

# The Effect of Challenging Stressors on Job Involvement of Post-90s Employees: A Study on the Moderating Effect of Job Values

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## ABSTRACT

Young employees in enterprises are facing increasing pressure from time and work knowledge input. Among the factors affecting the degree of work input, the pressure is common and realistic. Based on the survey data of 201 employees, this study explored the “Double-edged” effect of challenging stressors on post-90s employees’ work engagement, and examined the moderating effect of employees’ work values. The results show that time pressure and work knowledge input pressure in challenging stressors have an inverted U-shaped effect on post-90s employees’ work input. The interpersonal harmony factor in the employee’s work values weakens the inverse U-shaped effect of time pressure on work input, and the compensation and welfare value plays a positive role in the linear relationship between time pressure and work input. The internal preference factors in values showed positive moderating relationship between the two dimensions of challenging stressors and the linear relationship of job involvement.

**Keywords:** *challenging stressors, job engagement, job values*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Challenging stressors are difficult job demands that motivate employees to engage in positive behaviors and thus generate potential benefits for individuals[1]. Job involvement refers to a kind of healthy, positive and complete emotional and cognitive state held by individuals in their work, which is mainly manifested in three dimensions: vitality, dedication and concentration[2]. Enterprise efficiency is the lifeblood of enterprise survival, staff as the main body to improve efficiency, while bearing the dual pressure of improving personal quality and final elimination. In March 2019, the word 996 became a hot topic on the internet after Internet company programmers’ collective criticism of the 996 work schedule. Young employees affected by 996 expressed their dissatisfaction with the system. Enterprise efficiency is the lifeblood of enterprise survival, staff as the main body to improve efficiency,

while bearing the dual pressure of improving personal quality and final elimination. In March 2019, the word 996 became a hot topic on the internet after Internet company programmers’ collective criticism of the 996 work schedule. Young workers affected by the 996 system of work express their dissatisfaction with the system. Based on the analysis of data from the National Labor Force Dynamic Survey, it is also found that more than 50% of the employees work overtime objectively[3]. At the same time, in order to adapt to the needs of organizational change, young employees must self-learning, self-empowerment, in order to adapt to organizational change. According to the theory of trait activation, when the external situation of an individual is matched with the “Latent” trait within the individual, the trait will be awakened and behave in a specific way. When the level of activation experienced by employees deviates from the optimal state of activation, they will be depressed due to the impairment of information processing ability, resulting in a decline in performance

and other adverse effects[4]. So in the face of high time pressure and work knowledge input, employees will show what kind of work state, the degree of work input? Under what circumstances, the staff can achieve the best activation level, so that the time pressure and learning needs of the two sources of pressure to play a positive role to the maximum, is the issue of concern to the organization managers.

## 2. RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA ANALYSIS

### 2.1. Sample selection

the survey is conducted on the staff of the Enterprise, the questionnaire is distributed by the network, and the subjects fill in the questionnaire online. Online distribution mainly includes two ways: one is paid on the "Questionnaire star"App to distribute the questionnaire; the other is by college classmates, family members and friends to proliferate the questionnaire. A total of 201 valid questionnaires were completed.

### 2.2. Reliability and validity test

Using SPSS25.0 to calculate the reliability of the questionnaire, the reliability of time pressure and work knowledge input used by challenging stressors were 0.807 and 0.82; The reliability of work engagement and work values scale was 0.929 and 0.952, respectively Each variable or dimension has a Cronbach'alpha value greater than 0.8. In addition, the KMO and Bartlett spherical test were performed on all scales by SPSS25.0. The KMO values of the three scales were 0.791,0.916 and 0.936, respectively. The Bartlett spherical test was significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that the data were spherical distribution and the questionnaire had good structural validity.

