Shahid Sadoughi University of Medical Sciences School of Public Health

Social Behavior Research & Health

Social Behavior Research & Health

Social Determinants of Health Research Center

The Relationship between Social Support and Job Performance of Social Workers

Seyed Reza Javadian [a*], **Atefeh Hosseini** [a]

[a] Department of Social Sciences, Yazd University, Yazd, Iran.

ARTICLE INFO

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Article History:
Received: 11 May 2019
Revised: 23 Nov 2019
Accepted: 3 May 2020

***Corresponding Author:**
Seyed Reza Javadian

Email:
Javadian@yazd.ac.ir

Tel: +98 9131022330

Citation:
Javadian SR, Hosseini A. The Relationship between Social Support and Job Performance of Social Workers. Social Behavior Research & Health (SBRH). 2020; 4(1): 480-486.

ABSTRACT

Background: Receiving social support can result in a better job performance. For this reason, this study aimed to investigate the relationship between social support and job performance of social workers in Tehran.

Methods: The statistical population included all social workers working in Tehran. For this purpose, 325 social workers in Tehran in 2017 were selected and studied by non probability convenience sampling and Cochran's formula. Phillips Social Support Inventory (PSSI) and Job Performance Questionnaire (JPQ) were used for data collection. In order to analyze the data, the correlation coefficient test, independent t-test, and multivariate regression were used.

Results: The results indicated a positive correlation between all components of social support (family members' support, friends' support, and the others' support) and job performance among social workers ($P < 0.01$). Regression analysis showed that it is only the others' support which can predict changes in job performance ($P < 0.01$). Other results indicated that female and older social workers had a better job performance than male and younger social workers.

Conclusion: Receiving enough social support puts the job performance of social workers in a desriable place and thus provides better quality services.

Keywords: Social support, Job performance, Social workers

Copyright: © 2020 The Author(s); Published by Social Behavior Research & Health. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (http://creativecommons.org/ licenses/by/4.0),which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

[Downloaded from sbrh.ssu.ac.ir on 2026-11-21]

[DOR: 20.1001.1.27832104.2020.4.1.5.2]

[DOI: 10.18502/sbrh.v4i1.2827]

Introduction

In any society, one of the goals and programs of the social system is improving the welfare and well-being of people in the society; it requires the presence of some efficient social workers to take the requried measures with their interventions with the help of other specialists. Obviously, a social worker helps the clients by adhering to the ethical charter of social workers with sincerity, loyalty, stability and maximum use of professional skills and competence and attempts to improve the policy of the institution as well as its efficiency and effectiveness (Hosseini et al., 2018). In this regard, the job performance of social workrs is one of their efficiency indicators; job performance means the ability of employees for fulfilling job tasks as well as the presence of motivation in them, because if employees have the required ability and motivation, their performance will be good (Mohamadi et al., 2011). The job performance of social workers is often as one of the individual, group, and social approaches or includes a mixture of them. In the individual approach, the social worker helps the clients to establish a better relationship with the society. In the group approach, the social worker helps individuals in groups to realize their potentials and use their talents while in the social approach, the social worker attracts the participation of the society members to address their collective needs and problems (Hosseini et al., 2018).

The job performance of social workers is related to many factors such as social support. Social support is defined as the amount of support, care, respect, attention, and help received by a person on behalf of other groups like family members, friends, and others. In general, it can be said that social support means the the feelings of a person is regarded by others and others value him and the fact that he belongs to a social network (Bashiri, 2015). Clinical researchers believe that social support refers to the amount of support and encouragement received from family members, friends, colleagues, caretakers, and other important people (Nissi et al., 2001). In addition, it includes the social resources whcih people are ready to receive for improving their relationships (Asadimehr & Safarzadeh, 2014). Social support, as one of the emotional confrontation techniques, can protect individuals by preventing stressful situations or help them evaluate stressful events in a way to be less threatening (Reblin & Uchino, 2008). Such an issue is of higher improtnace especially in case of the social workers working in organizations, and if there are not sufficient support resources to reduce the job pressures of social workers, the performance with social workers' dissatisfaction will have negative effects not only on themselves but also on the authorities, organization, and ultimately the society. The significance of paying attention to the job performance of social workers at three levels of micro, medium, and macro, is completely obvious to the planners and policymakers of social welfare. Because the clients to social workers and their companions are often the weak and most vulnerable class of society and should be treated appropriately by social workers due to their conditions, on the other hand, social workers should learn new skills and promote their own job performance to provide their clients with high quality services. Social workers, as human beings, interact with family, friends, and other members of society in addition to serving in organizations. Receiving sufficient social support can promote mental health and also their job performance. Some studies were conducted on the relationship between social support and job performance. However, the conducted studies indicated that the relationship between social support and job performance of social workers was not studied in Iran. Accordingly, the researcher aimed to invetsigate the relationship between the job performance of social workers in Tehran and its relationship with social support in a descriptive – correlational study.

