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## EXAMINING THE RELATION OF WORK ETHICS TO JOB SATISFACTION AND WORK STRESS IN EMPLOYEES OF PAYAME NOOR UNIVERSITY CENTRAL ORGANIZATION

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**PAYAME NOOR UNIVERSITY**  
**TEHRAN**

### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study is to examine the relation of employees' perceptions of work ethics dimensions with job satisfaction and job stress. The study's method was descriptive. Its population was middle and operational managers and the experts from central organization of Payame Noor University and the sample volume was estimated 119 based on Morgan tables that were selected using cluster and random sampling. The researcher used three questionnaires: 1- Work ethics questionnaire 2- Job satisfaction questionnaire and 3- job stress questionnaire. Collected data were analyzed using correlation coefficient and multi variables analysis. The results indicate that there is a positive and significant relation between employees' perceptions of work ethics and job satisfaction, and there is a negative and significant relation between employees' perceptions of work ethics and job stress. The results of regression analysis also indicate that three dimensions of work ethics (job attachment, persistence, human and healthy relationships in the work setting) are significant predictors of job satisfaction, but just two dimensions of work ethics (interest and persistence) are significant predictors of employees' job stress.*

### KEYWORDS

Payame Noor University, Work Ethics, Job Satisfaction, Job Stress.

### INTRODUCTION

In our society, along with the positive factors in religious and national culture (in which work is valued) there are other dominant values in society structure which devalue work ethics and work conscientiousness. In this regard, Rezaeimanesh believes that: Morality in Iran is not desirable in the sector of general services and to reach a desirable ethical status in organizations of general services sectors, the mere reliance on strategies of intraorganizational ethical management is not adequate. On the other hand, political, economical and managerial structures play the most effective role in the ethical structure. If managers support financial and spiritual moralities, if the ethics codes and the standards of job and professional behaviors are more compiled, if there are more active control and disclosure systems, if there are more ethical trainings, if the system of wage, salary and motivation is more efficient, civil society will be more active and the ethics in the sector of general services of the society will be improved (Attarian, 2008).

According to the fact that work ethics is considered as one of the culture fields and it also includes the work – related beliefs, values and norms, obeying the principles of work ethics can result in creating a better situation to provide needs of organizations' human resources, increase job satisfaction, decrease job stress and finally to reach purposes.

As Moeidfard (Moeidfard, 1998) believes in his article with the title of "work ethics and its effective personal and social factors" that those people who are more optimistic about future of their society, who have more autonomy in their works, who trust their promotion in the work setting more than others and those whose works match their position will obey work ethics in organizations more than others. Findings of this study also indicate that those who are more obedient to traditional social values and more optimistic to their social surroundings, are in more desirable status interest to the work ethics. Conversely, those who are more obedient to modern social values and are work ethics. It is worth nothing that social cooperation, social justice and cultural unity and coherence have a very close relation to commitment to the work ethics.

The subject of ethical management is more important than the other ones. Experiences of various countries in the field of programming have indicated that these trainings in the framework of our country's educational System are considered as important parts of the Development Program with the purpose of training experts in line with strategies of economical and social development.

Payame Noor University has stepped in such a field that by appropriate training of students and employees of the university in all its branches all around the country and modifying the job pyramid, it has increased productivity in different sectors effectively, with the purpose of developing religious knowledge, establishing Islamic – Iranian values and training academy members with ethical virtues. So; it is necessary to consider employees' job satisfaction and stress (Aboei, 2001).

Job satisfaction, one of the most widely studied issues in the relevant literature, may be defined as 'the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job values' (Locke, 1969).

The term (Job Satisfaction) refers to the general personal attitudes to one's job. A person whose job satisfaction is in high level, has positive attitude to one's job. In contrast a person whose job satisfaction is in low level, has negative attitude to one's job (Robbins, 1991). It is considerable that job satisfaction refers to employees' attitude about six factors: 1- Work, it refers to a group of activities and duties which are done in a special place 2- salary, it refers to a fixed amount of money which is given to employees ever month 3- Organization, it refers to a special system or ministry in which people work 4- Colleagues, it refers to people who work at a same place 5- Promotion, it refers to reaching a higher level in the work setting which includes more important responsibilities to compare with the previous job level 6- Supervisor, it refers to a person or people who work in organizations as managers or supervisors (Soleymani, 2001).

