

The Impact of Job Stress on the Counter-productive Work Behavior (CWB) A Case Study from the financial Sector of Pakistan

Hira Aftab

Lecturer (Finance), Institute of Business & Information Technology (IBIT)
University of the Punjab, Quaid-e-Azam Campus, Lahore, Pakistan

Anam Javeed

Graduated Student of MBIT, Institute of Business & Information Technology (IBIT)
University of the Punjab, Quaid-e-Azam Campus, Lahore, Pakistan

Abstract

This research aims to find out the impact of job stress on the counter-productive work behavior (CWB) and to quantify the relationship between Job stress & counter-productive work behavior. Job stress has a vital importance and has become a key challenge for the organizations because of its strapping impact on the performance of an individual as well as of the organization. Employees serve as an assets for an organization but when they are stressed then the results are increased absenteeism, low productivity, low motivation and usually legal financial damages which eventually effect the employee work behavior and leads him/her towards the counter-productive work behavior. This research is a causal study and on the same time cross sectional one. Job stress and counter-productive work behavior has been measured through diverse factors. The results shows that overall sample was facing job stress mainly due to huge deal of attention demanded by their work beyond normal jobs range, remember many things, excessive workload than normal work, forced to work more by their supervisors and employers, poor communication, no appreciation received from management, unfair performance evaluation system, inappropriate working conditions and inappropriate salaries and rewards. The results of this study revealed that the job stress among employees lead them somewhat towards counter-productive work behavior and there was a sufficient positive correlation exist between job stress & employee CWB. These results were also consistent with the previous researches that job stress leads the employees towards CWB. This study reinforces the importance of employees work behavior which was essential for firms to be successful in the current era.

Keywords: Job stress, negative behavior, inferential statistics, causal study, cross sectional, employee counter-productive work behavior.

Introduction

Job stress has become a major challenge for the organizations due to its immense occurrence. The employees work behavior is greatly effected due to stress. It is understood that employees are the most important assets for the organizations due to their major role in running the organization effectively and successfully and cannot be treated like machines. The employees who experienced less stress are more cooperative and serve as assets for an organization but when the organization ignored its employees stress and needs, then the results are increased absenteeism, cost, low productivity, low motivation and usually legal financial damages which eventually effect the employee work behavior and leads him/her towards the counter-productive work behavior (CWB).

“McGrath (1976) proposed a definition of stress; he defined the stress as a situation in which a person is required to perform the tasks that threatens to exceed the person’s ability and resources for meeting it, under conditions where he or she expects a large difference in the rewards from meeting the demand versus not meeting it”. (Walonick, 1993)

Job stress has been the most vital issue in workplace in the both developed and the developing countries but stress has turn into a massive challenge for employer mainly in developing nations where the employer doesn’t provide much weight and attention to the employee stress. There are a numeral workplace factors, called job stressors that make job demanding and complicated for employees in services as well as in other sectors. Other stressors include negative behavior at work, such as absenteeism, increased turnover of employee and employees involved in theft, workplace deviance and aggression.

Workplace stress have a considerable consequences on employee work behavior but it is made even worse when employee receive a little support from their supervisors and boss which inadequately affect the employee behavior inside the organization.

Research Question: What is the impact of job stress on CWB of employees?

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are as:

- ❖ To find out the association between stress at work and employee counter-productive work behavior.
- ❖ To what extent the job stress effect the employee behavior and lead him towards the counter-work productive behavior.

Literature Review

The two variables in the study are stress at work and employee counter-productive work behavior.

Stress

Hans Selye view in 1956 about the stress was “stress isn’t necessarily something bad – it all depends on how you take it. The stress of exhilarating, creative successful work is beneficial, while that of failure, humiliation or infection is detrimental.” (Sanvee, 2009)

Work Stress

“Work-related stress occurs when one’s job demands are incompatible or mismatched with the mental regulation processes, such as information processing, planning, and movement execution”. (Greiner, 1998).

