


**THE IMPACT OF WORK PRESSURES ON JOB PERFORMANCE WITHIN THE  
MODIFIED ROLE OF INNOVATIVE E CAPABILITIES: APPLIED STUDY IN IRAQI  
UNIVERSITIES**

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Article history:</b> <b>Received:</b> December, 02<sup>nd</sup> 2023 <b>Accepted:</b> February, 26<sup>th</sup> 2024</p>	<p><b>Purpose:</b> The current study aimed to measure the impact of work pressure on the level of job performance in Iraqi universities within the framework of the enhancing role of innovative capabilities.</p>
<p><b>Keywords:</b> Work Pressure; Innovative Ability; Job Performance; Iraqi Universities; Modified Role.</p> 	<p><b>Design/Methodology/Approach:</b> Relying on a random sample of (294) respondents from senior, middle and supervisory management employees from four Iraqi universities, 23.9% of the total study population.</p> <p><b>Findings:</b> The study found a low level of work stress in Iraqi universities &amp; In return there is a high level of innovative capacity of those working in these universities, And a further increase in their level of job performance. In addition to the direct negative impact of work pressure on the level of job performance. This is in return for a direct positive effect of innovative ability on the level of job performance of employees in Iraqi universities. On the other hand, the coefficient of the interactive variable (innovative capacity × work pressure) was not statistically significant.</p> <p><b>Research, Practical &amp; Social Implications:</b> Simply controlling innovative capabilities has reduced the negative impact of work pressures from large to small. While innovative capabilities will have a significant positive impact on job performance. This means that the mere availability of innovative capabilities among workers will allow them to exploit them to avoid work pressures and reduce their negative impact on them.</p> <p><b>Originality/Value:</b> This confirms the great practical importance of innovative capabilities in neutralizing the negative effects of work pressures on the job performance of employees in Iraqi universities. This gives a strong support for developing the theory and building policies to control work pressures by working to increase the innovative capabilities of workers.</p> <p>Doi: <a href="https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2024.v9i3.4308">https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2024.v9i3.4308</a></p>

**O IMPACTO DAS PRESSÕES NO TRABALHO SOBRE O DESEMPENHO PROFISSIONAL  
DENTRO DA FUNÇÃO MODIFICADA DE RECURSOS ELETRÔNICOS INOVADORES: ESTUDO  
APLICADO EM UNIVERSIDADES IRAQUIANAS**

**RESUMO**

**Objetivo:** O presente estudo teve como objetivo medir o impacto da pressão no trabalho sobre o nível de desempenho profissional em universidades iraquianas dentro da estrutura da função de aprimoramento das capacidades inovadoras.

**Projeto/Metodologia/Abordagem:** Com base em uma amostra aleatória de (294) respondentes de funcionários de gerência sênior, média e de supervisão de quatro universidades iraquianas, 23,9% da população total do estudo.

**Resultados:** O estudo constatou um baixo nível de estresse no trabalho nas universidades iraquianas e, em contrapartida, há um alto nível de capacidade inovadora dos que trabalham nessas universidades, além de um

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aumento adicional no nível de desempenho no trabalho. Além do impacto negativo direto da pressão no trabalho sobre o nível de desempenho profissional. Em contrapartida, há um efeito positivo direto da capacidade de inovação sobre o nível de desempenho no trabalho dos funcionários das universidades iraquianas. Por outro lado, o coeficiente da variável interativa (capacidade de inovação  $\times$  pressão de trabalho) não foi estatisticamente significativo.

**Implicações Sociais, Práticas e de Pesquisa:** O simples controle das capacidades inovadoras reduziu o impacto negativo das pressões no trabalho de grande para pequeno. Por outro lado, as capacidades inovadoras terão um impacto positivo significativo sobre o desempenho no trabalho. Isso significa que a mera disponibilidade de recursos inovadores entre os trabalhadores permitirá que eles os explorem para evitar pressões no trabalho e reduzir seu impacto negativo sobre eles.

**Originalidade/Valor:** Isso confirma a grande importância prática das capacidades inovadoras para neutralizar os efeitos negativos das pressões do trabalho sobre o desempenho profissional dos funcionários das universidades iraquianas. Isso dá um forte apoio ao desenvolvimento da teoria e à criação de políticas para controlar as pressões no trabalho, trabalhando para aumentar as capacidades inovadoras dos funcionários.

**Palavras-chave:** Pressão no Trabalho, Capacidade de Inovação, Desempenho no Trabalho, Universidades Iraquianas, Função Modificada.

## EL IMPACTO DE LAS PRESIONES LABORALES EN EL RENDIMIENTO LABORAL DENTRO DEL PAPEL MODIFICADO DE LAS CAPACIDADES E INNOVADORAS: ESTUDIO APLICADO EN UNIVERSIDADES IRAQUÍES

### RESUMEN

**Propósito:** El presente estudio se propuso medir el impacto de la presión laboral sobre el nivel de rendimiento laboral en las universidades iraquíes en el marco del papel potenciador de las capacidades innovadoras.

**Diseño/Metodología/Enfoque:** Sobre la base de una muestra aleatoria de (294) encuestados pertenecientes a los niveles de dirección superior, intermedio y de supervisión de cuatro universidades iraquíes, el 23,9% de la población total del estudio.

**Resultados:** El estudio constató un bajo nivel de estrés laboral en las universidades iraquíes & Como contrapartida existe un alto nivel de capacidad innovadora de quienes trabajan en estas universidades, Y un aumento adicional de su nivel de rendimiento laboral. Además del impacto negativo directo de la presión laboral sobre el nivel de rendimiento laboral. Como contrapartida, se observa un efecto positivo directo de la capacidad innovadora sobre el nivel de rendimiento laboral de los empleados de las universidades iraquíes. Por otra parte, el coeficiente de la variable interactiva (capacidad innovadora  $\times$  presión laboral) no fue estadísticamente significativo.

**Implicaciones Sociales, Prácticas y de Investigación:** El simple control de las capacidades innovadoras ha reducido el impacto negativo de las presiones laborales de grande a pequeño. Mientras que las capacidades innovadoras tendrán un impacto positivo significativo en el rendimiento laboral. Esto significa que la mera disponibilidad de capacidades innovadoras entre los trabajadores les permitirá explotarla para evitar las presiones laborales y reducir su impacto negativo sobre ellas.

