

## The causal relationship between personality traits and job stress with the quality of work life through the mediation of job attachment

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### Abstract

**Background and purpose:** Today, a new trend has started in organizations, and work in organizations has gained a new meaning. Organizations that offer a good quality of work life to their employees have a good index in attracting and retaining employees. Therefore, the quality of employees' working life is the key to any organization's success, increasing employee satisfaction and strengthening their learning and flexibility in a changing environment. Therefore, this research aimed to investigate the causal relationship between personality traits and job stress with the quality of work life through the mediation of job attachment. **Methodology:** The research method was correlation and path analysis. The statistical population of the research was made up of all the teachers and teachers working in education in Ludab region (Boyer Ahmad city) in the academic year 2022-2023. The statistical sample of the research was 250 teachers who were selected by convenience sampling. In order to measure the research variables, Walton's (1973) work-life quality questionnaires, Davis et al.'s job stress (1991), NEO personality traits (Costa & McCree, 1985), and Edwards and Klipatrick's (1984) job attachment were used. Evaluation of the proposed model was done using path analysis. **Results:** The findings showed that the direct paths of personality traits and job stress and job attachment with quality of work life and the direct paths of personality traits and job stress with job attachment were statistically significant. On the other hand, the results showed that the indirect paths of personality traits and job stress through job attachment with the quality of work life were significant. **Conclusion:** Generally, personality traits and job stress significantly correlate with the quality of work life through the mediation of job attachment in teachers.

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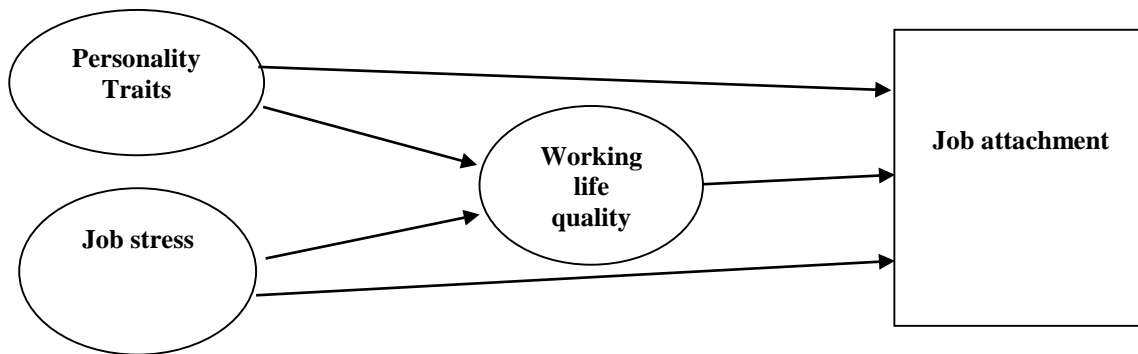
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## **Introduction**

The quality of working life has become a major social issue this century and worldwide. The quality of work life, raised in the early 1970s, has been examined from different angles during the past few decades (Mustafa Rad, 2019). Walton (1973) is the first and most famous person who classified the components of the quality of work life. He considered eight main variables as the goal of improving the quality of work life, which are fair and adequate pay, safe and healthy working conditions, suitable work opportunities for the development of human capabilities, a suitable opportunity for growth and security of continuity, the importance of work in society, Legality of work and social compatibility. Johnson (2011) considers the quality of work life as a workplace strategy that increase and maintain employee job satisfaction and aims to improve working conditions for employees and individual and organizational effectiveness. The quality of work life is the ability of employees to satisfy essential personal needs by using the experiences they have gained in the organization (Bezazjairi, 2016). High quality of work life is essential for the organization because it makes the organization attractive to employees and leads to their retention in the organization (Hsu et al., 2006). It is worth mentioning that the quality of work life reduces absenteeism, workplace accidents, job dissatisfaction, and job leaving (Mossadgrad et al., 2020). Job stress is an influencing factor on job satisfaction and organizational commitment of employees and is one of the predictors of leaving the job. Job stress occurs when there is an imbalance between the demands (expectations) in the workplace and the ability of employees (Golavani & Shinde, 2014). As a result, occupational stress affects the quality of work life. Stress reduces attention, concentration, decision-making, and judgment skills (Shapiro et al., 2005). In addition, job stress is negatively related to work quality and will lead to mistakes and errors (Teng et al., 2010). Another factor affecting the quality of work life is personality traits. Personality is accepted as one of the predictors of job performance, and each person's personality traits play an essential role in his job performance because each person's personality is one of the practical factors in how a person responds to job requirements, motivation, and attitude towards a job. Job determines (Mohramzadeh et al., 2014). Personality is a relatively stable pattern of traits, tendencies, or characteristics that sustains people's behavior to some extent. More specifically, personality consists of traits or tendencies that lead to individual differences in behavior, stability of behavior over time, and continuity of behavior in various situations (Farhangi et al., 2016). In a study, the researchers stated that the most important conditions affecting the quality of work life are job security, physical conditions of work, workplace and control of pressure and stress in it, balance in work and life, and finally, another important factor that can affect the quality of work life is personality traits (Mahmoudi et al., 2014).

