TÜRKİYE'DE GEMİ ACENTESİ ÇALIŞANLARININ İŞ STRESİ VE İŞ TATMİNİ ÜZERİNE BİR ARAŞTIRMA

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Özet

Günümüzde iş dünyasında, iş tatmini ve iş stresi, örgütsel verimlilik ve bireysel motivasyon açısından kritik öneme sahip kavramlardır. İş tatmini, bireylerin işlerinden duydukları genel memnuniyet düzeyini yansıtırken, iş stresi ise işin getirdiği baskılar ve zorluklar sonucu ortaya çıkan olumsuz etkileri ifade eder. Denizcilik sektörü, küresel ticaretin önemli bir bileşeni olarak, yoğun iş yükü, uzun çalışma saatleri ve hızlı müşteri talepleri gibi stres faktörleriyle karşılaşan gemi acentesi çalışanları için stresli bir ortam yaratmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye'de gemi acentesi çalışanlarının iş stresi ve iş tatmini düzeylerini incelemektir. Araştırma, Türkiye'deki gemi acentelerinde görev yapan 100 çalışanla yapılan anket ve derinlemesine görüşmelere dayanmaktadır. Katılımcıların çoğunluğu 26-35 yaş aralığında olup, operasyon departmanında çalışmaktadır. İş stresi kaynakları arasında rol çatışması, iş-aile çatışması ve iş yükü fazlalığı öne çıkmaktadır. Katılımcıların %58'i, iş nedeniyle ailevi planlarında değişiklik yapmak zorunda kaldıklarını belirtmiştir. İş yükünün fazla olduğu ve yıllık izin sürelerinin yetersiz olduğu vurgulanmıştır. İş tatmini açısından, katılımcıların %42'si ücret dengesizliğinden şikâyet etmektedir. Ayrıca, yan ödemelerin yetersizliği ve terfi olanaklarının eksikliği de önemli sorunlar arasında yer almaktadır. Çalışma ortamı ve yönetici tutumu ise iş tatmini üzerinde etkilidir; katılımcıların %48'i iş arkadaşlarıyla ilişkilerinden memnunken, %36'sı amirlerinin adaletli davrandığını ifade etmiştir. Sonuç olarak, iş stresi ve iş tatmini arasındaki ilişkinin güçlü olduğu, çalışanların karşılaştığı temel sorunların iş-aile çatışması, iş yükü fazlalığı ve ücret dengesizliği olduğu belirlenmiştir. Esnek çalışma saatleri, iş yükü dengeleme ve adaletli terfi sistemlerinin geliştirilmesi önerilmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Gemi Acentesi, İş Stresi, İş Tatmini, Çalışma Koşulları, Denizcilik Sektörü

A STUDY ON JOB STRESS AND JOB SATISFACTION OF SHIP AGENCY EMPLOYEES IN TURKEY

Abstract

In today's business world, job satisfaction and job stress are critical concepts with significant implications for organizational productivity and individual motivation. Job satisfaction reflects the general level of contentment individuals derive from their work, while job stress refers to the negative impacts caused by the pressures and challenges of the job. The maritime industry, as a key component of global trade, presents a stressful environment for ship agency employees, who frequently face factors such as heavy workloads, long working hours, and rapid customer demands. The purpose of this study is to examine the levels of job stress and job satisfaction among ship agency employees in Turkey. The research is based on surveys and in-depth interviews conducted with 100 employees working at ship agencies across Turkey. The majority of participants are between the ages of 26 and 35 and work in the operations department. Key stress factors identified include role conflict, work-family conflict, and excessive workload. Approximately 58% of participants reported having to alter family plans due to work commitments, highlighting work-family conflict as a primary stressor. Excessive workload and insufficient annual leave were also identified as significant stressors. In terms of job satisfaction, 42% of participants expressed dissatisfaction with wage disparity. Furthermore, the lack of sufficient fringe benefits and limited promotion opportunities emerged as other major concerns. Regarding the work environment and managerial approach, 48% of respondents reported being satisfied with their relationships with colleagues, while 36% felt that their managers acted fairly. The findings reveal a strong relationship between job stress and job satisfaction, with work-family conflict, excessive workload, and wage disparity being the main issues. It is recommended that flexible working hours, workload balancing, and equitable promotion systems be implemented to improve employee satisfaction and reduce job stress, thereby enhancing sectoral productivity.

