

## A Study of Job stress and Job Satisfaction: the Mediating and Moderating role of Job Burnout and Proactive Personality

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**Abstract:** This study explores the mediating role of job burnout (i.e. emotional exhaustion) in the relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction as well as the moderating role of proactive personality in the association between job burnout and job satisfaction. The sample includes 140 service sector workers from selected commercial banks. The author employed the Hayes (2013) PROCESS tool for mediation and moderation analysis. The results show that burnout partially mediates the relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction. The results further demonstrate that proactive personality significantly moderates the relationship between job burnout and job satisfaction. Findings of the study highlighted the intervening role of job burnout and the importance of proactive personality to mitigate the detrimental effect of job burnout on job satisfaction. The study provides implications and limitations of the findings.

**Key Words:** Job Stress; Job Burnout; Job satisfaction; Proactive Personality.

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### I. Introduction

Workplace stress and burnout are the most frequently used mental health indicators in organizational psychology (Baeriswyl, Krause, & Schwaninger, 2016). Emotional exhaustion is considered by feelings of mental fatigue or of being emotionally drained (Baeriswyl et al., 2016). The excessive amount of work and time given by the bankers to their respective banks is a potential source of stress for them (Khattak, Khan, Haq, Arif, & Minhas, 2011). In addition, frequent customer interaction and excessive job demands put forth additional work pressure on them. When employees face various stressors due to several job circumstances and fail to cope with them, results in job stress and burnout (Saif-ud-Din, Ishfaq, Khan, & Khan, 2019; Tourigny, Baba, & Wang, 2010). An array of research explores high cost related to job stress in terms of employee's turnover, absenteeism, and decreased productivity (Aiken, Clarke, Sloane, Sochalski, & Silber, 2002; Maslach, 2003; Parker & Kulik, 1995).

Emotional exhaustion is considered as a fundamental component of burnout (Cropanzano, Rupp, & Byrne, 2003; Lee & Ashforth, 1993), and frequently linked with different negative organizational and personal outcomes like counterproductive work behavior, sickness absence, turnover intentions and mental health problems (Borritz et al., 2006; Lee & Ashforth, 1993). Job satisfaction is largely studied variable in work and organizational psychology (Dormann & Zapf, 2001), and is frequently known as a "pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (Locke, 1976). This study focused on workplace stress, job burnout, whereby employees experience mental health issues as they fear that they are powerless to ensure consistent job satisfaction. The job holders at work who experience job stress and emotional exhaustion become confused and less concentrate on their role; it may result into a mental and physiological illness (Saif-ud-Din, Baba, & Tourigny, 2018; Saif-ud-Din et al., 2019). Both job stress and burnout adversely affect employees' job satisfaction, turnover and low commitment which may negatively affect individual performance and organizational effectiveness (Cropanzano et al., 2003; Saif-ud-Din et al., 2018).

An array of research have explored different personal characteristics and individual differences in predicting workplace behavior (Baba, Tourigny, Wang, & Liu, 2009; Li, Wang, Gao, & You, 2017). Most of these studies offers Big-five model as a predictor of workplace behavior. They revealed Neuroticism and Extraversion as a noticeable predictor of the feeling about individual job (Chang, Li, Wu, & Wang, 2010; Ozer & Benet-Martínez, 2006). Among these studies, a very few of them explored proactive personality as a predictor of job burnout and job satisfaction. In addition to big five individual traits proactive personality has been proved to be a positive predictor of employee's job satisfaction (Li et al., 2017). This study offers proactive personality as a conditional variable influence burnout and job satisfaction relationship. It is noted that individual high in proactivity traits find opportunity in their surroundings and immediately act and response them until they bring about a significant change (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Therefore, this study intended to provide threefold objective; first to provide workplace stress, burnout, and job satisfaction relationship. Second this study offer the

mediating role of job burnout in relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction. Third, it offers the moderating role of individual proactive personality in the relationship between job burnout (i.e. emotional exhaustion) and job satisfaction among the banks employees in Pakistan.

