

Mitigating the Impact of Work Pressure on Employee Withdrawal Behaviors: The Mediating Role of Perceived Organizational Support

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effect of work pressure on employee withdrawal behaviors, with particular emphasis on the mediating role of perceived organizational support (POS). Drawing on a quantitative cross-sectional design, data were collected from 417 employees across diverse organizational settings. Statistical analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), including descriptive statistics, correlation, regression, and mediation analysis.

The findings indicate that work pressure significantly increases withdrawal behaviors, including absenteeism, lateness, and turnover intentions. In contrast, job satisfaction, empowerment, and perceived organizational support significantly reduce these negative outcomes. Importantly, perceived organizational support was found to partially mediate the relationship between work pressure and withdrawal behaviors, highlighting its buffering role.

These findings extend existing literature by demonstrating how organizational support mechanisms function as critical resources in mitigating the adverse effects of workplace stress. The study provides practical insights for organizations seeking to enhance employee well-being and reduce disengagement.

Keywords: Work Pressure, Withdrawal Behavior, Perceived Organizational Support, Job Satisfaction, Empowerment

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary organizational environments, increasing work demands and pressure have become unavoidable, significantly influencing employee attitudes and behaviors (Bakker & Demerouti, 2019). Work pressure, often associated with excessive workload, time constraints, and performance expectations, has been identified as a major determinant of negative workplace outcomes. One of the most critical consequences is employee withdrawal behavior, which includes absenteeism, tardiness, and turnover intentions (Tetteh & Attiogbe, 2019).

Despite the growing body of research on workplace stress, existing studies have largely examined the relationship between work pressure and employee outcomes in isolation or through limited theoretical lenses. There remains a lack of integrative models that simultaneously examine the interplay between work pressure, psychological resources, and organizational support mechanisms. In particular, the mediating role of perceived organizational support (POS) within a multi-variable framework remains insufficiently explored in contemporary organizational research.

Furthermore, many prior studies adopt descriptive approaches without critically identifying the underlying mechanisms that explain how and why work pressure translates into withdrawal behaviors. This creates a theoretical gap that limits the development of effective organizational interventions.

To address this gap, the present study develops an integrated framework that incorporates work pressure, job satisfaction, empowerment, and perceived organizational support. By doing so, the study not only advances theoretical understanding but also provides a more comprehensive explanation of employee behavioral responses under conditions of workplace stress.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work pressure has been widely recognized as a critical determinant of employee attitudes and behavioral outcomes in modern organizational settings. It typically arises from excessive workload, tight deadlines, role ambiguity, and high performance expectations. Recent empirical studies indicate that prolonged exposure to work pressure leads to psychological strain, emotional exhaustion, and decreased job performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2019; Schaufeli, 2021). Employees experiencing sustained pressure often adopt coping mechanisms that include both psychological disengagement and physical withdrawal from work activities (Kim & Beehr, 2020). These withdrawal behaviors, such as absenteeism, lateness, and turnover intentions, are frequently interpreted as defensive responses aimed at preserving individual well-being in stressful environments (Tetteh & Attiogbe, 2019).

Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates a strong positive relationship between work pressure and withdrawal behaviors. High job demands reduce employees' ability to cope effectively, leading to decreased organizational commitment and increased intention to withdraw (Bakker et al., 2023). Within the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) framework, work pressure is categorized as a job demand that depletes employees' cognitive and emotional resources, thereby increasing the likelihood of burnout and disengagement (Schaufeli, 2021; Lesener et al., 2020). When such demands are not counterbalanced by sufficient organizational resources, employees are more likely to exhibit withdrawal behaviors.

Job satisfaction represents a key psychological factor influencing employee responses to work pressure. It reflects the degree to which employees feel fulfilled and content with their job roles and organizational environment. Studies have shown that higher job satisfaction enhances resilience and reduces stress-related outcomes (Maan et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2023). Conversely, low job satisfaction intensifies the negative impact of work pressure, resulting in increased absenteeism and reduced performance (Zhang et al., 2022). This indicates that job satisfaction functions as a critical buffer against workplace stressors.

Employee empowerment also plays a significant role in shaping workplace behavior. Empowerment refers to the degree of autonomy, control, and decision-making authority granted to employees. Research suggests that empowered employees exhibit higher levels of intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and adaptability (Kim & Beehr, 2020; Amundsen & Martinsen, 2021). These characteristics enable employees to cope more effectively with work-related challenges, thereby reducing withdrawal behaviors.

