

research in brief

Job/Life Stresses

A study was conducted on the relationships of job and life stresses on resulting job strain. Job strain was defined as the various responses to job stress and often was mixed with life stresses.

Five potential job stresses were identified:

1. Role ambiguity (several previous studies have shown a relationship between role ambiguity and low job satisfaction).
2. Subjective, quantitative work load (positively related to work tension, but negatively with job satisfaction).
3. Use of abilities (related to low job satisfaction).
4. Participation (related to high job satisfaction).
5. Responsibility for people (resulting strains often causes ulcers, heart disease, etc.).

A random sample of 2,001 employees of a federal agency (kept anonymous in the study) was selected. Completed forms were returned by 77% of the employees. However, only 1,301 were usable in the study analyses.

Most of the study subjects reported that they wanted more use of their skills and abilities and more participation in decision making than they currently had at the time of the study.

The results suggested that job-related strain can be effectively predicted using a combination of job and life stresses. Job involvement is potentially a critical moderator of the effects of job and life stresses. In this study, for females, the life stresses accounted for more of the variance in strain than of any of the job stresses; whereas, job stresses were primarily responsible for job strain of the males.

Editor's Note:

How can we in Extension best look at life and job stresses for employees at all levels of the organization and develop ways to predict and alleviate these stresses?

"Job Strain as a Function of Job and Life Stresses." Jack Singer. Ph.D. dissertation, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, 1975.

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