## **II. Literature Review**

### **2.1 The Mediating role of Job Burnout:**

The Karasek,(1979) JDC model offers the roles of job demands and job control in relation to job stress proposes that extensive job demands with least control level may experience higher job stress, which, in turn, leads to employees burnout. Stress is a worldwide prevailing phenomenon exists almost in all organizations without concerning the size and functions of the organization. The essence of stress has two folds: the “Challenge Stressors’ that helps to achieve goals timely and increase productivity”and “Hindrances stressorsprevent one from goal accomplishment at work place”(Robbins, Judge, & Sanghi, 2009; Sacramento, Fay, & West, 2013). The JDC model has the potential to explain that, individual stress contributes to strain and negatively predict physiological, psychological, and organizational outcomes(Caplan, Cobb, French, Harrison, & Pinneau, 1980; Karasek, 1979). Job stress and burnout is viewed as a negative predictors of employees physical and mental health(Iacovides, Fountoulakis, Kaprinis, & Kaprinis, 2003), which, in turn, negatively predict individual job performance(Muecke, 2005; Rathore, Sharma, Singh, Tiwari, & Sharma, 2015).COR theory has the strength to elucidate burnout process such as, (a) loss of one’s resources, (b) threat to individual current resource, and (c) inadequate individual physical and mental investment made to maximize their resources. Consequently employee counts their resource imbalances and feels emotionally exhausted. It is noted that emotional exhaustion significantly represent resource depletion (Hobfoll & Freedy, 1993).Continuous presence of workplace stress is a result of individual inability to face job demands which consequently create emotional exhaustion experience among employees (Leiter, 1993; Maslach & Leiter, 1997). A study found significant positive relationship between global stress and emotional exhaustion(Koniarek & Dudek, 1996). Researchers have explored the negative relationship between individual anxiety and work stress with work performance and job satisfaction(Ivancevich & Donnelly, 1975).

In previous studies workplace stress and job burnout are reported as the most repeatedly used predictors of individual mental health and wellbeing in organizational studies (Baeriswyl et al., 2016; Hombrados-Mendieta & Cosano-Rivas, 2011). Job burnout (accumulation of workplace stress) has been known as a universal issue of concern for many decades (Prapanjaroensin, Patrician, & Vance, 2017). Emotional exhaustioncan be defined as“feelings of being emotionally overextended and depleted of one’s emotional resources”(Maslach, 1993, pp. 20-21), reflects employees strain dimension of burnout(Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007). Hence, emotional exhaustion presents individual emotional depletion those results from workplace stressors and consequently results anxiety, psychosomatic complaints, fatigue and depression complaints at work place.Research shows that employees work performance will suffer if they experience emotional exhaustion (Karasek, 1979; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). In a wide range of organizational settings emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction are proven to be the most relevant factor in the sense of inhibitor of job performance (Li et al., 2017; Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999).In previous studies, job burnout is proved as a mediator between job level and job satisfaction relationship (Kim, Ra, Park, & Kwon, 2017), and job satisfaction as a strong predictor of emotional exhaustion(Baeriswyl et al., 2016). As such, our study posited that workplace stress (Psychological symptoms) instigated emotional exhaustion (emotional state), which, in turn, reduce job satisfaction (job attitude). Therefore, we posit the following hypothesis:

H1: Job stress has significant negative relation with job satisfaction.

H2: Job stress has significant positive relation with job burnout.

H3: Job stress has significant negative relation with job satisfaction.

H4: Job burnout mediates the job stress and job satisfaction relationship.