**Table 1** KMO Value And Bartlett Sphericity Test ( N=201 )

Measurement Index	KMO	Bartlett Sphericity Test		
		Approximate chi-square	Degree of freedom	Saliency (P value)
Time pressure				
Work knowledge input	0.791	574.079	21	0.000
Engagement	0.916	1776.091	78	0.000
Work values	0.936	3616.245	190	0.000

### 2.3. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis

showed that the subjects'perceived time pressure and work knowledge input were in the middle and upper level ( $m_1 = 3.58, m_2 = 3.60$ ). There was a positive correlation

between time stress dimension and job involvement in challenging stressors ( $r = 0.203, p < 0.01$ ), there was also a significant correlation between job knowledge involvement and job involvement ( $r = 0.541, p < 0.01$ ). The relationship between innovation orientation and interpersonal relationship in work values and employees'work engagement was higher ( $r = 0.572, p < 0.01; R = 0.566, p < 0.01$ ). Other dimensions also had significant positive correlation with dependent variables in different degrees.

### 2.4. Supposing Test

#### 2.4.1. Main effect test

according to the results of MODEL2 regression in table 2, time pressure has a positive effect on employee engagement ( $\beta = 0.124, p < 0.05$ ), the effect of time pressure square item on employee engagement was more significant than that of single item ( $\beta = -0.112, p < 0.05$ ). The explanation degree of employee engagement was 16.1% when square item was added to the regression model, and R2 was higher than MODEL2, the time stress dimension in challenging stressors has an inverted U-shaped effect on job engagement. Both the first item and the square item of work knowledge input in Model 3 and Model 4 had significant effects on work input, but model 5R2 was slightly higher than Model 4, indicating that the regression equation constructed in model 5 had more significant effects on dependent variables ( $\beta_1 = 0.402, \beta_2 = -0.082, p < 0.001$ ). Therefore, the dimension of work knowledge input in challenging stressors has an inverted U-shaped effect on employees'work input.

**Table 2** Master Effect Model Checklist (N=201)

variable	Engagement					
	Model1	Model2	Model3	Model4	Model5	Model6
Age	0.411 ***	0.386 **	0.362 *	0.314 **	0.306 **	0.265 **
Sex	-0.043	-0.041	-0.053	-0.062	-0.060	-0.033
Educational Level	-0.121	-0.107	-0.094	-0.097	-0.093	-0.080
Years of service	-0.048	-0.047	-0.027	-0.031	-0.023	0.008
Time pressure		0.124 *	0.089			-0.156 **
Time pressure squared			-0.112* *			0.071
Work knowledge input				0.441 ***	0.403 ***	0.344 ***
Work knowledge input squared					-0.082 *	-0.109 *
Work values						0.465 ***
DW	1.780	1.812	1.807	1.790	1.767	1.724
R2	0.113	0.135	0.161	0.363	0.377	0.529
Adj.R2	0.095	0.113	0.135	0.347	0.358	0.507
F	6.262 ***	6.107 ***	6.200 ***	22.214 ***	19.567 ***	23.832 ***
VIF ( max )	2.120	2.139	2.155	2.146	2.150	2.176

#### 2.4.2. Adjustment effect test

Firstly, based on MODEL3, the interaction items of each dimension with time pressure primary item and time

pressure square item were added in turn. The regression results show that, the factor of interpersonal harmony in work values has a significant moderating effect on the inverted U-shaped relationship between time pressure and work engagement (the coefficient of time pressure square and interpersonal harmony interaction is 0.077, P value is 0.019). Further regression analysis showed that under low time pressure, the linear relationship between time pressure and job involvement showed significant negative moderating relationship between compensation and welfare factors and internal preference factors ( $\beta = -0.144, p = 0.009$ ;  $\beta = -0.097, p = 0.043$ ). Similarly, based on model 5, the interaction terms of independent variables and moderating variables and the square of independent variables and moderating variables are introduced, to examine the moderating effect of work values on the inverted U-shaped effect of work knowledge input pressure on work engagement. The results showed that each dimension of work values had no significant moderating effect on the inverted U relationship between work knowledge input pressure and work engagement ( $p > 0.05$ ).

