



Social support's relationship to correctional staff job stress, job involvement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment

Eric G. Lambert^{a,*}, Kevin I. Minor^{b,1}, James B. Wells^{b,2}, Nancy L. Hogan^{c,3}

^a Department of Legal Studies, The University of Mississippi, 202 Odom Hall, Mississippi, MS 38677, USA

^b School of Justice Studies, Eastern Kentucky University, Stratton 467, 521 Lancaster Avenue, Richmond, KY 40475, USA

^c School of Criminal Justice, Ferris State University, 525 Bishop Hall, Big Rapids, MI 49307, USA

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 18 December 2014

Received in revised form 18 April 2015

Accepted 5 October 2015

Available online 6 November 2015

Keywords:

Correctional staff

Social support

Job stress

Job satisfaction

Job involvement

Organizational commitment

ABSTRACT

The literature suggests that social support, in general, is linked to positive outcomes among correctional staff, but the different types of social support may differ in their effects. Using survey data from staff working at a privately-owned, maximum security prison for juveniles sentenced as adults, this study analyzes three intra-organizational supports, administrative, supervisory, and coworker, and one extra-organizational form, family/friends support, as antecedents of job stress, job involvement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Personal variables serve as controls. Administrative and supervisory support are inversely related to job stress, while job involvement is affected positively by supervisory support and negatively by family/friends support. All three intra-organizational forms of support are significant antecedents of job satisfaction and organizational commitment however family/friends support is not. These findings hold implications for improving job outcomes among correctional staff and for future research.

© 2015 Western Social Science Association. Published by Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Prisons are expensive to administer and operate. [Henrichson and Delaney \(2012\)](#) report that over 35 billion dollars is spent on prisons each year in the United States to house 1.4 million adult inmates. Operating prisons is labor intensive, with staff being the largest expenditure, often accounting for over 75% of a prison's annual budget ([Camp & Lambert, 2005](#)). Additionally, staff are a valuable resource, as they are responsible for the multitude of tasks and duties necessary for the operation of a humane,

secure, and safe prison. In a sense, staff are a prison's heart and soul. In an era of reduced government budgets, investigating the factors that may affect correctional staff is imperative.

A growing body of research focuses on prison staff, particularly in terms of job stress, job involvement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Stressed, uninvolved, dissatisfied, and uncommitted staff can be detrimental to a prison's operations. On the other hand, having relatively unstressed, involved, satisfied, and committed staff is a desired outcome. To reach this outcome, researchers and administrators need information on the factors that help shape the job stress, job involvement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment of prison staff.

Working in a prison differs from working in other types of organizations. The prison work environment is unique because it involves confining individuals against

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1 662 915 2672.

E-mail addresses: eglamber@olemiss.edu (E.G. Lambert), Kevin.Minor@eku.edu (K.I. Minor), James.Wells@eku.edu (J.B. Wells), Hogann@ferris.edu (N.L. Hogan).

¹ Tel.: +1 859 622 2240.

² Tel.: +1 859 622 1158.

³ Tel.: +1 231 591 2664.

their will—individuals who have been convicted of violating criminal law. As [Armstrong and Griffin \(2004\)](#) point out, “Few other organizations are charged with the central task of supervising and securing an unwilling and potentially violent population” (p. 577). As the work environment in prisons varies from that found in most other organizations, the factors which influence job stress, job involvement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment may also vary compared to other organizations. Research needs to identify factors that mitigate job stress and contribute to the prison staff’s job involvement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

The literature suggests that social support is important for staff to deal with the unique strains and challenges encountered in a prison work environment ([Keinan & Maslach-Pines, 2007](#); [Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986](#)). Social support should help staff deal with strains that would otherwise increase job stress and decrease job involvement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. There are different types of social support, and the literature is limited and unclear about what types of social support are linked with job stress, job involvement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment among prison staff. This study’s objective is to explore the nature of the relationship between administrative support, supervisory support, coworker support, and family and friends support with job stress, job involvement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Expanding knowledge of these relationships provides a framework for the future development of research in this area and provides correctional administrators with information on how different forms of social support affect prison staff.

