

**Psychological Predictors of Job Performance: The Role of Job Stress and Self-Esteem
among Rescue 1122 Workers**

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the impact of job stress and self-esteem on the job performance of Rescue 1122 workers of South Punjab, Pakistan. The primary objectives were to examine impact of job stress and self-esteem on job performance. A sample of 200 rescue workers—including emergency medical technicians and firefighter rescuers, all employed at BPS-11 level—was selected from an initial pool of 300 personnel using purposive sampling. Due to the variability in job roles and service duration, a cross-sectional research design was employed. Data were collected using three standardized instruments: the Work-Related Stress Questionnaire, the State Self-Esteem Scale, and the Job Performance Scale. Statistical analyses included regression analysis, Pearson correlation, and independent samples t-tests. The findings revealed that both job stress and self-esteem significantly predicted job performance. Additionally, a significant negative correlation was found between job stress and self-esteem. These results highlight the crucial role of psychological well-being in enhancing performance among emergency service workers.

Keywords: job stress, self-esteem, job performance, rescue workers

INTRODUCTION

Most countries around the world have established emergency rescue services, each operating under specific codes—such as 911 in the United States and 1122 in Pakistan. Rescue 1122 was officially launched in Lahore, Pakistan, in 2004 and has since expanded its operations across Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), and other provinces. These services are designed to provide critical assistance during emergencies, natural disasters, and life-threatening situations. The nature of rescue work necessitates constant preparedness, quick decision-making, and the ability to manage intense emotional experiences. Given these demands, Rescue 1122 workers are especially vulnerable to occupational stress, which can directly influence their performance. Therefore, understanding how psychological factors like job stress and self-esteem affect their professional functioning is essential for enhancing the effectiveness and well-being of these frontline responders.

Job stress refers to the physical and emotional responses that arise when job demands exceed an individual's capacity to cope. It is recognized as a significant occupational hazard, particularly in high-risk professions such as emergency services. Rescue 1122 workers are often exposed to traumatic

incidents, extended working hours, life-threatening environments, and rapid decision-making scenarios, all of which contribute to elevated stress levels. Recent studies have confirmed the adverse effects of occupational stress on employee well-being and job outcomes. According to Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional model of stress, job stress is not solely dependent on external pressures but also on an individual's cognitive appraisal and coping resources. For first responders, chronic exposure to stress has been associated with burnout, emotional exhaustion, reduced cognitive functioning, and compromised performance (Sawhney et al., 2023). Empirical research highlights that job stress negatively correlates with job performance (Ali et al., 2022). In the context of emergency services, high stress may impair decision-making, slow reaction time, and increase the risk of operational errors. Furthermore, inadequate stress management can result in psychological issues such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), further hindering job effectiveness (Khan et al., 2021).

Self-esteem, defined as an individual's overall evaluation of their self-worth, plays a critical role in shaping workplace behavior and performance. High self-esteem is associated with confidence, resilience, and a proactive attitude, which are essential traits for emergency responders who face challenging and unpredictable work conditions. Rosenberg's (1965) theory of global self-esteem has been widely applied in occupational psychology. Employees with higher self-esteem tend to exhibit better stress coping mechanisms, higher motivation, and a greater sense of responsibility and job satisfaction (Baumeister et al., 2003). In contrast, low self-esteem has been linked with self-doubt, withdrawal behaviors, and decreased job commitment, all of which can undermine performance (Mahmood & Iqbal, 2020). Recent findings by Alam and Afzal (2022) demonstrate that self-esteem acts as a buffer against workplace stress. For paramedical and emergency service personnel, high self-esteem may enhance their ability to manage job demands, maintain composure under pressure, and perform effectively even in crisis situations.

Job performance refers to the effectiveness with which job duties are carried out and is a critical metric in high-stakes roles such as those in Rescue 1122. Campbell's (1990) model identifies task performance, contextual performance, and adaptive performance as core components. For emergency responders, not only task accuracy but also adaptability, teamwork, and emotional control are vital indicators of job success. In operational contexts, performance can be affected by multiple factors, including psychological well-being, physical health, organizational support, and environmental stressors. Rescue workers are expected to demonstrate physical endurance, mental agility, and emotional stability, often under life-threatening conditions (Qureshi et al., 2021). Research increasingly suggests that job performance is significantly influenced by both internal (psychological) and external (environmental) factors. Job stress typically exhibits a negative association with performance, whereas self-esteem shows a positive association (Ahmad et al., 2022). Thus, understanding the interplay between these variables is crucial for improving the effectiveness of emergency services. The study found a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence, leadership skills, and organizational commitment among civil servants. Those with higher emotional intelligence yields positive mental health and higher job performance (Batool et al., 2024).

