
Recruitment Process and its Relationship with Job Stress among Ministry of Commerce Executives

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Abstract:

This study aims to explore the relationship between recruitment methods and occupational stress, as both concepts play a critical role in determining the outcomes of various human resource management activities and the organization's performance. The study was conducted in a prominent Algerian service institution within the field of commerce, specifically the Ministry of Commerce, focusing on executive-level employees.

The findings reveal that executives within the Ministry of Commerce experience a high level of stress. The results also indicate that there is no significant relationship between recruitment methods and job stress among these executives.

Keywords: Recruitment Process, Job Stress.

1. Introduction

The recruitment process is one of the most critical functions of human resource management as it aims to attract the best candidates with excellent competencies and qualifications. Effective recruitment helps prevent the costly mistakes associated with hiring unfit individuals, which can lead to financial losses and market share decline for the organization. Given the rapid developments and changes in the external environment, particularly in areas of increased competition and technological advancement, organizations must continually adjust work concepts and procedures to keep up with these changes.

Many organizational changes have been a source of failure for some employees, as they struggle to adapt to increasing work demands. This has led to increased stress, especially under challenging life conditions and growing requirements. Job stress has become a psychological phenomenon, increasing among employees in modern institutions, and is now considered a primary threat to organizational performance due to its impact on a critical resource: human capital.

This study is designed to examine the relationship between recruitment and job stress among employees, addressing the following research questions:

1. Do executives experience high levels of stress?
2. Is there a relationship between recruitment methods and job stress among executives?

2. Hypotheses

1. Executives experience high levels of job stress.

2. There is a significant relationship between recruitment methods and job stress.

3. Recruitment Process

The recruitment process is a core activity of human resource management, aiming to select the best candidates with the required skills and qualifications. Effective recruitment minimizes the risk of hiring unfit individuals, which can be costly for the organization. Below are key aspects and theories of recruitment.

3.1 Definitions of Recruitment

1. **Rifaat Abdel-Halim Al-Faouri (2005)**: Defines recruitment as "the process of sourcing and selecting the workforce needed by the organization from various sources, enabling it to choose and appoint suitable people for work" (p. 205).
2. **Dimitrie Weiresse and Pierre Morin (1982)**: Describe recruitment as a "series of time-based processes aimed at finding suitable candidates" (p. 279).
3. **Mansour Ahmed Mansour (1975)**: Views recruitment as "an ongoing process requiring the organization to identify its workforce needs and search for, select, and integrate the best candidates to achieve the organization's goals" (p. 95).
4. **Rabhi Mustafa Alian (2007)**: Describes recruitment as "an activity involving the advertisement of vacant positions to attract qualified individuals, thus fulfilling organizational goals" (p. 241).
5. **Jean Guyot (1979)**: Defines recruitment as "the overarching function encompassing the search, identification, and attraction of external human resources to join the organization" (p. 17).

3.2 Importance of Recruitment

Ali Al-Salami (1985) emphasizes the importance of recruitment as a fundamental activity that meets the organization's need for human resources. Recruitment answers critical questions, such as:

- **Sources**: Which sources can the organization use to obtain qualified human resources?
- **Methods**: What procedures should the organization follow to select the best applicants?

Recruitment's importance is also highlighted by its role in supporting the human resource strategy, linking it with workforce planning, skill development, and performance evaluation.

4. The Role of Recruitment in Human Resource Management

According to Ali Al-Salami (1985), human resource management oversees all personnel-related functions, including:

1. **Job Analysis**: Identifying tasks and responsibilities within each role.
2. **Workforce Planning**: Determining the number and types of employees needed.
3. **Recruitment**: Filling vacancies with individuals whose characteristics align with the job requirements.
4. **Training and Development**: Equipping employees with skills to enhance their performance.
5. **Performance Evaluation**: Measuring employee contributions and behavior in the organization.

6. **Compensation:** Rewarding employees for their efforts, either financially or through other means.

5. Types of Recruitment

5.1 External Recruitment

External recruitment involves filling vacant positions by sourcing candidates from outside the organization. This approach allows the organization to access a larger pool of talent, providing benefits such as:

- **Fresh Perspectives:** External candidates bring new ideas and experiences.
- **Immediate Availability:** Filling positions quickly with qualified external candidates.
- **Higher Efficiency:** A larger candidate pool increases the likelihood of finding the most suitable person for the job.

However, external recruitment also presents challenges, such as increased costs for advertisements and the risk of hiring individuals who may not fully integrate with the organization's culture.

5.2 Internal Recruitment

According to Jean Marie Peretti (2005), internal recruitment fills vacancies using current employees through transfers or promotions. Internal recruitment fosters employee loyalty and reduces turnover by offering advancement opportunities within the organization.

Promotion Criteria:

1. **Seniority-Based Promotion:** Prioritizes employees with longer tenures.
2. **Merit-Based Promotion:** Focuses on performance and capabilities.
3. **Combination of Seniority and Merit:** Balances both experience and performance.

Promotion policies must be transparent, with clear job descriptions and training programs to prepare employees for advancement.

5.3 Internal Recruitment

According to **Jean Marie Peretti (2005)**, internal recruitment involves filling vacant positions within the organization by utilizing current employees, either through job transfers or promotions. This practice supports the principle of prioritizing the organization's internal human resources.