### **3. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION**

#### ***3.1. Research conclusion***

Based on the survey data, this paper takes the post-90s working population as a sample, combining the universality of time pressure and the development needs of the new era employees' self-empowerment, two dimensions of time pressure and work knowledge input in challenging stressors were selected to verify the inverted U-shaped effect of two different types of challenging stressors on employees' work input. When the work knowledge input pressure is at a moderate level, the employee's work input will increase significantly with the work knowledge input pressure. As can be seen from the chart of the main effect of work knowledge input in Fig. 3, although its effect on work knowledge input is inverted U-shaped, the pressure of work knowledge input corresponding to the high point of work knowledge input in the quadratic curve is at a higher level, this is in line with the theoretical expectation of this study. Based on the survey data, the proportion of employees aged from 20 to 30 reached 77.11%, and the subjects were mainly "90" employees, pursuing the realization of self-value, and the higher work knowledge input requirements matched their own development needs, it can stimulate the intrinsic motivation of their work, urge them to change from passive work to active study, increase work input and better complete work tasks. And time pressure in the present more performance for the "Time is not enough" sense of urgency, and the resulting overtime and personal leisure time reduction. When employees' perceived time pressure is at a low level, they will increase their work engagement due to

their sense of urgency, while when employees' perceived time pressure is at a high level, because of continuous busyness and fast-paced activities, employees will have emotional stress reactions such as anxiety and irritability, which will affect their physical and mental health, reduce their sense of well-being, and then may reduce their own work input.

As the intrinsic psychological motivation of individual work, work value will have a direct impact on their own work will and work behavior. Therefore, this paper introduces work values as moderating variables to further clarify the relationship between challenging stressors and job involvement. The results show that the interpersonal harmony factor in the work values of the post-90s employees plays a positive role in the inverted U-shaped relationship between time pressure and work engagement. The post-90s employees with high values of interpersonal harmony, when faced with the same time pressure, the degree of job involvement is much higher than the employees with low values of interpersonal harmony. This further validates the analysis of personality traits of the new generation of employees, that is, more attention is paid to self-feeling and emotional experience in the work, and when faced with high time pressure, a good interpersonal atmosphere at work can relieve the tension and anxiety caused by time pressure, thus make the staff increase their work input in a happy way, and finally complete the in-role performance task. When analyzing the moderating role of work values in the linear relationship between challenging stressors and job engagement, the data show that, the effects of salary, welfare and internal preference on time pressure and work input and the effects of personal internal preference on learning demand and work input are both negatively regulated. The results show that, when faced with low level of time pressure, employees of the post-90s generation who have lower salary and welfare will put in more work than those who have higher salary. The reason may be that workers with lower pay are forced to seek performance opportunities and invest more in their jobs to gain long-term growth. The internal preference of employees has a negative moderating effect on the linear relationship between time pressure and work knowledge input pressure. The reason for this result may be that the way of obtaining the sample of this research group is mainly to collect the data of the subjects in the way of "Snowballing". Most of the subjects are the employees after "90", and the working life of enterprises is relatively short, oneself and the work are in the selected state, to oneself work satisfaction degree is low, thus the work engagement degree is not high.

#### ***3.2. Conclusion and Enlightenment***

For the post-90s new generation employees who pay attention to emotional experience at present, shaping humanistic organizational culture is a good medicine to

help them cope with high time pressure under 996 working system. A good superior-subordinate relationship and a harmonious working environment can, to a certain extent, ease their anxiety and anxiety in a high-pressure working environment, and meet the emotional needs of the new generation of employees at work, motivate employees' internal sense of responsibility and altruistic behavior to maintain a good organizational climate, so as to enable them to better fulfill their in-role tasks and achieve more out-of-role performance. Therefore, in the practice of management, enterprises should pay attention to the cultivation of humanistic management thought of managers at all levels, pay attention to the reaction of employees at lower levels to overtime and workload, and listen to the feedback of employees in a timely manner, in order to improve the perceived time pressure level and work efficiency, the employees with different personality needs are given organizational care.

Enterprises can build learning organization, encourage employees to self-study, make the new generation of employees feel the value of their work and grow. In addition, managers should pay attention to the degree of satisfying the internal preferences of young employees, and support young employees to transform their ordinary jobs into jobs that suit their interests and abilities. In employee training, we can encourage employees to rebuild their work tasks and relationships by cultivating their job-remolding skills, so as to enhance their inner sense of work significance and promote their work involvement.

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