Keywords: Ship Agency, Job Stress, Job Satisfaction, Working Conditions, Maritime Sector

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's business world, job satisfaction and job stress are two critical concepts in terms of organizational efficiency and individual motivation. Job satisfaction and job stress represent a balance between employees' level of satisfaction with their work and the challenges present in the work environment. Job satisfaction refers to the overall contentment employees feel regarding their jobs, whereas job stress is defined as the negative psychological state individuals experience due to work-related pressures, demands, and challenges. These two concepts directly influence employees' productivity, motivation, and overall quality of life (Brown, 2017).

The maritime industry, unlike other sectors, operates within a highly dynamic structure that requires 24/7 operations. This dynamic nature creates various effects on employees in terms of both job satisfaction and job stress (Özkan & Arslan, 2021). As a vital component of global trade, the maritime sector plays a crucial role in the world economy. This sector not only encompasses international transportation but also includes numerous logistical and managerial processes. Shipping agencies constitute a significant part of these processes, and particularly, ship agency employees face stress factors such as heavy workloads arising from managing complex operations, extended working hours, and the necessity to respond promptly to continuous customer demands (Çelik, 2018).

Nevertheless, maintaining a high level of job satisfaction among these employees is of paramount importance for the sustainability of the sector. The primary objective of this study is to examine the job satisfaction and job stress levels of ship agency employees and to analyze the relationship between these two concepts. The research aims to provide findings that could yield significant implications at both individual and organizational levels. Additionally, the study offers an industry-specific analysis to contribute to the literature on job satisfaction and job stress.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Job stress and job satisfaction are significant factors that directly impact workforce productivity and the quality of life of employees. A number of studies on these two concepts have highlighted the sector-specific influences and how the work environment affects job satisfaction and stress. However, studies focusing specifically on the ship agency sector are limited. Düğenci's (2018) study on the effects of job stress on job satisfaction among seafarers provides a comprehensive view of how working conditions and stress-inducing factors in the sector affect this relationship. The study thoroughly examines how job stress among seafarers is triggered by factors

such as working conditions, environmental influences, and workload, and how this stress negatively impacts job satisfaction. These findings suggest the presence of similar relationships in sectors like ship agency, which operate in dynamic and challenging environments. In addition, other studies on the maritime industry have shed light on the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction, but the factors specific to ship agency have not been adequately addressed. The unique challenges faced by ship agency employees, the complexity of the shipping trade and operational processes, are crucial factors affecting stress levels and satisfaction in this sector. Ramlawati (2021) examines the relationship between job stress, job satisfaction, and employee turnover intention, while also considering the influence of external job alternatives. The findings indicate that high job stress negatively affects job satisfaction and increases employees' intentions to leave their jobs. Additionally, when employees perceive attractive external job opportunities, their likelihood of turnover rises, especially when job satisfaction is low. The study highlights the importance of reducing workplace stress and improving job satisfaction to enhance employee retention. Martin, Hauret & Fuhrer (2022) explores how the shift to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic influenced job satisfaction, job stress, and productivity. The findings suggest that while digital transformation allowed for flexible work arrangements, it also led to increased job stress due to blurred work-life boundaries, communication difficulties, and excessive digital demands. Some employees reported higher job satisfaction due to autonomy, but overall productivity was affected by technological challenges and isolation. The study emphasizes the need for balanced digital work strategies to mitigate stress and enhance job satisfaction in remote work settings. This gap in the literature forms the core aim of our research. Identifying the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction within the ship agency sector will provide a significant contribution to understanding the dynamics of the industry.

3. METHOD

In this study, the survey method was employed as the primary approach to determine the relationships between the impact criteria. The survey form was designed by the researcher and consists of demographic information along with scales measuring job stress and job satisfaction. Participants were asked to evaluate their levels of job stress and job satisfaction. The questions in the survey were adapted from validated and reliable scales in the literature, and the responses provided by participants will be analyzed strictly for scientific purposes. The validity, significance, and reliability tests of this survey were conducted by Moncrief et al. (1997) and Bhuian et al. (2005), and it has been widely accepted and utilized in numerous studies in the literature.

The survey form was adapted from the questionnaire used in İbrahim Düğenci's 2018 master's thesis, An Examination of the Effects of Seafarers' Perceptions of Job Stress on Job Satisfaction and Turnover Intentions, conducted at Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa. The original questionnaire was designed for seafarers; however, it was modified by the researcher to be applicable to ship agency employees and an office environment. Within this scope, only a few questions were adjusted to align with the target audience's characteristics, while all other questions remained in their original form.

The survey consists of four sections. The first section includes questions aimed at identifying employees' demographic characteristics. The second section measures job stress levels through factors such as role conflict (8 items), role ambiguity (6 items) (Moncrief et al., 1997), work-family conflict (4 items) (Bhuian et al., 2005), and role stress (12 items). The reliability coefficients for these scales are as follows: role conflict: 0.831, role ambiguity: 0.909, work-family conflict: 0.768, and role stress: 0.872. The overall job stress reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) is 0.936.