**Originalidad/Valor:** Esto confirma la gran importancia práctica de las capacidades innovadoras para neutralizar los efectos negativos de las presiones laborales sobre el rendimiento laboral de los trabajadores de las universidades iraquíes. Esto da un fuerte apoyo al desarrollo de la teoría y a la construcción de políticas para controlar las presiones laborales trabajando para aumentar las capacidades innovadoras de los trabajadores.

**Palabras clave:** Presión Laboral, Capacidad Innovadora, Rendimiento Laboral, Universidades Iraquíes, Rol Modificado.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Iraqi universities are an important work environment that requires employees to achieve excellent and effective performance. One of the factors that may affect the performance of employees in these universities is work pressure. Work pressure refers to the volume and intensity of tasks and responsibilities that employees must carry out within a limited time frame.

Research indicates that work pressure may negatively affect the performance of employees in Iraqi universities. Continuous and excessive pressure may lead to an increase in their levels of tension and stress, which negatively affects their concentration and attention. It may become difficult for employees to achieve their goals and do their tasks efficiently when they are under high work pressure (Mohammed abdufatah al-janabi & Turki, 2022). However, workers' innovative capabilities may act as a palliative and mitigating factor to the impact of negative work pressure on performance; the ability to think creatively and invent new solutions can help employees deal with work pressure better and improve their performance. Innovative capabilities may contribute to developing new strategies for managing and organizing tasks, improving the decision-making process, & Increase employees' flexibility in adapting to continuous changes) Warraich, et al., 2014). In addition, providing a supportive environment and encouraging innovation in Iraqi universities can contribute to enhancing the innovation capabilities of employees. Thus, reducing the impact of work pressure on their performance, this can be achieved by providing training and continuous development opportunities, and encouraging creative thinking and innovation in various aspects of work, and improving the work environment to encourage cooperation and interaction among employees (Kwon & Kim, 2020). This issue poses a challenge to universities in how to deal with work pressure situations, especially in the Iraqi environment. Iraq is considered one of the developing countries that suffers from a volatile and unstable environment in political, economic, and social aspects. Therefore, there is still a need for more research to understand the effect of work pressure on the job performance of workers in Iraqi universities and the role of innovative capabilities as a moderator of this effect. This research may contribute to identify effective strategies for managing work pressure and improving employee performance in these educational institutions operating in Iraq. Based on the above, the current study aims to examine the nature of the relationship between work stress and job performance for workers in Iraqi universities. This is within the framework of the level of innovative capabilities of workers as a moderator of the relationship. This research paper is organized as follows; In Section (2) we give a theoretical background on the study variables. In Section (3), we discuss the development of previous studies related to the research objective. In Section (4) we discuss the research design and methodology. In Section (5) we present the experimental results. Finally, in Section 6, we discuss the results, conclusions, and recommendations for future studies.

## 2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 WORK PRESSURES

Work pressure is known as a set of physical and psychological changes that occur in an individual as a reaction when he is exposed to multiple situations in the work environment. Szilagy defined it as a subjective experience that causes a psychological and organic imbalance in the individual, which is caused by factors in the external environment surrounding the organization or within the organization or the individual himself. As for Matteson & Ivacevich, they defined it as an adaptive response that varies depending on the individual to calm the effects, situations, and events imposed by the special requirements of the organization on the individuals working in the organization. It is a group of interactions that affect the movement of blood pressure in the body from a physical perspective, but from a psychological perspective, they are all the demands that make the individual adapt and cooperate in order to fit in with those around him, represented by anxiety, frustration, nervousness, conflict, conflict, discomfort, and a feeling of pain (Adebanjo & Ahmed, 2018).

Work stress reflects the extent of an individual's ability to cope and adapt to situations resulting from organizational, environmental, and personal factors. Which leads to a reaction and imbalance, which affects his health, physical, psychological, and behavioral condition and thus leads to a deviation from the normal path of the disease in order to accomplish its tasks. There are important elements that employees in the organization are exposed to; *i*) It is (Nasser, 1995) the stimulus element; *ii*) The response element is the element that represents the physical, psychological and behavioral reactions that the individual exhibits to stress, such as anxiety, tension, frustration, etc. *iii*) The interaction element, which is the interaction between the factors causing the stress and the response to it (Wu, et al., 2017). There are some points related to the psychological stress that managers must take into consideration, these points are; *i*) There are specific reactions to pressure, *ii*) There is a difference in the form of reactions, which is attributed to individual differences between individuals in the work environment, in addition to the type and severity of the pressures they are exposed to. *iii*) The human mind and body have limits. Recurring and continuing stressful situations may increase a person's susceptibility to accidents, illnesses, confused behavior, and other results that may negatively affect his organizational performance (Michailids & Elwkai, 2003).

There are sources combined to create different forms of pressure, which are:

First: organizational sources; that include:

- a) **workload:** It means an increase or decrease in the amount of work assigned to the individual that must be done; Excessive workloads that exceed the normal and acceptable level cause a lot of pressure at work. However, if the amount of workload assigned to the individual decreases, the rate of stress to which the individual is exposed reduces. This feeling of pressure leads to feelings of tension, nervousness, and confusion, and results in absence from work, failure to perform work satisfactorily, and isolation from others (Boyland, 2011);
- b) **the system of wages and incentives:** Failure to activate the incentive system creates within the individual a feeling of frustration and unwillingness to make an effort for the work assigned to him because he thinks that his effort is wasted. Therefore, he makes excuses for not performing the work in order to evade performing the work assigned to him;
- c) **performance evaluation:** It is considered an important cause of work stress. Despite its importance to the organization and the individual, it causes problems between individuals. It is a complex and subjective process. The employee or manager may dislike that process;
- d) **work nature:** It is difficult to find a job without pressure, although some jobs suffer from work pressure more than others, as the severity of these pressures varies depending on the nature of the work (Rathore, et al., 2020);
- e) **the organizational structure:** is the structure that defines the departments and internal parts of any organization. The centralization present in the organizational structure is one of the important sources of work pressure, as the centralization of decisions, the weak participation of workers in making them, the following of complex organizational methods, and excessive allocation and division, In addition to the lack of clarity of specializations and the dilution of responsibilities and their lack of specificity, they collectively affect the psychology of working individuals and lead to their feeling of pressure (Usmanova, et al., 2021).