Promotion: In the technical sense, it refers to the transition of an employee from a current position to a higher-level position, accompanied by an increase in salary and, in many cases, additional benefits. It may also involve changes in the nature of tasks, level of responsibility, and scope of authority. Employees often start their careers at entry-level positions within the organizational hierarchy and, over time, may advance to more senior roles. Promotion is highly valued by individuals within society and is seen as an integral part of organizational culture.

Promotion is one of the key methods used to recognize and develop employees' capabilities within the organization without needing to recruit externally. However, senior positions are usually limited in number relative to other job levels, meaning that demand often exceeds availability.

Consequently, a fair standard must be applied to distribute promotion opportunities among employees. There are three primary criteria for promotion:

- 1. Seniority-Based Promotion:** This approach prioritizes employees based on their length of service within their current position or with the organization as a whole.
- 2. Merit-Based Promotion:** This method promotes employees based on their performance and abilities, placing the right person in the right position according to their skills.
- 3. Combined Seniority and Merit-Based Promotion:** This criterion combines seniority and performance, allowing for a balance between experience and capability.

To ensure a successful promotion system, several key factors must be considered:

- **Accurate Job Descriptions:** The responsibilities of each position, along with the necessary qualifications, should be clearly defined.
- **Clear Promotion Policies:** Transparent promotion policies should be communicated to all employees within the organization.
- **Training Programs:** Employees who are suitable for promotion should receive training and development opportunities to prepare them for future roles.
- **Awareness of Career Paths:** Employees should be informed about the promotion paths available to them within the organization.

In Algeria, the importance of promotion is underscored in public service regulations. These guidelines encourage employees to improve their performance, as evident in legal provisions within Algeria's public service legislation. For instance, Article 1/54 and Article 2 of Decree 85-59 define promotion as the move to a higher position according to a hierarchical system, either through a change in rank within the same category or a transition to a higher category. The Algerian legislature differentiates between grade promotion and rank promotion:

Grade Promotion (Article 106 of Decree 03-06): "Promotion in grades involves moving from one grade to the next higher grade in the same job series."

Rank Promotion (Article 107 of Decree 03-06): "Promotion in ranks refers to career advancement, allowing the employee to move to a higher rank within the same series or to an advanced series."

6. Employment Theories:

6-1- Traits and Factors Theory:

It was mentioned in the Career Guidance and Counseling Guide (2007) that:

- **Traits:** Refer to the characteristics of an individual that can be measured by objective standards.
- **Factors:** Refer to the requirements for success in a specific field or profession.

This theory, in its simplified form, is based on the idea that individual differences in "traits" can be measured and then aligned with the various "requirements" of professions or fields of study. The concept of alignment, as previously mentioned, can be traced back to Parsons, and the measurement concepts are associated with the Minnesota group (Patterson, Williamson, and their colleagues). During the period when trait and factor guidance dominated, the professional requirements for a particular job were often determined by measuring the characteristics possessed by employees in that job. The implicit assumption is that the characteristics held by employees are required or essential for successful performance in that job. An example of this approach is the General Aptitude Battery, which provides "professional standards" and "patterns of professional readiness" based on the scores obtained from employees in the top two-thirds of the total employees tested. Here, there is an application of measurement results in predicting potential success in a particular job.

Williamson suggested that individuals seeking guidance to help them with career planning could be classified into four categories: 1) No choice 2) Uncertain choice 3) Poor choice 4) Mismatch between interests and aptitudes. In the career counseling process, the client is diagnosed as belonging to one of these categories. Once the diagnosis is made, a plan of action is established to resolve the issue or difficulty the client faces. Williamson believes that the counselor must complete six steps in this counseling process. These steps are:

1. **Analysis:** Gathering information about the individual or client through interview procedures, supported by data from tests and other sources. Information includes aptitudes, interests, motivations, physical health, emotional stability, family background, knowledge, academic progress, and other factors.
2. **Synthesis:** Summarizing and organizing the data and information about the client to reveal their problems, strengths, and unique characteristics. The counselor attempts to identify a pattern of consistency in the gathered information to form a clear understanding of the client and their problem.
3. **Diagnosis:** Diagnosing the client's career problem(s) (no choice, uncertain choice, poor choice, or a conflict between interests on one side and aptitudes and abilities on the other). Here, the counselor reviews the case information using objective data in conjunction with their clinical intuition to arrive at a critical assessment and conclusion regarding the underlying causes of the problem.
4. **Prediction:** Assessing the individual's potential for achieving the goals they have set (if they have goals). The counselor predicts the future development of the problem in light of the assessment of the available information. If accurate predictions about future behavior can be made, Williamson suggests that this step be combined with the diagnosis. Overall, this step involves recognizing available options or attempts at adjustment that the client can undertake.
5. **Counseling:** Providing advice when the counselor determines that the individual has not succeeded in choosing a suitable profession or field (i.e., in setting goals). Here, the counselor helps the client to gather and organize their personal and non-personal strengths and potentials that will aid in adjustment both now and in the future. The counselor presents supporting or opposing evidence for the client's educational or vocational choices, clarifying the supportive and unsupportive information and weighing or assessing each's importance, explaining why they recommend that the client pursue a particular solution or path.
6. **Follow-up:** To determine whether the solution proposed through the counseling process is a good and applicable one. If it is found that the solution is inadequate, all previous steps should be repeated, meaning that the career counseling process should start from the beginning to identify the individual's career problem. This step involves assisting the client

in the future, whether in dealing with new problems, with the re-emergence of the same issue, or ensuring the effectiveness of the counseling.

