 2. Stress is deeply affected by the quality of social and interpersonal relationship. 3. The quality of social relationships is determined by inequalities existing in the society. Elstad's four main sources are social stress approach, excitement sociology, and social correlation approach.

- **Social stress approach:** stress is regarded as a form of excitement which is caused by presence of environmental, social needs or lack of means which can help us, then reach a goal.

In this sociological orientation, researchers focus on how distributing stressful factors is based on situation of individuals within social structures. Due to the presence of many unequal social structures, stressful factors and especially long-term and chronic ones are distributed unevenly in the society. The degree of the effect of stress is based on mind evaluations of stress which are affected not only by concrete characteristics but also by distribution of moderating sources. that's why Elstad suggests that the degree of stress varies according to people's social status and shows its effects on how healthy people are.

- **Self-effectiveness approach:** In this approach, human is emphasized and considered active creatures surrounded by structural and external forces. In his definition of effectiveness, he relates success and failure to personal characteristics such as ability and attempt and considers. them the same as concepts like mastery , internal locus of control , personal control, perceived control of environment and instrumentalism. He also states that concepts like power struggle, feeling powerless, external control center, and learned inability are in contrast with self-effectiveness. Eventually, self-effectiveness is related to self-esteem, self-concept, social support and

compatibility styles. Self-effectiveness makes people less fragile to stress which consequently improves self-esteem and protects the person from chronic pressures and stress.

- **Excitement sociology approach:**Excitement sociology studies the fact that how social world acts in interactive emotional issues. So there is emphasis on the relationship between individual's social world, and his physical and mental dimensions. Binary issues such as body/soul, nature/culture, and biology/society are discussed here. Since experiences are rich sources of emotions, those experiences which create exciting responses in a person mean a lot to him. If such a situation continues, it can harm the person's health in the long-run. And that's how stress can be regarded as part of a bigger issue which is excitement. If this happens, stress will change into a peripheral part of negative excitements. Social origins of stress deal with how stress appears. With this regard, the quality of social relationships is of important basically. Those who communicate well with others are less likely to suffer from negative excitements, compared to those who can't get along with others.

- **social correlation approach:** Elstad, using partial deprivation theory, suggests that people of a society use criteria which are considered important by others as base for self-evaluating. Questions like: how people choose their reference groups, what is the position of social comparison processes, and what norms are involved in such processes are basic issues in social deprivation social inequalities such as income inequality, power inequality in organizational hierarchy, and undemocratic organizations have fundamental effect on social relations and interactions of people (22).

The relationship between dimension of

Social capital and job stress

Structural dimension of social capital and spiritual job stress

Tredyharpham suggests that social capital can reduce harmful effects of long-term problem of life, life disasters, and lack of social support on people's health. He believes that social capital is a supply of investments, sources and

networks that result in social homogeneity, confidence and eagerness to become involved in social activities.

Harpham then states that social capital can decrease stressful and dangerous factors related to health. Those who possess a high level of social capital rarely lose their jobs. Kawachi and Berkman suggest that social homogeneity results in emergence of positive moods such as feeling purposeful, awareness of self-values, feeling secure and having a sense of belonging. These positive mental moods will consequently make people eager to take care of themselves and become healthy. Introversion and losing contact with people can create negative mental moods and if this introversion continues for a long time, it can do some damage to nervous and immune systems of your body and make you vulnerable to diseases and stressful events (2).

Organizational commitment acts as a mediator in job stress (24). After studying 506 Israeli nurses, Glarz and Cruce(2008) found out that organizational commitment can considerably decrease job stress among people who work in public organizations dealing with children rights (1).

Cognitive dimension of social capital and job stress

Due to the fact that cognitive dimension of social capital consists of opinion, belief and perception about environment, a person's appropriate social status can be a sign of cognitive dimension of social capital.

Kawachi and Berkman believe that an appropriate social status can increase the possibility of access to different forms of social support and that's how people can protect themselves against stressful factors. Kawachi and Berkman state that social support caused by social relationships can prevent severe emotional responses to stressful events. In addition, social support can help carry out a

better evaluation of the status quo and consequently stop negative emotional and behavioral responses when facing stressful situations. Perceived support can reduce both negative emotional reactions and behavioral-physiological responses to stress. People who participate in social activities will be happier and in better cognitive conditions. (2).

Berkman also refers to the effects of social network and relationships on health. He uses the concept of network to analyze ties that cut family relationships of different social classes. He tries to analyze behaviors by means of which people can obtain political jobs and important social roles. Coleman believes that the main factor that determines people's behavior and attitude is establishing social connections that provide them with opportunities to attain good positions.

Communicative dimension of social capital and job stress

Berkman and Kawachi emphasize the role of people who have an influence on network members. As references of groups, these people affect the behavior of network members and form their performance in important aspects. If what network members do in compliance with their reference group is decent manners their physical and mental health will improve, otherwise, their behavior will be dangerous and will cause physical and mental damage in the long-run (2).

Results:

In this article, social capital from the standpoint of Nahapite and Goshal(9) as well as job stress from theories of Seale(4) and Elstad(22) were all discussed. Besides, Spiritual dimension of job stress was dealt with by reviewing theories of psychologists who consider healthy people responsible, independent and effective. The relationship between social capital and job stress is also presented in a conceptual model (fig.1.1).