### **2.2 The Moderating role of Proactive Personality:**

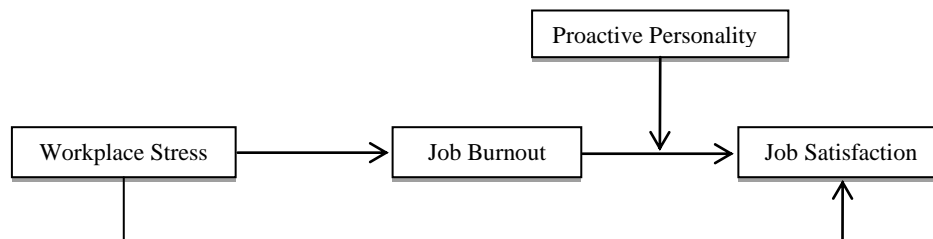
Proactive personality reveals a “stable disposition to take personal initiative in a broad range of activities and situations”(Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001). In addition to big five personality traits proactive personality was identified to be a single facet of individual personality and a positive predictor of employee’s performance(Chang et al., 2010; Li et al., 2017; Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005). Different studies in the domain highlighted the significance of proactive personality infosteringindividual performance(Li et al., 2017; Ng et al., 2005; Seibert et al., 1999). As stated earlier, researchers found proactive personality as a positive predictor of employees job satisfaction(Furnham, Badmin, & Sneade, 2002; Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002), it is therefore,probable that proactive personality can be measuredas an important factor in determining individual’s job satisfaction.Moreover, the diverse level of decentralized and autonomous organizational style encourage individual proactive behavior and their flexible role orientation (Crant, 2000; Parker, Wall, & Jackson, 1997). Although organizations in previous decades mainly focused for new hires to performed a defined jobs strictly,

but currently they more emphasis to proactive behavior as a role requirement and value employees with proactive orientation(Campbell, 2000).

Proactive personality can be useful for individual career, because it predicts one's performance(Crant, 1995), work adjustment(Li et al., 2017), and extrinsic and intrinsic career success in organization(Seibert et al., 1999, 2001). This clearly indicates in support of proactive behavior for recruitment and selection process to hire employees with proactive behavior orientation. Therefore, it seems obvious to have proactive employees to become high performer and viable in the relevant industry. However, we have a limited research to empirically clarify the conditional link between burnout and its behavioral resultants like job satisfaction. In work place proactive personality is consider as motivators of proactive behavior because they are capable to initiate, continue and endeavor to shape their environment (Bateman & Crant, 1993). We already know that performance of emotionally exhausted employees is negatively affected if the job demands are high and the individual resources are low (Karasek, 1979; Maslach et al., 2001). The proactive personality characteristics would further suggest that such an individual characteristic moderates the relationship between job burnout and job satisfaction. In summary, this study hypothesizes that workplace stress and job burnout leads to lower levels of job satisfaction. It is further examine whether the association between stress and job satisfaction is mediated by job burnout. In addition, it is hypothesized that the strength of association between job burnout and job satisfaction is moderated by proactive personality of the banking employees. Figure 1 depicts the hypothesized relationships in the present study. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H5: Proactive personality moderates the relationship between burnout and job satisfaction, such that employees with least proactive orientation will report lower level of job satisfaction under high job burnout conditions and employees with high proactive orientation will report high levels of job satisfaction regardless of the extent of their job burnout.

**Figure 1 Theoretical Framework**



### III. Methodology

#### 3.1 Respondents and procedures:

The questionnaire survey was administered in English because the modes of communication in Pakistani banks are in English and thus understood by the banking employees in our sample. Respondents were randomly selected from different commercial banks located in the small city of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa province Pakistan. Respondents were asked to participate in the survey and complete a questionnaire individually. They were further encouraged about the confidentiality of their responses.

#### 3.2 Measure:

##### 3.2.1. Workplace stress:

Workplace stress was the self-reported independent variable in this study. The used scale was developed by(Parker & DeCotiis, 1983). After conducting EFA we have selected 8 items to measure the overall stress level of the employees working in banking sector. The sample items included "My job gets to me more than it should" and "Sometimes when I think about my job I get a tight feeling in my chest" They were asked to respond on 5 point likert type scale (1=strongly agree and 5=strongly disagree). The alpha reliability value for the scale is 0.83 (see table 1).