In these six steps, as seen by Williamson and the early counselors following the trait and factor approach, the counselor adopts a role similar to that of a doctor in diagnosing the client's problem, prescribing treatment to rectify it, and then following up to ensure successful resolution. This active leadership role of the counselor gave rise to the term "directive" or "prescriptive" counseling, in contrast to "non-directive" or "non-prescriptive" approaches (such as those advocated by Carl Rogers and his supporters), who resisted or opposed that role for the counselor.

The "trait and factor" counselor utilizes various sources and applies many of them with each client. During the analysis stage, the counselor obtains information about the client from interviews, school records, and other self-reported sources. Furthermore, intensive measurement is often employed to obtain objective information. The counselor's ability to connect and synthesize information is of great importance during the synthesis, diagnosis, and prediction stages. The counselor organizes and evaluates information about the individual and uses professional data to support or oppose the client's plans or to help the client develop or accept a plan. In the counseling stage, the client is active in discussing or planning a course of action. Williamson sees the counselor as responsible for establishing a trusting relationship with the client, aiding the client in understanding themselves, being a guide or planner for a course of action, and sometimes as an executor of the plan or responsible for transitioning the client to another individual for additional assistance. When needed, Williamson sees the counselor as responsible for compelling the client to comply or for altering the environment, teaching the client certain skills, or changing some of the client's attitudes. To accomplish this, the counselor may need to persuade, explain, guide, and lead.

The outcome expected by the "trait and factor" counselor is the resolution of the client's current problem. The final step, "follow-up," clearly assumes that some adjustment or revision of the established plan may be necessary later. It is also assumed that resolving the client's current problem will help them be better prepared to tackle future problems, as resolving the problem is expected to lead to more effective "self-management."

6-2: Developmental Theory:

In the same career guidance and counseling manual, "Developmentalists view career choice as a long-term process. Consequently, the counselor's perspective will differ based on the developmental stage of the client when they meet the counselor. Since developmental theorists share numerous common viewpoints, it would be easier for the reader if these were discussed collectively rather than individually. In fact, the Ginzberg group did not give special attention to the role or position of the counselor in the professional development process. Osipow (1983) clearly pointed this out when he stated that the theory is ambiguous in that it does not propose mechanisms for counselors other than the general idea that experiences should be arranged for youth and young adults to facilitate their advancement at the stage they are in. If the theory is accurate and truthful, it can be used to clarify developmental tasks and make them of interest to counselors, teachers, and parents.

Super, on the other hand, has written extensively about developmental career counseling, and his approach will dominate our discussion of applications for this theoretical stance. Developmental career counseling, as described by Super, integrates the developmental process (life stages) with a modified trait-factor approach. The introduction of the concept of "life stages" acknowledges that the needs and processes of career counseling will vary based on the developmental status of the client. For instance, a young person in their early high school years will have different professional interests and needs than another who is 25 years old. Additionally, either one may be ahead of or

behind their peers in planning and implementing their professional development plans. The idea of comparison with peer groups led to the development of Super's concept of professional maturity.

Career counseling typically begins with assessing the client's career maturity, as this is an indicator not only of where the client stands developmentally and what their counseling needs are, but it also suggests what actions the counselor will take. An immature client is helped to develop self-understanding and exploration skills before embarking on the selection or trial process. The immature client will be provided with information about themselves and careers to assist them in making a decision later. Therefore, the focus is on the initial stages, such as exploration, which requires the use of measures and professional information.

A mature client will be more prepared to engage with information about themselves and the environment in the decision-making process, focusing on decision-making skills, reality perception, and examination. A young, immature individual can be assisted in various ways, often in a non-counseling relationship, to acquire the appropriate information and skills for their career development stage. When the individual approaches the decision-making stage and has developed appropriate levels of career maturity, career counseling is then resumed. Super sees the counselor as someone who employs direct and indirect interviews periodically. In the initial interview, the counselor will primarily be "indirect," allowing and encouraging the client to describe and explore their problem, their self-concept, and the realities of their psychological world. This process will continue until both the counselor and client feel that the problem has been satisfactorily identified and defined by the client.

At this point, the counselor shifts to a direct style that includes identifying the topics for upcoming counseling sessions and prioritizing them. It is also essential to identify the information that is necessary to acquire, whether it relates to the individual or their world, and how to obtain it. When the best way to gather information is through tests and measures, the client is then involved in this process and in the decision-making regarding the use of those tools. Measures are used selectively to obtain specific information whenever that information is needed and are not used broadly as a general battery of tests applied in a semi-coercive or mandatory manner.

After completing this phase, the counselor resumes an indirect role to allow the client the opportunity to express their views regarding the proposed plan and its implications and requirements. This change in direction enables the client to clarify feelings and attitudes and accept responsibility for the jointly developed counseling plan, as well as increasing self-acceptance and self-awareness.

Subsequent counseling sessions, in which the counselor helps the client to acquire and understand the results of measures and professional information or any other facts, are conducted in a direct manner. Since the counselor and client are dealing with information that includes terms and forms unfamiliar to the client, the counselor can here adopt a quasi-teaching role. The purpose of these sessions is to assist the client in obtaining additional necessary information and to represent or internalize that knowledge in a way that enables them to use it in the decision-making process.

Expanding the client's perspective by acquiring additional information requires a reconsideration of attitudes and feelings. Consequently, the counselor returns to an indirect role. Here, the client is assisted in understanding and clarifying their feelings and attitudes in light of this broader view of self and the world they inhabit.