In fact, the present study aimed to answer the question of is social support related to the job performance of social workers?

[Downloaded from sbrh.ssu.ac.ir on 2026-11-21]
[DOR: 20.1001.1.27832104.2020.4.1.5.2]
[DOI: 10.18502/sbrh.v4i1.2827]

Methods

This study was a descriptive study of correlational type. Based on the surveys conducted by the Iranian Social Workers Association, the number of social workers in Tehran in 2017 was about 2000. In this case, the sample size was 325 individuals based on Cochran's formula. The method used for sampling in this study is non probability convenience sampling. The data collection tool included two questionnaires of social support and job performance.

Philips Social Support Inventory (PSSI) has 23 items and is scored as yes or no. The score ranges from zero to 23. In a study for determining the reliability of this questionnaire, the two methods of Cronbach's alpha and bisection were used, being respectively equal to 0.78 and 0.80 (7). In this study, Cronbach's alpha of the social support questionnaire was calculated as 0.696. Patterson's (1970) Job Performance Questionnaire (JPQ), which was translated Shekarkan and Arshadi in 1990 (Saatchi et al., 2012) in Iran by, includes four dimensions of adherence to work discipline, sense of responsibility at work, cooperation at work, and improvement of work and has 16 questions.

The scoring of this questionnaire is based on the Likert scale (never 1; rarely 2; sometimes 3; often 4; always 5) and has the lowest score of 16 and the highest score of 80. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient of job performance questionnaire was calculated as 0.931. It should be noted that Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, descriptive statistics, correlation statistical tests, independent t-test, and regression analysis were used with SPSS-21 software in order to analyze the data after examining the normality of data distribution. In addition, incomplete questionnaires were excluded from the analysis process and also social workers were assured that their answers would be kept confidential. The present study was derived from the master's degree in social work under the ethics code IR.YAZD.REC.1398.023 approved by Yazd University.

Results

Among the participants in the study, 82.2% were female and 59.7% were married. 9.2% had an associate's degree, 60.6% had a bachelor's degree, 27.7% had a master's degree, and 2.5% had a PhD.

The results of the correlation coefficient test in Table 2 indicated a significant positive correlation between social support and all its components with job performance ($P < 0.01$).

Table 3 indicates a positive relationship between age and job performance ($P < 0.01$), which means that job performance increases with the increase of age.

The results of T-test in Table 4 indicate that the job performance of females is different from males. In other words, the mean score of job performance among females is higher than that of males.

Based on the results of Enter regression, the dimensions of social support predict 7% variance of job performance. In the meantime, it is only the others' support which significantly explains job performance.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics related to the variable of job performance and its dimensions

Variable and its dimensions	minimum	maximum	Mdian	Mean	Variance	Standard deviation
Job performance	18	80	74	70.85	112.58	10.61
Adherence to work discipline	4	20	19	17.64	8.75	2.95
Sense of repsoinsbility at work	5	20	20	18.15	8.34	2.88
Cooperation at work	4	20	18	17.27	9.43	3.07
Improvement of work	4	20	19	17.77	9.06	3.01

[Downloaded from sbrh.ssu.ac.ir on 2026-11-21]
[DOR: 20.1001.1.27832104.2020.4.1.5.2]
[DOI: 10.18502/sbrh.v4i1.2827]

Table 2. The results of Pearson correlation test between social support and its components with job performance

Variables	Job performance	
	Pearson correlation coefficient	Significance value
Social support	0.26	0.001
Family members' support	0.17	0.002
Friends' support	0.19	0.001
Others' support	0.25	0.001

Table 3. Spearman correlation coefficient test table between age and job performance

Variables	Job performance	
	Spearman correlation coefficient	Significance value
Age	0.18	0.001

Table 4. Table of independent T-test results between gender and job performance

	Gender	N	Mean	Standard deviation	t	df	Sig
Job performance	males	58	66.84	11.14	-3.219	323	0.001
	females	267	71.72	10.3			

Table 5. Multivariate regression analysis results for predicting job performance through social support dimensions

Predictor variables	Raw coefficients		Standard coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Contsnta values	56.56	3.02		18.73	0.000
Family members' support	0.353	0.431	0.051	0.819	0.414
Friends' support	0.607	0.431	0.087	1.408	0.160
Others' support	1.318	0.449	0.192	2.933	0.004
R = 0/273			F = 8/57		
ADJ.R^2 = 0/066			Sig = 0/000		

Discussion

Based on the obtained results, the relationship between social support and job performance of social workers was approved. Asadimehr and Safarzadeh (2014) stduied the relationship between social support and teachers' job performance. They showed that the increase of social support among elementary school teachers was related to an increase in their job performance (Asadimehr & Safarzadeh, 2014). In addition, other studies confirmed the relationship between social support and job performance (Askari & Nekezadeh 2010; Golparvar, 2016; Aini, 2010).