Stress at workplace has a serious devastating effects on employee health and work. Stress is a major cause of psychosocial sickness; such as tense muscles can aggravate ergonomic injuries. The workers who experienced stress can be more vulnerable to injury, health and disease. (Enough Workplace Stress: Organizing for Change, 2003). Generally it is believed that some stress has positive effects on individuals which is referred to as “Challenge or Positive Stress” but when stress goes beyond the amount which you are not been able to handle then both physical and mental alterations may arise. Work related stress then arise as a result of differences

between employee job demands and an employee amount of control over gathering these demands which can cause a harmful impact on employee physical and emotional responses. In short the amalgamation of very high demands in a job and the employee low amount of control over the situation is a major cause of stress. Stress at workplace can be come from multiple events or can be from single events and it has a huge impact on employers and employees alike. According to “Canadian Mental Association” job redundancy. Layoff fears in an economy which is uncertain, excessive workload due to staff cutbacks are the major negative stressors and the employees who are starting to feel the pressure to perform get involved in a negative and downward spiral of highly increasing efforts to meet increased expectations with no increase in job satisfaction. The unyielding requirements to work at optimum performance leads to the increase in toll in employee job dissatisfaction, turnover of employees, reduced efficiency and employee illness. Absenteeism, lack of involvement, lack of participation in decision making, apathy and indifference, lack of creativity or motivation are all by-products of the workplace which is over stressed. (Workplace Stress - General, 2008).

The journal article on “Stressful work, job satisfaction, intention to leave and organization citizenship behavior: examining the mediating role of job satisfaction” was conducted to examine the relationship between job stress, employee intention to leave means employee turnover and OCB. In the research it is found that increased stressful work and stressful environment increased the employee desire to leave the organization so the work stress was correlated positively with employee intention to leave the employer or negatively correlated with OCB and that job dissatisfaction increases in employees who experienced work stress. This job dissatisfaction among employees motivating them to increase absenteeism and to quit the organization. Stress can cause health problems for employees and loss of profits for employers. The results found in this study are consistent with the previous researches that stressful work causes job dissatisfaction among employees. Finally the results of this study proved that unsatisfactory employment act as a bridge between employee work stress and his intention to leave the employer. (Paillé, Stressful Work, Citizenship Behavior and Intention to Leave the Organization in a High Turnover Environment: Examining the Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction., 2011).

The research paper on “Impact of job stress on employee job satisfaction” investigated the effects of job stress on employee job satisfaction. In this paper a sample of 134 employees from the telecom sector of Pakistan. The job stress has been measured by three important dimensions which are work conflicts, employee workload and physical environment. The study revealed that all the three factors of job stress effect the job satisfaction of employee negatively. The study results also been supported by the prior studies results that employee who feel excessive stress found their job dissatisfying. It is also found in this study that the subjects who have experienced more stress by the factors including work conflict, excessive workload and physical environment was found to be less satisfying as compared to those employees who experienced less stress. (Mansoor, Muhammad; Fida, Sabtain; Nasir, Saima; Ahmad, Zubair, 2004).

There is another study to examine that whether the organizational stressor variables had contributing to manager’s job stress or not. In this study sample of 285 respondents were taken. The organizational variables taken in this study were role conflict, no advancement opportunities for employees, extreme work load and unfavorable workplace environment. The regression analysis were done on this and the results revealed that out of all organizational stressors, three

of the stressors which are role conflict, no advancement for opportunities and work environment were been the major cause of job stress among managers. (Aizzat Mohd Nasurdin; T. Ramayah; S. Kemaresan). According to different surveys conducted by “American Psychological Association (2008)” more than half of the respondents reported that stress is a significant reason of their poor performance and almost three of half reported that stress is a major cause of their bad health. Another survey study conducted by “Multi employer, multi-site employee” exposed that employees who have high level of stress, their health expenditures were 46% higher as compared to the employees with no stress.

According to different researches, “Job stress has become a common and costly problem in the American workplace, leaving few workers unaffected. For example, studies report the following:”

- Almost one-fourth of employees in different organizations view their jobs as the number one stressor in their lives-
Northwestern National Life
- Almost three-fourths of employees in different organizations believe they have more on-the-job stress than a generation ago.”
Princeton Survey Research Associates