Second: Functional sources; that represented in:

- a) **the physical work environment:** It includes the conditions available in the workplace such as equipment, location, space, lighting, ventilation, noise, privacy, and similar considerations. The work conditions constitute pressure on the individual, given that the lack of appropriate availability of these conditions causes an increase in the severity of work pressures (Assaf, 1994);

- b) **Occupational safety and health:** The lack of occupational safety and health conditions and rules is a source of work stress and also creates a feeling in the individual that his life is not safe while performing work, and this appears in the jobs assigned to employees as it exposes workers to occupational hazards that affect their health, as is the case of jobs where owners deal with dangerous chemicals or are exposed to radiation, toxic gases, or large machines;
- c) **Work relations:** It is represented by the poor relationship between the employee and his colleagues, such as competition, withholding of information, and lack of cooperation, or between the employee and his subordinates (such as their failure to obey his orders or their low performance, or the poor relationship between the employee and his superiors, which is represented by not delegating sufficient powers, or not appreciating his efforts, or catching his mistakes, Or follow twisted methods in dealing with him, and the employee's relationship with his superiors has the greatest impact on his exposure to pressure from his colleagues or subordinates in a position of weakness in front of them (Al-Mubaideen, 1995);
- d) **Decision making:** which is to allow the individual to participate in the decision-making process in the organization to which he belongs. Decisions that are imposed on individuals from above without their participation in the process of making them are considered sources of work pressure (Montes, et al., 2005);
- e) **Feedback:** Individuals usually search for feedback or an echo of their results through feedback as a form of moral appreciation for the effort they have made or the services they have provided. Therefore, the organization's lack of an integrated feedback system leads to individuals feeling frustrated and unappreciated (Caseiro & Coelho, 2019).

Third: Personal sources:

It plays an important role in determining the level of his suffering from stress and his reactions to the causes of stress and among the most important influences are:

- a) **Personality type:** Personality type can be distinguished into two types of behavioral patterns that directly affect the sensitive organs in the human body, such as the heart, which are type A and B. The A personality type is characterized by boldness, ambition, competitiveness, and boldness. He speaks emotionally and rushes others to implement his directions. He struggles to complete the greatest amount of tasks in the least possible time and is considered always busy with the scheduled deadlines for completing work. He hates waiting and constant conflict with individuals, events, and things. As for the B



personality type, there are no details about the A personality type, but this does not mean that these individuals are characterized by competition and motivation to perform, and they are not superior in their performance. In fact, they may be so. The basic imbalance between the two styles is that Style A races against time while Style B relies on an organized rhythm (Cooper, 1993).

- b) **Event control center:** which means the individual's belief that he can control the events surrounding him to a large extent, which is that the external forces that surround the individual are beyond his control, such as luck and coincidence (Al-Yindawi, 1994).
- c) **The individual's abilities and needs;** one of the factors that help increase pressure is the compatibility between individuals' abilities and needs and the requirements of the work environment. The more an individual conforms to the job requirements, the more his needs are satisfied and the less pressure he faces (Nasser, 1995).
- d) **The psychological and physical state:** has a significant impact on the level of his suffering from stress. The psychological state determines the nature of the response, as extreme fatigue has a significant impact on the perception of the causes of stress, and an individual who lacks self-confidence and self-esteem responds negatively to stressful situations that may require some kind of challenge (Micheal & Ivancevich 1980).
- e) **Stressful events in an individual's life;** There are many events that an individual may be exposed to in his life that cause him tension and stress, such as the death of a spouse, divorce, separation, death of a relative, or illness. If an individual is exposed to one of these events, this will cause the individual's mind to become preoccupied and affect his job performance in the organization (Al-Hanawi, 1999).
- f) **Experience:** The relationship between work pressure and experience is an inverse relationship, as experience plays a major role in reducing the pressure resulting from the work environment. Individuals who remain for a long time in the organization are characterized by having characteristics that give them the ability to confront stressful situations. Over time, these individuals develop certain ways to deal with these situations to help them adapt to them and reduce suffering from them (Caseiro & Coelho, 2019).

## 2.2 INNOVATIVE CAPACITY

Innovative ability can be described by how the employee uses his creative personal skills in the ability to devise new administrative methods that lead him to innovative solutions

to a problem that the organization may face. Or it is possible to find a new vision to address these problems by relying on purposeful analysis and organized creative effort that may relate to the individual's sensory perception through experimentation and evaluation. (Bushiri, 2014). The process of developing innovative skills is divided into successive stages, during which the modern and innovative idea is generated. Therefore, these stages are divided into: *i*) **The preparation stage**, which is a stage that requires a lot of effort and high perseverance, which is exposure to a lot of information and experiences and a commitment to continuous work and strong repeated experiences; *ii*) **The waiting stage**, which is the stage of calm, contemplation, developing ideas, and preparing the climate for mental ideas to contribute to completing the innovative process; *iii*) **The inspiration stage**, which is the production of more general laws that cannot be predicted in addition to the emergence of the idea automatically without planning; *iv*) **Verification phase**; It requires a great effort from the ideas that have been arrived at, choosing which one is better and more accurate in solving problems, and reaching an accurate formulation of the ideas that are chosen to solve the problems (Wang, 2021). An innovative person is someone who loves risk and usually seeks to enter a previously unknown field of investment. This is normal, as most of what loses creativity is relying on historical information. There are personal, psychological, and environmental factors that play a major role in limiting the completion of the innovation process. They can be dealt with in an appropriate manner to achieve achievements in the best possible way, and these obstacles can be classified into: *i*) **Personal obstacles**; It is represented by weak self-confidence, fear of the future, excessive enthusiasm controlling the person, and stereotypical thinking in the short term, *ii*) **social obstacles**; They are represented by family obstacles, which are obstacles that go deep into society and adherence to ancient customs without searching for innovative customs that suit the modern era (Ghafoor & Haar, 2022).

### 2.3 JOB PERFORMANCE

Job performance can be defined by the worker's competence for his work, his behavior in it, and the extent of his ability to carry out his workloads and bear responsibility in a specific period of time. Based on this definition, an individual's competence may be based on: *i*) the extent of the individual's efficiency in doing his job; *ii*) the personal characteristics of the individual and the extent of their connection and effects on his level of performance (Thomas 1989). (Privet 1983) defines performance as a comprehensive approach to change that depends on the availability of specific resources for individuals that create motivation and enthusiasm



for them to bring out their latent creativity and thus achieve excellence for the organization and for the individual himself. There are elements that can determine effective performance, which are: *i*) Various work activities and their fixed and variable aspects; *ii*) Relationships between activities, work tasks, and appropriate work design; *iii*) The required specifications in the individual who performs the work (Amer & Hajal, 2008). It is also possible to identify some job performance objectives, which are: *i*) identify key areas that determine aspects of job performance; *ii*) Involving employees working in the organization in the process of setting goals, *iii*) Work to set measurable, achievable and relevant time-bound goals to ensure they are clear and easy to achieve; *iv*) Providing the necessary support and resources that provide employees with financial and human resources that support employees (Rathore, et al., 2020). There is a set of standards in measuring performance that should be known in order to intervene in a timely manner to address the negatives that may occur, and they are:

