

The Issue of Control in Jail: The Effects of Professionalism, Detainee Control, and Administrative Support on Job Stress, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment among Jail Staff

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Abstract Jails are important, yet understudied, components of the American criminal justice system. While most research on correctional personnel has focused on prisons, a growing body of work is beginning to emerge on jails. This is encouraging given the unique circumstances that occur within jail environments (e.g., diversity and mobility of offenders, health issues among detainees, overcrowding, lack of training among staff, etc.). Given these conditions, the staff members who run jails become the glue that holds them together. The following study contributes to this burgeoning area of empirical inquiry by examining a variety of antecedents of job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment among jail personnel. Using survey data collected from a large county correctional system in Orlando, Florida, the findings indicate that staff perceptions of professionalism, detainee control, and administrative support all significantly impact degrees of job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

Keywords Jail staff · Job satisfaction · Job stress · Organizational commitment · Perceptions of professionalism · Perceptions of detainee control · Administrative support

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Jails are a critical part of the several interrelated components of our United States criminal justice system. There are currently more than 3,300 jails in the U.S. that house an average daily population of almost 750,000 detainees and employ over 200,000 staff members (Pastore & Maguire, 2009). Compared to the long term housing found in prisons, jails typically house individuals who are awaiting outcomes of their legal cases. In addition, jails also hold those who are awaiting transfer to a prison, those serving a sentence (typically less than a year), as well as parole and probation violators (Farkas, 1999). Nevertheless, despite their importance and their unique position, jails do not always receive the empirical attention they deserve, as the vast majority of research on staff working in closed correctional facilities has focused on prison employees (Castle, 2008; Castle & Martin, 2006).

The dearth of research on jail staff is a serious oversight in light of the fact that the work environment of jails is different from that of prisons. As such, jail personnel face rather unique work conditions (Castle, 2008). Jails hold a wider array of offenders and have a much more rapid turnover among the detainee population than do most prisons (Castle, 2008; Farkas, 1999). Over two million detainees pass through U.S. jails each year, far more than prisons (Pastore & Maguire, 2009). Jail staff are also more likely to be tasked with dealing with mentally ill persons, including those not properly diagnosed as having mental health problems and those waiting transfer to a mental health facility (Harrison & Beck, 2006; O'Toole, 2002). Jail detainees tend to have higher levels of health problems, such as HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, health problems from drug, alcohol, and tobacco usage/abuse, and infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis, than the general public (Lindquist & Lindquist, 1999; Silverman, 2001).

Even with the myriad of tasks and issues that confront them on a daily basis, jail staff members generally receive less training than prison staff (Stohr, Lovrich, & Mays, 1997). Furthermore, many urban jails are overcrowded and understaffed, which places greater demands on staff (Lambert, Reynolds, Paoline, & Watkins, 2004). Thus, many jails face staff recruitment and retention issues (Poole & Pogrebin, 1991; Price, Kiebusch, & Theis, 2007; Stohr, Lovrich, and Wilson, 1994b). Because jails are labor intensive (Kiebusch, Price, & Theis, 2003), staff become the most valuable asset. Not only does staff have significant affects on jail operations, the jail can and does have significant affects on the staff, largely through the conditions present in the work environment.

Since staff are the “heart and soul” of most jails, it is important to explore how the work environment affects them. Job stress, job satisfaction and organizational commitment are three salient areas in which the work environment can affect jail staff. Satisfied, committed staff, who do not suffer from undue job stress, are critical in ensuring that a jail is successful, while overly stressed, unhappy, and uncommitted staff can result in disaster for the jail. While some areas of the jail work environment have been explored, several have been overlooked. This study expands upon previous literature on jail staff by examining the effects of perceptions of professionalism, detainee control, and administrative support on the job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment of jail staff.

Literature Review

Job Stress, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment

Job Stress

Job stress is generally defined in the correctional literature as feelings of work-related tension, anxiety, and frustration (Cullen, Link, Wolfe, & Frank, 1985; Grossi, Keil, & Vito, 1996). Prolonged exposure to job stress generally has numerous negative outcomes. High levels of job stress has been linked with health problems, social problems, marital and family problems, substance abuse problems, decreased job performance, turnover, absenteeism, and even death (Cheek & Miller, 1983; Matteson & Ivancevich, 1987; Slate & Vogel, 1997). The research to date indicates that different aspects of the work environment can cause strain for employees that ultimately leads to job stress for employees (Dowden & Tellier, 2004; Matteson & Ivancevich, 1987). Since prolonged job stress is harmful to the employee, to the organization, and to society, it is important to identify the workplace factors that are associated with job stress. Without this information, jail administrators will be unable to make informed changes to improve the work environment and address the problem of job stress among staff.