1. Literature review

1.1. Job stress

According to [Matteson and Ivancevich \(1987\)](#), “there are literally hundreds of definitions for stress to be found in the research and professional literature. Virtually all of them can be placed into one of two categories, however: stress can be defined as either a stimulus or a response” (p. 10). Stressors are negative stimuli that cause strain for a person, which ultimately can result in stress ([Cullen, Link, Wolfe, & Frank, 1985](#)). Job stress is psychological strain leading to leading to job-related hardness, tension, anxiety, frustration, and worry arising from work ([Misis, Kim, Cheeseman, Hogan, & Lambert, 2013](#)). Job stress can be harmful over time, leading to increased mental withdrawal from the job, reduced interactions with clients and coworkers, increased conflict with family and friends, absenteeism, substance abuse, turnover, burnout, health/medical problems, and even premature death ([Cheek, 1984](#); [Cheek & Miller, 1983](#); [Lambert, Edwards, Camp, & Saylor, 2005a](#); [Matteson & Ivancevich, 1987](#); [Mitchell, MacKenzie, Styve, & Gover, 2000](#); [Slate & Vogel, 1997](#); [Whitehead, 1989](#); [Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986](#); [Woodruff, 1993](#)). Job stress is harmful to both staff and the prison organization, and its antecedents need to be studied. Social support may be one such antecedent.

1.2. Job involvement

Job involvement is the level of psychological identification with a job ([Kanungo, 1982a,b](#)). As [Elloy, Everett, and Flynn \(1992\)](#) note, it refers to a cognitive bond people can form with their jobs. [Paullay, Alliger, and Stone-Romero \(1994\)](#) point out that job involvement is a psychological state wherein an individual “is cognitively preoccupied with, engaged in, and concerned with one’s present job” (p. 224). [DeCarufel and Schaan \(1990\)](#) note that “an individual with a high degree of job involvement would place the job at the center of his/her life’s interests. The well-known phrase ‘I live, eat, and breathe my job’ would describe someone whose job involvement is very high” (p. 86). Persons with low job involvement focus on interests other than their work ([Hogan, Lambert, & Griffin, 2013](#)). [Elloy et al. \(1992\)](#) contend that job involvement is a measure work life’s quality. [Chen and Chiu \(2009\)](#) point out that people with “high job involvement are more independent and self-confident—they not only conduct their work in accordance with the job duties required by the company but are also more likely to do their work in accordance with the employees’ perception of their own performance” (p. 478). [Pfeffer \(1994\)](#) contends that job involvement translates to organizational effectiveness in the long run. Additionally, job involvement is linked with reduced turnover intent among jail staff ([Lambert & Paoline, 2010](#)). There is a need to examine possible antecedents of prison staff job involvement, and social support may be an important antecedent.

1.3. Job satisfaction

[Locke \(1976\)](#) defines job satisfaction as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (p. 1300). [Weiss \(2002\)](#) contends job satisfaction is the summative positive and negative emotions arising from the job. Simply, job satisfaction is “the extent to which people like their jobs” ([Spector, 1996, p. 214](#)). In all these definitions, job satisfaction is an affective/emotional response by an employee concerning his/her particular job and whether the employee likes the job. Job satisfaction is a salient and powerful workplace concept. Low levels have been found to be associated with absenteeism, turnover, and job burnout among correctional staff ([Byrd, Cochran, Silverman, & Blount, 2000](#); [Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986](#); [Wright, 1993](#)). Conversely, high levels are related to improved work performance, organizational innovation, greater compliance with organizational rules, greater support for rehabilitation of inmates, and greater life satisfaction among correctional staff ([Fox, 1982](#); [Lambert, 2004](#); [Lambert & Hogan, 2010](#); [Lambert et al., 2009](#); [Lambert, Hogan, Paoline, & Baker, 2005b](#); [Robinson, Porporino, & Simourd, 1992](#)). Given its significance, it is important to explore how different forms of social support may be associated with job satisfaction.

1.4. Organizational commitment

Organizational commitment is the bond between an employee and the employing organization ([Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982](#)). Continuance and affective

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/139970>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/139970>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)