It could be argued that job satisfaction leads to increasing productivity, employees' commitment to organizations, increasing employees' interest in organizations, increasing work quality and quantity, creating healthy and human relationships in working place, increasing moral and interest in work and decreasing stress (Homan, 2002). On the other hand decrease of job satisfaction leads to increase absenteeism or relocating employees and decrease productivity (Rafiei, 2003).

One of the aftermaths of modern life is stress in working places. Job stress is one of the reasons of decreasing production, employees' absenteeism and disintegration of organizations. Workaholism and inadequate necessary training are hidden reasons of leaving job because of excessive stress in working place (Carestenj, 2006).

When a person faces some requirements in the work setting which do not match one's current capacities, needs and requests, he/she will suffer from conflicts and to reduce that, he/she must adopt oneself to the new conditions (Rahimi, 2007). Miller believes that job stress is a kind of psychological mood according to Kals's belief. He argues that lack of balance between personal perception of one's needs in the working place and one's ability to adopt oneself with those needs (Miller, 2000). Job stress is very much an individual reaction, and differs from general stress as it is also organization, and job related (Chen & Silverthorne, 2008) Based on these definitions job stress can produce adverse consequences for both the individual and the company since it has the effect of lowering motivation levels and performance, and increases turnover intentions (Montgomery, Blodgett & Barnes, 1996).

According to researchers, job stress and satisfaction result from different personal, group, organizational and para organizational factors. Among these factors work relations with managers, supervisors, colleagues and subordinates so determinative in the framework of work ethics. Ethics does not necessary relates to a special rule or religion. It exists in all human societies. It consists of a group of principles and spiritual values which determine correctness of person or group behaviors. These values determine the criteria of goodness of behaviors and decisions (Zahedi, 2000).

Ethical behavior is both a broad and specific topic. By definition, behavior means a way to act in certain circumstances or situations, conduct, behavior. Ethical behavior in organizations means to act in ways that are in accordance with the ethical values held by that organization. More discussion and research supports

the importance of ethical behavior in organizations functioning. The organizations that stress ethics have better images and reputation and yield higher long-term interests. Reputation is of immense importance to all organizations, whether they are commercial, governmental, or not-for-profit. To achieve goals, remain competitive, and prosper, the received wisdom is that good reputation paves the organizational path to acceptance and approval by stakeholders (Tom Watson, 2007). For organizations reputation is seen as a major element alongside and included in financial performance and innovation. The organizational reputation is magnified in a crisis because of the loss of physical assets and business momentum, the impact on people assets and the expected clear-up and associated legal costs associated (Fombrun & Van Riel, 2004). Unethical behavior usually causes dissatisfaction of the parties involved, scandals, and may even lead to the organization's bankruptcy (Robertson, 2008).

Individuals' attitude about work ethics differs. But generally it is believed as realizing the concept of correctness in working place and consequently doing right and avoiding wrong and in a perfect explanation. "Work ethics could be described as a social norm or a group of personal qualifications". Work ethics as a social norm relates a positive value to work when it is done perfectly as if it has an innate value (Yankelovich and Immer, 1984). Work ethics is a part of social culture. As mentioned before, it entails beliefs, values and norms which are related to work and although its concept differs in different societies due to historical trends, it is so significant and considerable in all societies. According to sociology approach, work ethics entails beliefs, values and norms of the field of economical activities specially the field of production which result from cultural system and values of societies. This part of beliefs, values and norms are impressed strongly by the process of socializing people specially by educational institutions in societies.

When work ethics is assumed as an independent variable, its effects can be observed on group or personal results of employees' work in organizations. For instance, Saks and his colleagues' (1996) research findings indicate that stronger belief in work ethics has a direct relation to job satisfaction and organizational commitment and it is indirectly related to less desire to leave the job. Yousef research (2000) indicates that work ethics has direct and positive effects on triple dimensions of organizational commitment (emotionally, continuous norm). Findings of another research which was done by Yousef (2001) on 425 Moslem employees of some organizations in United Arab Emirates indicate that there is a positive and significant relation between work ethics and organizational commitment. Another research done by Schwepker (2001) on salesmen indicate that creating an ethical atmosphere which is dependant to ethical rules and policies leads to more job satisfaction and organizational commitment and less desire to leave the job. Findings of another research by Petti John and Charles (2008) in a commercial institute on salemen's perception of work ethics principles, consuming behaviors and relations between these observations and their job satisfaction indicate that there is a positive relation between salemen's perception of work ethics and their employer's ethical principles and their job satisfaction. Okpara and Wynn (2008) did a research in 2008 with the purpose of studying effects of wok ethics on job satisfaction and organizational commitment in Nigeria and they found that there is a significant relation among organizational work ethics, organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Chye Koh and Boo (2004) clarified the relation among structure of ethical culture in organizations, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Rafiei and Kosha (2007) studied about the "consequences of ethical management on success of organizations in Information Age" and presented the findings in the 5<sup>th</sup> management international conference which showed that ethical management by observing work ethics and social responsibility guide organizations to success through increasing eligibility of organization's performances, using the advantages which result from increasing income, profitability and competition improvement.