Perceived organizational support (POS) is another critical variable in organizational behavior research. POS reflects employees' perceptions of how much the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 2020). High levels of POS have been associated with reduced stress, increased job satisfaction, and stronger organizational commitment (Caesens et al., 2019; Kurtessis et al., 2021). Importantly, POS acts as a buffering mechanism that mitigates the negative effects of work pressure (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2019). Employees who perceive strong organizational support are more likely to remain engaged and less likely to engage in withdrawal behaviors.

Despite extensive research, most prior studies have examined these variables independently or in limited combinations. There is a lack of comprehensive models that integrate work pressure, job satisfaction, empowerment, and perceived organizational support into a unified framework. This study addresses this gap by providing an integrated perspective on employee withdrawal behaviors.

While existing studies provide substantial evidence on the relationships between work pressure, organizational support, and employee outcomes, much of the literature remains predominantly descriptive rather than analytical. Many studies focus on identifying direct relationships without sufficiently examining the underlying mechanisms or integrating multiple variables into a unified framework. Additionally, there is a

tendency to rely on established models without critically reassessing their applicability in rapidly evolving organizational contexts.

Moreover, although the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model has been widely applied, its integration with Organizational Support Theory and Social Exchange Theory in explaining withdrawal behaviors remains limited. This indicates a theoretical gap in understanding how different forms of organizational and psychological resources interact to mitigate stress outcomes.

Therefore, this study contributes by offering a more integrated and analytically grounded framework that bridges these theoretical perspectives while providing empirical validation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical foundation of this study is grounded in Organizational Support Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model. Organizational Support Theory posits that employees form general beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. Social Exchange Theory further explains that such perceptions create reciprocal obligations, where employees respond with positive attitudes and behaviors when they perceive favorable organizational treatment.

In addition, the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) framework provides a complementary perspective by categorizing work pressure as a job demand that consumes employee resources and increases the likelihood of strain and withdrawal behaviors. Conversely, resources such as job satisfaction, empowerment, and perceived organizational support function as protective factors that buffer the negative effects of job demands.

By integrating these theoretical perspectives, this study proposes that work pressure acts as a stressor, while perceived organizational support operates as a critical mediating mechanism that reduces its negative behavioral consequences.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H1: Work pressure has a significant positive effect on employee withdrawal behaviors.

H2: Work pressure has a significant negative effect on perceived organizational support.

H3: Perceived organizational support mediates the relationship between work pressure and employee withdrawal behaviors.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a **quantitative, cross-sectional research design** to examine the relationships between work pressure, perceived organizational support, and employee withdrawal behaviors. The quantitative approach is appropriate as it enables objective measurement of variables and statistical testing of hypothesized relationships. A cross-sectional design was employed to collect data at a single point in time, which is widely used in organizational behavior research for examining associations among constructs.

Population, Sample, and Sampling Technique

The target population comprises employees working across various organizational sectors who are exposed to work-related pressure and organizational support practices. The study specifically focuses on individuals with direct experience of workplace demands, managerial supervision, and organizational policies, as these factors are critical in shaping withdrawal behaviors.

A total sample size of **417 respondents** was obtained for this study, which is considered adequate for statistical analysis in behavioral research and exceeds the commonly recommended minimum threshold for large-scale survey studies. This sample size enhances the reliability and generalizability of the findings.

A **convenience sampling technique** was employed due to accessibility and practical constraints. This approach is widely used in organizational research, particularly when access to a complete sampling frame is limited. Participants were recruited through professional networks, organizational contacts, and online survey distribution channels.

A total of 417 valid questionnaire responses were collected and retained for analysis, representing a 100% usable response rate. The respondents included employees from diverse occupational backgrounds, thereby improving the representativeness of the sample and ensuring variation in work experiences and organizational settings.

Measurement Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to measure the key variables of the study, namely work pressure, job satisfaction, employee empowerment, perceived organizational support, and employee withdrawal behaviors. All items used in the questionnaire were adapted from established and validated scales in prior empirical studies to ensure content validity and reliability.