- a) **quality:** which is the degree of mastery and quality of the final product; it must be proportional to the available capabilities;
- b) **quantity:** It is the amount of volume accomplished in light of the capabilities and capabilities of the individuals working at the same time, no less than their capabilities and capabilities ,because this means slow performance, which makes workers lax and indifferent. Agreement on the size and quantity of work performed to achieve an acceptable rate of growth in the performance rate would be preferable to the individual's experience and training (Kwon & Kim, 2020);
- c) **time:** it is a resource that is not renewable or delegated, It is a capital, not an income, What must be exploited optimally at every moment because it always dwindles and goes irreversibly and it is priceless. It is one of the five most important basic resources in the field of business management, which are (materials, information, individuals, material resources and time). Time is the most important indicator upon which work performance is based as it is an anticipatory statement that specifies when responsibilities will be carried out. Therefore, an agreement shall be made on an appropriate time to complete the work (Wiradendi, 2019);
- d) **procedures:** They are the arranged lines for the practical application of the skills to be performed .It is necessary to agree on the permissible methods and methods authorized to be used to achieve the goals.

Although the procedures and lines followed in completing the work are expected and recorded in the organization's documents in accordance with the rules, laws, regulations and

instructions, it is preferable to agree between superiors and subordinates on the procedures followed in completing the work whether it is in depth with the completion of transactions or their delivery, so that the picture is clear to all parties and so that the performance of one of the employees is not affected (Saeed & Khaled, 2003).

The most important factors affecting performance are as follows: *i) Individual-specific factors*; It is represented by the motivation and desire of the individual to carry out specific work tasks and the extent of the self-directed and immediate drive to perform those tasks by transforming the abilities and skills that the individual possesses, which are considered unstable over time, from a latent, ineffective force to a driving force that pushes the behavior of employees in directions consistent with the organization's goals. *ii) Factors related to the organization and the external environment*; they are represented in: Tasks, nature of work and requirements. These are the units, responsibilities, tools, and expectations that the worker is expected to provide, in addition to the methods, methods, and equipment used in carrying out his tasks and work (Adebanjo, et al., 2018). Job performance evaluation consists of studying and analyzing employees' performance of their work and observing their behavior and actions during work to judge the extent of their success and the level of their abilities in carrying out the current work assigned to them. Determining one's future growth and advancement opportunities, taking on greater responsibilities, and promoting another function. There are several factors that cause a divergence between the individual's characteristics which are: *i) Changes occurring in the content of the job, represented by the addition of new tasks and duties, the expansion of the job's geographic jurisdiction, the delegation of powers from one organizational level to the top, and the different location of the job in the organizational structure; ii) Changes in working methods and methods related to the use of computers or the use of new regulations systems; iii) changes in the circumstances surrounding work performance such as changes in the composition of the workforce and the quality of workers; iv) Changes in the individual's own skill level or level (Caseiro & Coelho, 2019).*

## 2.4 PREVIOUS STUDIES AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The importance of previous studies and a key pillar of scientific research because it provides a basic database that can inform the application of theoretical norms as well as the advancement of experimental and field manual methods that support the scientific aspect of the study and in-depth previous studies on the relationship between work pressure and functioning are almost minimal in Iraq's environment, As far as the researcher knows, there is no previous

study on the relationship of work stress to job performance in the light of the level of workers' innovative abilities as a relationship rate. As for the first trend of studies that examined the relationship of work pressure to job performance; The study of Jalal (2006) found an inverse relationship between work stress and job performance among officers in Pakistan in Tabad district, and the study of Ahmed & Ramzan (2013), which showed that stress at work affects the performance of employees in the banking sector in Pakistan. This leads to a decline in the quality and efficiency of banking services and negatively affects the bank's reputation. A study (Bushiri, 2014) also found that employees will improve their performance if problems in the work environment are addressed. As well as the study of Kalash (2020) at the Bashir Bin Nasser Sokara Public Hospital Institution. The study (Karim, 2022) also showed that the pressure resulting from work may negatively affect the performance of employees, and this can negatively affect the company's performance in general, as well as the study (Mawardi, 2022) which showed that alternative work styles and a good working environment reduce intention to Action, while pressures resulting from work increase the intention to act and affect performance in general. Ben Alla (2022) study also showed that work pressures represent part of the employees' performance tasks, and that the relationship of the dimensions of work pressures to employees' performance is related to the workload, the work environment, and the organizational structure, in the Directorate of Electricity and Gas Distribution in Timiun, one of the subsidiaries of the Sonlemgaz Distribution Company for Morocco, Oran. On the other hand, the results of the current study differed from the study of Issa (2009), which showed that there was no statistically significant relationship between workload and the performance of employees in five-star Jordanian hotels. For the second direction of the studies that examined the relationship of labor pressure to capacity, innovative; A study by Rafique, et al. (2022) showed that stress resulting from work negatively affects the creative behavior of employees in China, Transformational leadership positively affects the creative behavior of employees. Knowledge exchange plays a mediating role in the relationship between stress resulting from work and creative behavior. The study (De Clercq & Belausteguigoitia, 2019) also confirmed that excessive workload negatively affects the creative behavior of employees, improved energy resources play an important role in analyzing this relationship. The study showed that improved energy resources act as buffer factors to mitigate the impact of work overload on creative behavior. These resources include social support, rest, and enjoyment of work. In the same vein, a study (Wang, et al., 2021) indicated that the pressure of work adversely affects the creative behavior of employees, Work-life balance and employee engagement work to reduce

this effect. The study also showed that work-life balance can help improve employee engagement and thus improve creative behavior. The study (Anjum & Zhao, 2022) also showed that stress resulting from work can negatively affect the creative behavior of health professionals, and that social support can act as a precautionary factor to improve this relationship. On the other hand, the study (Ghafoor & Haar, 2022) indicated that stress resulting from work can have a positive effect on the creativity of employees in China, and that psychological capital can help improve this relationship. The study (Wiradendi, 2019) also indicated that stress at work negatively affects sales performance, and that it positively affects incentives and motivation.