Mismatch with the organization in the way that employees are given no rights in decision making were found out to be the main reason of work stress as well as if employees does not have any control over work environment, personality characteristics and unclear rules and policies and unclear roles effect employee performance. (Meneze, 2005). The data of “**Bureau of Labor Statistics**” showed that stress and anxiety are the major causes of workers absenteeism and that the workers who take their time off due to stress or anxiety or any other related problem will not be on a job for about 20 days. (NIOSH - U.S. Department of Health and Services.). Workplace stress effect employees over the past many years. This workplace stress occurs due to increased workload and clients demands. The increased level of stress in employees affects not only the employee health but also ends up costing the economy in the shape of employee absenteeism, employee loss of productivity and turnover. The clients are also decreasing because the more stressed the workers is feeling, the less likely they are been able to perform their jobs at full potential. (Klink & al., Work-related Stress in Division of Youth and Family Caseworkers: Determining Whether a Cognitive Behavioral Intervention Will Decrease Stress., 2001).

Stress is often a end-product of poor boss attitude and poor workplace environment and have a serious effect on organizational productivity and growth. Therefore organizations that have effective stress management programs, talk on regular basis with their workers and have efficient system, procedures and policies to deal with employee stress related issues like employee absence and workplace discipline are much more able to avoid stress situations and to cope up with employee problems as they arise. (Working together to reduce stress at work. A guide for employees., 2008). The work-related stress occur due to “Poor organization design” such as poor inappropriate work systems or workplace environment, improper job alienation and the way we manage it, and “Poor work designs” such as no employee participation in decision making and their lack of control over work processes, by poor management and no support from boss, colleagues and supervisors. Employees feel less stressed when their job and work demands matched with their knowledge and abilities and they have a right to participate in decision

making and proper support is received from all the supervisors and colleagues. (World Health Organization.)

Employee Counter-productive Work Behavior (CWB)

Counterproductive workplace behavior (CWB) has turn into a progressively accepted issue of learning between researchers. “Counter-productive work behavior (CWB) is any intentional behavior on the part of an organization member, viewed by the organization as contrary to its legitimate interests”. (Gruys & Sakett, 2003)

A study on “Job Stressors, Negative Affectivity and Counter-Productive Work Behavior (CWB)” tried to investigate the relationship between job stressors and their effect on employee counter-productive work behavior (CWB) keeping in view the role of negative affectivity. The results show incivility, poor organizational environment and conflicts among employees were negatively correlated with employee job satisfaction and lead him toward the counter-productive work behavior (CWB). The results of this study are consistent with the previous studies showing a relationship between job stress and employee counter-productive work behavior (CWB). The results also showed that the individuals who have higher negative affectivity with organizations are more going towards the counter-productive work behaviors than for individuals who are low in negative affectivity. This shows that being subjected to incivility could aggravate an individual to go towards negative attitude and as a result employees are engaged in retaliatory acts such as CWB. Furthermore this study also shows that individuals who engaged in counter-productive work behaviors (CWB) would be the cause of creating a workplace incivility. (Penney & Spector, 2005).

Another study on “Effect of job stress on health, personal and work behavior of nurses in public hospitals in Ibadan Metropolis, Nigeria” tried to find out the relationship between job stresses on nurses and its effect on their health and their work behavior which mainly include their behavior with patients. The results showed that the job stress is the major cause of nurse’s bad health and cause great health problems for them. Job stress is negatively associated with their work behavior and an increased level of stress provokes them to engage in behaviors such as absenteeism, withdrawal and aggressive or impolite behavior with patients. (Mojoyinola, J. K., 2008) .

According to one of the survey conducted by “CCH Inc” revealed that stress is one of the major causes of unscheduled absences from work. Employee absences or absenteeism is defend as the work time missed by an employee and the survey results show that stress related illnesses and health problems cause 70% of job absenteeism. (Kim, Sorhaindo, & Garman, 2006)

The research on “Impact of job stress on employee productivity, performance and turnover” said that stress is a universal element and the persons from nearly all aspects of life have to face it. Today stress management issues are critically analyzed by the employees that lead them towards low job satisfaction and high turnover. The survey results shown that overall sample is facing stress because of low acceptance for work done by the top management, rigid organizational structure, lack of support from supervisors and colleagues and unclear roles are the main causes of increasing stress levels in employees which ultimately effect their job performance negatively and lead them toward leaving the organization. (Imtiaz & Ahmad, 2009).