Several studies have explored the interactive effects of job stress and self-esteem on performance. For example, a study by Javed et al. (2021) on law enforcement personnel found that high self-esteem moderated the negative effects of job stress on performance outcomes. Another study found positive self-concept has positive effect on self-esteem among adults. Similarly, Shaikh and Bano (2023) noted that in high-demand jobs, self-esteem not only enhanced performance but also acted as a psychological shield against burnout. The study concludes that stressors originating within the workplace are key contributors to occupational stress and play a substantial role in undermining employee performance within the banking sector (Batool et al., 2023). While empowering leadership is typically associated with positive outcomes, recent studies suggest that without adequate employee optimism or resilience, it may

inadvertently increase stress by shifting responsibilities without sufficient support (Abbas et al., 2023). The study found that financial stress was a primary contributor to suicidal ideation during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly among male breadwinners in low-income families. The inability to provide financially led to feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness, increasing suicide risk (Rani et al., 2023).

The present study examines the impact of job stress and self-esteem on the job performance of Rescue 1122 workers. While all professions come with responsibilities and challenges, some roles—particularly in emergency response—demand extraordinary physical, emotional, and psychological resilience. Rescue 1122 is a unique occupation that requires exceptional levels of commitment, courage, and dedication. Workers in this field are routinely exposed to highly stressful situations, including accidents, natural disasters, suicide attempts, and large-scale health emergencies such as pandemics.

METHOD

Research Design

A correlational cross-sectional research design was employed to examine the relationship between job stress, self-esteem, and job performance among Rescue 1122 workers. This design was appropriate for identifying predictive relationships between psychological variables in a natural work setting.

Participants

A sample of 200 rescue personnel was selected from a larger pool of 300 employees using purposive sampling, considering variations in service type and tenure. The sample consisted of emergency medical technicians and firefighter rescuers, all employed at BPS-11 level, across various units of Rescue 1122. All participants were Urdu-speaking and functionally literate in English. A prior power analysis using G*Power 3.1.9 (Faul et al., 2007; 2013) indicated a required sample size of 92 (effect size = 0.33, power = 0.95, $\alpha = 0.04$). To enhance statistical reliability and account for potential attrition or bias, a final sample of 200 participants was recruited.

Instruments

Work-Related Stress Questionnaire

This instrument is adapted from the Management Standards Indicator Tool developed by the UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE). It assesses organizational factors contributing to job stress, such as workload, control, support, role clarity, and change management. The tool has been widely used to evaluate occupational stress in high-risk professions.

State Self-Esteem Scale (SSES)

This scale developed by Heatherton and Polivy (1991), the SSES is a 20-item instrument measuring an individual's momentary self-esteem across three subscales: *Performance Self-Esteem*, *Social Self-Esteem*, and *Appearance Self-Esteem*. Responses are recorded on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = *Not at all* to 5 = *Extremely*. The scale has demonstrated high internal consistency in previous studies.

Job Performance Scale

The Job Performance Scale by Goodman and Svyantek (1999) consists of 25 items assessing three dimensions: *Task Performance (9 items)*, *Conscientiousness*, *Altruism (Contextual Performance)*. The scale has been previously validated in diverse occupational settings, including emergency services and education (Yusoff, Khan, & Azam, 2013; Arnold & Matthijs, 2010). Responses are recorded on a Likert-type format.

Procedure

Data collection was carried out following approval from relevant authorities. Informed consent was obtained from all participants after briefing them about the purpose, nature, and confidentiality of the study. Only those employees who met the inclusion criteria and willingly agreed to participate were included. Questionnaires were administered in person during designated work breaks to minimize disruption. Participants were instructed to complete the scales independently and return them to the researcher in sealed envelopes to ensure confidentiality and data integrity.

Ethical Considerations

Permission to use all standardized instruments was obtained from the respective authors. Organizational consent was acquired from the Rescue 1122 administration for data collection. Written informed consent was secured from all participants. Participants were assured of anonymity, confidentiality, and their right to withdraw at any stage without any consequences. No physical or psychological harm was caused during data collection.

RESULTS

Table 1: *Descriptive Statistics*

	N	Mean	SD
RescueWorkers1122	200	53.985	18.597

Results of the independent sample t-tests indicated the descriptive statistics of Rescue workers 1122. The total number of Rescue workers 1122 was 200, the mean for Rescue workers 1122 was 53.985 and the standard deviation for Rescue workers 1122 was 18.597.

