

The cover features a dark blue night sky with a prominent galaxy. A telescope is positioned in the lower center, its lens reflecting the light from the galaxy. The background is composed of several overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes in shades of teal, green, and dark blue, creating a layered effect.

# REVISTA INCLUSIONES

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BIBLIOTECA UNIVERSIDAD DE CONCEPCIÓN

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB STRESS AND EMPLOYEES'  
ALIENATION WITH MEDIATING ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE  
IN THE SOCIAL SECURITY ORGANIZATION IN RAZAVI KHORASAN,  
NORTH KHORASAN AND SOUTH KHORASAN PROVINCES**

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**Abstract**

In this study, the correlation between job stress and employees' alienation with mediating role of organizational justice was assessed in the Social Security Organization in Razavi Khorasan, North Khorasan and South Khorasan provinces. Due to the large number of employees in the Social Security Organization, only those with a bachelor's degree were considered as the statistical population from these provinces. Based on the structural equation modeling, the sample size was 389. The data were collected using the standard questionnaire of job stress, employees' alienation, and organizational justice. Descriptive and analytical statistics were applied. The factors related to these variables were identified and measured. The results indicated that job stress, its four factors, alienation, its relevant factors, distributive justice, and procedural justice factors were not in desirable condition in the target population. However, organizational justice and interactional justice factor were in desirable condition. Moreover, the correlation coefficient for the relationship between job stress and alienation was positive and escalating. Any increase in the job stress factors would lead to elevated alienation. According to the negative correlation coefficients, the association of job stress factors (mental, physical, and behavioral signs) with organizational justice was in decline. The mediating effect of organizational justice on the relationship between job stress and alienation was substantiated.

**Keywords**

Job stress – Alienation – Empowerment – Social security organization

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## Introduction

Although today's modern life provides limitless comfort and welfare, the human body and mind have faced expectations, which, in turn, lead to stress. Stress is a recurrent subject and human is more often affected by stress while entering society. Indeed, stress exerts great impacts on each aspect of human life, thus being related to family, education and pedagogy, social and economic activities, organizations, as well as professions.

When the environment is unstable and unpredictable, organizations are to be flexible. Undeniably, the manager of each organization cannot afford to plan and implement strategies towards organizational goals in such a way that meet these changes. Therefore, there is a need for employees' participation and use of their intellectual and professional abilities. Also, they are to be involved in decision-making process and wide participation to become empowered. As a result, team work has garner much attention recently. A body of literature has addressed empowerment, effectiveness, team work, and team building.

Today's organizations has encountered issues such as rapid changes, customer taste, and expectation to receive the best service, and so forth. Accordingly, organizations must develop innovations proportionate to these changes and reconsider attitudes, goals, and procedures.

Justice as a fundamental need for human societal life have drawn attention throughout history. The most foundational cognition in the heavenly religions is the knowledge of God; the base of human and God relationship is founded upon, with God being the one who establish justice<sup>1</sup>.

On the other hand, most of human life is spent in organizations or in association with organizations. In fact, organization is a social system that its survival and sustainability rely on the strong connection among its constituents. Lack of justice can cause the separation between these components, thus destroying this connection. In accordance with the theory of relative deprivation, when individuals believe that their earnings are not in balance with others' at the same condition, the feeling of injustice grows. If people feel that they have not get fair share and suffered unfairly in comparison with others, it is more likely that they challenge the system responsible for such condition. Specially, in the case that main and basic needs of one person or group do not meet, or there is a stark contrast between demand and possession, the probability of this event increases. Unfair distribution of resources in society leaves it vulnerable to social turmoil.

In this research study, efforts have been made to investigate factors of job stress, work alienation, and organizational justice in the Social Security Organization as one of social welfare organizations affiliated to the ministry of cooperatives, labor and social welfare. Furthermore, the level of stress was assessed.

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<sup>1</sup> H. Ramin Mehr; A. Hadizadeh Moghaddam & I. Ahmadi, "Study the relationship between organizational justice perception and organizational citizenship behavior: The case of National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company", *Transformation Management Journal* Vol: 1 num 2 (2009): 65-89.