Another study on “The role of personality, occupation and organization in understanding the relationship between job stress, performance and absenteeism” tried to examine the relationship between stress with important behavioral perspective of employee i.e. absenteeism keeping in view the role played by personality and occupation. The results of this study indicated that job stress are the major reason of increased absenteeism in employees resulting poor employee performance and personalities was found to have a major effect on employee performance. (Arsenault & Dolan, 1983)

“St. Paul's report indicated that interpersonal demands on employees are increasing. This in itself creates tremendous stress. Interpersonal demands due to working with team members and supervisors were the most significant cause of stress burnout. Thus, in today's workplace, we have people who are already under stress from a variety of causes put into an interpersonal context that, by its nature, is very stressful. Being already stressed-out, they are less likely to respond appropriately and constructively, further heightening the likelihood they will find such a demanding interpersonal context even more difficult and depleting.” (Lee, 1997)

The ratio of stress in employees in organizations is increasing at disturbing rate. All the studies mentioned above also show that stress result in high absenteeism, turnover and poor performance. That's why it is very imperative to consider job stress as an essential and critical factor in organizations from the employee behavioral perspective.

Hypothesis

The main hypothesis tested in this study was:

1. Is there any significant effect of job stress on the counter-productive work behavior of employees?

While there were many other hypothesis which were tested to see the effect of demographical variables on job stress and Counter productive work behavior.

Research Methodology

The purpose of this study was to determine the association between job stress and counter-productive work behavior, this study serves to address the hot issue as how the job stress will direct the employee towards counter-productive work behavior. This research was a cross sectional study. The data was collected through questionnaire from different banks of Lahore. The questionnaire was distributed among middle level management having a designation of AVP, OG-I, OG-II and OG-III of different banks. The sample size in this study was 352 employees. The obtained data was analyzed through SPSS version 17. Both inferential and differential statistical methods were used.

Results with tables

Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha N of Items

.942 71

The chronbach alpha score for the questionnaire was 0.942. It means that internal consistency of the questionnaire was more than minimum acceptance standard.

Two Independent sample T-test

No.	Test Variables	Grouping Variables	Mean Ranks		Z- value	P-value
			Male	Female		
1	job stress	Gender	176.25	177.40	-0.087	0.931
	CWB		182.03	156.40	-1.946	0.052
			Joint	Nuclear		
2	job Stress	Nature of Family	186	150.79	-2.882	0.004
	CWB		180.41	165.91	-1.188	0.235

The result of two independent sample T-test shows both males and females had experienced the same job stress level in case of grouping variable. Similarly CWB was same among males and females.

In case of grouping variable nature of family, stress level between males and females was not same and by further looking at their means it was evident that people living in joint families were facing more stress. While CWB was same among those who were living either in joint or nuclear families.

ANOVA

Educational level

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Variable 1: Job Stress	Between Groups	.605	3	.202	.336	.799
	Within Groups	208.743	348	.600		
	Total	209.348	351			
Variable 2: CWB	Between Groups	.853	3	.284	.531	.661
	Within Groups	186.344	348	.535		
	Total	187.197	351			

The result of differential Anova statistics showed that the stress and CWB was significantly equal in all individuals who were having different educational backgrounds.

Kruskal Wallis Test

Age	Under 26	26-35	36-45	46-55	56+	P-value
Job stress	179.43	170.10	190.40	149.58	203.64	0.137
CWB	139.19	168.56	184.66	213.09	227.29	0.000

The result of differential Kruskal Wallis statistics showed that the stress was significantly equal in all age groups but CWB was not significantly equal, it means that there must be a an age group who is either characterized more by CWB as compared to other age groups

Monthly Salary	<25000	25000-40000	40001-55000	55001-70000	>70000	P-value
Job stress	194.26	172.29	181.75	164.72	153.94	0.302
CWB	146.86	182.13	175.61	204.52	190.56	0.032

In Kruskal Wallis test for monthly salary, the sigma value for job stress showed that stress was significantly equal in all individuals getting different salaries. Similarly in CWB, the sigma value showed that counter-productive work behavior was significantly not equal in all individuals.

Total Professional Experience	<1 yr	1-3 yrs	3-6 yrs	6-9 yrs	>9 yrs	P-value
Job stress	205.98	185.94	157.39	190.11	171.74	0.165
CWB	150.14	163.72	169.85	175.38	192.83	0.160

In Kruskal Wallis test for total professional experience, the sigma value for job stress showed that stress was significantly equal in all individuals having different professional experiences. Similarly in CWB, the sigma value showed that counter-productive work behavior was also significantly equal in all individuals.