The counselor continues this indirect approach while the client engages with their feelings and attitudes and progresses in the decision-making process. This shift between direct and indirect procedures does not need to be distracting or confusing for either the counselor or the client. Super fundamentally distinguishes between counseling methods to fit the content of counseling sessions. When the primary content consists of facts, such as establishing procedural plans or discussing the results of measures or professional information, the counselor adopts a direct approach or style. However, if the core content is attitudinal, such as exploring self-concept and past experiences, recognizing the client's desire to continue counseling as suggested by the counselor, or discussing the client's feelings toward measurement results or experimenting with some experiences or examining reality, the counselor will take an indirect position or approach. In the first role, the counselor uses interpretation, explanation, and summarization, while in the second role, the counselor responds with reflection, clarification, and rephrasing.

The developmental counselor relies on numerous sources. These include interview procedures, measures, and a variety of professional information and experiences. As previously mentioned, the selection and application of appropriate sources are linked to the developmental stage of the client and the goals and outcomes consistent with the client's career maturity.

In a manner that may seem simplified, the purpose of applying these procedures is to assist the client in a process of evaluation that includes assessing the problem, the client, and any predictions about future career compatibility. Unlike proponents of trait-factor theory, Super views the client and counselor as engaged collaborators in this evaluation process. Consequently, the client is provided with input regarding new information about themselves, careers, and the broader environment, but is simultaneously required to deal with their feelings and integrate them into their overall career development.

The developmental career counselor has access to a complete set of measurement tools as a means to assist the individual in learning about themselves. Super and Crites' book (1962) is still considered one of the key resources regarding the use of measures. Super suggests that measures can be used to obtain information that appears critical for the client to understand themselves or the broader environment. Rather than selecting and applying a lengthy, general battery of measures to all clients, Super proposes that measures providing specific information be chosen and applied when both the counselor and client agree that such information and data are essential. The counselor must be proficient in the available measures to ensure the most appropriate measure is selected for the client's needs, as perceived by both the counselor and client together.

The developmental counselor also assists the client in using information about jobs and the world of work or the larger environment where those jobs exist. This information comes in various forms that may range from some printed materials to direct experience in the work environment (such as spending a day with an employee or worker and observing what they do, or trying out job experiences). The primary purpose of using professional information is to assist the client in self-assessment and predictive evaluation (helping to identify current and latent strengths and weaknesses and estimating the extent to which these characteristics can predict future success or satisfaction).

Some developmentalists emphasize that useful professional information for the developmental counselor is that which follows a professional model, such as that provided by Super's studies, which traced the paths taken by individuals in his sample from their early high school years to their mid-thirties. The use of this information must be undertaken cautiously, as the factors and circumstances that adolescents faced thirty or forty years ago are not the same as those experienced

by today's generation. Internal factors such as values, motivations, and goals, and external factors such as opportunities and social, economic, and political conditions do not have a constant character over long periods.

The developmental counselor anticipates that career counseling will result in the client gaining a clearer understanding of themselves, leading to more appropriate decisions in the present that are consistent with the client's self-concept. Furthermore, the counselor expects the client to be able to modify present decisions to fit the changing circumstances they may encounter in the future. Here's the translation of the provided text:

6-3: Social Learning Theory: According to Krumboltz, as stated in the Career Counseling and Guidance Handbook (2007), "the theory relies on Albert Bandura's social learning theory and is based on reinforcement theory. Krumboltz believes that the process of development occurs as a result of learning and imitating the behaviors of others. He developed a theory of decision-making and career development based on the process of social learning or environmental conditions, genetic influences, and educational experiences, where he sees that people choose their professions based on what they have learned.

Krumboltz identifies four elements that influence the decision-making process:

1. **Genetic talents and special abilities:** Some inherited biological factors such as race, appearance, and gender may limit professional development, in addition to other factors that are less heritable, including special abilities like musical and artistic talent and coordination.
2. **Environmental conditions:** This factor includes influences that are beyond the individual's control, which nevertheless impact the person through the environment they are in. Some of these influences may have a human basis (training opportunities, labor laws, economic conditions, etc.), while others may be related to other factors.
3. **Educational experiences:** All prior educational experiences affect the individual's learning process. Despite Krumboltz's recognition of the complexities of learning, he identifies only two types of learning:
 - Learning within conditions where the individual works on the environment to achieve specific results.
 - Learning that occurs under conditions where the individual learns through their response to specific influences, such as observing a role model.
4. **Skills related to different tasks:** These are the skills that the individual uses when engaging in new work. A person continuously faces educational experiences, and their response leads to outcomes, each of which may follow either a positive or negative reinforcement, impacting the individual. The interaction between the stimuli received (educational experience) and the reactions to the outcomes will shape the individual into a distinctive personality, and this shaping occurs through three types of outcomes:
 - Generalization of self-observation, which leads the individual to evaluate their performance based on educational standards.
 - The efforts made by the individual to conceptualize future self-observations to make predictions about the future.
 - The application of behaviors before applying for a job or changing careers, where behavior results in specific consequences that will inevitably affect future behavior.

In summary, this theory is based on the following idea: the individual enters a specific environment (the world) with specific genetic talents, and as the person grows, they encounter all kinds of conditions (social, economic, cultural, etc.) and learn from these environmental events, applying

what they have learned to new conditions, events, and encounters. This will lead to feedback from others and sometimes from role models in the individual's life who provide an impression of how successful or unsuccessful behaviors are.

