

Work Stress Level and Coping Strategies Among Jordanian Customs Employees*

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Abstract

This study tests a work stress model by evaluating the work stress level and work stress coping strategies experienced by Jordanian Customs Department employees, ranks the coping strategies of work stress, measuring work stress level, and evaluates the relationships between stress patterns. The sample consists of 248 Jordanian Customs officers, for whom correlation, means, path analysis and frequencies were computed. The major findings of the study show that Jordanian Customs employees experienced flexibility, acceptance of others' values, active and productive, as the major coping strategies they used to overcome work stress. The relationship between the level of work stress and coping strategies is strong while the relationship with personal differences is weak.

Keywords: work stress sources; coping strategies; Jordan; customs

Introduction

Occupational stress is generating increasing concern among public and media concern, employers, and trade unions. Workplace health and safety representatives in many countries are seeking solutions for guidance both on the nature and causes of the problem and on the legal requirements relating to its prevention and control. A number of factors have to be considered in the study of stress, for example, the multidimensionality of the study, the definition of stress, the strong relationship between stress and behaviour, the increasing negative effects of stress on work, and the overall multidimensionality of stress issue.

Stress can influence an individual's behaviour either negatively or positively. Many researchers, like Spielberger (1979, p.4), believe that work stress is one of the most important factors affecting productivity because of the direct relationship between the individual's behaviour and the stress he experiences. However, as stress is multidimensional, there is often confusion

about the term. According to Krohe (1999, p.36), coping with stress is the effective reduction of its negative effects. He states that senior managers often think it necessary to create a stressful work environment to adduce the best performance from their staff. However, stress can also be an obstacle to good performance, innovation, and creativity. Stress may lead to the commission of criminal acts (Schlesinger and Revitch, 1981). Recent studies have shown that the financial cost of work stress has increased considerably worldwide (Spielberger and Reheiser, 1995; Golembiewski et al., 1998; Levy, 1998, p.40), in the USA (Matteson and Ivancivich, 1987, p.241; Richardson and Larsen, 1997, Arntz (1999, p.12), Deneen (1998, p.32), Aldred (1998, p. 19) on UK and, Krohe (1999) in Japan

The causes of on-the-job stress, as Turner (1998, p.19) states, ranges from severely traumatic experiences, such as fire or bombings, to injury or violence on the job. There are other negative outcomes to the organization, such as increased staff turnover (Maslach and Jackson, 1981; Matteson and Ivancivich, 1987, p.241) and absenteeism (Warshow, 1979). For example, US companies were reckoned to lose \$18 billion annually from the consequences of stress outcomes such as turnover and absenteeism (United States, 1997, p.39). However, the most important negative effects may well be those that affect productivity and employee health (Cooper and Payne, 1988; Kahn et al., 1964; Karasek and Theorel, 1990; Keite and Sauter, 1992; Levi, 1981; Matteson and Ivancivich, 1982; Perrewé, 1991; Quick et al., 1992).

The customs workers of most developing countries suffer various degrees of stress because of the nature and responsibility of their work. Customs work is high stress as the duties are difficult, varies qualitatively and quantitatively (social, economical and political) and heavy with responsibility at the international and national levels. Kasl (1998) found that high-stress jobs (like customs work) have chronic, unrelenting demands, a pace often dictated by extraneous factors, a necessity for constant vigilance, the prospect of drastic consequences such as the loss of life if the work demands are not met, and slipover between work and leisure time.

Nature of Stress

There have been many studies on work stress that have been carried out by researchers. Hogan and Joyce (1982, p.141) found the stress literature to be extensive and complex, traversing fields as diverse as Clinical and Applied Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology, Psychosomatic Medicine, Industrial Relations and Epidemiological. Putting it simply, stress is a natural and unavoidable part of life (Modern Business Report 1975, p.12; Quick et al., 1987), with some researchers even believing it to be a *sine qua non* of life (Auerbach and Gramling, 1998). Stress can, therefore, be looked at from

several different points of view, covering many different disciplines as mentioned above.

For the purpose of this study and after reviewing the literature we can define stress as an extraordinary state affecting the individual human functions as an outcome of internal and external factors that differ qualitatively (different types of stressors) and quantitatively (different number of stressors) in its outcome from individual performance due to individual differences.