4. FINDINGS

As a result of the conducted survey, the demographic information of the participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The responses and percentages for the demographic questions.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
Age (18-25)	26	26
Age (26-35)	43	43
Age (36-45)	19	19
Age (46 and above)	12	12
Education		
Primary Education	1	1
Secondary Education	3	3
Associate Degree	24	24
Bachelor's Degree	57	57
Graduate Degree	15	15
Department		
Operations	82	82
Accounting	4	4
Sales & Marketing	2	2
Other	12	12
Experience (Years)		
Experience (0-2 years)	28	28
Experience (3-5 years)	26	26
Experience (6-10 years)	16	16
Experience (11 years and above)	30	30

In Table 2, the questions related to job stress and the response percentages from the participants are presented.

Table 2. Ship Agency Employees' Views on Job Stress

Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Role Conflict					
I do not have the necessary resources and tools to do my job.	6	13	11	41	29
I have to work with different individuals or groups due to the nature of my job.	47	38	3	7	5
I am doing tasks that I am not required to do.	37	29	14	15	5
The rules and policies in the office prevent me from performing my job effectively.	12	24	19	32	13
My colleagues have demands that cause conflicts among us.	13	33	19	28	7
I am required to do a variety of tasks.	44	37	6	10	3
I cannot satisfy all the individuals related to my job at the same time.	33	28	14	16	9
I am doing a job where the workforce may not be sufficient.	18	17	14	38	13
Role Ambiguity					
My job is not clearly outlined or planned.	26	31	8	25	10
I am unsure how to manage my time while performing my	10	14	10	36	30

job.					
I know what my responsibilities are.	10	10	12	36	32
I am not fully aware of what is expected from me.	14	12	18	30	26
I am not fully aware of my authority.	14	14	13	35	24
My supervisor does not clearly explain what I need to do.	15	11	13	32	29
Work-Family Conflict					
The stress from my job makes it difficult for me to fulfill my family responsibilities.	36	33	10	12	9
Due to my job responsibilities, I am unable to do what I want at home.	42	36	4	11	7
Because of my job duties, I have to make changes to my family plans.	58	30	3	5	4
Role Stress					
I do not know how my performance is evaluated for progress and promotion.	38	27	14	12	9
The status of the work I do is low.	22	17	17	26	18
My supervisor treats some employees in a discriminatory manner.	17	22	22	24	15
There is high employee turnover in my company.	27	16	16	26	15
I need more time to perform my job	23	30	12	24	11

properly.					
The company's policies and methods are inconsistent with each other.	25	19	23	21	12
My workload is excessive.	47	29	13	6	5
Workspaces are not distributed in an organized and fair manner.	29	22	12	26	11
The company's employee retention policies are insufficient compared to other companies.	22	16	16	30	16
Job security is very low in my company.	23	10	18	34	23
The annual leave duration is very short.	35	20	13	23	9
Personal and family issues create pressure and stress on me.	37	18	12	23	10

In Table 3, the questions related to job satisfaction levels and the response percentages from the participants are presented.

Table 3. Ship Agency Employees' Views on Job Satisfaction

Questions	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
Salary					
I believe the salary I receive for my work is balanced.	6	12	16	24	42
I am satisfied with the salary increase periods in my company.	5	23	14	24	34
When I think about the salary I receive, I feel valued by the	8	27	19	17	29

company.					
I am satisfied with the rate of salary increases.	4	11	20	32	33
Promotion					
The opportunities for progression and promotion are satisfactory.	11	15	17	27	30
Employees who perform their tasks properly have a fair chance of promotion.	10	21	24	22	23
Employees in my company progress as quickly as those in other companies.	7	17	27	24	25
Manager					
My supervisor is highly skilled in their work.	29	34	11	8	18
My supervisor treats me fairly.	13	36	21	13	17
The attention my supervisor gives me makes me feel like an important person.	13	31	23	16	17
I like my supervisor.	18	29	27	7	19
Benefits					
The extra payments I receive outside of my salary are satisfactory.	11	21	10	23	35
The extra income I earn in my company is comparable to what employees in other companies earn.	1	10	22	21	46
Extra payments in my company are distributed fairly.	8	17	16	20	39
I do not receive the extra payments I am entitled to.	34	9	17	18	22
Recognition					
When I perform well	19	24	16	13	28