## Significance of the study

Effective human resources are the most valuable wealth of every country. Due to the lack of competent and qualified manpower, many communities of high natural sources fail to benefit from these gifted. To improve performance, organizations are to pay a deep attention to employees and factors influential on their performance. It has been shown that job satisfaction, organizational commitment, creativity, stress, conflict, and so forth can affect employees' performance.

Job stress occurs when the expectation from an individual is more than her/his abilities and powers. The condition where a person is not given an opportunity to show creativity, decision-making, and tact results in the development of stress, which, in the long run, comes up with reduced efficiency; this is one of the big threats towards human health in today's modern societies. Also, decreasing an individual's efficiency is associated with elevated absenteeism at workplace, declined production, labor turnover, work conflict, medical costs, disability, and extra cost of recruiting a new employee<sup>2</sup>.

One of the major human dilemmas during the shift towards modern lifestyle in recent decades is stress, which greatly impacts the health of employees. Along with globalization, the importance of this phenomenon is on the rise. Psychological, physical, chemical, ergonomic, and biologic hazards are regarded as main risk factors at workplace. Of psychological hazards, job stress is of utmost importance<sup>3</sup>.

Krischer et al.<sup>4</sup> showed that counterproductive behaviors can be considered as a means of emotion-focused coping which develop in response to perceived stress. Therefore, employees react differently when the cause of events is attributed to elements other than themselves. In this regard, the attribution of stress is an emerging concept, which refers to the extent that people attribute the stressful experiences to their characteristics, strengths, limitations, and/or others' performance, expectations and characteristics<sup>5</sup>. In each human environment, stress is an influential factor on performance and behaviors<sup>6</sup>. For instance, work overload occurs if the responsibilities and requests do not match the abilities or available work resources in the work environment<sup>7</sup>.

Stress and work overload consequently end up with occupational alienation which is a harmful workforce's feeling. The concept of occupational alienation in a psychological

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<sup>2</sup> M. Ranjbar Ezatabadi; M. Arab; H. Zeraati; A. Akbari Sari & H. Dargahi, "Prevalence of intimate partner violence and views of women on adopting ways to fight against it in Arak city, Iran", *Journal of School of Public Health and Institute of Public Health Research*, Vol: 7 num 3 (2009): 73-81.

<sup>3</sup> M. Aghilinejad; S. Mohammadi; M. Afkari & R. Abbaszade Dizaji, "Surveying the association between occupational stress and mental health, personality and life stressful events in Tehran police officers", *Research in Medicine*, Vol: 31 num 4 (2007): 355-360.

<sup>4</sup> M. M. Krischer; L. M. Penney & E. M. Hunter, "Can counterproductive work behaviors be productive? CWB as emotion-focused coping", *Journal of occupational health psychology*, Vol: 15 num 2 (2010): 154-166.

<sup>5</sup> A. Goh, An attributional analysis of counterproductive work behavior (CWB) in response to occupational stress. Doctoral dissertation, University of South Florida. 2007.

<sup>6</sup> A. Masoudnia, "Perceived severity of stress and coping strategies with stress", *Contemporary Psychology*, Vol: 4 num 2 (2010): 71-80.

<sup>7</sup> M. Gholamali Lavasani; M. Keyvanzadeh & N. Arjmand, "Spirituality, job stress, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction among nurses in Tehran", *Contemporary Psychology*, Vol: 3 num 2 (2009): 61-73.

level arises from mental states whereby an individual feels disconnected from the work-related duties and responsibilities and lacks a sense of creating and maintaining social relations.

Recent studies have demonstrated that justice processes play a key role in an organization and the way employees are treated in organizations may affect their beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and behaviors. Moreover, a sense of justice has a direct impact on the tendency to quit one's job. On the other hand, managers should predict individual behaviors and orient them with organizational goals to establish and develop justice-related behaviors and a sense of justice in their employees<sup>8</sup>.

### Literature review

Alavi-Arjmand et al.<sup>9</sup> explored the effect of stress management on job stress and work-life conflict among nurses in Shahid Lavasani Hospital of Tehran. The data were collected by using demographic, work-life conflict, and job stress questionnaires. This was a case-control study which used a course of stress management as an intervention. The results revealed that training the skills of stress management carried a lowering effect on job stress and work-life conflict among nurses.