In fact, the existence of a fit between personality traits and job characteristics will increase job satisfaction. Also, the existence of this fit may have a profound effect on a person's better job performance (Faizabadi Farahani & Mir Hashemi, 2011). Another topic related to and affecting the quality of work life is job attachment, which has attracted the attention of many research studies in recent years. Job attachment, which is related to positivity, self-learning, and work (Wong et al., 2017), has been defined as a positive and job-related state of mind characterized by energy, dedication, and job attractiveness. Employees who are attached to their jobs have much energy and enough enthusiasm to perform their job duties. They are so focused on their work and immersed in it that they do not notice the passing of time (Shafli & Bakker, 2004). According to Cohen, job attachment is a desirable feature. People with high job attachments are satisfied, show a positive attitude, and express high commitment to their organization and colleagues. Such people rarely think of quitting their jobs and are expected to work for their respective organizations for many years (Brown, 2007), so they seem to have a high quality of work life. Although previous studies have examined the desired variables, based on the research done in the research background, so far, a model that includes all these variables has not been tested; Therefore, in order to answer the research question that personality traits and job stress affect the quality of work life through the mediation of job attachment, the model of Figure 1 is set up and analyzed.



**Figure 1. The conceptual model of the research**

### **Methodology**

The current research is of applied purpose type and, in terms of methodology, descriptive-correlation type of structural equations. The research's statistical population was comprised of all teachers and teachers working in education in Ludab region (Boyer Ahmad city) in the academic year of 1402-1401. Sampling in this research was done in the form of available sampling. For this purpose, according to the statistical population, the sample size was calculated based on the Morgan table of 250 teachers. Teachers with at least 3 years of work experience were selected as the sample size. After conducting the questionnaires on the sample, first the descriptive statistics indicators such as number, minimum,

maximum, average and standard deviation related to the research variables are reported. In the following, the investigated hypotheses were analyzed through Pearson's correlation test and path analysis, and their results are reported. All statistical calculations were done through SPSS\_22 and Amos software.

## Materials

**1- Walton's Quality of Work Life Questionnaire.** To measure the quality of work life, Walton's (1973) quality of work life questionnaire was used, which includes 35 questions with a five-point Likert scale (very low = 1, low = 2, moderate = 3, high = 4, very high = 5) and It consists of 27 questions and includes 8 sub-scales of the quality of working life, which are: fair and adequate payment (questions 1, 2, 3), safe and healthy work environment (questions 4, 5, 6), provision of opportunities for continuous growth and security. (questions 7, 8, 9), legalism in the organization (questions 10, 11, 12, 13), social dependence of work life (questions 14, 15, 16), the general atmosphere of life (questions 17, 18, 19), unity and social cohesion in work organization (questions 20, 21, 22, 23) and development of human capabilities (questions 24, 25, 26, 27). The minimum score of this questionnaire is 35 and the maximum score is 175. This questionnaire has been used in numerous pieces of research abroad and inside the country, showing high validity and reliability. Walton has reported the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire in the general state of 0.88. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this questionnaire was reported by Jamshidi (2009) 0.831, Rahimi et al. (2005) 0.85, Khalili and Pradehian (2008) 0.91 and Mehdad et al. (2014) 0.91. In the present study, in order to check the reliability of Walton's quality of work-life questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha method and half were used, which are respectively: 0.83 and 0.83.