Based on previous studies, the study's hypotheses can be derived as follows:

- a) **Hypothesis 1:** There is a negative impact of work pressures on the performance level of Iraqi universities.
- b) **Hypothesis 2:** There is a positive impact of innovative capability at the level of functional performance of Iraqi universities.
- c) **Hypothesis 3:** Innovative capacity has a modified role in the relationship of labour stress to the level of functioning of Iraqi universities.

### 3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study relied on the quantitative approach to test the study hypotheses. The research design includes the following:

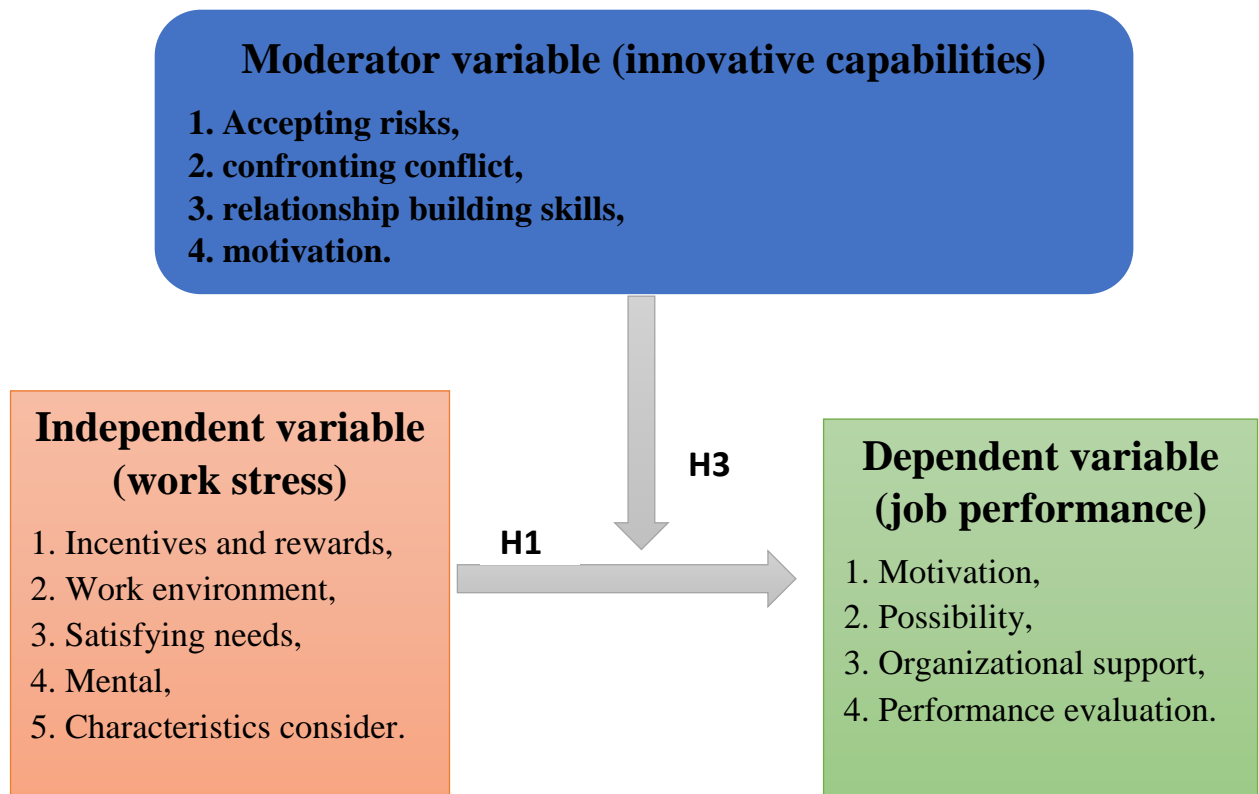
#### 3.1 MEASURES

The study relied on the questionnaire tool as a basic tool for collecting data, as the questionnaire contained five questions, in addition to an attitude scale consisting of 60 statements formulated according to the Likert scale (five dimensions). The questionnaire includes three basic measures: i) Work pressure (the independent variable) which contains four sub-dimensions: Satisfying the psychological needs of the individual and taking into account human characteristics. ii) Innovative capacity (modified variable), which includes four sub-dimensions: Accepting risk, facing conflicts at work, and building work relationship skills, and stimulating thought. iii) Job performance (the dependent variable) and also includes four sub-dimensions: motivation, ability, organizational support, and performance evaluation elements. Each sub-dimension includes five statements.

### 3.2 THE HYPOTHETICAL OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

**Figure 1**

*Hypothetical diagram of the study*



### 3.3 STUDY POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The original study population is represented by all employees at all administrative levels (senior, middle, and supervisory management) in four Iraqi universities affiliated with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Iraq, namely Al-Rafidain University College, Al-Mansour University College, and Heritage University College, which were all founded in 1988. This is in addition to Al-Mamoun University College, which was established in 1990. Therefore, the study population contains (1232) people. Due to the difficulty of comprehensively enumerating the study population, it was decided to take a random sample of (294) workers surveyed from these universities, representing 23.9% of the total study population. Here, Table (1) shows the distribution of the study population and sample by administrative level as follows:

**Table 1***Distribution of study population and sample according to colleges*

	Scientific departments	Study Population	Study Sample
Al Mamoun University College	11	248	52
Al-Mansour University College	10	224	42
Al-Turath University College	22	490	146
Al-Rafidain University College	12	270	54
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>1232</b>	<b>294</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>23.9%</b>

Table (2) also shows the general characteristics of the study sample, whether in terms of personal and general data of the respondents, or in terms of job specialization and professional experience of employees within the university/college.

**Table 2***Demographic characteristics of the sample respondents*

<i>factorial variables</i>	<i>category</i>	<i>frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Gender</b>	1) Female	95	32.3
	2) Male	199	67.7
<b>Age</b>	1) Less than 30	71	24.1
	2) From 31-40 years	84	28.6
	3) From 41-50 years	62	21.1
	4) Over 50 years old	77	26.2
<b>Educational level</b>	1) Bachelor's	223	75.9
	2) Post (High Diploma, master's & PhD)	64	21.8
	3) Other	7	2.4
<b>Job specialization</b>	1) Administrative Sciences	61	20.7
	2) Human sciences	125	42.5
	3) Engineering sciences	45	15.3
	4) Medical Sciences	44	15
	5) Other	19	6.5
<b>Professional Experience</b>	1) Less than 6 years	40	13.6
	2) 6 - 10 years	64	21.8
	3) 11 - 15 years	66	22.4
	4) 16 years or above	124	42.2

It is clear from the table that two-thirds of the sample of respondents are males (67.7%), compared to (32.3%) of the respondents are females. As for the rest of the demographic characteristics, they reflect the actual levels of the staff structure in these universities. As for the age of the respondents, the youth group (up to the age of forty) accounts for (52.7% of the sample of respondents, and this percentage decreases as the age of the respondents increases. As for the educational level, we find that the majority of the sample is at the university educational level (75.9%), compared to (21.8%) for the post-university educational level. As



for the professional experience of the respondents, we find that the study sample contains all levels of experience in a balanced manner, so the percentage of inexperienced respondents (those whose professional experience is less than 6 years) is The sample of respondents also included all job specializations, although the vast majority of respondents came from employees of the faculties of humanities (42.5%).