Literature Review

This section highlights the analysis of many studies and theories related to work stress. Matteson and Ivancevich (1989) developed organizational stress framework that includes sources of work stress such as job factors; role conflict; role ambiguity; work overload; and insufficient control. Further, they examined the influence of biological/demographic variables such as age, sex, occupation, health status, education, and social support. Other proximate variables investigated in this model include cognitive/affective variables such as need levels, locus of control, Type A/B traits, hardiness, and self-esteem. Another model is the major categories of stress-at-work model, developed by Kahn and Cooper (1993). The model includes stressors intrinsic to the job, such as working conditions, the role of the individual in the organization, career development, relationships with others, and organizational structure and climate - the interface between home and work

An expended review of the stress literature at the international level covering (Manning et al. (1996), Crampton et al. (1995, p.15), Peterson et al. (1995), Golembiewski et al. (1998), Xie (1996), Edwards (1996), Arlene (1996, p.88), Seers et al. (1983), Antonioni (1995, p.7), Xie and Gary (1995), Bolger and Zuckerman (1995), Brown and Cooper (1996), Aouserie (1996, p.49) and Wellbrock (2000)) shows numerous studies on work stress as it relates to different groups of workers such as the police, teachers, nurses, air traffic controllers, students, and army officers. Those studies investigated sources of work stress, coping strategies and other variables. Additionally, studies on the Customs Departments employees are rare except the study by Barhem (1996), which employed a different model than the more efficient and encompassing one we are using here

Work stress studies in Jordan have been conducted in different fields such as Jordanian private companies (Mohamd, 1999), Jordanian Customs (Barhem, 1996), Jordanian public managers (Awamlah, 1994), and Jordanian bank staff (Dawood, 1991).

The need for this study

There are two main reasons for this study: a problem that affects individuals and all around the individuals in real time. Rare research addressed this issue among customs workers in Jordan. This study evaluates a new model for occupational stress. The model is designed to evaluate the stress patterns in terms of personal differences, the level of work stress and coping strategies, in order to glean a general understanding of how to cope with the stress, within the customs job environment. This would help to highlight stress level and effects on Customs employees. Results of this study will form a benchmark for future studies. They would also help Jordanian Customs improve their staff performance by testing the appropriate work environment to identify work stress level and coping strategies.

The reasons for choosing Jordan in order to study the problem are many. First, Jordan entered a new economic era after 1994 when it started to invite foreign investment, specifically after establishing the free trade zone in Aqaba in 2001. With its more open borders, the Jordanian Customs have had to work harder to prevent smuggling (of drugs and other dangerous materials) from the neighboring countries, as a result of which several officers have lost their lives or have been seriously injured. Second, the conditions under which the Jordanian Customs operate today are seriously noticed with its large inflow of foreign investment. This study aims to help improve the Jordanian Customs by evaluating their performance.

The Jordanian Customs

The Jordanian Customs is one of the most important public institutions in the country, providing it with about 50% (about US\$900 million) of its revenue (Annual Report, 1998). Naturally, the government is trying very hard to improve its performance. The Customs Department comes under the Ministry of Finance and is run by a Director-General assisted by five Deputies. Its goals (Annual Report, 1998) are to support local industries, facilitate commercial exchange, protect the national economy and generate income for the treasury. The Jordanian Customs have several posts throughout the country summarized in Table 1.

Table (1)
Jordanian customs posts

Post	Number
Border stations	14
Inner stations	7
Customs clearance stations	16
Custom stations	21

Source: Jordanian customs department, Annual Report, 1998

Objectives of the study

There were two objectives of this study: -

- To evaluate the work stress level, and the strategies that help to cope with the stress as experienced by the Jordanian Customs employees.
- To rank the coping strategies of work stress among Jordanian Customs employees.

The Current Study

The previous studies concentrated on one or more of stress patterns, some were concerned with different sources of work stress or different coping strategies of work stress or the relationship of one of them with personal differences, and mostly they were in other fields. The current study is including many patterns of work stress, the level of work stress, a set of different coping strategies of work stress, and a set of personal differences. It was derived from the theoretical models developed by Matteson and Ivancevich (1989), and Kahn and Cooper (1993). The variables included in the study (figure 1) are very important to the manager daily functions who can deal with them directly without the need for experts in the Psychological or medical aspects of work stress; they are managerial work stress issues.