##### 3.2.2. Job Burnout:

This study selected emotional exhaustion from the burnout inventory to job burnout. Burnout philosophy has given priority to emotional exhaustion in its theoretical foundation (Maslach et al., 2001). Moreover, emotional exhaustion reflects the job burnout strain dimension(Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007). After running EFA we have selected 4 items from the Maslach and Jackson(1984) burnout inventory (MBI). The response ranged one for strongly disagree to seven for strongly agree. The sample items included: "Working with people directly puts too much stress on me" and "I feel frustrated by my job". The scale's alpha reliability is 0.94 (see table 1).

**3.2.3. Job Satisfaction:**

To measure job satisfaction, five point scales is used from Gul&Oktay(2008)scale. This scale ranged 1 (least satisfactory) to 5 (Most satisfactory). We have selected four items from this scale after conducting EFA. The sample items included: “My work helps me to have a confident future” and “My work provides me personal progress and promotion”. The Alpha coefficient value for this scale is 0.85.

**3.2.4. Proactive Personality:**

Proactive personality acted as a moderator in this study and was measured by self-reported 5 items after conducting EFA. The scale was adopted from Seibert, Crant and Kraimer, (1999). The sample items included: “I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life” and “If I see something I don’t like, I fix it”. The coefficient alpha value for this scale is .65.

**IV. Results of the study**

**4.1 Factor Analysis:**

Although the data in the present study were collected from the same respondents (Banking employees), we ran an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) reported in table 1 to established the discriminant validity of the data. The internal consistency or reliability values (Cronbach’s coefficient alpha) were computed for each factor. Three of the four reliability coefficients are beyond the acceptable threshold of 0.70; for the fourth factor (proactive personality) the reliability value of 0.65 is not exceedingly low (Nunnally, 1978).

**Table 1:** Exploratory factor analysis results:

Factors	Items	Factors Loading
<b>1. Work Stress</b> ( $\alpha = 0.829$ ) KMO=.705 Approx. Chi-Square=445.223 Sig= .000	1	.823
	2	.818
	3	.815
	4	.720
	<b>2. Burnout</b> ( $\alpha = 0.942$ ) KMO=.792 Approx. Chi-Square=522.577 Sig= .000	1
2	.881	
3	.870	
4	.855	
<b>3. Job Satisfaction</b> ( $\alpha = 0.845$ ) KMO=.770 Approx. Chi-Square=622.312 Sig= .000	1	.780
	2	.779
	3	.775
	4	.681
	<b>4. Proactive Personality</b> ( $\alpha = 0.65$ ) KMO=.70 Approx. Chi-Square=622.710 Sig= .000	1
2		.820
3		.774
4		.832
5		.809

**4.2. Correlation Analysis:**

The table 1 below shows correlation analysis. Work stress was positively correlated with burnout ( $r = .391, p < .05$ ). Moreover, work stress is significantly correlated with job satisfaction ( $r = .204, p < .01$ ) however, contrary to our expectations we did not find a negatively sign. Burnout negatively correlated with job satisfaction ( $r = -.148, p < .05$ ) and negative but insignificantly correlated with proactive personality ( $r = -.157, p > .01$ ). Moreover, job satisfaction positively correlated with proactive personality ( $r = .461, < .05$ ). The mean and standard deviation values for each variable are mentioned in table 2.

**Table 2. Zero-order Correlations of the Study Variables**

Study variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4
Work stress	3.43	1.06	1			
Job Burnout	4.54	1.59	.391**	1		
Job Satisfaction	3.69	.98	.115*	-.148*	1	
Proactive Personality	3.55	.83	.002	-.157	.461**	1

M= Mean, SD= Standard deviation

**4.3. Mediation analysis:**

A proposed method by Hayes (2013) was used to test for mediation analysis. Table 3 shows the results of the mediation analysis. Workplace stress has significant influence on job satisfaction ( $\beta = .118, \Delta R^2 = .057, p < .001$ ) and on job burnout ( $\beta = .587, \Delta R^2 = .533, p < .001$ ). Results also shows that job burnout negatively and significantly predict job satisfaction ( $\beta = -.140, \Delta R^2 = .153, p < .001$ ). Hence, Hypothesis 1, 2 and 3 were supported. This also fulfills the mediation analysis criteria proposed by Barron and Kenny (1986). The results also support the hypothesis that job stress has an indirect influence on job satisfaction through burnout ( $\beta = -.082, p < .001$ ) [LLCI=-.170 ULCI= -.017]. Both of the direct and indirect effects of job stress on job satisfaction are significant thereby showing a partial mediation (See table 3). Thus hypothesis 4 was partially supported.