Ghasemzadeh-Alishahi et al.<sup>10</sup> addressed the association of personal accountability with job stress and work deviant behavior among nurses. Indeed, a sense of personal accountability directly caused job stress and work deviant behavior in employees. Also, conscientiousness exerted a significantly negative causal effect on stress and work deviant behavior. Therefore, they concluded that conscientiousness reduced the negative effect of accountability on job stress and work deviant behavior.

### Study questions and conceptual framework

The main question of the present study was as followed:

What is the level of job stress, employees' alienation, organizational justice in the Social Security Organization?

This objective was associated with the following subquestions:

Q1: What are the factors of job stress in the Social Security Organization?

Q2: What are the factors of employees' alienation in the Social Security Organization?

Q3: What are the factors of organizational justice in the Social Security Organization?

Q4: What are the level of job stress in the Social Security Organization?

<sup>8</sup> M. A. Zaki, "Social alienation of youths (a case study: girl and boy students of the University of Isfahan)". *Research Youth, Culture and Society* num 3 (2009): 25-51.

<sup>9</sup> N. Alavi Arjmand; Z. Kashaninia; M. A. Hosseini & P. Rezasoltani, "Effect of stress management on job stress and work-family conflict among nurses", *Journal of Hayat*, Vol: 18 num 4 (2013): 81-91.

<sup>10</sup> A. Ghasemzadeh-Alishahi; M. Rabiei and M. Kazemzadeh-Beytali, "The relationship of individual accountability with job stress and work deviant behavior among nurses", *Journal of Clinical Nursing and Midwifery*, Vol: 4 num 1 (2015): 27-38.

Q5: What are the level of employees' alienation in the Social Security Organization?

Q6: What are the level of organizational justice in the Social Security Organization?

Q7: Is there any relationship between job stress and employees' alienation in the Social Security Organization?

Q8: Is there any association of mental, behavioral and physical signs with employees' alienation in the Social Security Organization?

Q9: Is there any relationship between job stress and organizational justice in the Social Security Organization?

Q10: Is there any association of mental, behavioral and physical signs with organizational justice in the Social Security Organization?

Q11: Is there any relationship between organizational justice and alienation in the Social Security Organization?



Figure 1  
The conceptual model of the study

### The Statistical Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Method

All units with at least one common feature constitute a statistical population. The sample is defined as a set of points that are selected from a larger part, group, or population and represent qualities and characteristics of this larger part, group, or population. Sampling is the process of selecting a sample.

Considering the main objective of this study, that is, developing the model of job stress, alienation and empowerment, as well as the supervisor's and advisor's views, the statistical population included all employees with a bachelor's degree or above from the Social Security Organization in South Khorasan, North Khorasan, and Razavi Khorasan provinces during the year of 2015.

Given that structural equation modeling was used for data analysis, and the population size was 550, a total of 400 questionnaires (10 times more than the number of the questionnaire items) were distributed according to the supervisor's opinion. Finally, the respondents returned only 389 questionnaires.

### Description of Job Stress Variable

Descriptive data including mean, median, mode, standard deviation, maximum, and minimum were presented in Table 1. The mean level of job stress was 3.13. Since the 5-point Likert scale was used to rate variables, it was concluded that job stress variable was higher than the mean scale.

Considering the mean value and “Abbas Bazargan et al.’s” scale, it can be concluded that mental, behavioral, and physical signs were higher than the mean scale.

Variable	No	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Mental sign	389	3.07	3.13	3.00	0.64	1.38	5.00
Physical sign	389	3.20	3.29	3.65	0.63	1.59	5.00
Behavioral sign	389	3.07	3.10	3.20	0.64	1.40	4.80
Job stress	389	3.13	3.23	3.43	0.59	1.54	4.91

Table 1  
The descriptive data of job stress variable for all participants

Descriptive data including mean, median, mode, standard deviation, maximum, and minimum were presented in Table 2. The mean level of job stress was 3.43. Since the 5-point Likert scale was used to rate variables, it was concluded that alienation variable was higher than the mean scale.

Considering the mean value and “Abbas Bazargan et al.’s” scale, it can be concluded that meaningfulness, social aversion, powerlessness, normlessness, work aversion, and social isolation factors were higher than the mean scale.