Jobs Switched	First	<2	<4	<6	>6	P-value
Job stress	188.79	152	181.13	225.5	192.63	0.025
CWB	181.11	171.11	151.81	205.60	205.69	0.503

In Kruskal Wallis test for numbers of job switched, the sigma value for job stress showed that there was a significant difference in all individuals and the results shows that the individuals who had switched less than 6 jobs were facing more stress than others. Similarly in CWB, the sigma value showed that there was no significant difference between all individuals switching different jobs.

Designation	AVP	OG-I	OG-II	OG-III	P-value
Job stress	171.91	170.43	163.95	199.86	0.083
CWB	176.47	193.72	168.88	166.01	0.234

In Kruskal Wallis test for individuals who were at different designations, the sigma value for job stress was 0.083 > 0.05 showed that stress was significantly equal in all individuals at different designations. Similarly in CWB, the sigma value was 0.234 > 0.05 showed that counter-productive work behavior was significantly equal in all individuals.

Comfortable in computers	Very comfortable	Somewhat comfortable	Neutral	Somewhat Uncomfortable	Very Uncomfortable	P value
Job stress	161.28	187.13	227.78	143.25	205.95	0.00
CWB	143.54	207.32	202.69	225.75	213.68	0.00

In Kruskal Wallis test for individuals using computers, the sigma value for job stress was 0.000 < 0.05 showed that stress was significantly not equal in all individuals and the stress was faced

more by the individuals who were neither comfortable nor uncomfortable with using computers. Similarly in CWB, the sigma value is $0.000 < 0.05$ showed that counter-productive work behavior was significantly not equal in all individuals and the employees who are somewhat uncomfortable with using computers are more involved in CWB.

Gender Analysis of Job Stress

No.	Test Variables	Grouping Variables	Mean Ranks		Z-value	P-value
			Male	Female		
1	Huge attention	Gender	172.82	189.86	-1.446	0.148
2	Remember things	Gender	174.13	185.1	-0.88	0.374
3	Excessive Workload	Gender	172.81	189.91	-1.354	0.176
4	Poor Communication	Gender	172.72	190.24	-1.367	0.172
5	Unclear Roles	Gender	167.05	210.8	-3.3443	0.001
6	Conflicts between staff	Gender	171.75	193.76	-1.720	0.085
7	Not receive appreciation	Gender	177.41	173.21	-0.329	0.742
8	Unfair performance evaluation system	Gender	175.07	181.7	-0.521	0.603
9	No opportunities of advancement	Gender	173.36	187.89	-1.146	0.252
10	Technology problems	Gender	173.17	186.41	-1.044	0.296
11	Age Problems	Gender	174.79	182.72	-0.633	0.527
12	Noisy Area	Gender	181.52	158.28	-1.832	0.067
13	No emotional attachment	Gender	182.53	154.59	-2.201	0.028
14	Boss shouting	Gender	177.85	171.59	-0.498	0.618
15	Leg pulling behavior	Gender	178.63	168.78	-0.776	0.438
16	Long working hours	Gender	178.88	167.87	-0.864	0.387
17	Unsatisfied with salary	Gender	181.51	158.32	-1.812	0.7
18	Boring and dull workplace	Gender	179.90	164.16	-1.244	0.213
19	Overtime	Gender	180.04	163.64	-1.290	0.197