**Table 3:**Regression Results for Simple Mediation: JB as Mediator between WS andJSF (n =140).

S.No.	Variables	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$	B	SE	t	LLCI	ULCI	
Step 1									
1	Direct effects of WS on JSF	.239	.057	.118	.083	2.264	.024	.353	
Step 2									
2	Direct effects of WS on JB	.391	.153	.587	.118	4.988	.354	.819	
	Direct effects of JB on JSF			-.140	.055	-2.524	-.250	-.030	
Step 3									
						Bootstrap Results for indirect effects			
Mediation of JB						Effect	SE	LL [95% CI]	UL[95% CI]
						-.082	.039	-.170	-.017

**Note:**SE= Standard Error, LL= lower limit, UL= Upper limit, CI=Confidence intervalWS=Workplace Stress, JSF= Job satisfaction, JB= Job Burnout.

**Table 4:** Moderated Regressions of Job Burnout and Proactive Personality on job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction	
Predictors	$\beta$
Burnout	.446**
Proactive Personality	2.546*
JB×PP	-.280**
R <sup>2</sup>	.460**
$\Delta R^2$	.031*

**Note:**JB = Job Burnout, PP= Proactive Personality

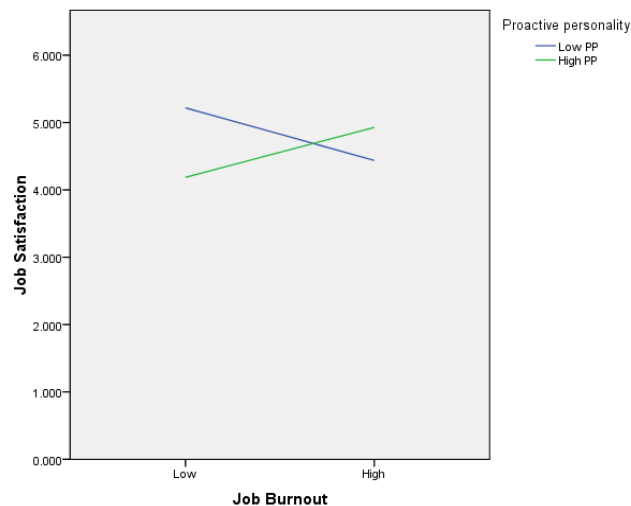
\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

#### 4.4. Moderation analysis

Table 4 demonstrates the moderation analysis results. Scores were centered to reduce the issues of multicollinearity in moderation analysis (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). Interaction for slope analysis were further plotted above and below the mean (Aiken, West, & Reno, 1991). Given that, H5 posit that PP plays its significant role in moderating burnout and job satisfaction relationship. Results of the PROCESS SPSS model 1(Hayes, 2013)shows that the interaction term for JB×PP significantly moderates the relationship between job burnout and job satisfaction( $\beta = -.280, \Delta R^2 = .031, p < .05$ ). Moreover, results showed that zero does not lies between the two confidence intervals values [LLCI= -.478 and ULCI= -.081](Hayes, 2013). The slope of the relationship between burnout and job satisfaction was also found significant among individuals high in proactive personality ( $\beta = -.280, t = -2.639, p < .001$ ). Thus, hypothesis 5 was supported. Figure 2 represents the two way moderation graph.

The graph shows that individual low in their proactive personality and high in job burnout reports low level job satisfaction. The slope of the relationship among low proactive personality individuals is more negative than their high proactive personality counterparts. Hence, a negative relationship between job burnout and job satisfaction is hold for those who experiencing high burnout conditions and report low PP. The slope for individuals highin proactive personality reportsless negative effect of job burnout on job satisfaction. The slop of relationship is in positive direction. This shows that individual with high PP has the ability to effectively manage their burnout conditions and maintains their job satisfaction level. These results suggest that high proactive personality characteristics significantly alleviate the negative effect of high job burnout experience by the banking employees.