### 3.4 TESTING THE QUESTIONNAIRE LIST (PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES OR CONDITIONS)

For us to have confidence in data collection and the suitability of data collection methods to achieve the objectives of the study, it is necessary to test the validity and reliability of the data collection tool (questionnaire) as follows:

#### 3.4.1 Testing the validity of the questionnaire statements

The researcher verified the validity of the questionnaire statements through exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor loading, in addition to face validity. The results showed that convergent validity was achieved through high saturation values for the phrases that constitute the underlying general structure of the dimensions of work stress, innovative ability, and job performance. This is because the values of the bifurcations far exceed the standard (0.40 seconds) and do not reach the correct unit. Five expressions are excluded, as the saturation value for them was less than the modular value. This requires deleting them from the model.

The shared variance between the saturated items on each latent factor was also calculated which is known as the average variance extracted (AVE) Its value was greater than the acceptance threshold (0.50). This indicates that the three study measures enjoy convergent validity. It also became clear that the correlation coefficients between the four latent factors for each variable were high, and, but it was less than the value (0.90), the statistical value (differences square-Chi) was also statistically significant 1% . The correlation value for the HTMT scale is less than 0.90. Which indicates that discriminant validity has been achieved between the latent factors of the study variables, meaning that there is no similarity between the latent dimensions, and that each latent dimension represents itself.

#### 3.4.2 Calculating the stability coefficient of degrees (Analysis Reliability)

Here, the researcher used the internal consistency reliability method (Cronbach Alpha) on each variable as well as on the questionnaire as a whole in Table (3)

**Table 3***Reliability of study variables (Cronbach's alpha coefficient)*

<i>Variables</i>	<i>No of items</i>	<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>
<b>1) Independent Variables</b> (Work stress)	19	0.931
<b>2) Moderator Variables</b> (Innovative ability)	17	0.943
<b>3) Dependent Variables</b> (Job performance)	19	0.905
<b>The Questionnaire Overall</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>0.713</b>

It is clear from the results of the table that the questionnaire as a whole, and all its variables (work pressures, innovative ability, and job performance) are characterized by high reliability. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the questionnaire list with its variables far exceeds the standard value (0.7). Which means that the scale used will give the same results when used repeatedly in the study, thus accepting the reliability of the questionnaire. Thus, the researcher has confirmed the veracity and reliability of the survey statements, which gives full confidence in the validity of the survey and its suitability for analyzing the results, answering the study's questions, and testing its hypotheses.

## 4 ECONOMETRICS AND RESULTS

### 4.1 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTIC

To know the direction of the opinions of the respondents in the study sample towards the study variables, Table (4) displays the appropriate descriptive statistics, such as the arithmetic mean, which is one of the measures of central tendency, and the standard deviation, which is one of the measures of dispersion, in addition to the relative importance index. This is to describe all variables of the study model, which is in (work pressures, innovative ability, and level of job performance).

**Table 4***Descriptive analysis of study variables*

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Descriptive statistics</i>				<i>Correlation matrix</i>		
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>RII</i>	<i>Importance level</i>	<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>	<i>(3)</i>
<b>(1) Independent Variable:</b>							
Work stress	2.004	0.652	0.401	Medium	1		
<b>(2) Moderator Variable:</b>							
Innovative ability	3.976	0.677	0.795	Medium – High	-0.837**	1	
<b>(2) Dependent Variable:</b>							
Job performance	4.082	0.560	0.816	High	-0.754**	0.826**	1

**Note:** \*\*, \* indicate significance at 1%, 5% respectively.

Considering the main characteristics of the data, we can notice a clear difference in the level of variables in Iraqi universities. We find that the relative importance of work pressures was moderate (40.1%), compared to above-average relative importance for innovative ability (79.6%), and high for the level of job performance (81.6%). Thus, this reflects a strong awareness among the sample of respondents of the low level of work pressures in Iraqi universities. In exchange for an increase in the level of innovative ability of employees in these universities, and a further increase in their level of job performance.

In order to first verify the strength and direction of the hypothesized relationships between the variables, Pearson's zero-order bivariate correlations are loaded between the study variables, which show the presence of a large and statistically significant inverse correlation at the 1% level between work pressures and the innovative ability of workers, which amounts to (-83.7%). Which indicates that the low level of work pressures in Iraqi universities is linked to, or is largely accompanied by, an increase in the level of innovative ability of employees in these universities. And vice versa. Likewise, we find a significant and statistically significant inverse correlation of 1% between work stress and the level of job performance which amounts to 75.4%. On the other hand, we find a large and statistically significant direct correlation, also at 1%, between the innovative ability of employees and their level of job performance, reaching (82.6%). This means that a decrease in the level of work stress and an increase in the level of innovative ability will be significantly associated with an increase in the level of job performance of employees. Therefore, the correlation coefficients between the study variables showed signs consistent with administrative logic and expected signs. Therefore, it can be expected that there will be a negative effect of work pressures on the level of job performance, and it can also be expected that the innovative ability of employees will have a positive effect. It can be traced back to the negative impact of work pressures on job performance. As shown in the table above, correlation analysis provides strong relevant indicators. Therefore, to further study and load the path of the relationships proposed in the study model, the multiple regression model will be relied upon in order to give the best predictive model of the current relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

#### **4.1.1 Testing the differences in the respondents' perception of the study variables**

Here, we examine the extent to which there are statistically significant differences in the respondents' perception of the study variables, which are due to differences in global variables, that is, the personal and functional characteristics of the respondents, which are (gender, age,

educational level, scientific specialization, and professional experience). The Kruskal-Wallis test will be used here to achieve this. It is a non-parametric test alternative to the parametric one-way analysis of variance test. This test is based on comparing the median for each group and is based on arranging the results in ascending order to determine the rank for each result. It is therefore intended to indicate whether the averages of the survey communities are almost equal in the perception of the study's variables, that any differences between them are attributable to chance and can be expected, or whether the averages between these communities and the differences between them are substantial or statistically significant in the perception of the study's variables. Since the Kruskal Wallis test is used in the case of comparison between more than two groups, it is achieved in all working variables, with the exception of the gender/gender variable where it contains only two groups (male, female). Thus, to examine the extent to which there are statistically significant differences in investigators' perception of study variables due to differences in their gender, the Man Whitney test, which is also a test for educators, will be used as an alternative to the "T test". It is like the Kruskal Wallis test, but is used in the case of comparison between only two groups.