The cumulative responses will inevitably affect the individual when making new decisions or choices, helping to increase the likelihood of making successful decisions and avoiding decisions that may lead to failure. This learning process is a lifelong, continuous one as the person is in a state of constant change."

Concept of Stress: The term "stress" is derived from Latin and was used in the 17th century to mean: intensity, hardship, sorrow, or affliction. During the 18th and 19th centuries, it began to refer to force, pressure, stress, or tension; the term was then used in other sciences, especially psychology, to denote the situation in which an individual is experiencing emotional or physical stress. (Faeq, 1961, p. 67)

- **Definition of Work Stress:**

- **Linguistic Definition:** The term "stress" is derived from the Latin verb "stringere," which means: tightness, intensity, from which the French verb "êtreindre" (to grasp) is derived, referring to the constriction leading to anxiety. (Shahata, Al-Najjar, 2013, p. 2112)
- **Terminological Definition:** Stress as a stimulus is defined by Cohen and Lares as events that challenge the individual and require physiological, cognitive, or behavioral adaptation (Jum'a, 2014, p. 17). Stress refers to anything that leads to an acute and persistent emotional response (Abdul Halim, 2011, p. 35). Stress is a condition affecting the emotional aspects of the individual and their thinking process, negatively impacting individuals' thoughts, behaviors, and their difficult states. (Hafez, 2017, p. 12)

Stress as a Response: Proponents of this approach view stress as physical, psychological, or behavioral reactions that arise from exposure to specific stimuli. Fontana defines stress as a state that occurs when external demands exceed the personal capabilities and potential of the organism (Abdulaziz, 2015, p. 12). Greenberg and Baron define it as a type of emotional state and physiological responses that occur in certain situations where individuals feel they are capable of achieving organizational goals. (Tah, Salama, 2016, p. 22)

Stress as an Interaction Between the Individual and the Environment: Proponents of this approach view stress as a result of the interaction between the individual's personal characteristics and the surrounding environmental conditions, where proponents of this comprehensive developmental approach found a deficiency in the previous two approaches mentioned. Among the definitions of this approach is Neuman & Beel's definition that stress is a condition arising from the interaction between work-related factors and employee characteristics, leading to changes in the physical or psychological state of the individual, driving them to unusual physical or mental behavior. Grath defines it as a condition arising from the interaction between the individual and the environment that places the individual before demands, obstacles, or opportunities. (Al-Amayan, 2015, p. 161)

It is viewed as a situation in which the interaction between work conditions and the worker's personality affects their psychological and physical state, potentially driving them to change their behavior pattern. (Al-Sabbagh, 2011, p. 21). Through reviewing the previous definitions, whether those addressing stress as a stimulus, those viewing stress as a response, or others discussing it as an interaction between the individual and the environment, a holistic definition of stress can be drawn:

"a condition that affects the individual due to their inability to adapt to the work environment, exposing them to internal and environmental stimuli that exceed their adaptive capacity, resulting in a range of psychological, physiological, and behavioral effects."

There are many definitions of this concept; for instance, Abdul Baqi Saladin Muhammad defines stress as "a collection of stimuli present in the work environment of individuals that lead to a range of reactions reflected in individuals' behavior at work, their psychological and physical state, or their performance in their tasks due to the interaction of individuals with their work environment that contains stress." (Abdul Baqi, 2015, p. 242). Meanwhile, Maher Ahmed defined occupational stress as "a state of psychological and physical imbalance, usually arising from factors present in work or the surrounding environment, resulting in a lack of psychological and physical equilibrium that appears in various manifestations of dysfunction in work performance." (Maher, 2014, p. 323). As for Na'sani and others, they defined occupational stress as "the dynamic conditions in which an individual faces opportunities that include potential gains for them, along with constraints limiting their ability to achieve what they desire, and demands that may lead to the loss of what they wish to achieve." (Na'sani, 2014, p. 315). Ne'im Fawziya defined stress as a state that arises when there is an imbalance between an individual's perception of the stresses in the surrounding environment and their ability to cope with these stresses. An individual may be capable of resisting stresses in their narrow sense but faces great difficulties in coexisting with various stresses. Non-work-related stresses can lead to changes in individual behavior and a decrease in work performance, and not all forms of stress can be attributed to work; occupational stress can be caused by various factors, including work content and organization, work environment, and poor communication between individuals within the work environment, etc. (Na'im, 2012, p. 15)

Characteristics of Occupational Stress: Occupational stress is characterized by several important facts outlined as follows:

- Occupational stress is always prevalent and exists in the workplace in one form or another.
- Individuals differ in their responses and reactions to stress.
- Occupational stress varies in nature and degree of impact on individuals. (Al-Dosari, 2017, p. 62)

Mechanism of Occupational Stress Occurrence: Stress may arise from within the individual, referred to as internal stress, or it may come from the external environment, such as work, relationships with friends, conflicts with neighbors, marital disputes, divorce, the death of a loved one, or exposure to a sudden traumatic event, referred to as external stress.

In general, whether stress originates from within the person due to emotional outbursts or psychological state hold-ups, or from external stress represented by life events, it is considered a response to environmental changes. (Al-Amara, 2011, p. 14).