Other studies in Iran indicate the same results. For instance, there is a positive and direct relation between ethical atmosphere in organizations and managers' job satisfaction (Attarian, 2007). Also, the relation between dimensions of managers' ethical behavior (personal, organizational, social and profitability) and modification of pattern of consumption behavior in public organizations has been determined (Sabori, 2010).

In conclusion, enforcing ethical management in organizations not only leads to some suitable intraorganizational direct results such as increasing work profitability and reinforcing group conscientiousness producing and establishing new ethical values and also changing organizational culture but also is considered as one of the important indices to evaluate organizations' performances (Soltani, 2003). So, the researcher believes that there is still lack of theorization and research activities in the cognition field of ethics. For that reason, this study is to examine the relation between employees' perceptions of work ethics and their job satisfaction and job stress.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1- Is there any relation between observing work ethics by employees and their job satisfaction and job stress?
- 2- What are the effective factors on job satisfaction?
- 3- What factors lead to job stress?

## RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

- 1- There is a significant relation between employees' perception of work ethics and their job satisfaction.
- 2- There is a significant relation between employees' perception of work ethics and their job stress.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research is categorized in the group of descriptive – correlative research in respect to the method of collecting data and in the group of applicable ones in respect to the purpose. It included two levels, for collecting data and hypothesis test, there was a field and archival study based on surveying through questionnaire which firstly indices of work ethics were obtained based on job satisfaction and job stress in respect to managerial books, afterwards a model was made by experts' comments and finally they were evaluated in Payame Noor University and the influence of observing work ethics on job satisfaction and job stress was examined. Statistical population of this study were middle and operational managers (faculty members and administrative employees) and experts from central organization of Payame Noor University who had bachelor certificate or higher degree. 119 participants were selected randomly as the research sample from 248 participants of statistical population. They were selected from groups of males and females experts, males and females administrative managers and males and females from faculty staff.

For collecting data, three questionnaires were used. Conscientiousness questionnaire of work ethics: this tool was made in 1990 by Grigory Sypety for this concept. Pety (1990) believes that quadric dimensions of work ethics include: job attachment (16 questionnaires), persistence in work (12 questionnaires), healthy and human relationships in work setting (14 questionnaires) and cooperation in work setting (8 questionnaires). Work ethics questionnaire consists of fifty items on a five – point Likert scale (I am always like this, I am often like this, I am sometimes like this, I am rarely like this, I am never like this). This questionnaire has a good content validity because of good theoretical basis and is confirmed by experts in the field (Moedifar, 1998).

## JOB SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE

The original copy of this questionnaire was compiled by Robbins (1991) which includes six factors: work (10 questionnaires), organization (8 questionnaires), supervisor (10 questionnaires), colleagues (10 questionnaires), promotion (5 questionnaires) and salary (5 questionnaires). There are 60 pair questions or pair terms in this questionnaire based on Likert continuum. As this questionnaire has been compiled by one of the famous experts of organizational behavior (Robbins, 1991) according to theories of motivation and job satisfaction and it has been revised and used by domestic researchers (Soleimani, 2000), it is believed to have a good content validity.

## JOB STRESS QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire had twenty items which examined and evaluated individual job stress from three months before filling out the questionnaire till the time of filling it out. This questionnaire was standardized by Sotodeh in 2002. The most and least score for each participant was 80 and 0 respectively (Sotodeh, 2003).



To determine reliability of questionnaires, a primary study was applied on 35 participants of statistical population (except for the main sample) and the coefficients of Cronbach's Alpha were calculated as follows in table 1.