**Table 5**

*Mann-Whitney and Kruskal-Wallis test for study variables*

<i>factorial variables</i>	<i>category</i>	<i>Work stress</i>	<i>Innovative ability</i>	<i>Job performance</i>
<b>Gender</b>	1) Male	-0.381	-0.918	-0.324
	2) Female	[0.703]	[0.359]	[0.746]
<b>Age</b>	1) Less than 30			
	2) 31-40 years	1.776	5.886	4.822
	3) 41-50 years	[0.620]	[0.117]	[0.185]
	4) Over 50 years old			
<b>Educational level</b>	1) Bachelor's	2.782	4.182	1.650
	2) Post	[0.249]	[0.124]	[0.438]
	4) Other			
<b>Job specialization</b>	1) Administrative Sciences			
	2) Human sciences			
	3) Engineering sciences	3.637	3.911	4.667
	4) Medical Sciences	[0.457]	[0.418]	[0.323]
	5) Other			
<b>Professional Experience</b>	1) Less than 6 years			
	2) 6 - 10 years	1.326	1.134	0.570
	3) 11 - 15 years	[0.723]	[0.769]	[0.903]
	4) 16 years or above			

**Note:** - \*\* indicate significance at 1%, \* indicate significance at 5%.

It is clear from the previous table that the value of the Mann-Whitney test (Z) statistic was not statistically significant for the study variables. Which indicates acceptance of the null

hypothesis of the Mann-Whitney test that there are no statistically significant differences in the respondents' perception of work pressures, innovative ability, and job performance due to the type of respondents (male or female). This is evident from the average ranks between male and female respondents, which were very close. Likewise, we find that the value of the chi-square statistic ( $\chi^2$ ) of the Kruskal-Wallis test was not statistically significant for the study variables, for the rest of the factor variables other than gender. This indicates acceptance of the null hypothesis that there are no statistically significant differences in the respondents' perception of these variables due to their demographic characteristics.

## 5 EVIDENTIARY ANALYSIS (HYPOTHESIS TEST)

To achieve the study's objective, Hierarchical Multiple Regression will be relied upon, where three gradual linear models are created here to reflect the graduation in the study hypotheses, thus demonstrating the difference in impact while expanding the study model by taking into account other dimensions. After examining and ascertaining the problems of measurement, a decision can be made to use the proposed hierarchical study model to examine the study's hypotheses, as in table 6 below:

**Table 6**

*Work stress, innovative ability, and job performance: Econometrics results*

Dependent variable: Job performance

**Method:** OLS with heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors [Huber-White-Hinkley (HC1)]

	<i>Expected Sign</i>	<i>Reg (1)</i>		<i>Reg (2)</i>		<i>Reg (3)</i>	
		<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>t stat.</i>	<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>t stat.</i>	<i>Coeff.</i>	<i>t stat.</i>
Work stress ( $\beta_1$ )	(-)	-0.6487	-15.00**	-0.1826	-2.856**	-0.1124	-0.583
Innovative ability ( $\beta_2$ )	(+)			0.5368	9.103**	0.5821	5.089**
Work stress $\times$ Innovative ability ( $\beta_3$ )	(+)					-0.0198	-0.424
Constant	n/a	5.3817	65.83**	2.3129	6.698**	2.1430	4.044**
<b>Key regression statistics</b>							
R-squared		56.9%		69.5%		69.6%	
Adjusted R-squared		56.8%		69.3%		69.3%	
Fisher test ( <i>F-stat.</i> )		(224.87)**		(163.99)**		(194.36)**	
<b>Model selection criteria</b>							
Schwarz criterion		256.6627		160.4899		165.5575	
Akaike criterion		249.2955		149.4392		150.8232	
Hannan-Quinn criterion		252.2458		153.8647		156.7238	
Log-likelihood criterion		-122.6478		-71.71958		-71.41159	
<b>Practical significance: Effect Size (Cohen's d)</b>							
<i>Work stress</i>		-1.759 [Large effect]		-0.335 [Small effect]		-0.069 [No effect]	
<i>Innovative ability</i>				1.069 [Large effect]		0.599 [Intermediate]	
<i>Work stress <math>\times</math> Innovative ability</i>						-0.050 [No effect]	

**Note:** \*\*, \* indicate significance at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively.

The previous decline table shows many interesting results, as follows:

In the first regression, which examines the impact of work stress on the level of job performance, without controlling innovative ability or its enhancing role; It is clear that there is a direct negative impact of work pressures on the level of job performance in Iraqi universities at the 1% level of statistical significance. According to the regression coefficient ( $\beta_1$ ), increasing the level of work stress by one degree leads to a decrease in the level of job performance by (0.6487) degrees on average, i.e. a decrease in job performance amounting to 64.9% of the percentage of increase in the level of work stress. Also from the adjusted determination coefficient (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>), it is clear that work pressures explain 56.8% of changes in the performance level, which is very high, and reflects the significant role that work pressures pose to employees' performance. While the remaining percentage, amounting to 43.2%, is due to random error as a result of the presence of other administrative variables that were not controlled within the model. Moving on to the second regression, which examines the impact of work stress on the level of job performance, after controlling for the innovative ability of workers only; It is clear from this that the direct negative impact of work stress on the level of job performance in Iraqi universities continues at the level of 1%, even if the regression coefficient (effect size) decreases significantly from (0.6487) in the first regression to (0.1826) in the second regression. This is normal as a result of low bias in outcomes after controlling innovative capacity. There is also a direct positive impact of the innovative capacity of employees at the level of their university career performance at the level of 1%. According to the decline factor ( $\beta_2$ ), a single degree increase in the level of innovative capacity increases the level of job performance by 0.5368 degrees on average, an increase in job performance of 53.7% from the rate of increase in the level of innovative capacity. Therefore, the effect of innovative ability on job performance is much greater than the effect of work pressures in Iraqi universities. Also, from the adjusted coefficient of determination, it is clear that controlling for innovative ability has increased the explanatory power of the second regression to 69.3% compared to 56.8% in the first regression. This is a relatively high percentage, which implies that controlling for innovative capacity has substantially affected the explanatory power of the model. Finally, moving to the third regression, which reflects the main model of the study, as it is concerned with examining the impact of work pressures on job performance, after controlling for the innovative ability of workers, and its potential enhancing role. It is clear that there is no effect of the interactive variable (work stress  $\times$  innovative ability) on the level of job performance of employees in Iraqi universities. We find that the regression coefficient ( $\beta_3$ ) is