In explaining this result, it should be said that social support is one of the factors which can lead to a disrurbance in performance in case of its lack; increasing social support can directly affect the job performance of social workers. Due to the role of support in job performance, social support can be regarded as one of the techniques of adjusting the negative pressures caused by job. The lack of social support, particularly when job stresses can cause lots of difficulties and reduce the quality of job performance. If such supports are increased, the person will work with more pleasure and consequently the job performance will be at a higher level. Another result of the study showed a correlation between age and job performance. Different opinions were presented about the role of age in employee behavior. Kunze et al. (2013) believed that age is one of the factors which affect the level of motivation among individuals. Younger people have normally much more motivations for fulfilling the tasks, make career progress, and present a better performance (Kunze et al., 2013). On the contrary, there are other theories which

[Downloaded from sbrh.ssu.ac.ir on 2026-11-21]

[DOR: 20.1001.1.27832104.2020.4.1.5.2]

[DOI: 10.18502/sbrh.v4i1.2827]

underestimate the role of age. Mathieu and Zajak (1990) considered personal traits as an important factor in the growth and development of the organizational commitment level, and in line with age, they believed that older employees have more tendency to organizational commitment compared to young people. Some researchers emphasized negative reasons for this fact. Older employees have less job opportunities and endanger their benefits in case of leaving the organization. Others believe that older employees are more satisfied and thus have better job opportunities (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). With a look at the current theories and examination of the studies, it is obvious that there are different findings. The results of this study are consistent with some studies but inconsistent with others; the results of this study are consistent with the results of studies by Carllius and Considine (2002) measuring the relationship between age and work quality (Carllius & Considine, 2002). There are also some other studies which are inconsistent with the results of this study such as the study by Bakhshi et al. (2017) that found no relationship between age and job performance. Another result of the study idnicated a significant correlation between gender and job performance; in other words, the score of females' job performance was higher than males'. Investigating the conducted studies showed that the above-mentioenc results were consistent with the findings of Jafari et al. (2013) and Bakhshi and Kalantari (2017) evalauting the relationship between gender and job performance (Jafari et al., 2013; Bakhshi & Kalantari, 2017). It should be noted that social work is a job being more involved with social harms. The harms such as addiction, imprisonment of spouse, girls' runaway, female-headed households, and alike are somehow related to female gender; Even the addiction which often involves men is that is a harm which affects women and children, and on the other hand, women are vulnerable human beings and thus it is obvious that a female social worker better understands women's problems; Thus, since the hypothesis of the relationship between gender and job performance was confirmed ans due to the better performance of female social workers than male social workers especially in the areas where most clients are female is more appropriate. There are some findings such as Uppal (2017) as well as Shafi Abadi and Khalaj Asadi (2010) rejecting the relationship between gender and job performance.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that if social workers are supported by family, friends, and society, their job performance will increase. Thus, their families should encourage their members who are also the members of the social worker community. Respect, love, help at the time of need, intimacy, and admiration of social workers are some of methods for increasing support from their family members. Friends, colleagues, clients, authorities of society, and other indivdiuals can take a positive step toward promoting job performance by paying attention to social workers' successes, valuing social workers services, and considering them significant. Since there was a positive relationship between age and job performance, it can be expected that older and more experienced social workers have provided the younger social workers with the necessary guidance in form of supervisoion sessions to enable them take steps towards improving their job performance. Among the limitation of this study was the influence of some social workers on each other at the time of completing the questionnaire and the insufficient concentration of some social workers while answering because of workload and the large number of questions in the questionnaire.

Conflict of interest

Authors declare no conflict of interests during the study period.

Acknowledgements

The authors of the study would like to thank the manager and social workers of welfare, social work, and social services organizations and institutions of Tehran who have had a

[Downloaded from sbrh.ssu.ac.ir on 2026-11-21]
[DOR: 20.1001.1.27832104.2020.4.1.5.2]
[DOI: 10.18502/sbrh.v4i1.2827]

competent cooperation in conducting this study.