TABLE 1: QUESTIONNAIRES RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS

Questionnaire	Number	Alpha Coefficient
Work ethics	35	0/945
Job satisfaction	35	0/956
Job stress	35	0/93

DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

Correlation coefficient and regression analysis were used to analyse data.

As mentioned before the research questionnaires have a good content validity.

TEST OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relation between work ethics and job satisfaction.

TABLE 2: CORRELATION MATRIX BETWEEN WORK ETHICS DIMENSIONS AD JOB SATISFACTION (Dependent Variable)

Spearman	Pierson	Index	Job attachment	Work ethics dimensions
0/283	0/3014	Correlation coefficient	Job attachment	
216	216	Numbers		
0/000	0/000	Significant level		
216	216	Numbers	persistence	
0/284	0/289	Correlation coefficient		
0/000	<b>0.000</b>	Significant level		
216	216	Numbers	Healthy human relationships	
0/043	0/065	Correlation coefficient		
0/534	0/345	Significant level		
216	216	Numbers	Cooperation	
0/128	0/128	Correlation coefficient		
0/085	0/061	Significant level		
216	216	Numbers	Work ethics /Total index/	
0/247	0/240	Correlation coefficient		
0/000	<b>0.000</b>	Significant level		

As table 2 indicated, correlation coefficient between dimensions of "job attachment" and "job satisfaction" was obtained 0/301 and this coefficient between "persistence in work" and "job satisfaction" was 0/289 both of which were significant at 0/01.

This coefficient between "human and healthy relationships" and "job satisfaction" was 0/06 which was not significant.

Correlation coefficient between "cooperation in work place" and "job satisfaction" was 0/128 which was not significant.

Correlation coefficient between "employees' perceptions of work ethics" and "job satisfaction" was 0/24 which was significant according to 99% confidence level.

To determine multiple correlation coefficient between dimensions of work ethics and job satisfaction, researcher used regression analysis in stepwise method:

TABLE 3: REGRESSION MODEL

sig	F	Standard Deviation	Adjusted correlation coefficient	Squared Correlation coefficient	Correlation coefficient	Model
<b>0.000</b>	<b>10.88</b>	<b>0.542</b>	<b>0.121</b>	<b>0.133</b>	<b>(c)0.365</b>	<b>3</b>

The predictors were "interest to work", "Healthy and human relationships" and "persistence in work" and dependent variable was job satisfaction.

As table 3 indicated, multiple correlation coefficient 0/365R is significant at 0/99. In fact more than 12% of variance related to job satisfaction variable was explained based on three dimensions of work ethics such as job attachment, healthy and human relationships and persistence in work. To determine prediction model of regression coefficient see table 4.

TABLE 4: REGRESSION COEFFICIENT

Significant level	t	Standard coefficient	Unstandard coefficient		Dimensions
		Beta	Standard deviation	Beta	
<b>0.000</b>	<b>3.924</b>		<b>0.447</b>	<b>1.753</b>	Constant Number
<b>0.004</b>	<b>2.916</b>	<b>0.270</b>	<b>0.120</b>	<b>0.351</b>	Job attachment
<b>0.007</b>	<b>-2.718</b>	<b>-0.222</b>	<b>0.120</b>	<b>-0.326</b>	Healthy human relationships
<b>0.014</b>	<b>2.487</b>	<b>0.230</b>	<b>0.110</b>	<b>0.273</b>	persistence

According to table 4, all obtained "t" values for regression coefficients were significant at least at 0/05 level. Thus according to model, three dimensions of work ethics were significant predictors of job satisfaction and the below regression equation was obtained according to regression coefficient.

Job satisfaction= (1/753) + Job attachment (0/27) + Healthy and Human relationships (- 0/222) + Persistence in work (0/230)

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relation between employees' perceptions of work ethics and their job stress.

TABLE 5: CORRELATION MATRIX BETWEEN WORK ETHICS (INDEPENDENT VARIABLES) AND JOB STRESS (Dependent Variable)

Spearman	Pierson	Index	Job attachment	Work ethics dimensions
-0/391	-0/415	Correlation coefficient	Job attachment	
216	216	Numbers		
0/000	0/000	Significant level		
-0/420	-0/418	Correlation coefficient	persistence	
216	216	Numbers		
0/000	<b>0.000</b>	Significant level		
-0/300	-0/292	Correlation coefficient	Healthy human relationships	
216	216	Numbers		
0/000	0/000	Significant level		
-0/339	-0/320	Correlation coefficient	Cooperation	
216	216	Numbers		
0/000	0/000	Significant level		
-0/440	-0/434	Correlation coefficient	Work ethics Total index	
216	216	Numbers		
0/000	<b>0.000</b>	Significant level		

As table 5 indicated all of the correlation coefficients were significant at 0/01. Therefore; the first hypothesis was confirmed with 0/99 confidence. Thus there is a negative and significant relation between work ethics dimensions and employees' job stress.