**Figure 2** Impact of Proactive Personality on Burnout and Job Satisfaction Relationship



## V. Discussion

The leading purpose of this research was to explore the mediating role of job burnout (emotional exhaustion) between workplace stress and job satisfaction and the moderating role of proactive personality in job burnout and job satisfaction relationship. In accordance with previous studies job stress positively related with job satisfaction and negatively predict job burnout (Iacobucci, McBride, Popovich, & Rouziou, 2018; Saif-ud-Din et al., 2019; Tourigny, Baba, & Lituchy, 2005). In addition, results prove that proactive personality positively predict employees job satisfaction (Li et al., 2017; Seibert et al., 1999). Proactive personality research shows that people with proactive personality characteristics are not likely to inactively delay for information and opportunity (Crant, 2016; Parker & Collins, 2010), rather they have a “great sense of self-determination and they are more effective in seeking better solutions for improving tasks” (Li et al., 2017). The results of this study offer that individual proactivity moderate the job burnout and job satisfaction relationship. It proves that, individual highly in proactive personality experience high job satisfaction as compare to their low proactive personality counterparts (see figure 1). Thus proactive characteristics of banking employees are benefits for their future career success (Crant, 2000). Moreover, banking personnel with high proactive orientation are more likely to experience their high job satisfaction as well as more potential to cope with stressful environment and improve work environment compared to passive ones (Li et al., 2017). Consequently, proactive personality could promote bankers job satisfaction. This is what expected by this study because “proactive personality may stimulate more positive qualities and well-defined work behavior, such as confidence, self-efficacy, and work engagement” (Crant, 2000; Li et al., 2017; Seibert et al., 1999). Thus, proactive personality could stimulate banking employee’s job satisfaction.

The mediating role of job burnout (i.e. Emotional exhaustion) in the relationship between workplace stress and job satisfaction was examined in the current study. As expected, job burnout is found as a partial mediator in the desired relationship. Job stress and job burnout is also found to be negatively related with job satisfaction. These results were consistent with Kim et al., (2017) findings which demonstrated job burnout subscales (emotion, cynicism, professional inefficacy) to mediate the job level and job satisfaction relationship. Moreover, previous research also report job stress and job burnout as a negative predictor of job satisfaction see for example (Hombrados-Mendieta & Cosano-Rivas, 2011; Saif-ud-Din et al., 2019). In current study results prove that proactive personality is positively related with job satisfaction and negatively related with job burnout. All of these positive qualities of proactive personality are important to enhance the level of employees job satisfaction which, in turn, helpful to enhance the desired performance level. Therefore, proactive personality could not have only a significant predictor of job satisfaction but also could play its role as a significant moderator in job burnout (emotional exhaustion) and job satisfaction relationship. As mentioned earlier employees who report high proactivity in their personality characteristic appears more to cope with burnout experience at their workplace.

Although the current study offers useful evidence that adds to a better understanding of the mediating role of job burnout and moderating role of proactive personality (for example see figure 1), one should also note the limitation of the current study. First the study is a cross-sectional design of the study does not allow us to test a cause and effect analysis. Hence, it is recommended to replicate the current results by experimental or longitudinal designs to establish causality. The self-report measure is another limitation of the current study. The sample of the study was composed from the small city of the province; hence a large samples size should be selected from different cities of the province to ensure the generalizability of the results.

Despite the limitations above, this study provides useful results regarding the negative connection of job stress and burnout with job satisfaction. In addition, this study offers the mediating role of job burnout (i.e. emotional exhaustion) in the job stress and job satisfaction relationship. Further, more importantly proactive personality plays its role as a significant moderator in the relationship between job burnout and job satisfaction. This demonstrates that proactive personality among employee is a useful source to cope with stressful condition at the workplace to maintain the level of job satisfaction among the banking employees.

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