**2-Job stress questionnaire of Davis, Robbins and McKay.** The occupational stress questionnaire and its sources were prepared by Davis et al. (1991). This questionnaire consists of two parts: the measurement of stress symptoms, which contains 20 questions. This questionnaire examines and evaluates the symptoms of job stress from the last three months until the person completes the questionnaire; and measures sources of occupational stress, which includes 50 questions (Yazdi & Jafari, 2010). This questionnaire is answered on a five-point spectrum from 0 (never) to 4 (almost always). In this questionnaire, a score of 0 to 25 indicates that the person is likely to cope with stress sufficiently and is compatible. The questionnaire is based on the Likert spectrum scale (almost always "score 4" to never "score 0"). The minimum score is zero, and the maximum score is 280. Acquiring a score of 26 to 40 indicates that people suffer from job stress. If they get a score of 41 to 55, they need to take preventive action to avoid burnout, and a score of 56 and above is a sign of burnout, and a comprehensive management plan should be used to control people's stress. Cronbach's alpha reported the reliability coefficient of this tool as 0.8 by

Daniyal et al. Kohpima et al. (2013) also reported the reliability of the occupational stress level of 0.93 and the sources of occupational stress at 0.95. In the present study, to check the reliability of Davis, Robbins, and McKay's job stress questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha method was used, and the results were: 0.81 and 0.81, respectively.

**3- Questionnaire of NEO personality traits (five-factor NEO).** In order to examine the personality traits, the short form of the Big Five Factors of McCree and Costa (1987) questionnaire was used. The short form of the NEO test has 60 questions. The questionnaire of personality traits has five components of neuroticism (1-6-11-16-21-26-31-36-41-46-51-56), and extroversion (2-7-12-17-22-27-32). -37-42-47-52-57), experienceability (3-8-13-18-23-28-33-38-43-48-53-58), agreeableness (4-9-14-19 -24-29-34-39-44-49-54-59) and responsibility (5-10-15-20-25-30-35-40-45-50-55-60). The answer sheet of this questionnaire is based on a Likert scale (completely disagree, disagree, indifferent, agree, and completely agree). The scoring of the short form of this questionnaire, i.e., NEO-FFI, is different in all materials. This means that in scoring some items in the short form of the questionnaire, a score of 4 is given to completely disagree, 3 to disagree, 2 to indifferent, 1 to agree, and 0 to completely agree. While some other materials of this short form are graded as the opposite of the said state. The reliability of this test in the research of Shekarkan et al. (2002) using the retest method on 64 sample people at two-week intervals for the five mentioned factors was 0.87, 0.84, 0.79, 0.80 and 0.82 has been obtained. Karmi et al. (2014) also reported the reliability of its five factors using Cronbach's alpha method as 0.76, 0.65, 0.59, 0.48 and 0.75, respectively. In the present study, in order to check the reliability of the personality traits questionnaire (five-factor neo), Cronbach's alpha method was used and the results were: 0.79 and 0.78, respectively.

**4-Job attachment questionnaire.** Edwards and Kilpatrick (1984) questionnaire, which was translated and adjusted by Pakari and Shokrkon (1991), will be used to evaluate job attachment. This questionnaire consists of 20 questions with a 4-point Likert scale and no subscales. The minimum score is 20 and the maximum score is 80. Hasani (1993) obtained a coefficient of 0.70 to determine the validity of this questionnaire by correlating this test with the criterion question. Hasani (1993) and Pakari and Shokrkon (1991) used the halving method to determine the reliability of the job attachment questionnaire and reported 0.52 and 0.23 coefficients, respectively. Asgari and Pour-Trab (2008) also used Cronbach's alpha and Tansif methods to check reliability, which they reported as 0.83 and 0.84, respectively. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha method was used to check the reliability of job attachment questionnaire, and the results were: 0.76 and 0.74, respectively.