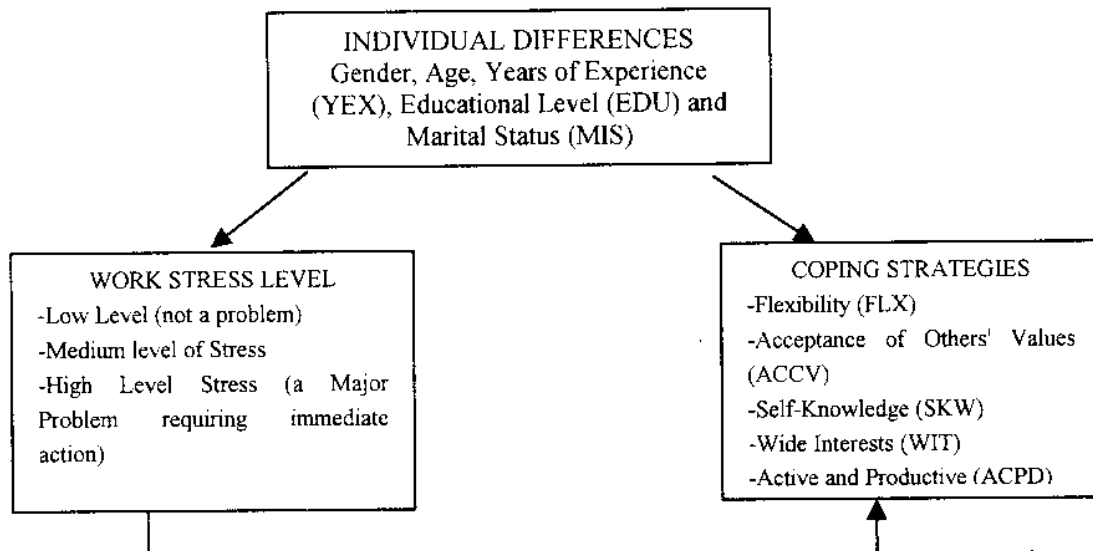


Figure 1: Model of the study

This model measures the relationships between the level of work stress (low, medium, and high) and a set of coping strategies (flexibility, acceptance of others' values, self-knowledge, wide-interest and active and productive). Flexibility means to react to stress differently at different times.

An individual is quite capable of adjusting his behavior within a short time to deal with a wide range of stress-inducing conditions, although this may require a variety of skills from him (Jayaranty and Chess, 1983).

Acceptance of others' values when a person should be aware of the different views of others and accept this as a fact of life. Tolerance is one of the major personal characteristics. Girdano et al. (1993) recommended examining our own expectations of self/others, expressing our feelings to others, greeting others and learning how to give and accept compliments. Self-knowledge is when an individual knows himself and accepts his own strengths and weaknesses. According to Krohe (1999), self-knowledge is obtained when you develop compassion and understanding for yourself and others, and a profound clarity that is otherwise unattained in a busy life. Also, gaining a sense of personal control over the situation will improve stress reduction (Yuen and Martin, 1998).

Wide interest means having many interests outside of work, such as hobbies, sports or leisure activity. Girdano et al. (1993) also recommended joining social groups and reading. Lastly, active and productive is to be active and productive at work without sacrificing similar activities at home or in the community. Such persons are not drained by their jobs. Stark (1999) suggested that keeping stress low in the workplace is vital to maintaining productive staff. When employee suggestions are heard and considered, the likelihood of stress and negative feelings are greatly reduced. Spreitzer et al. (1997) reported that the higher levels of competence reduce stress. Yuen and Martin (1998) recommended working faster and more efficiently.

The third part of the model is personal differences (sex, age, experience, educational level and marital status). Many studies are concerned with the relationship between the feeling of stress in the workplace and personal differences. The results have been varied, some finding the relationship and some not finding it at all. It is, however, important to present the results according to the purposes and personal differences investigated.

Men and women differ naturally in many ways, and, therefore, differences in their response to stressors are not unexpected (Russo, 1985; Stoney et al., 1985; Kerrler et al., 1985, Sultan 2000, Sultan 2001). According to Jick and Mitz (1985), males and females are subject to different patterns of stressors to which they respond differently (i.e. different outcomes and consequences) and cope with different strategies. Beehr and Shuler (1980) found little evidence that gender influences stress-related symptoms in the workplace. Alternatively, there is a lack of any sex related difference in work stress (Summers et al., 1995; Smith, 1993; Vinokur et al., 1996; Rosniah, 1990).

As stress affects age, so too does age affect stress (Matteson and Ivancivich, 1987). Also, stress increases disorders, as men grow older (Leighton, 1963; Comstock and Helsing, 1976). Auerbach and Gramling (1998) found coping ability to be very much a function of past experience. Kahn and Cooper (1993) stated that experience working as moderator of stress-strain relationship in a particular working environment. Mohamed (1999) observed that there is a negative relationship between the level of work stress, and work experience, education level and marital status. In terms of Educational Level, Syme (1975) found that stress illness rates increased as individuals climb above the social level commensurate with their educational level. The better educated and endowed a person is, the less stress he feels (Sutherland and Cooper, 1990). The marital states possible are single, married, divorced or widowed. Being married is less stressful and more satisfying for men than women (Jenkins, 1991; Crosby, 1984; Valdez and Gutek, 1987). On the other hand, divorced women or men may have a negative/positive performance although this would depend more on the individual (Crosby, 1985; Johnson and Skinner, 1986).

Hypotheses

Based on the reviewing of the literature from which our model was derived, we come up with the following hypotheses that can be tested in this research:

The study will examine three hypotheses:

- H₁: The Jordanian Customs suffer a high level of work stress.
- H₂: There is a relationship between personal differences and work stress level, and coping strategies.
- H₃: There is a relationship between work stress level and coping strategies.