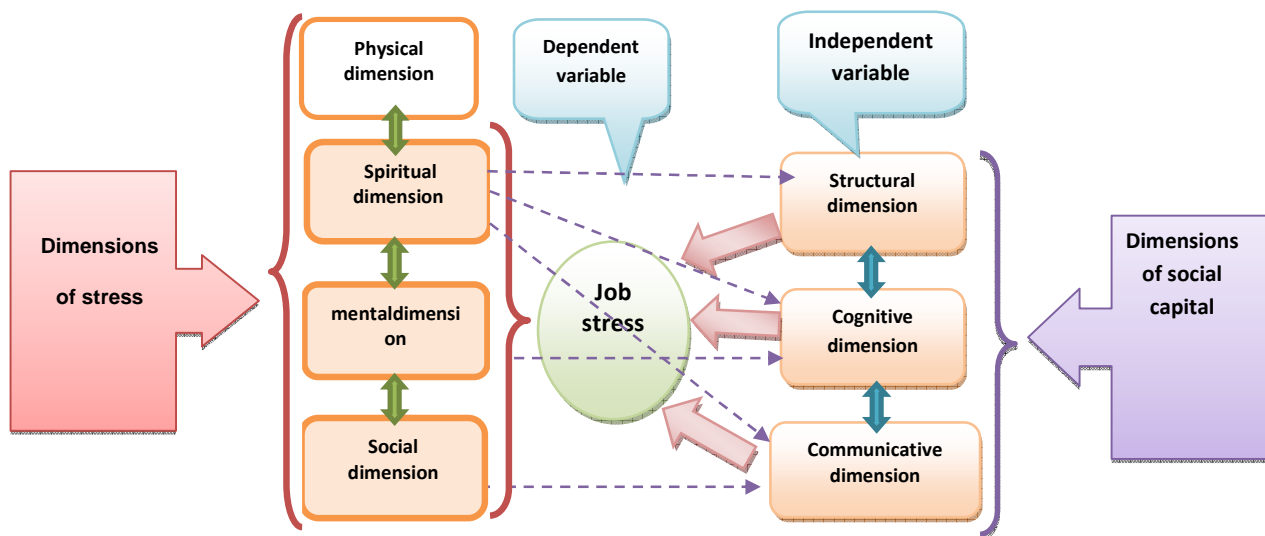


Fig1.1. The Model of the relationship between dimensions of social capital and stress which affects job stress – with dependent and Independent variables.

Human power as a supply of social capital consists of physical, spiritual, mental and social dimensions on all of which stress has effect. Although organization management style can be important in studying effects of stress, it is not analyzed in this model because it does not have considerable effects on employees` level of physical growth. When job stress emerges as a spiritual stress, it affects all aspects of social capital since spirituality accounts for underlying part of a human`s character. Creating indifference and removing the role of a human`s participation, stress can reduce the range of accepted values in the network. Moreover, it decreases cognitive social capital by changing beliefs and attitudes which are based on responsibility. It finally decreases the level of communicative social capital and turns it into a negative form of communication by establishing undesirable norms.

Conclusions and Discussions

In proposed model, the relationship between the dimensions of social capital dimensions, stress and job stress are shown. If stress results in aimlessness and indirection, the structure of social capital which has provided the sources to achieve the goals will be ineffective. The stress which results from a lack of trust and

participation and unreasonable social inequalities in job decreases the communicative social capital. Some researchers believe weak relationships between employees and their colleagues, managers and those who work under them are the main cause of job stress (1). Spector (2002) notes that increasing trust between managers and those who work under them is essential at work place. Some studies have suggested that trust is closely related to job stress (1). Generally, if trust increases, job stress might decrease. Studying some elementary school teachers, Ray and Miller evaluated the relationship between communication and job stress and concluded that the more people communicate with each other, the less job stress they have (1).

Also, if reasonable social inequalities are assessed, it will improve the mental dimension and self-esteem and will increase cognitive social capital. Trust, as a mediator, enhances one`s imaginations and perceptions of cognitive dimension of social capital. New cognition creates new social norms and values and then the structural dimension of social capital is improved through a collection of new trust and values. Increasing trust would

eventually lead to useful, effective and efficient organizational commitment. Stress can also have intense negative effect on communicative social capital by creating negative excitement and injustice.

Cognitive social capital can be affected by spirituality as well as by mental dimension. Communicative social capital is influenced by social communications and spirituality. Berkman suggests that correlation is a factor which prevents emergence of imbalanced mood and results in forming safe and effective groups in a larger system. Increasing social relationships in an experienced and perceived, the less job stress (2).

Human power, as the factor of social capital, is affected in different ways when competing with stress. Negative effects of this process appear in employees' health and their organizational performance. By presenting a conceptual model, we suggest that social capital is a moderator to job stress. The advantage of this model is that it can give managers comprehensive insight into solving or preventing stressful issues by covering all dimensions of stress.

For Future Research

In order to measure the validity of the model presented here, it is suggested that researchers look over it in organizations. It is also recommended to measure the efficiency of model in organizations with a level of stress below or above average. Besides, searching for mental, social and spiritual norms can be done through questionnaires about job stress.

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