Job Satisfaction

Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (p. 1300). Spector (1996) defined job satisfaction as simply “the extent to which people like their jobs” (p. 214). As with job stress, job satisfaction has significant consequences for both employees and organizations. Higher levels of job satisfaction have been linked with positive work attitudes and behaviors, such as compliance with rules, job performance, extra work efforts, and support for rehabilitation (Clegg & Dunkerley, 1980; Culliver, Sigler, & McNeely, 1991; Farkas, 1999; Kerce, Magnusson, & Rudolph, 1994). Conversely, low levels of job satisfaction have been found to be related to burnout, absenteeism, turnover intent, and turnover (Byrd, Cochran, Silverman, & Blount, 2000; Hulin, Roznowski, & Hachiya, 1985; Lambert, Edwards, Camp, & Saylor, 2005; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1986; Wright, 1993). It benefits jails to make interventions and changes that will increase the satisfaction of staff. Thus, there is a need to explore how different aspects of the work environment affect jail staff job satisfaction.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is generally defined as having the core elements of loyalty to the organization, identification with the organization, and involvement in the organization (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979). According to Lambert, Hogan and Barton (1999), “organizational commitment is a bond to the whole organization, and not to the job, work group, or belief in the importance of work itself” (p. 100).

Staff commitment is important for most organizations. Higher levels of organizational commitment have been linked to positive correctional staff behaviors, such as higher levels of job performance (Culliver et al., 1991), and inversely linked with negative correctional staff worker behaviors, such as absenteeism and turnover (Camp, 1994; Lambert et al., 2005; Stohr, Self, & Lovrich, 1992). Without committed staff, not only will the jail suffer, so will other employees, detainees, and society in general; hence, it is important to understand how different aspects of the work environment affect the organizational commitment of jail staff. While organizational commitment is important for jails, it has received relatively little empirical attention to date.

Past Research on Jail Staff

There is a growing body of research that has examined how the work environment affects jail staff. From the results to date, it appears that different aspects of the jail work environment have an influence on the job satisfaction of staff. In terms of type of jail structure, staff members who work at new generation jails have been found to have higher job satisfaction than those working at traditional jails (Nelson & Davis, 1995; Williams, Rodeheaver, & Huggins, 1999; Zupan & Menke, 1988). As new generation jails allow greater direct supervision of detainees, the finding that new generation jails are linked with greater job satisfaction suggests that having greater control over detainees is important to jail staff. In addition, new generation jails may also have newer physical plants that function more reliability and are more pleasant to work in, which in turn could also lead to increased satisfaction among the jail staff at new generation jails.

With respect to organizational directives, Kerle (1985) reported that the lack of clear policies is negatively related to jail staff job satisfaction. Lambert and Paoline (2005) reported that perceptions of quality medical care being provided to detainees and perceptions of quality training were both related to increased job satisfaction. Stohr, Lovrich, Menke and Zupan (1994a) noted that jails with a more participatory management style had higher levels of employee job satisfaction than those who employed a more autocratic style of management. Griffin (2001) found that quality of supervision and perception of relevant job training had significant positive effects on job satisfaction for staff at the Maricopa County, Arizona, jail system. Additionally, supervisory support has been observed to have positive effects on jail staff job satisfaction (Castle, 2008). Among staff at a large Florida jail system, role conflict, perceived dangerousness of the job and satisfaction with pay were associated with higher levels of job satisfaction (Lambert et al., 2004). Furthermore, positive relations with coworkers and views on policies and accreditation have been found to be positively associated with job satisfaction (Paoline, Lambert, & Hogan, 2006). Finally, job variety, instrumental communication, perceptions of promotional opportunities, and input into decision-making have all been reported to lead to increased satisfaction with the job for jail staff (Lambert & Paoline, 2008).