Variable	No	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Meaninglessness	389	3.31	3.33	3.00	0.80	1.33	5.00
Social aversion	389	3.32	3.33	3.00	0.79	1.67	5.00
Powerlessness	389	3.32	3.25	3.25	0.71	1.50	5.00
Normlessness	389	3.35	3.20	3.20	0.72	1.80	5.00
Work aversion	389	3.67	3.60	3.60	0.68	2.00	5.00
Social isolation	389	3.54	3.50	4.00	0.83	1.00	5.00
Alienation	389	3.43	3.41	3.14	0.58	2.14	5.00

Table 2  
The descriptive data of alienation variable for all participants

Descriptive data including mean, median, mode, standard deviation, maximum, and minimum were presented in Table 3. The mean level of organizational justice was 2.88. Since the 5-point Likert scale was used to rate variables, it was concluded that organizational justice variable was in desirable range.

Considering the mean value scale, it can be concluded that distributive and procedural justice factors were in desirable range, whereas interactional justice factor was higher than the desirable range.

Variable	No	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Distributive justice	389	2.74	2.80	2.80	0.79	1.00	4.80
Procedural justice	389	2.75	2.83	3.17	0.75	1.00	4.33
Interactional justice	389	3.11	3.57	3.57	0.60	1.29	4.57
Organizational justice	389	2.89	2.94	2.94	0.62	1.11	4.22

Table 3

The descriptive data of organizational justice variable for all participants

### Hypotheses testing

Using Z test, the study hypotheses were tested as followed:

#### 1. Hypothesis: Investigating the status of job stress in the target population

H0: Job stress in the population was not in desirable condition.

H1: Job stress in the population was in desirable condition.

As can be seen in Table 4, the p-value (1.000) was higher than the significant level (0.05), therefore the null hypothesis was accepted. That is, considering the mean value of job stress, it was not in desirable condition.

Mean	Standard deviation	Mean = 3.00	
		z	p-value
3.13	0.59	4.53	1.000

Table 4

Job stress in the target population

#### 2. Hypothesis: Investigating the status of job stress factors in the target population

H0: Job stress factors in the population were not in desirable condition.

H1: Job stress factors in the population were in desirable condition.

As can be seen in Table 5, the mental, physical, and behavioral signs were not in desirable condition (p-value>0.05).

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean = 3.00	
			z	p-value
Mental sign	3.07	0.64	2.30	0.989
Physical sign	3.20	0.63	6.34	1.000
Behavioral sign	3.07	0.64	2.09	0.981

Table 5

Job stress factors in the target population

#### 3. Hypothesis: Investigating the status of alienation in the target population

H0: Alienation in the population was not in desirable condition.

H1: Alienation in the population was in desirable condition.

As can be seen in Table 6, the p-value (1.000) was higher than the significant level (0.05), therefore the null hypothesis was accepted. That is, considering the mean value of alienation, it was not in desirable condition.

Mean	Standard deviation	Mean = 3.00	
		z	p-value
3.43	0.58	14.48	1.000

Table 6  
Alienation in the target population

**4. Hypothesis: Investigating the status of alienation factors in the target population**

H0: Alienation factors in the population were not in desirable condition.  
H1: Alienation factors in the population were in desirable condition.

As can be seen in Table 7, the p-value (1.000) was higher than the significant level (0.05), therefore the null hypothesis was accepted. That is, considering the mean values of alienation factors, these were not in desirable condition.

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean = 3.00	
			z	p-value
Meaninglessness	3.31	0.80	7.87	1.000
Social aversion	3.32	0.79	8.33	1.000
Powerlessness	3.32	0.71	8.85	1.000
Normlessness	3.35	0.72	9.52	1.000
Work aversion	3.67	0.68	19.58	1.000
Social isolation	3.54	0.83	12.75	0.001

Table 7  
Alienation factors in the target population

**5. Hypothesis: Investigating the status of organizational justice in the target population**

H0: Organizational justice in the population was not in desirable condition.  
H1: Organizational justice in the population was in desirable condition.

As can be seen in Table 8, the p-value (1.000) was higher than the significant level (0.05), therefore the null hypothesis was accepted. That is, considering the mean values of organizational justice and the index by Bazargan et al., it was in desirable condition.