Based on the perspective of Hans Selye, the mechanism of stress occurrence consists of: **Alarm Stage:** Characterized by the emergence of excessive alertness that in turn stimulates cognitive contexts represented in attention, focus, and memory; this psychological-behavioral change contributes to assessing the stressful situation and devising an initial response strategy for the resulting organic response. **Resistance Stage:** This stage is marked by the development of a stable strategy, but it is flexible and adaptable according to the evolution of the stressful situation; its goal is to achieve relative control over the situation in order to attain a new equilibrium between the individual and the environment. **Exhaustion Stage:** Characterized by ineffective responses in addressing stressors, leading to the disruption of the body's system, ultimately resulting in either

physical or mental illness, or even death, as the body has exhausted its resources for resistance and coping with the surrounding stressors, becoming unable to handle them.

This perspective illustrates the necessity of addressing the sources of stress to avoid health deterioration and potential illness, especially since excessive stress can result in negative impacts on the individual (physical and psychological). Stress in the work environment represents a challenge for managers and organizations, leading to the need for stress management methods to adapt to work pressures effectively, especially since the absence of measures to address occupational stress can hinder the expected performance of individuals in organizations, whether negatively affecting their relationships with colleagues or productivity levels.

Theoretical Models in Understanding Stress: Numerous theoretical models have emerged to explain the phenomena of stress, as follows:

- **Environmental Model:** This model posits that stress is a result of discrepancies between the external environment and individual capabilities or resources.
- **Interaction Model:** This model emphasizes the interaction between the individual and their environment, suggesting that stress arises when the individual's resources fail to meet environmental demands.
- **Transactional Model:** This model views stress as a transaction between the individual and their environment, emphasizing the cognitive appraisal of stressors and the individual's coping strategies.

To summarize, stress results from various stimuli; therefore, it becomes important to conduct awareness programs on how to cope with it effectively within organizations, addressing its causes and implementing proper strategies to mitigate its impacts. Stress management is a vital part of employee wellness programs in organizations; it improves mental health, employee performance, job satisfaction, and productivity, while reducing employee turnover, absenteeism, and related costs, ultimately leading to a more efficient and effective work environment.

Coping with Stress: According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the following are methods to manage stress:

1. **Exercise Regularly:** Engage in physical activities such as walking, jogging, or any other sports to release tension and improve mood.
2. **Practice Mindfulness:** Focus on the present moment through meditation or breathing exercises to calm the mind.
3. **Develop Support Networks:** Strengthen connections with family and friends, fostering supportive relationships to share feelings and seek advice.
4. **Organize Time Efficiently:** Implement time management techniques to reduce feelings of being overwhelmed by tasks.
5. **Seek Professional Help:** In case of persistent stress, consult with a psychologist or counselor for support and coping strategies.

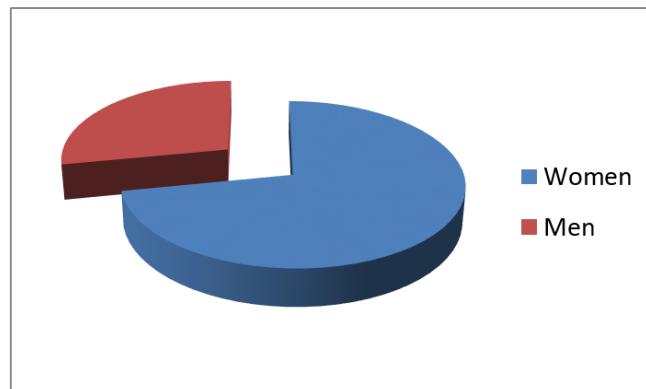
Conclusion: Understanding stress and how to manage it effectively is crucial in today's fast-paced world. By implementing effective stress management techniques, individuals can enhance their well-being, productivity, and overall quality of life.

1. **Methodology Used in the Research:** Our current research aims to study the relationship between recruitment methods in the Algerian Ministry of Commerce and occupational

stress. Based on the nature of our topic, we have adopted a descriptive approach as we seek to translate real information by examining existing phenomena within the organization.

2. **Field of Research:** The research was conducted at the Ministry of Commerce in Algiers, located in the Bab Zaar neighborhood, specifically in the Zrhouni Mokhtar area - Mohammedia - Building A.
3. **Research Sample:** 3.1. **Community and Method of Sample Selection:** In this research, we relied on the original community of the Human Resources Directorate. The selection was based on the facilities provided by them for conducting the research. Our research sample consists of 150 individuals, which is the total number of employees in Building 1 of the Ministry of Commerce. After retrieving the questionnaires, we received 132 responses out of 150. Following processing and sorting, this number was reduced to 100, as we eliminated 32 questionnaires due to a significant lack of responses affecting the research results. Thus, we relied on 100 questionnaires from 100 employees out of 150.

3.2. **Descriptive Characteristics of the Sample:** We will present graphical representations that illustrate the descriptive characteristics of the individuals in the current research sample. **Personal Data:** We will provide the shapes that clarify the descriptive characteristics of the current research after processing the questionnaires. These characteristics include personal data (gender, age, academic level, marital status, recruitment method, nature of the contract), which we will address in order as follows:

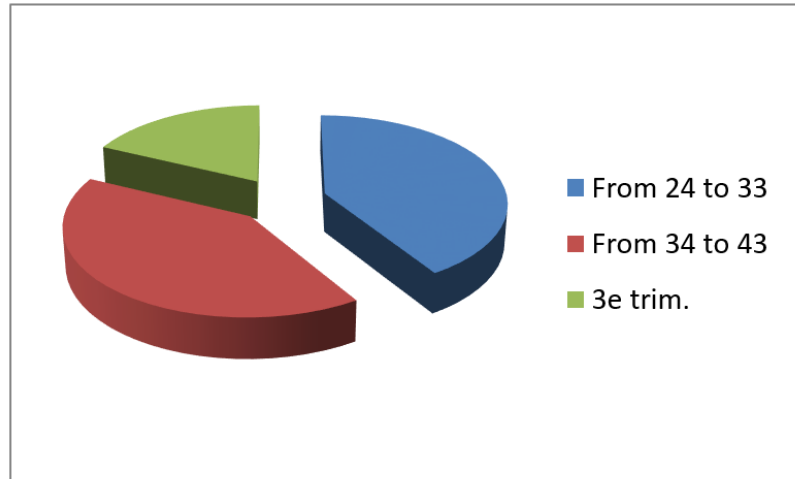


- **Gender:** The total size of the research sample is 100 individuals, distributed into 34 males and 66 females.
- **Figure 1:** Distribution of sample individuals by gender.