Methodology

To measure the relationships between the variables according to the hypotheses, and the overall relationship between the variables, Pearson's correlation coefficient and Path analysis were used. These procedures were also used to measure averages and frequencies and to rank the sources of work stress and coping strategies. These analytical tools have been used previously by Ganster et al., 1992, p.329; Lee and Ashforth, 1990; Bhagat et al., 1995; Wetzels et al, 1999 and Potthoff et al., 1995 to measure such relationships.

A questionnaire was constructed to measure these relationships. This questionnaire consisted of three parts and was distributed to a random sample of Jordanian Customs employees by using stratified random sampling. A total of 248 members from Jordanian Customs Department participated in the study. The sampling technique used was stratified random sampling; the measurement for the level of work stress was adopted from Ivancivich and Micheal (1980). It comprised of 30 items to evaluate the influence of work stress level. The level of stress was measured by the respondents on a five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). Scoring measurement for the work stress level and coping strategies was ranked from 1 to 5, the influence level is divided into three parts; < 2.5 = (Low) level of influence; 2.5 ≤ 3.5 (Medium) level of influence; > 3.5 (High) level of influence.

The Demographic Characteristics (personal differences) constitute the last section of the questionnaire contains which questions yielding background information about the respondents. The sample characteristics are summarized in Table (2).

Reliability and Validity of the Tool of the Study

A pilot study was carried out to assess the internal consistency reliability of the tool of the study. The Cronbach alpha for work stress level and coping strategies measures scored 0.753. This assessment was also applied to the data collected (level and coping strategies); it was 0.778. The results indicated that the tool of the study was reliable within acceptable standards. Content validity was measured by using a five point scale (ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)) to classify the degree of feeling with stress patterns in all parts of the tool of the study. The construct validity of the tool of the study is consistent according to the internal reliability measures (Cronbach alpha results obtained for the pilot and sample measures); the range is 0.753 to 0.778 in all cases.

Discussion

The sample member characteristics are summarized in table (2). The table shows the age distribution and confidence interval estimates at 95% level between 3.24 and 3.65. The largest age group was 35 - 39 with 81 respondents, or 32.7%. An individual of this age is at the peak of his performance, with both the experience and energy to apply himself fully to his work. Recently, the Jordanian Customs has tried to attract more qualified employees to join it from other governmental institutions. An overwhelming response was received from those not satisfied with their positions, mainly those with <10 years working experience. The public employees in Jordan are generally happy after 10 years in their jobs because of the rather comfortable positions they have reached. After 1984, the criteria for employment became more stringent, in effect rising the average age for new employees to 24 years old.

The next largest age group was 30 - 34 years with 30.6% of the respondents - the medium age for employees in any organization. The minimum interval represented in this sample regarding age is the interval of less than 25 years old. The Jordanian Customs at present hires only graduates. Thus, new applicants are at least 22 years old, the normal minimum age to be a graduate. However, as the high employment in the country makes it normal to wait an average of three years to get a job, new employees are at least 25 years old. This explains the paucity of employees < 25 years old.

The table indicates that the educational level of the respondents and the 95% confidence interval estimates were (lower and upper bound) 2.78 and 3.04. The largest category had only high school education and Medium College (143 respondents, or 57.7%), reflecting the earlier policy to hire non-graduates and continuing their education in-service. Non-high school graduates were also hired as it was felt that the staff could be motivated to improve themselves throughout their careers. Thus, staff with only a high-school and Medium College qualification or lower constituted almost 64.9% of the respondents.

The experience was also presented with confidence interval estimates at 95% level between 3.01 and 3.52. The largest group was those with the most experience of greater than 12 years (86, or 39.8%). The next largest group was 4 - 6 years with 19.0%. The results are largely a reflection of the age profile of the respondents as greater than 40 years and 25 - 29 years were the two largest age groups. The bulk of them (210, or 84.7%) was married, reflecting the social norm and the incentives by the department to do so. The other categories were very small. The study found that marital status had no significant effect on the level of work stress suffered. Most were male (231, or 93.1%); this finding was not unexpected because of the isolated, arduous, dangerous and outdoor work involved and periodical transfers.

Table (4) and (Models 1 and 2, Appendix A) shows no significant relationship between medium and high work stress with age for the

Jordanians. No significant relationships were found between educational level and level of work stress.