Mean	Standard deviation	Mean = 3.00	
		z	p-value
2.89	0.62	-3.51	1.000

Table 8  
Organizational justice in the target population

**6. Hypothesis: Investigating the status of organizational justice factors in the target population**

H0: Organizational justice factors in the population were not in desirable condition.  
H1: Organizational justice factors in the population were in desirable condition.

As can be seen in Table 9, the interactional justice factor was in desirable condition ( $p$ -value $<0.05$ ). However, the distributive and procedural justice factors were not in desirable condition ( $p$ -value $>0.05$ ).

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean = 3.00	
			Z	p-value
Distributive justice	2.74	0.79	-6.48	1.000
Procedural justice	2.75	0.75	-6.51	1.000
Interactional justice	3.11	0.60	3.63	0.001

Table 9  
Organizational justice factors in the target population

### 7. Hypothesis

H0: There was not a linear relationship between job stress factors (mental, physical, and behavioral signs) and employees' alienation in the Social Security Organization.

H1: There was a linear relationship between job stress factors (mental, physical, and behavioral signs) and employees' alienation in the Social Security Organization.

Due to normal distribution of the data, Pearson's correlation coefficient was utilized to test this relationship. The results indicated that mental, physical, and behavioral signs were significantly related to alienation ( $p$ -value $<0.05$ ). Since the correlation coefficients were positive, these relationships were direct and increasing. That is, escalating each factor of job stress would elevate the level of employees' alienation. Given the resultant correlation coefficients, the relationship between physical sign and alienation was stronger than others Table 10.

Variable	Alienation	Mental signs	Physical signs	Behavioral signs
Alienation	1			
Mental signs	0.615*	1		
Physical signs	0.663*	0.756*	1	
Behavioral signs	0.596*	0.717*	0.811*	1

\* Significant at  $p < 0.01$

Table 10  
The association of job stress factors with employees' alienation

### 8. Hypothesis

H0: There was not a linear relationship between job stress factors (mental, physical, and behavioral signs) and organizational justice in the Social Security Organization.

H1: There was a linear relationship between job stress factors (mental, physical, and behavioral signs) and organizational justice in the Social Security Organization.

Due to normal distribution of the data, Pearson's correlation coefficient was utilized to test this relationship. The results indicated that mental, physical, and behavioral signs were significantly related to organizational justice ( $p$ -value $<0.05$ ). Since the correlation coefficients were negative, these relationships were inverse and decreasing. That is, escalating each factor of job stress would decline the level of organizational justice. Given

the resultant correlation coefficients, the relationship between physical sign and alienation was stronger than others Table 11.

Variable	Organizational justice	Mental signs	Physical signs	Behavioral signs
Organizational justice	1			
Mental signs	-0.559*	1		
Physical signs	-0.619*	0.756*	1	
Behavioral signs	-0.602*	0.717*	0.811*	1

\* Significant at  $p < 0.01$

Table 11  
The association of job stress factors with organizational justice

### Conclusion

This study was an attempt to evaluate the relationship between job stress and employees' alienation with organizational justice as a mediating variable in the social security organization in South Khorasan, North Khorasan, and Razavi Khorasan during the year of 2015. In initial sections, an overview concerning background, theory, and relevant literature, along with methodology and results were provided. The study model was modified according to experts' views. Thereafter, the proposed model was prepared and distributed as questionnaires to collect data from the population for further data analysis. First, the factors related to each variable were identified. Then, the relationships between these variables were measured. It was found that job stress had an increasing relation with employees' alienation; that is, an increase in job stress was associated with elevated employees' alienation. Moreover, there was a decreasing association of organizational justice with job stress and employees' alienation. In other words, enhanced levels of organizational justice would cause a decline in both job stress and alienation. Therefore, much attention is required to overcome job stress, occupational alienation, and employees' empowerment. As for future research, it is recommended:

1. to consider organizational climate and senior managers' ability as mediating variables.
2. to implement this model in organizations affiliated to the ministry of cooperatives, labor and social welfare.
3. to consider intraorganizational stressor factors such as rules and regulations, obligatory directives, and so forth.

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