## Results

In the following table, the descriptive indices of the research variables are reported.

**Table 1. Descriptive statistics indexes**

Components	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation
Job stress	11	67	46/86	10/19
Neurotic personality trait	10	53	24/70	7/40
The personality trait of extroversion	9	49	33/72	6/81
The personality trait of being open to experience	8	54	28/02	9/98
Adaptability personality trait	7	49	25/68	10/80
The personality trait of conscientiousness	8	49	29/71	8/18
Job Involvement	10	73	44/89	7/90
Quality of working life	67	158	118/22	20/07

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the research variables (occupational stress, personality traits, job attachment, and quality of work life). The mean and standard deviation of occupational stress is 46.86 (10.19), respectively; Also, the lowest score of personality traits is related to neurotic personality with a mean and standard deviation of 24.70 (7.40) and the highest score is related to extraversion personality trait with a mean and standard deviation of 33.72 (6.81). Also, the mean and standard deviation of job attachment was reported as 44.89 (7.90), and the mean and standard deviation of work-life quality as 118.22 (20.07), respectively.

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test measures the normality of data distribution. When the significance level of this test is more significant than 0.05, the assumption of normality of the data is confirmed, and as a result, the researcher is allowed to use this test. Table 2 shows the statistical indicators of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

**Table 2. Kolmogorov Smirnov (K-S) test for data normality**

Research variables	Z	sig
Job stress	1/26	0/16
Neurotic personality trait	1/17	0/21
The personality trait of extroversion	/142	0/09
The personality trait of being open to experience	1/05	0/31
Adaptability personality trait	0/06	0/59
The personality trait of conscientiousness	1/11	0/26
Job Involvement	2/00	0/11
Quality of working life	0/19	0/53

The results related to the normality of the data distribution in the variables examined in the pre-test are reported in Table (2). According to the results of Table (2), because the significance level of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is greater than 0.05 in all the investigated variables, the null hypothesis (normality of data distribution) is confirmed.

**Table 3. Matrix of correlation coefficients of research variables**

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Occupational stress	1							
2. Neurotic character	0/255**	1						
3. Extraverted personality	-0/183**	-0/443**	1					
4. Character openness to experience	-0/143**	-0/155**	0/166**	1				
5. Personality adaptability	-0/188**	-0/235**	0/245**	0/467**	1			
6. Conscientious character	-0/237**	-0/262**	0/173**	0/171**	0/213**	1		
7. Job attachment	-0/193**	-0/180**	0/119*	0/237**	0/322**	0/152**	1	
8. Quality of working life	-0/178**	-0/191**	0/243**	0/288**	0/299**	0/111*	-0/171**	1

P<0/05\* p<0/01\*\*

The results of the correlation coefficients in Table 3 show a positive relationship between the personality trait of neuroticism and job stress. There is a significant negative relationship between job attachment and quality of work life. A negative relationship was found between the extroversion personality trait and job stress, and a significant positive relationship was found with job attachment and quality of work life. There is a negative relationship between the personality trait of openness to experience and job stress, and there is a significant positive relationship between job attachment and quality of work life. Also, there is a significant negative relationship between the adaptability personality trait and job stress and a significant positive relationship between job attachment and work life quality. There is a significant negative relationship between the personality trait of conscientiousness and job stress, and there is a significant positive relationship between job attachment and the quality of work life.

Also, the above table results show a significant negative relationship between job attachment and quality of work life. The highest coefficient is related to the correlation coefficient of adaptable personality with job attachment, and the lowest coefficient is related to the correlation coefficient of extroverted personality with job attachment.

**Table 4. Model fit indices**

RMSEA	GFI	CFI	X <sup>2</sup> /df	X <sup>2</sup>
0/98	0/97	0/99	2/42	33/27

As can be seen in Table (4), the goodness of fit index (GFI) was equal to 0.98, adjusted goodness of fit index (CFI) equal to 0.99 was obtained. The size of the indices obtained from the structural model fit test indicates that the model fits well. The root means square

error approximation (RMSEA) is equal to 0.076 and is less than 0.08, and this indicator also indicates the good fit of the model.