not statistically significant. But it is interesting that the presence of the interactive variable led to the disappearance of the direct negative effect of work stress on job performance (as the statistical significance of the work stress variable disappeared). While the direct positive effect of innovative ability on the level of job performance remained at the 1% significance level. This indicates that innovative capacity discourages/eliminates the negative impact of work pressures on career performance levels. That is, innovative capabilities enable workers to avoid and control work pressures, thereby eliminating the negative effects of these pressures on their job performance.

As for the adjusted coefficient of determination, it is clear that controlling the modifying role of innovative capacity (the interactive variable) did not affect the explanatory power of the third regression at all, as it is still 69.3%. The value of the Fisher test statistic was also statistically significant, which indicates rejection of the null hypothesis and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis that there is statistical significance for the regressions as a whole at the 1% level of statistical significance. As for the criteria for selecting or comparing between models, which are represented by the (Schwarz), (Akaike), (Hannan-Quinn), and (Log-likelihood) criteria, where the lower value of these criteria expresses a better model. The value of most of these criteria was less than possible for the second regression compared to the first and third regression. This implies that the best model for the relationship is the second regression. Since statistical significance is the least interesting thing about results,  $p$  is not enough because it only tells us that there is a stronger relationship between two variables (rejecting the null hypothesis), i.e. it simply tells the reader that the relationship found between variables is unlikely to be due to pure chance. Therefore, we will rely on the effect size, which provides a quantitative measure of the size of the association between variables. Thus, it provides an assessment of the strength of the results that statistical significance tests alone do not provide, in other words, it shows the extent of the practical significance of the relationship in actual reality. Therefore, the size of the effect brings us additional information for the inferential decision to accept or reject the null hypothesis. The effect size here is calculated from the partial correlations between the variables, which measure the correlation between the dependent and independent variables while controlling for the rest of the other variables in the model (assuming that they also affect the dependent variable), and then it will be converted to the Cohen  $d$  statistic (1988), the results of which are shown below the table. (6). It will become clear that in the absence of employees' innovative capabilities, work pressures will have a negative and significant impact on the job performance of employees in Iraqi universities,

which is evident from the first regression. However, controlling the innovative capabilities of workers in the second regression will reduce the size of the negative effect of work pressures on job performance to small, while innovative capabilities will have a large positive effect on job performance. This means that the mere availability of innovative capabilities among employees will allow them to exploit them to avoid work pressures and reduce their negative impact on them. This is confirmed by the third regression, as the interaction between work pressures and the innovative capabilities of workers leads to the complete disappearance of the negative effect of work pressures on job performance. This confirms the great practical importance of innovative capabilities in neutralizing the negative effects of work pressures on the job performance of employees in Iraqi universities. This gives strong support for developing theory and building policies to control work stress by working to increase the innovative capabilities of workers. Thus, these results support the verification of the three study hypotheses.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

The current study aimed to measure the impact of work pressures on the level of job performance in Iraqi universities in the context of the enhancing role of innovative capabilities. Relying on a final sample of (294) respondents, representing 23.9% of the total study population. The study found a lower level of work stress in Iraqi universities, compared to a higher level of innovative ability of workers in these universities, and a higher level of their job performance from the point of view of the respondents. While work stress is inversely and significantly related to both the innovative ability and job performance of employees, in contrast, the innovative ability of employees is significantly positively related to the level of their job performance. The respondents' perception of the level of work pressures, innovative ability, and level of job performance in Iraqi universities does not differ according to their personal and job characteristics. Also, the demographic characteristics of the respondents do not affect at all the level of job performance in Iraqi banks. The study also showed a direct negative effect of work pressure on the level of job performance, and this result is consistent with administrative thought, such as stress theory or job pressure, and emotional stability theory. The stress resulting from work can reduce the level of productivity and efficiency at work, and increase the rate of errors and negligence at work. The stress resulting from work can also affect the mental and physical health of university workers, affecting their level of tolerance for pressure and challenges at work. Accordingly, achieving compatibility between

the work performed by the individual and his own capabilities leads to higher performance that achieves a sense of job satisfaction, while failure to achieve that balance between the two parties leads to an increase in the intensity of pressures and negative practices on the employee as he is an important element in the organization. Low employee performance indicates limited ability, qualifications, and skill, and vice versa, if the level of stress is reduced, it indicates a natural increase in employee performance. Taking into account the fluctuating inverse relationship that is based on differences in the personalities of employees and the circumstances surrounding them in the organization. In contrast, the performance of Iraqi university staff is positively impacted by innovative capacity. Similarly, in order to improve the high level of functioning in Iraqi universities, staff need to plan well and effectively organize tasks, clearly identify work priorities and set targets, as well as provide a healthy and suitable working environment for workers that is supportive and encouraging of innovation and creativity. Emphasis should also be placed on providing continuous training and development to employees, encouraging them to interact and collaborate with their colleagues. As for the modifying role, innovative ability (the interactive variable) did not have any modifying role in the relationship of work stress to the level of job performance of employees in Iraqi universities. However, the presence of the interactive variable led to the disappearance of the direct negative effect of work stress on job performance. While the direct positive effect of innovative capacity continued. This indicates that innovative ability enables employees to avoid the negative effects of work pressures on their job performance. Therefore, the study recommends using the results of the study to develop human resources management programs in the university sector and develop employment and training policies to improve the performance of employees in the future, with a focus on improving alternative work patterns and providing a good practical environment to improve job satisfaction, reduce the intention to leave, improve the balance between work and personal life for employees, and encourage Engaging employees to improve the creative behavior of employees, in addition to providing improved energy resources for employees, such as social support and enjoyment of work, improving the quality of life in the workplace, improving the work environment to promote creative behavior and improving performance, and finally, improving employees' psychological capital, such as enhancing self-confidence and hope. Optimism and psychological toughness can help improve creativity and reduce the negative impact of stress resulting from work.

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