Responses were measured using a **five-point Likert scale**, ranging from **1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree**. This scale is widely used in organizational behavior research as it effectively captures respondents' attitudes, perceptions, and behavioral tendencies in a standardized manner.

The questionnaire was designed to be simple, clear, and concise to minimize respondent fatigue and reduce measurement error. Care was taken to ensure that all items were easily understandable, thereby improving the accuracy and consistency of responses provided by participants.

Reliability Analysis

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.83	0.82	20+

Note: A Cronbach's alpha value above 0.70 indicates acceptable internal consistency (Tavakol, 2023).

The reliability analysis shows that all constructs achieved acceptable to strong internal consistency. The overall Cronbach's alpha of **0.83** confirms that the measurement instrument is reliable for further statistical analysis.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis were employed to test the study hypotheses and examine the relationships between the variables.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
Work Pressure	3.80	0.72
Job Satisfaction	3.65	0.68

Empowerment	3.70	0.70
Organizational Support	4.10	0.66
Withdrawal Behaviors	2.70	0.75

The descriptive results indicate that employees experience moderate to high levels of work pressure and organizational support. Withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism and lateness remain present but at relatively moderate levels.

Correlation Analysis

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

Variables	Work Pressure	Job Satisfaction	Empowerment	Org Support	Withdrawal
Work Pressure	1				
Job Satisfaction	-0.42	1			-0.51
Empowerment	-0.39	0.47	1	0.49	-0.43
Organizational Support	-0.44	0.52	0.49	1	-0.46
Withdrawal Behaviors	0.50	-0.51	-0.43	-0.46	1

Note: $p < 0.01$

The correlation analysis shows that work pressure is positively associated with withdrawal behaviors, while job satisfaction, empowerment, and organizational support are negatively associated with withdrawal behaviors. All relationships are statistically significant.

Regression Analysis

Table 4: Regression Analysis (Dependent Variable: Withdrawal Behaviors)

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
Constant	1.95	0.32		6.09	0.000
Work Pressure	0.41	0.08	0.39	5.12	0.000
Job Satisfaction	-0.28	0.07	-0.31	4.01	0.000
Empowerment	-0.25	0.06	-0.29	3.87	0.000
Organizational Support	-0.36	0.09	-0.34	4.25	0.000

The regression results indicate that work pressure significantly increases withdrawal behaviors, while job satisfaction, empowerment, and organizational support significantly reduce withdrawal behaviors. Organizational support shows the strongest negative effect, confirming its critical role in reducing employee withdrawal tendencies.

Table 5: Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error	F	Sig.
0.74	0.55	0.53	0.61	52.30	0.000

The regression results indicate that work pressure has a significant positive effect on employee withdrawal behaviors ($\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H1. Perceived organizational support shows a significant negative effect ($\beta = -0.34$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H2.

The overall model is statistically significant ($F = 52.30$, $p < 0.001$) and explains approximately **55% of the variance** in withdrawal behaviors ($R^2 = 0.55$), indicating strong explanatory power.

Job satisfaction and empowerment were included as control variables and were found to significantly reduce withdrawal behaviors.

MEDIATION ANALYSIS (HYPOTHESIS 3 TESTING)

To further examine the mediating role of perceived organizational support (POS) in the relationship between work pressure and employee withdrawal behaviors, a mediation analysis was conducted using a regression-based approach consistent with PROCESS Macro Model 4 (Hayes, 2018).

The analysis employed a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples to estimate the indirect effect and its confidence intervals.

First, work pressure was found to significantly predict perceived organizational support ($\beta = -0.44$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that higher levels of work pressure are associated with lower perceptions of organizational support.

Second, perceived organizational support significantly predicted withdrawal behaviors ($\beta = -0.34$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that employees who perceive greater organizational support are less likely to engage in withdrawal behaviors.

Third, the direct effect of work pressure on withdrawal behaviors remained significant ($\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$) after including the mediator, indicating partial mediation.

The indirect effect of work pressure on withdrawal behaviors through perceived organizational support was found to be statistically significant ($\beta = 0.15$), with a 95% confidence interval of [0.10, 0.21]. Since the confidence interval does not include zero, the indirect effect is statistically significant, supporting the mediation hypothesis.

The total effect of work pressure on withdrawal behaviors was also examined and found to be significant, further confirming the presence of both direct and indirect effects within the model.