It is clear from Figure 1 that the percentage of females is dominant at 66%, while the percentage of males is 33%. This may be attributed to the nature of the positions, as they are administrative roles.

Age: It is evident that the majority of the sample members belong to the youth category, as confirmed by the average age of the sample members, which is estimated at 36.16 years.

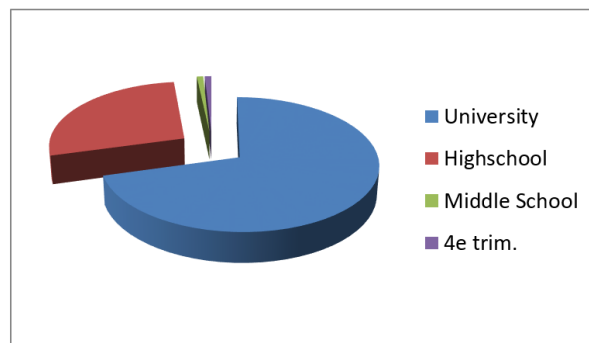
- **Figure 2:** Distribution of sample individuals by age.



It is evident from Figure 2 that the largest majority of the research sample is concentrated in the age group between 34 and 43 years, which is confirmed by a percentage of 41%. This is followed by the age group between 24 and 33 years, accounting for 38%, while the age group over 44 years covers 21% of the research sample, as shown in the figure above.

Educational Level:

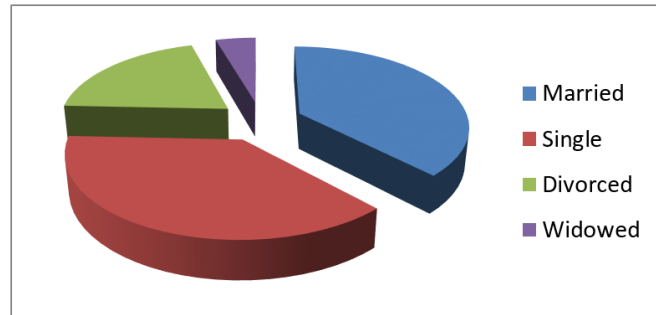
Figure 3: Distribution of sample individuals by educational level.



It is evident from Figure 3 that the majority of employees are university graduates, with the percentage of those holding a university degree reaching 83%. This is followed by the secondary education level at 15% of the total sample individuals, and then the middle and elementary levels, each accounting for 1%. This may be attributed to the nature of the work, which requires training and a high level of education.

Marital Status: The research sample is composed based on marital status into four categories, distributed as shown in the following figure:

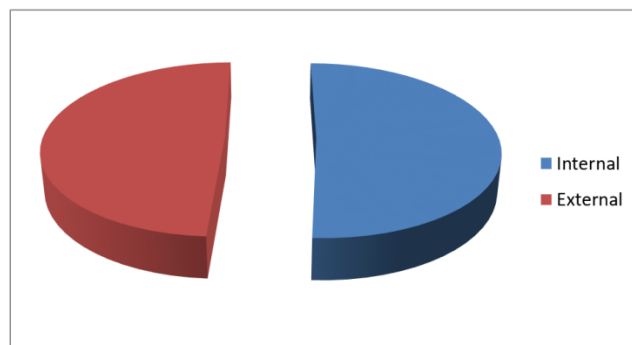
Figure 4: Distribution of sample individuals by marital status.



It is evident from Figure 4 that 48% of the individuals are married, making it the largest group, followed by the single category at 47% of the sample individuals, then the divorced category at 4%, and finally the widowed category at 1% of the sample.

Method of Employment: The research sample is divided in terms of employment method into two categories of employees, as shown in the following figure:

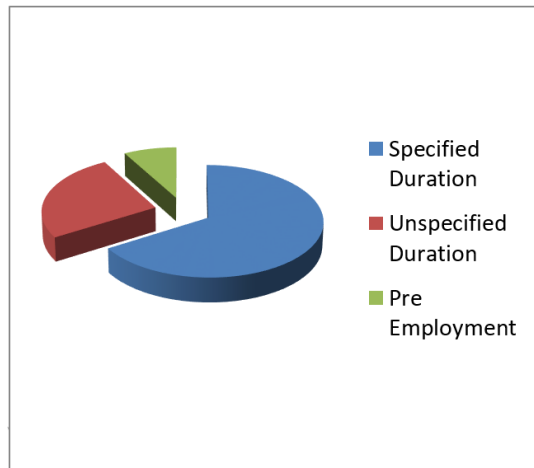
Figure 5: Distribution of sample individuals by employment method.



It is evident from Figure 5 that the percentage of employees hired internally is the largest group at 51%, followed by the group of externally hired employees at 49% of the sample individuals.