**Table 5. Value and significance of path coefficients of the initial model of the proposed path**

Path		Non-standard effects	Standard effects	Standard error	T	Sig
From	To					
Job stress	Job attachment	0/20	-0/14	-0/17	-	-0/17
neurosis	Job attachment	-0/24	-0/19	-0/22	-	-0/22
extroversion	Job attachment	0/16	0/11	0/13	-	0/13
Openness to experience adaptability	Job attachment	0/28	0/21	0/25	-	0/25
Conscientiousness	Job attachment	0/33	0/28	0/31	-	0/31
Job stress	Quality of working life	0/17	0/11	0/14	-	0/14
neurosis	Quality of working life	-0/18	-0/15	-0/22	-0/24	0/46
extroversion	Quality of working life	-0/19	-0/14	-0/20	-0/21	0/41
Openness to experience adaptability	Quality of working life	0/23	0/17	0/23	0/25	0/48
Conscientiousness	Quality of working life	0/28	0/13	0/29	0/32	0/61
Job attachment	Quality of working life	0/29	0/25	0/30	0/33	0/63
	Quality of working life	0/12	0/09	0/12	0/14	0/26
	Quality of working life	-0/17	-0/16	-0/18	-	-

The results of the path coefficients model showed that there is a significant direct relationship between job stress and job attachment. Also, a significant direct relationship was obtained between neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, conscientiousness and adaptability of personality traits with job attachment and quality of work life. Also, a significant direct relationship between job attachment and quality of work life was obtained.

Next, in order to check the indirect hypotheses to test the indirect relationships (mediation), macro bootstrap and Preacher and Hayes tests were used, the results of which are reported in Table (6).



**Table 6. Macro and Preacher and Hayes bootstrap test results for all mediating paths in the initial model**

Independent variable	Mediator	Dependent variable	Bootstrap	Bias	Standard Error	Confidence interval%95	
						Lower limit	Upper limit
Job stress	Job attachment	Quality of working life	0/148	0/151	0/0003	0/02	0/044
neurosis	Job attachment	Quality of working life	0/166	0/167	0/0008	0/03	0/052
extroversion	Job attachment	Quality of working life	0/176	0/178	0/0003	0/04	0/050
Openness to experience	Job attachment	Quality of working life	0/133	0/135	0/001	0/01	0/047
Conscientiousness	Job attachment	Quality of working life	0/139	0/141	0/0004	0/02	0/039
adaptability	Job attachment	Quality of working life	0/141	0/143	0/0004	0/02	0/040

In the above table, bootstrap was used for the mean of mediating relationships. Table (6) shows the results obtained from bootstrap in Preacher and Hayes macro program for all indirect (intermediate) paths. The contents of the above table indicate the significance of intermediate paths. The confidence level for the confidence interval is 95 and the number of bootstrap resampling is 5000. Considering that zero is outside the confidence interval (upper and lower limits), these mediating relationships are significant; In this way, the hypotheses related to indirect (intermediate) paths were confirmed.