Authors' Contribution

Conceptualization, A.H.; Methodology, A.H. and S.R.J.; Formal Analysis, A.H. and S.R.J.; Investigation, A.H. and S.R.J.; Writing - Review & Editing, S.R.J.; Supervision, S.R.J.; Writing - Original Draft, A.H.

All authors read and approved the final manuscript. All researchers are responsible about any question related to the manuscript.

References

Aini, S. (2010). Impact of trust and social support on employee's job satisfaction and commitment. Master Thesis. Ming Chuan University. Taiwan.

Asadimehr, E., Safarzadeh, S. (2014). Investigation of the relationship between social support and job performance in elementary teachers of Baghmalek city. The first scientific conference on educational sciences and psychology, social and cultural injuriesIran,Tehran:18. https://www.civilica.com/Paper-PSCONF01-PSCONF01_375.html

Askari, P, Nekezadeh, M. (2010). Relationship between job stress, social support and job satisfaction among national drilling company staff. Journal of Social psychology, 5(14), 37-52.

Bakhshi E, Kalantari R, Salimi N. (2017). Assessment of job performance and its determinants in healthcare workers in islamabad-e Gharb city based on ACHIVE model in 2016. Arak Medical University Journal (AMUJ), 20(2), 1-9. [Persian]

Bakhshi E, Kalantari R. (2017). Investigation of quality of work Life and its Relationship with Job Performance in Health Care Workers. Journal of occupational hygiene engineering (JOHE), 3(4), 31-37. [Persian]

Bashiri, Y. (2015). Investigation of social factors on violence against women (Sanandaj and Bijar Cities). Master Thesis. Faculty of Social Sciences. Allameh Tabatabaei University. Tehran. [Persian]

Carllius R. Considine G. (2002). The quality of work life to australian employees. Australian Centre for Industrial Relations Research and Training (ACIRRT).

Golparvar, S. (2016). The effectiveness of perceived organizational support on organizational commitment. Master Thesis. Allameh Tabatabaei University. Tehran. [Persian]

Hosseini A, Javadian S, Farahmand M. (2018). The relationship between organizational climate and job performance in social workers in the city of Tehran. Quarterly journal of social work, 7(1), 37-45. [Persian]

Jafari, M., Maleki, M., Eyvazi, M., Khodayari, R., Ahadi, B. (2013). The study of relationship between job burnout and performance in East Azerbaijan's health house workers. Journal Health System Research, 9(11), 1375-1384. [Persian]

Kunze, F., Boehm, S., Bruch, H. (2013). Age, resistance to change, and job performance, Journal of Managerial Psychology, 28(7/8), 741-760. https://doi.org/10.1108/JMP-06-2013-0194

Mathieu, J.E., Zajac, D.M. (1990). A review and meta-analysis of the antecedents, correlates and consequences of organizational commitment, psychological Bulletin, 108(2), 171-194.

Mohamadi, H., Ahmadi, E., Amin shayan jahromi, S. (2011). On the relationship between personality characteristics and entrepreneurship of women. Quarterly Journal of Women and Society, 2(5), 99-120. [Persian]

Nissi, AK., Najjarian, B., Pourfarej, SF. (2001). Comparison of academic performance, mental and physical health among students with and without father and regarding the moderating role of social support in first grade high schools in Ahvaz. Journal of Education and Psychology, 8(3-4), 67-86. [Persian]

Reblin, M., Uchino, B. (2008). Social and emotional support and links to physical health. Current Opinions in Psychiatry, 21(5): 211-215.

Saatchi, M., Kamkari K., Asgarian, M. (2012). Psychological tests.3th ed. Iran. Tehran: Virayesh; P.336. [Persian].

[Downloaded from sbrh.ssu.ac.ir on 2026-11-21]
[DOR: 20.1001.1.27832104.2020.4.1.5.2]
[DOI: 10.18502/sbrh.v4i1.2827]

Shafi Abadi, A., Khalaj Asadi, SH. (2010). Relationship between job satisfaction and mental health among university Staff. Journal of Industrial/Organizational Psychology, 1(2), 27-33. [Persian]

Uppal N. (2017). Moderation effects of perceived organizational support on curvilinear relationship between neuroticism and job performance. Personality and Individual Differences, 105, 47-53. [DOI:10.1016/j.paid. 2016. 09.030]

[Downloaded from sbrh.ssu.ac.ir on 2026-11-21]

[DOR: 20.1001.1.27832104.2020.4.1.5.2]

[DOI: 10.18502/sbrh.v4i1.2827]