To determine multiple correlation coefficient between work ethics dimensions and job stress by regression analysis see table 6.

TABLE 6: REGRESSION MODEL IN BRIEF

sig	F	Standard Deviation	Adjusted correlation coefficient	Squared Correlation coefficient	Correlation coefficient
0.000	52.27	5690/	1980/	2050/	(b) 4530/

The predictors were "job attachment" and "persistence in work" and dependent variable was job stress.

According to table 6 and obtained correlation coefficients. Regression model was predictive of job stress. Correlation coefficient in this model was 0/453 which means that more than 20% of job stress variance would be explained with two dimensions of work ethics.

Regression coefficients to determine regression equation was explained as follow:

TABLE 7: REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS

Significant level	t	Standard coefficient	Unstandard coefficient		Dimensions
		Beta	Standard deviation	Beta	
0.000	734.9	-0/251	3980/	3/875	Constant Number persistence Job attachment
0000/	-2/977		1100/	-0/326	
0000/	867-2/	2420/	1210/	346-0/	

According to table 7 all obtained "t" value for regression coefficient were significant at 0/05. According to the above table the regression equation for predicting job stress based on the dimensions of work ethics is:

Job stress= (3/875) + Persistence in work (-0/251) + Interest to work (-0/242)

## RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATION

According to the first hypothesis, the first result of this study showed that employees' perception of work ethics has a positive and significant relation with job satisfaction. In other words, result showed that the more employees feel the work ethics in work setting, the more they experience higher job satisfaction ( $P < 0/05$ ). Basis of the subject and confirms the result of studies conducted by researchers such as Saks (1996), Yousef (2000 & 2001), Schwepker (2001), Okpara and Wynn (2008) and Chye Koh and Boo (2004). These studies confirm the positive relation of ethics in organizations with job attitudes (organizational commitment and job attachment).

Results of some studies done in Iran also, confirms this finding. For instance, Haghiri (2009) showed that ethical management increases organizational commitment and job attachment in employees. Attarian (2007) showed the relation between organizational ethics with job satisfaction in employees. Sabori (2010) also found that managers ethical behaviors affects pattern of employees consuming behavior in governmental executive institutions.

The second finding of this study is indicative of a negative and significant relation between employees' perception of work ethics with job stress. In other words feeling of work ethics in the work setting reduces the job stress accordingly. This finding is in line with theories in psychology and job relations. Work ethics in the organization would reduce detrimental factors employees' attitude and behaviors. Although there have not been any relevant research in the literature to support this finding, it is consistence with intellectual and experimental evidence.

According to job stress theories, personal factors are among influential factors in job stress which are shaped by individuals' feelings, experiences, beliefs and perceptions about their and others' behaviors in the work setting. Among these factors, individuals' perceptions of work ethics relevant to collective behaviors are more influential than other factors.

Overall, for explaining this study's findings it could be argued that work ethics is based on philosophical, social, cultural and psychological principles each of them which affects employees' attitudes and personal, group and organizational behaviors. In a philosophical respect, managers' assumptions, values, beliefs and perceptions about society, organization and work shapes their theoretical and practical ethics. Also, in a social and cultural respect, managers' perceptions of rules, norms and current behavioral procedures in societies and organizations, strongly influences their ethical management. It appears that the parts of work ethics which is based on psychological principles are relevant to motivational factors and if they are manifested in a superb way in the work setting, they could improve job attitude and conversely could reduce factors contributing to stress.

At the end, although the result of present study are promising due to the broad range of components of ethical behaviors and multitude of theories in this field on one hand and complications of measuring ethical behaviors on the other hand, results should be generalized with caution – finally it is recommended that other approaches to ethics in organizations be defined and measured and their effects on job attitudes and employees' performance be studied.

"This study has been conducted using a special reputation research by Payam E Noor University"

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