1. The p-value for huge attention is $0.148 > 0.05$ showed that huge attention given to work was significantly equal in males and females.
2. The p-value for remember many things is $0.374 > 0.05$ showed that remember many things in job was significantly equal in males and females.
3. The p-value for excessive workload is $0.176 > 0.05$ showed that excessive workload was significantly equal in males and females.
4. The p-value for poor communication is $0.172 > 0.05$ showed that poor communication in workplace was significantly equal faced by males and females.
5. The p-value for unclear roles and responsibilities is $0.001 < 0.05$ showed that unclear roles and responsibilities was significantly not equal in males and females. Furthermore the mean ranks depict that females have more unclear roles and responsibilities than males.
6. The p-value for conflict between staff members is $0.085 > 0.05$ showed that conflicts between staff was significantly equal in males and females.
7. The p-value for not receive any appreciation is $0.742 > 0.05$ showed that appreciation given to employees when their work is good was significantly equal in males and females.
8. The p-value for unfair performance evaluation system is $0.603 > 0.05$ showed that results on organization unfair performance evaluation system was significantly equal in males and females.
9. The p-value for no opportunities for advancement is $0.252 > 0.05$ showed that opportunities for advancement was significantly equal in males and females.
10. The technology problems p-value is $0.296 > 0.05$ showed that both males and females have faced the same technological problems.
11. The age problems p-value is $0.527 > 0.05$ showed that aging problems was significantly equal in males and females.
12. The noisy area p-value is $0.067 > 0.05$ showed that both males and females have equally faced the problem of noisy working area.
13. The emotional attachment p-value is $0.0028 < 0.05$ showed that emotional attachment with work was significantly not equal in males and females. Furthermore it is evident that males have felt it more as compared to females.
14. The boss shouting p-value is $0.618 > 0.05$ showed that shouting faced by boss was significantly equal in males and females.
15. The leg pulling behavior p-value is $0.438 > 0.05$ showed that leg pulling behavior faced by males and females was significantly equal.
16. The long working hour's p-value is $0.387 > 0.05$ showed that long working hours in workplace was significantly equal in males and females.
17. The salary rewards p-value is $0.70 > 0.05$ showed that dissatisfaction with salary rewards was significantly equal in males and females.
18. The boring and dull workplace p-value is $0.213 > 0.05$ showed that it was significantly equal in males and females.
19. The overtime problems p-value is $0.197 > 0.05$ showed that work overtime due to pressure of work was significantly equal in males and females.

Correlation Analysis

	Variable 1: Job Stress	Variable 2: CWB
Variable 1: Job Stress		
Pearson Correlation	1	.379
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	352	352
Variable 2: CWB		
Pearson Correlation	.379	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	352	352

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In the correlation table the sigma value was 0.000 means that there was a relationship between job stress and CWB and the degree of association between job stress and CWB was 37.9%. From the value of correlation coefficient it was concluded that there was not a very strong but still a sufficient positive correlation between job stress and CWB exists.

Regression Analysis

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.379 ^a	.144	.141	.67669

In the model summary generated by SPSS, the “R” shows the correlation between both variables, “R square” tells the level of association between both the variables and adjusted R square tells the level of association within population. The value of adjusted R square is 0.141 or 14.1% means that 14.1% employees involved in counter-productive work behavior was due to work stress.

Coefficients					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.747		5.473	.000
	Variable 1: Job Stress	.359	.379	7.668	.000

The p-value for beta coefficient of variable 1: job stress was 0.000. Therefore we cannot accept the null hypothesis. The impact of job stress was positively related with employee CWB.

Findings

It was concluded that the job stress, CWB and questionnaire cronbach alpha value is greater than 0.7 which shows that the questions to find the impact of job stress on CWB of employees are reliable. It is evident from the results that overall sample was mainly facing job stress due to huge deal of attention demanded by their work beyond normal jobs range, remember many things, excessive workload than normal work, forced to work more by their supervisors and employers, poor communication, no appreciation received from management, unfair performance evaluation system, inappropriate working conditions and inappropriate salaries and rewards. These all job stressors took the employee towards CWB. The survey results shown that the major CWB in which the employees involved were purposely damaged their organization property, come to late work without permission, stayed at home to avoid work and purposely work incorrectly. Although the percentage of employees involved in CWB due to job stress was low in banking sector and most of the employees said that they were not engage in any negative behavior but still if the issue of job stress will not be catered properly by the organizations than there are bright possibility that the percentage of employees involved in CWB in the future will raise.

Conclusion

This study investigates the relationship between job stress and employee CWB. From the survey results it was concluded that there was an impact of job stress on employees CWB, the employees working in different banks suffered from stress and this stress somewhat lead them to counter-productive work behavior. The correlation analysis also shows that there was enough positive correlation exists between job stress and employee counter-productive work behavior. The p-value for beta coefficient in regression analysis was also 0.000, thus we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis which also states that the impact of job stress was positively related with employee CWB.

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