at work, I have enough opportunities for recognition.					
I feel that my work is appreciated.	24	41	15	6	14
Rewards are given frequently in my company.	7	12	17	24	40
I think my efforts are adequately rewarded.	6	11	25	18	40
Working Conditions					
Most of the rules and procedures make it easier for me to do a good job.	7	24	25	17	27
My efforts to do a good job are not hindered by bureaucracy.	18	12	27	26	17
I do not have to work excessively due to my job.	15	19	5	31	30
I do not have too much paperwork (documents) to handle.	13	15	12	31	29
Co-workers					
I am satisfied with my co-workers.	20	48	17	9	6
I do not have to work excessively because I work with competent individuals.	9	19	27	22	23
I am satisfied with the co-workers who assist me in my job.	17	43	19	11	10
There are not many problems between staff members in the office.	15	44	14	16	11
The Job Itself					
I find my job to be meaningful.	35	35	12	7	11
In my free time	17	25	18	22	18

during the work process, I enjoy working more on my job.					
I take pride in the work I do.	35	37	13	7	8
I believe my job is enjoyable.	38	39	12	3	8
Communication					
There is a good communication environment in the office.	17	40	19	11	13
The goals of my company are sufficiently clear to me.	15	38	24	6	17
I am usually informed about what is happening in my company.	12	30	24	20	14
My tasks in the office are clearly explained.	15	23	30	14	18

5. DISCUSSION

In Table 2, ship agency employees' views on job stress indicate that the most significant stress factors are role conflict, ambiguity, and work-family balance. A large portion of employees (47+38) stated that they have to work with different individuals or groups due to the nature of their job, while many (37+29) reported performing tasks outside their job description. Additionally, a significant majority (58+30) mentioned that their job responsibilities force them to change their family plans. Excessive workload (76% agreement) and insufficient annual leave durations were also highlighted as major stressors. In Table 3, employees generally expressed dissatisfaction with their salary, promotion opportunities, and additional payments. The proportion of employees who believe their salary is fair is very low (6+12), whereas the majority (24+42) find their salary inadequate. Similarly, satisfaction with fair promotion opportunities is low, while evaluations of managers show relatively more positive opinions regarding fairness and competence. Satisfaction levels with the work environment, colleagues, and the job itself are comparatively higher, with 77% of employees finding their job meaningful and enjoyable. However, issues related to communication and lack of internal information within the company were identified as factors negatively impacting overall job satisfaction.

These findings suggest that the job stress experienced by ship agency employees significantly impacts their job satisfaction. Job stress can negatively affect employees' performance and overall well-being. Employees often face stress due to the numerous tasks required by their jobs, uncertainty, and role conflict. Furthermore, personal life-related stress factors, such as work-family conflict, can also have a detrimental effect on job satisfaction.The findings related to job satisfaction indicate that material factors, such as salary and promotion opportunities, are of significant importance to employees. Employees are seeking fairer salary increases and more consistent reward opportunities. This highlights the need for organizations to reconsider their salary policies and reward systems in order to improve employee satisfaction and motivation.

6. CONCLUSION

The results of the survey and in-depth interviews reveal various findings regarding job satisfaction and job stress among ship agency employees. A significant number of participants reported experiencing job stress related to role conflict, uncertainty, and work-family conflict. However, employees generally expressed more negative views regarding job satisfaction, particularly concerning salary satisfaction, promotion opportunities, and bonuses. On the other hand, employees held generally more positive views regarding their work environment and coworkers.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. Reducing Job Stress:

- Job stress is a critical factor that directly impacts employees' productivity and job satisfaction. Organizations should provide clearer job definitions and eliminate role ambiguity by providing necessary resources for employees.

- To improve work-life balance, organizations can offer flexible working hours and remote working options.

7.2. Salary and Promotion Policies:

- To improve salary satisfaction, regular salary increases and a fairer reward system should be implemented. Additionally, promotion opportunities should be presented through a transparent system that rewards success.

7.3. Enhancing Communication and Collaboration:

- Effective communication in the workplace is crucial for increasing employee motivation. The organization should foster a stronger communication culture by holding meetings and considering employee feedback.

- Activities that encourage collaboration and teamwork among employees can be organized.

7.4. Improving Working Conditions:

- To enable employees to be more productive, the physical and organizational conditions of the workplace should be evaluated. Eliminating unnecessary bureaucracy and excessive workloads will help employees perform better.

- A more balanced and equitable distribution of tasks should be established to create a healthier work environment by managing employees' workloads.

7.5. Training and Development Opportunities:

- Considering employees' career development and training needs, professional development programs should be provided. This will help employees feel valued and increase their commitment to the organization.

This study is derived from the master thesis titled "A Study on Job Stress and Job Satisfaction Among Ship Agency Employees".

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