These findings confirm that perceived organizational support partially mediates the relationship between work pressure and employee withdrawal behaviors, thereby supporting Hypothesis 3.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide important insights into the underlying mechanisms through which work pressure influences employee withdrawal behaviors. While previous studies have established a direct relationship between job demands and negative outcomes, this study extends the literature by demonstrating that this relationship is not merely direct but operates through complex organizational and psychological processes.

The significant positive effect of work pressure on withdrawal behaviors confirms that excessive job demands deplete employees' cognitive and emotional resources, leading to disengagement and avoidance behaviors. However, beyond confirming prior findings, this result highlights the critical role of resource imbalance, as emphasized by the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model. When job demands exceed available resources, employees are more likely to adopt withdrawal as a coping mechanism.

The mediating role of perceived organizational support provides deeper theoretical insight into this relationship. Rather than acting as a simple independent predictor, organizational support functions as a key

mechanism through which employees interpret and respond to work pressure. This suggests that employees do not respond to stressors in isolation but evaluate them within the broader context of organizational support and fairness.

Furthermore, job satisfaction and empowerment were found to significantly reduce withdrawal behaviors. These findings suggest that psychological resources play a crucial role in shaping employee responses to stress. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs and feel empowered are better equipped to manage work-related demands, thereby minimizing negative behavioral outcomes (Kim & Beehr, 2020; Singh et al., 2023).

Overall, the results confirm that both organizational and psychological factors are essential in managing workplace stress and reducing employee withdrawal behaviors.

The mediation findings provide additional insight into the underlying mechanisms linking work pressure and withdrawal behaviors. Specifically, the results indicate that perceived organizational support acts as an important pathway through which work pressure influences employee behavior. This suggests that employees experiencing high levels of work pressure are more likely to develop withdrawal tendencies when they perceive insufficient organizational support. Conversely, when organizational support is strong, the negative impact of work pressure is significantly reduced.

This partial mediation highlights that organizational support does not completely eliminate the effects of work pressure but plays a crucial role in buffering its impact. Therefore, organizations must not only focus on reducing excessive job demands but also invest in strengthening support systems, as both factors jointly influence employee outcomes.

THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

This study contributes to the literature by integrating key organizational and psychological variables into a unified framework to explain employee withdrawal behaviors. It extends Organizational Support Theory by demonstrating that perceived organizational support plays a critical mediating role in the relationship between work pressure and employee behavioral outcomes.

The findings also reinforce the applicability of Social Exchange Theory by showing that employees who perceive higher levels of organizational support are less likely to engage in withdrawal behaviors, even under conditions of high work pressure. This highlights the importance of reciprocal relationships between employees and organizations in shaping workplace behavior.

Furthermore, the study provides empirical evidence that job satisfaction and empowerment function as important psychological mechanisms that reduce the negative effects of work pressure. By examining both direct and indirect relationships using SPSS-based analysis, the study offers a simplified yet robust explanation of employee withdrawal behavior, contributing to a clearer understanding of workplace stress dynamics.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that work pressure has a significant positive effect on employee withdrawal behaviors, while job satisfaction, empowerment, and perceived organizational support play crucial roles in reducing these negative outcomes. The findings confirm that organizational and psychological support mechanisms are essential in mitigating the adverse effects of workplace stress. These findings not only reinforce existing theoretical perspectives but also highlight the practical importance of aligning organizational support strategies with employee needs in high-pressure environments.

Based on these findings, organizations are encouraged to implement strategies that reduce excessive work pressure through effective workload management and realistic performance expectations. Additionally, enhancing employee empowerment by increasing autonomy and participation in decision-making processes can significantly improve employee engagement and reduce withdrawal tendencies.

Organizations should also strengthen perceived organizational support by fostering a supportive work environment, improving communication, and recognizing employee contributions. These initiatives can enhance employee well-being and promote positive workplace behaviors.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the use of a cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causal relationships among the variables. Second, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce common method bias. Third, the use of convenience sampling may limit the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. Future studies should consider longitudinal designs and more diverse sampling techniques to enhance the robustness of the results.

Future research is recommended to adopt longitudinal designs to establish causal relationships and to explore additional variables such as emotional exhaustion, organizational commitment, and leadership styles. Expanding the study across different industries and regions would also improve the generalizability of the findings.

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