Table (2)

Sample member characteristics

Profile	Category	Number	Percent	Cum. %
Age	< 25 years	7	2.8	2.8
	25-29 years	23	9.3	12.1
	30-34 years	76	30.6	42.7
	35-39 years	81	32.7	75.4
	> 40 years	61	24.6	100.0
Total		248	100.0	
Ed. level	< High-School	18	7.3	7.3
	High-School and Medium college	143	57.7	64.9
	1 st . Degree	75	30.2	95.2
	Master & PhD	12	4.8	100.0
	Total		248	100.0
Experience	< 3 years	29	11.7	11.7
	4-6 years	27	10.9	22.6
	7-9 years	64	25.8	48.4
	10-12 years	47	19	67.3
	> 12 years	81	32.7	100.0
Total		248	100.0	
Marital status	SINGLE	34	13.7	13.7
	MARRIED	210	84.7	98.4
	WI / DIV	4	1.6	100.0
Total		248	100.0	
Gender	Male	231	93.1	93.1
	Female	17	6.9	100.0
Total		248	100.0	

Table (3) gives the level of work stress suffered by the Jordanians (95% confidence level with a lower, upper bound (95.21, 99.22). The average work stress suffered was 97.22, just in the highest category of greater than 97. One sample test was conducted to test if μ (mean value of stress) is greater than 97, and it was found that the mean value of stress was significantly greater than 97. Therefore, the mean value stress for the Jordanian customs employees can be considered in the high-level category. Only three respondents, or 1.2%, had low-level stress, which means that the bulk of them suffered at least moderate stress. In fact, the majority (54%) suffered high stress. The lowest individual score was 51 and the highest 142.

Table (3)**Work stress suffered by the Jordanian customs**

Stress level	Number	Percent	Total	Means
≤55 (low)	3	1.2	159	53
>56 - 97 (medium)	110	44.4	9255.5	84.14
>97 (high)	135	54.4	14695	108.9
Total	248	100	24109.48	97.22

Why are the Jordanian customs employees suffering such high stress? After all, they are in a seemingly positive environment doing well for their country - they support the local industries, facilitate commercial exchange, protect the national economy, and generate income for the treasury. However, they are always under chronic and unrelenting pressure from demands outside their control, and have no clear demarcation between work and leisure time throughout their careers. The work is both indoors and outdoors, risky and with onerous demands on the qualities of leadership, initiative and integrity.

The Jordanian Customs are uniformed and required to work in shifts around-the-clock. They are thus in a constant state of vigilance (and stress), especially as their duties against smuggling may cost them their lives. Moreover, they are under constant temptation to which they may succumb. In addition, their work is highly sensitive to the national security and important to the national economy, for which they are given considerable decision-making authority. They work in stations deep in the desert under difficult conditions, yet are expected to give their best. With their low pay, there is a constant feeling of exploitation with their poor lot in life. All these factors, therefore, contribute to the high work stress experienced.

In other countries, Golembiewski et al. (1998) found that burnout in the U.S. public sector was not appreciably worse than in business. Rahim's (1996) major findings were that managers and entrepreneurs differ in their levels of stress suffered, locus of control and social support. Sameer (1988), working in an Arabic environment, found a significant relationship between work stress level and race.

Relationships between level of work stress (dependent variable) and personal differences (independent variables)

Table (4) summarizes the correlation analysis between the level of work stress and personal differences. No significant relationships were found at $p < 0.05$.

Table (4)
Correlations between the level of work stress and personal differences

		Age	EDL	YEX	MST	Gender
MID	Pearson	.036	-.040	-.063	.074	-.071
	Sig.	.707	.675	.513	.440	.464
	N	110	110	110	110	110
HIG	Pearson	-.076	.118	.074	-.064	-.053
	Sig.	.382	.174	.394	.459	.542
	N	135	135	135	135	135

EDL: educational level
MST: marital status
HIG: high level of work stress
YEX: years of experience
MID: medium level of work stress

Path analysis

The path analysis done used two models for the Jordanians (high and medium). The first model analysed the relationships for high work stress. The results were: Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) = 0.86, Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) = 0.82, Root Mean square Residual (RMR) = 0.095, chi-square (χ^2) with 136 degrees of freedom (df.) = 1423.73, significant at $P < 0.05$. Medium work stress was analysed by the second model, and the results were: GFI = 0.87, AGFI = 0.21, RMR = 0.10, χ^2 (136 df.) = 644.94 as shown in table (5)

Table (5)
Results from path analysis

Model	χ^2	GFI	AGFI	RMR
Jordanian high level	1423.73	0.86	0.82	0.10
Jordanian medium level	644.94	0.87	0.21	0.10

In the analysis between medium work stress and personal differences (Appendix A, Model 1), the strongest relationship was a positive one with gender while educational level was the weakest and negative. However, none of the relationships were significant. The results were, therefore, consistent with those from correlation analysis.

In terms of high level work stress (Appendix A, Model 2), there were also no significant relationships. The relationship with age was the strongest and positive, and with educational level the weakest. The results were also consistent with the correlation analysis. Dawood (1991) found a negative relationship between the level of work stress and age and years of experience, but not with marital status and educational level.

Table (6) summarizes the results of correlation between the level of work stress and coping strategies. At both medium and high-level work stress, there was only one significant relationship between medium level and flexibility at $p < 0.001$.