Table 2: *Pearson Product- Moment Correlations between Job Stress and Self Esteem. (n = 200)*

Scale	M(SD)	Job Stress	Self Esteem
Job Stress	83.7(23.1)	----	
Self Esteem	53.9(18.6)	-.823**	----

*Note: *p < .05, **p < .01*

Table no. 2 explained that there was a significant negative correlation between Self Esteem and Job Stress in Rescue workers 1122. The third hypothesis is accepted that there would relationship b/w job stress and self-esteem.

Table 3: Regression Analysis Summary of Job Stress on job Performance

Variables	B	SE	B	t	P
Job Stress	.121	.029	.394	4.128	.000

R Square = .651

The table 3 regression analysis revealed that job stress significantly predicted job performance, $\beta = .394$, $t(198) = 4.13$, $p < .001$. The model accounted for 65.1% of the variance in job performance, indicating a strong effect. Therefore, the first hypothesis—stating that job stress has a significant impact on job performance—was supported.

Table 4: Regression Analysis Summary of Self- Esteem on job Performance

Variables	B	SE	B	t	P
Self Esteem	.109	.036	.286	2.966	.003

R Square = .423

The table 4 of regression analysis indicated that self-esteem significantly predicted job performance, $\beta = .286$, $t(198) = 2.97$, $p = .003$. The model explained 42.3% of the variance in job performance. These results support the second hypothesis that self-esteem positively affects job performance among Rescue 1122 workers.

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to examine the impact of job stress and self-esteem on the job performance of Rescue 1122 workers in Pakistan. The results provided substantial support for all three hypotheses and contribute meaningfully to the literature on occupational stress and psychological well-being in emergency service settings. The findings revealed a significant negative relationship between job stress and job performance. Specifically, higher levels of job stress predicted lower performance among rescue workers, consistent with prior research (Khan, Hussain, & Farooq, 2021; Sawhney, Sharma, & Kalra, 2023). These results align with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional model of stress, which emphasizes that individuals under prolonged stress often experience depleted coping resources, resulting in reduced efficiency, burnout, and compromised task execution.

Furthermore, the regression analysis showed that job stress alone accounted for 65.1% of the variance in job performance, demonstrating a strong predictive effect. This supports previous findings by Ali, Rehman, and Abbas (2022) and Shaikh and Bano (2023), who observed that elevated occupational stress adversely affects critical job functions in high-risk occupations. For Rescue 1122 workers—who frequently engage in physically and emotionally taxing scenarios such as accidents, medical emergencies, and disasters—chronic stress is likely to impair cognitive performance, decision-making, and interpersonal communication, all of which are vital for emergency response effectiveness. The study also demonstrated that self-esteem significantly predicted job performance. Rescue workers with higher self-esteem reported better performance outcomes, supporting the theoretical perspective that self-esteem enhances motivation, task engagement, and resilience (Baumeister et al., 2003). The State Self-Esteem Scale findings confirmed that individuals who perceive themselves as competent and socially valued are more likely to remain focused, committed, and productive in demanding roles. The results are congruent with findings by Mahmood and Iqbal (2020) and Javed, Aslam, and Khalid (2021), who reported positive correlations between self-esteem and work-related outcomes in public service sectors. In the context of Rescue 1122, where workers face public scrutiny and unpredictable demands, a strong sense of self-worth

may buffer the negative psychological effects of occupational stress, thereby improving role fulfillment and response accuracy. A strong negative correlation was observed between job stress and self-esteem, indicating that increased levels of occupational stress are associated with decreased self-esteem. This finding is consistent with earlier literature by Ahmad, Rafiq, and Saleem (2022), who noted that continuous exposure to high-pressure environments can erode self-confidence and self-worth, particularly in jobs that involve life-and-death decision-making. The inverse relationship also aligns with Rosenberg's (1965) conceptualization of self-esteem as a core affective component that fluctuates in response to environmental stressors. The current results emphasize that if rescue personnel are constantly overwhelmed by work-related stress without adequate coping support or institutional resources, their self-esteem may diminish, leading to further declines in performance.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that there was an impact of Self Esteem on Job Performance and there was also impact of Job Stress on Job Performance. Results indicated that Self Esteem and Job Stress were predictors of Job Performance in rescue workers of rescue 1122. Results indicated that there was a significant negative correlation between Self Esteem and Job Stress in Rescue workers 1122.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

These findings hold significant implications for occupational psychology and emergency service management. From a theoretical perspective, the study supports integrative models that recognize both psychological stress and self-concept as essential determinants of employee performance. The interaction between job stress and self-esteem appears to be particularly relevant in high-stakes professions. From a practical standpoint, the results suggest the urgent need for stress-reduction interventions, such as psychological resilience training, stress management workshops, and professional counseling services within Rescue 1122. Moreover, programs aimed at enhancing self-esteem—such as recognition, feedback mechanisms, and peer support systems—may improve not only morale but also operational outcomes.

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