Nature of the Contract: The research sample consists of three categories in terms of contract nature, as shown in the following figure:

Figure 6: Distribution of sample individuals by nature of the contract.



1. Presentation and Analysis of Results:

Occupational Stress Level Among Employees of the Ministry of Commerce

In our first hypothesis, we anticipated that the employees of the Ministry of Commerce suffer from a high level of occupational stress. The most suitable statistical test for this hypothesis is the Student's t-test for significance of differences between means. The following table (Table 1) illustrates this:

Table 1: Shows the level of occupational stress among employees of the Ministry of Commerce.

Level of significance	Degree of freedom	Test	Standard error	Standard deviation	Mean	Sample	Variable
0.01	99	37.76	1.23	12.32	46.56	100	Occupational stress

It is evident from the table above that there is a difference between the mean of the sample individuals and the theoretical mean, with this difference equaling 46.56. The results show that the value of the t-test reached 37.76 with degrees of freedom equal to 99, and this value is significant at 0.01. This indicates that there are differences between the mean of the sample individuals and the theoretical mean. In light of these results, we accept the first hypothesis, which predicted that the employees of the Ministry of Commerce suffer from a high level of occupational stress.

The relationship between recruitment methods and occupational stress.

We predicted in the second hypothesis: There is a statistically significant relationship between recruitment methods and occupational stress among the employees of the Ministry of Commerce. The most suitable statistical test for this hypothesis is calculating the Pearson correlation coefficient. The following table (2) illustrates this:

Table No. (2) shows the relationship between recruitment methods and occupational stress.

Statistical Significance	Correlation Coefficient	Variables
0.01	-0.60	Recruitment techniques / Occupational Stress

It is clear from the table shown above that there is a negative correlation between employment methods and occupational stress at the significance level of $\alpha = 0.01$, with a correlation value of $r = -0.60$, which is not significant. Based on the previous results, we reject the second hypothesis in which we anticipated a correlation between employment methods and occupational stress, and we accept the null hypothesis which states: there are no statistically significant differences between employment methods and occupational stress.

Discussion of Results: The aim of our current research is to reveal the relationship between employment methods and levels of occupational stress among the staff of the Ministry of Commerce. We have attempted, based on our current research, to identify the level of stress that the staff of the Ministry of Commerce suffer from and the extent of their exposure to occupational stress, especially since most studies conducted in institutions in general have addressed the staff category. We formulated the first hypothesis, which states that: the staff of the Ministry of Commerce suffer from high levels of stress. To verify the hypotheses of our research, we conducted statistical analysis, which led to the following results: "The staff of the Ministry of Commerce suffer from high levels of stress." Thus, the first research hypothesis is confirmed, as the results indicated that the ministry's staff experiences a high level of occupational stress, necessitating preventive measures to avoid burnout.

Quantitative evidence collected has confirmed that the staff do indeed suffer from high levels of stress while performing their tasks, which, if exceeded beyond a certain limit, can lead to adverse effects on the individual and the organization. This finding aligns with most Arab and global studies on this topic (Idaad Hassan, 2013). The results of our research concurred with the findings of a study conducted by Dahramangadan (1971), titled "Work Stress: A Comparative Study of Various Professions," which aimed to compare work stress among different professions, including supervisors and administrative assistants. The study showed that the highest levels of work stress were among police officers, and that the staff suffered from high levels of occupational stress. Our findings also aligned with a study by Samir Askar (1988) concerning work stress variables in the expenses sector in the United Arab Emirates, which confirmed that administrative staff suffer from high levels of work stress. Similarly, a study by Reda Masoudi (2003) examined occupational stress among emergency department physicians in some university hospitals in Algiers, revealing that these physicians experience elevated levels of occupational stress and intensity. In this context, our results resemble the findings of a study by Collins & Jons (2000), titled "Stress: The Perception of Social Work Lecturers in Britain," which found that social work lecturers experience high levels of job satisfaction alongside stress levels similar to those of the general British community, indicating that 25% of social work lecturers suffer from depression and anxiety. This is in line with the findings of studies by Al-Qaryouti (1997; 2002) which confirmed that university professors suffer from occupational stress and even burnout, similar to what we found in our current research that indicates a high level of occupational stress among the staff of the Ministry of Commerce.

As for the second hypothesis of our research, which states that there is a relationship between employment methods and occupational stress, the results contradict the research findings which indicate no relationship between employment methods and occupational stress. Given the lack of prior studies regarding the relationship between employment methods and occupational stress, the high levels of the latter in the Ministry of Commerce may be attributed to their age demographics, as the average age of most staff in the ministry is young, which may cause them stress in light of their lack of experience. Additionally, the current situation of the Algerian economy, with the country and market experiencing economic disruptions, may also significantly pressure the staff of the Ministry of Commerce, alongside delays in implementing the new finance law and the nature of

the work of the Ministry of Commerce, which could affect the levels of occupational stress among its staff.

Conclusion: In this research, we aimed to study employment methods and their relationship with occupational stress, where our expectations were that all the selected staff, chosen objectively, do not suffer from occupational stress. However, occupational stress, in psychological terms, has a direct relationship with personality nature as well as with the organizational circumstances that the organization is subjected to. Therefore, regardless of the type or method of employment used by the individual and relied upon by the organization, there is no relationship with occupational stress, since stress is the interaction between the individual and the stimuli and responses associated with the external and internal environment of the organization, as well as factors related to human resources.

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