Table (6)

Correlations analysis between level of work stress and coping strategies

	MID	SKW	WIT	ACCV	ACDP	FLX
Pearson		-.153	.140	.010	.033	-.329
Sig.		.111	.145	.914	.731	.000**
N		110	110	110	110	110
HIG						
Pearson		-.015	.114	.151	-.081	-.137
Sig.		.865	.186	.081	.350	.113
N		135	135	135	135	135

**Correlation significant at $P = 0.01$ (2-tailed).

SKW: self-knowledge

WIT: wide interests

FLX: flexibility

ACCV: acceptance of other's values

ACDP: active and productive

Path analysis

Path analysis between medium work stress and coping strategies for the Jordanian customs (Model 1, Appendix A) showed that wide interest and flexibility strategies were significantly correlated with stress. In path analysis between high level stress and coping strategies (Model 2, Appendix A), the only significant relationship was a positive one with active and productive. The results were consistent with those from the correlation analysis for most of the variables, in particular, with active and productive.

Tables (7) and (8) rank the coping strategies against stress. Flexibility was the most common strategy against both medium and high-level stress, with average scores of 3.394 (SD = 0.65) and 3.15 (SD = 0.875), respectively. The individual's own idiosyncrasies, the diversity in his working conditions and changes in his duties require nothing short of constant adaptation just to carry on his daily life. Thus, he would need to be flexible to cope, especially as the stress can be carried home as well. Barhem (1996) also found flexibility to be the most common coping strategy in the Jordanian customs. The lowest scores against both levels of stress were recorded for wide interest, which means that the Jordanian customs are more flexible with people than with things due to their dearth of other interests.

Table (7)**Coping Strategies against medium stress by the Jordanian customs
(ranked in descending order)**

	FLX	ACPD	ACCV	SKW	WIT
N	110	110	110	110	110
Mean	3.3942	2.7432	2.5114	2.4227	2.0209
σ	.6435	.6248	.5898	.4046	.5391
Sum	373.36	301.75	276.25	266.50	222.30

In scoring the coping strategies, 2.55 was a medium value. This was far exceeded in table (3), which shows the Jordanian customs to be suffering from high work stress. However, if they can learn to cope better, it is possible to reduce their stress.

Table (8)**Coping Strategies against high stress level by the Jordanian customs
(ranked in descending order)**

	FLX	ACCV	ACPD	SKW	WIT
N	135	135	135	135	135
Mean	3.1501	2.5315	2.3407	2.2500	2.0778
σ	.8751	.4204	.4902	.5272	.5022
Sum	425.27	341.75	316.00	303.75	280.50

The Jordanian customs thus have a moderate level of personal traits that allow them to cope with stress. The first three strategies were effective against medium stress, supporting the findings on sources of work stress at a moderate and high level. Nevertheless, they also suffered high stress (Table 3).

Relationships between personal differences and coping strategies

Table (9) summarizes the correlations obtained. With age (dependent variable), there were significant positive relationships with active and productive at $p < 0.05$.

Table (9): Correlation between personal differences and coping strategies for the Jordanian customs

		SKW	WIT	ACCV	ACPD	FLX	Age	EDL	YEX	MST	GD
SKW	Pearson	1									
	Sig	.									
WIT	Pearson	0.207	1								
	Sig	0.001	.								
ACCV	Pearson	0.169	0.284	1							
	Sig	0.008	0	.							
ACPD	Pearson	0.34	0.173	0.334	1						
	Sig	0	0.006	0	.						
FLX	Pearson	0.32	0.082	0.186	0.113	1					
	Sig	0	0.197	0.003	0.075	.					
Age	Pearson	-0.028	-0.074	0.013	0.125	-0.017	1				
	Sig	0.657	0.248	0.837	.049*	0.788	.				
EDL	Pearson	0.019	-0.036	-0.009	0.011	-0.07	0.014	1			
	Sig	0.766	0.571	0.888	0.858	0.274	0.828	.			
YEX	Pearson	-0.1	-0.059	-0.045	-0.066	-0.075	0.448	-0.219	1		
	Sig	0.117	0.355	0.48	0.303	0.237	0	0.001	.		
MST	Pearson	-0.085	-0.086	-0.03	0.069	0.018	0.41	-0.007	0.16	1	
	Sig	0.18	0.176	0.641	0.279	0.775	0	0.915	0.011	.	
GD	Pearson	0.049	0.045	-0.019	-0.083	0.012	-0.176	0.023	-0.112	0.002	1
	Sig	0.441	0.483	0.764	0.194	0.85	0.006	0.72	0.078	0.97	.
	N	248	248	248	248	248	248	248	248	248	248

*Correlation significant at P < 0.05 (2-tail)

**Correlation significant at P = 0.01 (2-tail)

Path analysis

Path analysis between coping strategies and personal differences in table (10) (Models 1 – 5) found that the only significant positive relationship between coping strategies (dependent variable) and personal differences (independent variables) was wide interests with age (Model 2). Self-knowledge was also significantly related to marital status, but the relationship was negative. These results were inconsistent with those from correlation analysis, which found a significant relationship between active and productive and age.