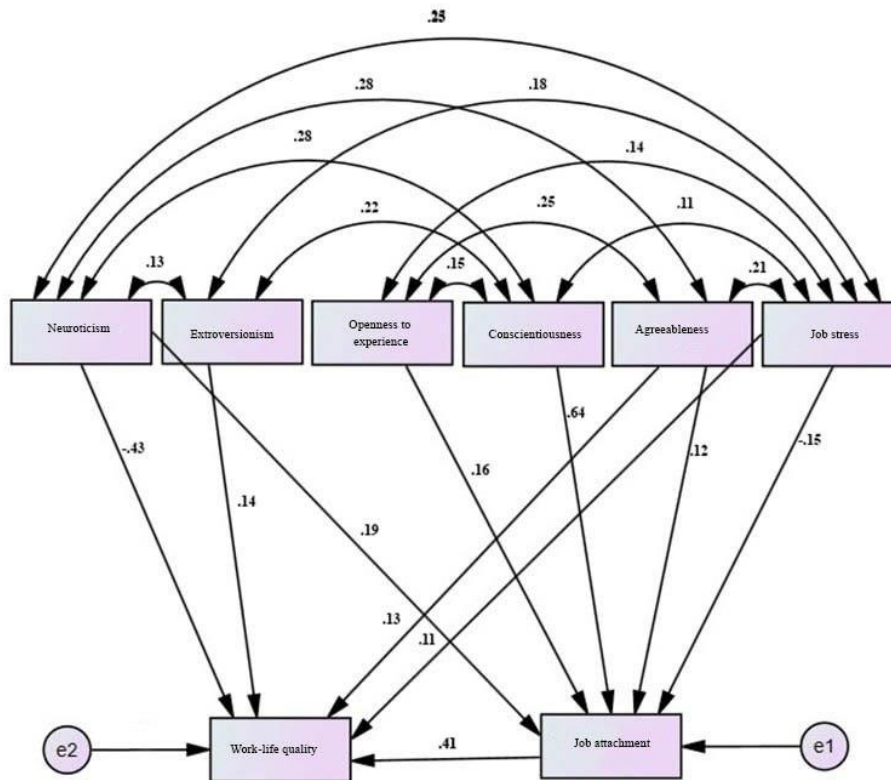


Figure 2. Final Model

### Discussion and Conclusion

This research aimed to investigate the causal relationship between personality traits and job stress with the quality of work life through the mediation of job attachment. In order to measure the research variables, Walton's (1973) work-life quality questionnaires, Davis et al.'s job stress (1991), NEO personality traits (Costa & McCree, 1985), and Edwards and Klipatrick's (1984) job attachment were used. Evaluation of the proposed model was done using path analysis. The findings showed that the direct paths of personality traits and job stress, and job attachment with the quality of work life and the direct paths of personality traits and job stress with job attachment were statistically significant. On the other hand, the results showed that the indirect paths of personality traits and job stress through job attachment with the quality of work life were significant. Generally, personality traits and job stress significantly correlate with the quality of work life through the mediation of job attachment in teachers.

As seen in table (6), job attachment significantly mediates the relationship between teacher personality traits and quality of work life. Considering the final model, job attachment has been able to mediate between personality traits and quality of work life in teachers.

The results obtained from this research are similar to the results obtained from the studies of Samadi Beile Sawar et al. (2016), Kandani and Mehta (2015), Kaushik and Singh Tank (2008), Mojtahedi and Ashuri (2017), Takshyatohemkaran (2015), Sheikh al-Islami et al. (2015) is aligned and coordinated.

In the research of Bernardo et al. (2005), it was shown that personality, especially through the dimensions of neuroticism, is one of the correlates of health. This personality structure is characterized by anxiety, depression, guilt, restlessness, and emotional instability. In fact, high neuroticism is related to extreme reactivity and mental instability. According to the research findings, there is a relationship between neuroticism and negative emotions. Neurotic people are prone to use drugs and engage in risky behaviors to cope with disturbing moods. High flexibility is also related to positive and negative emotions. Personality traits are a factor that affects the quality of work life of teachers through job attachment, and it is considered an important factor in the low quality of work life of people and the lack of personality development. Teachers with a high quality of life can establish healthier and more successful interpersonal relationships and gain the satisfaction of others. In explaining the obtained results, various factors are involved in forming behavior and as a result of mental health and quality of working life. Environmental factors and personality characteristics are among the determinants of behavior. According to documentary theories, especially Hyder's theories, behavior is a function of environmental and individual factors; In other words, behavior is the result of individual effective force and effective environmental force; Therefore, it can be said that if a person accepts himself in terms of personality and identity (one of the signs of high attachment to self and job) and values and respects himself (self-esteem and identity in attachment to the job), then behaviors He does what is beneficial for both himself and others. If he does not value and respect himself, then he engages in any behavior that reduces job attachment and, as a result, the quality of work life (Abassizadeh). et al., 2017).

Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that personality traits influence people's values and attitudes (Bozinlos, 2003). Work attachment reflects attitudes and values towards a specific aspect of life; Therefore, it should be related to personality traits. Job attachment is partly derived from personality, individual characteristics, organization environment, job design, and supervisory behavior. The most important personality traits in job attachment are age, need for growth, belief in traditional work ethics (Mehdad, 2010), locus of internal control, and need for progress. Therefore, psychologically, the more employees show an emotional self-reaction to their jobs, are attached to their jobs, and have high abilities, these employees are more inclined to spend effort in work and stand up to the problems of the

future, dedication and full concentration of the employees, and their experiences lead to mental health. Furthermore, it drives the quality of work life in the organization where they work.

As seen in table (6), job attachment significantly mediates the relationship between job stress and quality of work life in teachers. Considering the final model, it can be seen that job attachment has been able to play a mediating role between job stress and quality of work life.

These results are consistent with the results of the studies of Hajlo (2011), Sharzovani et al. (2011), Amini et al. (2012), Jafari et al.

The absence of stressors in the workplace is one of the most basic needs, neglecting which causes various mental illnesses, including feelings of alienation from work, reduced job attachment and, as a result, reduced quality of work life; In other words, because human beings are biological, psychological and social beings, psychological characteristics play one of the most important roles in human performance in the work environment. Among these psychological features and characteristics, job stress may cause many psychological problems such as nervous, intellectual and emotional pressures and a set of global problems that reduce job attachment and the quality of work life (Zare et al., 2018). Occupational stress reduces the quality of work life and increases the probability of work-related injuries. Quality of work life is very critical for organizations to attract and retain human resources. Considering the importance of stress in the lives of individuals and in the life of organizations, as well as the issues and problems that organizations are involved in due to the existence of stress, and the importance that organizations pay large sums of money for the problem caused by stress in the work environment, the necessity of research shows more in this field.

In explaining the obtained results, it should be said that job attachment is related to a person's general attitude towards the organization, in fact, employees with high job attachment are more satisfied with their jobs, show a positive attitude in their work, do not have stress and mental pressure, and The organization and their colleagues express a higher interest. Such people are more inclined to stay in the organization when they feel that moral values are considered in their organization when making decisions. This issue mostly happens when employees feel that their personal moral values are compatible with the organization, they rarely think of quitting their jobs and generally believe that their personal goals are compatible with their organizational goals (Sherzvani et al., 2013). All in all, these characteristics of job attachment improve the quality of work life in teachers.

In this research, the most important limitation was the use of correlation method and self-reporting tools. In this method, the discovered relationships cannot be assumed as causal relationships, and in self-reporting tools, people may need more self-regard and answer the items responsibly. Lack of control of intervening variables, such as the socio-economic

class of teachers, was another limitation of the research. According to the results of the research, in order to reduce occupational stress and consequently improve the quality of work life of teachers, it is suggested that managers and consultants pay attention to the signs of variables of stress and job attachment and, based on them, develop programs to increase the quality of work life of teachers and Teachers design. Also, to increase the quality of work life of teachers, educational workshops can be used to promote social support and psychological well-being, and by applying necessary measures such as reducing unhealthy competition, job tensions and job stress can be reduced, thereby preventing the reduction of the quality of work life. Teachers and education personnel. According to the results of the research, in order to maintain their skilled and experienced workforce, education managers must pay more attention to factors affecting job stress and quality of work life, such as increasing the number of salaries and benefits, reducing burdensome rules, improving relations between managers and employees, and creating a safe work environment.

### **Ethics**

This research observed ethical standards, including obtaining informed consent and ensuring privacy and confidentiality. Also, while completing the questionnaires while emphasizing completing all the questions, the participants were free to withdraw from the research at any time and provide individual information. They were assured that the information would remain confidential, which was strictly adhered to.

### **Acknowledgement**

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### **Conflict of Interest**

According to the authors, this article has no financial sponsor or conflict of interest.

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