Table (10)**Path analysis between coping strategies and personal differences for the Jordanian customs (medium work stress)**

Model 1						
SKW = -0.035*AGE +0.098*EDL-0.042*YEX -0.20*MST+0.056*GD, Errorvar=0.95,R ² =0.051						
	(0.100)	(0.093)	(0.098)	(0.095)	(0.091)	(0.12)
	0.35	1.06	0.43	2.11*	0.62	7.87
Model 2						
WIT = -0.19*AGE- 0.15*EDL- 0.044*YEX- 0.083*MST+ 0.092*GD, Errorvar. = 0.90 , R ² = 0.097						
	(0.097)	(0.090)	(0.095)	(0.093)	(0.089)	(0.11)
	-1.90	-1.64	-0.46	-0.90	1.03	7.87
Model 3						
ACCV = -0.047*AGE - 0.16*EDL-0.013*YEX+0.054*MST-0.062*GD, Errorvar.=0.97, R ² =0.031						
	(0.10)	(0.094)	(0.099)	(0.096)	(0.092)	(0.12)
	-0.47	-1.72	-0.13	0.56	-0.68	7.87
Model 4						
ACPD=0.038*AGE- 0.023*EDL-0.021*YEX-0.018*MST-0.073*GD, Errorvar. = 0.99, R ² =0.0083						
	(0.10)	(0.095)	(0.100)	(0.098)	(0.093)	(0.13)
	0.37	-0.24	-0.21	0.18	-0.79	7.87
Model 5						
FLX = 0.011*AGE -0.021*EDL - 0.094*YEX -0.0089*MST- 0.10*GD, Errorvar. 0.99, R ² = .015						
	(0.10)	(0.094)	(0.100)	(0.097)	(0.092)	(0.13)
	0.10	-0.22	-0.94-	0.092	-1.11	7.87

Path analysis between coping strategies and personal differences found that the only significant positive relationship for high work stress was between active and productive and age (Models 1 – 5, Table (11)), while the relationship with marital status was significant but negative. The results were only partly consistent with those from the correlation analysis, which found a significant relationship between active and productive and age.

Table (11)**Path analysis between coping strategies and personal differences for the Jordanian customs (high level stress)**

Model 1						
SKW=-0.100*AGE - 0.033*YEX - 0.19*MST- 0.046*GD+ 0.073*EDL, Errorvar.= 0.97, R ² = 0.028						
	(0.12)	(0.091)	(0.11)	(0.100)	(0.089)	(0.12)
	0.83	0.36	-1.70	0.46	0.82	8.02
Model 2						
WIT= 0.13*AGE + 0.011*YEX - 0.10*MST - 0.044*GD - 0.013*EDL, Errorvar.= 0.99 , R ² = 0.012						
	(0.12)	(0.092)	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.090)	(0.12)
	1.08	0.12	-0.92	-0.44	0.14	8.02
Model 3						
ACCV=0.077*AGE+0.098*YEX - 0.082*MST - 0.086*GD+ 0.059*EDL Errorvar. = 0.97,R ² = 0.028						
	(0.12)	(0.092)	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.089)	0.12)
	0.64	1.07	-0.75	-0.86	0.66	8.02
Model 4						
ACPD=0.26*AGE+ 0.056*YEX - 0.25*MST + 0.059*GD - 0.019*EDL, Errorvar.= 0.93 , R ² = 0.074						
	(0.12)	(0.089)	(0.11)	(0.098)	(0.087)	(0.12)
	2.19*	0.63	-2.33*	0.61	-0.22	8.02
Model 5						
FLX= -0.053*AGE - 0.10*YEX - 0.054*MST-0.039*GD+0.065*EDL,Errorvar. = 0.98 , R ² = 0.024						
	(0.12)	(0.092)	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.089)	(0.12)
	-0.43	-1.12	-0.48	0.39	0.73	8.02

Conclusions

This study tested a model of work stress a new field for stress studies by using different statistical tools relying basically on path analysis. The customs employees' opinions in Jordan were investigated with regard to their feeling of coping strategies related to the person treat (self- knowledge, wide interests, flexibility, acceptance of others values, and active and productive), and personal differences (age, academic status, years of experience, marital status, and gender).

The major findings of the study include the Jordanian customs officers' experience a high level of work stress. The study revealed flexibility, acceptance of other's values and active and productive were the most effective coping strategies. The relationships between work stress patterns in the Jordanian case were often significant by all the different tools of analysis used. The analysis found significant relationships for active and productive with marital status; active and productive with marital status and age; self-knowledge with marital status ; medium level stress with wide interest, and active and productive.

The challenge for researchers is to develop more systematic views on the stress environment in the customs and provide a more solid framework which explain the stress suffered. In fact, this study suggests that sustainable improvement (qualitatively and quantitatively) in the customs' performance can be achieved if more related studies are done. Moreover, it is necessary to further examine the effect of personal differences on more sources and coping strategies of work stress, in particular those related to social, economic and psychological aspects. It is hoped that it is the first of many steps, or studies, to improve the customs' performance by alleviating their stress suffered from a better understanding of their problems.

مستوى الاجهاد الوظيفي واستراتيجيات التعامل معه لدى موظفي دائرة الجمارك الأردنية

بلال برهم، قسم إدارة الأعمال، جامعة الإمارات العربية المتحدة، العين، دولة الإمارات
العربية المتحدة.

ملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى اختيار نموذج جديد للاجهاد الوظيفي من خلال دراسة مستوى الاجهاد واستراتيجيات التعامل معه لدى موظفي دائرة الجمارك الأردنية، وتصنيف هذه الاستراتيجيات من حيث درجة تميزهم بها، وقياس مستوى الاجهاد الوظيفي الذي يعاني منه الموظفون، وتقييم العلاقة بين مختلف نواحي الاجهاد الوظيفي المشمولة في الدراسة. تتألف العينة من 248 موظف من العاملين في دائرة الجمارك الأردنية.

تم استخدام الأدوات الاحصائية التالية: معدل الارتباط، الوسط الحسابي، التكرار، وتحليل المسار (Path Analysis) في التحليل. أهم النتائج التي خلصت إليها الدراسة تتمثل بأن أفراد العينة تعاني من مستوى مرتفع من الاجهاد الوظيفي، وأن أهم الاستراتيجيات التي يتمتع بها أفراد العينة للتعامل مع الاجهاد الوظيفي هي المرونة والقبول بقيم الآخرين وأن يكون الفرد منتجاً ونشطاً. وخلصت الدراسة إلى وجود علاقة قوية بين مستوى الاجهاد الوظيفي واستراتيجيات المكافحة بينما العلاقة بين مستوى الاجهاد الوظيفي والفروق الفردية.

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Appendix A
PATH ANALYSIS RESULTS FOR THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG WORK STRESS PATTERNS

Model no.1: Path Analysis Results For Jordanian Sample Members/Medium Level

TOT = $0.035^*SKW + 0.076^*WIT - 0.014^*ACCV + 0.022^*ACPD - 0.053^*FLX - 0.0093^*AGE + 0.0053^*EDL + 0.0056^*YEX + 0.011^*MST - 0.0094^*GD$ Errorvar.= 0.049, R² = 0.93
(0.021) (0.023) (0.022) (0.023) (0.024) (0.022) (0.023) (0.023) (0.021) (0.0062)
1.62 3.32* -0.66 1.00 -2.25* -0.39 0.24 0.24 0.46 -0.44 7.87

Model no.2: Path Analysis Results For Jordanian Sample Members/High Level

TOT = $-0.00048^*SKW - 0.00084^*WIT + 0.00025^*ACCV + 0.00050^*ACPD + 0.00046^*FLX - 0.00029^*AGE + 0.00018^*YEX - 0.00010^*MST + 0.00026^*GD + 0.00^*EDL$, Errorvar.= -0.0012
(0.0019) (0.0018) (0.0019) (0.0018) (0.0026) (0.0019) (0.0024) (0.0020) (0.0018) (0.00)
-0.26 -0.44 0.14 3.84* 0.012 -0.11 0.093 -0.043 0.13 0.045 23.84

Model no.3: Path Analysis Results For Malaysian Sample Members/Medium Level

TOT = $-0.00050^*SKW - 0.00080^*WIT - 0.00027^*ACCV - 0.00^*ACPD + 0.0018^*FLX - 0.00041^*AGE + 0.0014^*YEX - 0.00035^*MST + 0.00070^*GD - 0.0011^*EDL$, Errorvar.= -0.00010, R²
(0.0058) (0.0063) (0.0063) (0.0056) (0.0061) (0.0086) (0.0079) (0.0067) (0.0062) (0.0063) (0.00029)
-0.087 -0.13 -0.043 -0.0061 0.29 -0.048 0.18 -0.053 0.11 -0.17 0.37

Model no.4: Path Analysis Results For Jordanian Sample Members/High Level

TOT = $0.00025^*SKW + 0.00017^*WIT - 0.00040^*ACCV - 0.00046^*ACPD - 0.00075^*FLX + 0.0018^*AGE - 0.0015^*YEX + 0.00^*MST + 0.00044^*GD + 0.00^*EDL$, Errorvar.= 0.00030 R² = 1
(0.0014) (0.0016) (0.0015) (0.0016) (0.0016) (0.0033) (0.0034) (0.0017) (0.0015) (0.0015) (0.00)
0.18 0.10 -0.26 -0.29 -0.47 0.54 -0.46 0.034 0.29 0.0067 8.69