Similarly, the limited research to date supports the postulation that different aspects of the work environment are important in helping shape jail staff job stress. Smith (1993) reported that role ambiguity was related to job stress. Castle and Martin (2006), utilizing data from a Northeastern state, found that satisfaction with

administration procedures was negatively associated with job stress, while role strain (i.e., role conflict and role ambiguity) perceptions of the job being dangerous, and satisfaction with pay were positively associated with job stress among jail officers. Among staff at a Southern jail system, role conflict and perceptions of dangerousness had positive effects on job stress, while perceptions that quality training was provided for staff and quality medical care was provided for detainees had negative effects on job stress (Lambert & Paoline, 2005). Moreover, positive relations with coworkers and views on policies and accreditation have been observed to be negatively related with jail staff job stress (Paoline et al., 2006). Finally, instrumental communication, input into decision-making, and perceptions of promotional opportunities were all negative associated with job stress among staff at a large Florida jail, while role strain was positively related (Lambert & Paoline, 2008).

The research further supports the contention that work force factors are linked with the turnover intent and turnover of jail staff. In a study of staff at five jails, those who perceived they had a challenging job, believed they had equitable promotional opportunities, felt the administration cultivated employees to reach their goals, and thought that the administration provided support for workers were less likely to express intent to leave their jobs (Kieckbusch et al., 2003). Among jail staff at five Western jails, Stohr et al. (1992) observed that organizational commitment and tenure both had a negative relationship with turnover. At a Florida jail, job satisfaction was negatively related to turnover intent among jail staff (Byrd et al., 2000).

Different aspects of the work environment may also influence the correctional orientation (i.e., support for treatment and support for punishment of offenders) among jail officers. For example, Farkas (1999) found at Midwestern jail that role conflict negatively affected support for counseling roles while job satisfaction was negatively related to holding a punitive orientation.

There has been less research on how the different aspects of the work environment influence the organizational commitment of correctional staff. Among staff at five Western jails, input into decision-making was positively related with organizational commitment (Stohr et al., 1994a). Moreover, staff at a Florida jail reported that instrumental communication, formalization, job variety, and perceptions of promotional opportunities were each positively related to organizational commitment, while role strain (i.e., role conflict and role ambiguity) was linked with decreased commitment to the organization (Lambert & Paoline, 2008).

In summary, the above research findings support the contention that different dimensions of the work environment are important in helping shape the job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment of jail staff. While many aspects of the jail work environment have been explored to determine how they affect staff, there are several missing components, including the effects of perceptions of professionalism, detainee control, and administrative support on the job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment of jail staff.

Conceptual Focus of Study

The job demands model provides a theoretical underpinning of how psychological and social dimensions of the work environment influence employees (Karasek,

1979). The job demands model is part of the person-environment fit theory. This theory is important in understanding the relationship between a worker and the employing organization in explaining the perceptions, attitudes, views, intentions, and behaviors of the employee (Cable & Edwards, 2004). The person-environment theory is based on an interactional perspective in that the interaction between a person and his/her environment helps shape various outcomes, meaning that neither the individual nor the situation accounts for the outcome alone; rather, they work in conjunction with one another (Sekiguchi, 2004a). Boiled down to its basic premise, the person-environment fit theory is defined as the match between a person and his/her environment (Chatman, 1989; Edwards, Cable, Williamson, Lambert, & Shipp, 2006; Kristof, 1996).

As such, there needs to be congruence between the attributes, needs, and wants of the staff member and the work environment (Cable & Edwards, 2004). If there is a fit between the worker and the work environment, usually there are positive outcomes for both the worker and the organization. Similarly, if there is a poor fit between the employee and the work environment, negative outcomes generally result (Edwards et al., 2006; Kristof, 1996). The job demands model focuses on the fit between what the worker expects and wants from the job and what actually occurs (Edwards, 1991). This model examines the demands placed on a worker and if the needs of the worker are being met (Kristof, 1996).

If an employee perceives a particular aspect of the work environment as too demanding, threatening, or not providing what they desire, it places strain on the person (Cable & Judge, 1994; Sekiguchi, 2004b). Thus, the job demands model explains why different aspects of the work environment may influence the job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment of jail staff. If a jail staff member perceives aspects of the work environment as demanding, threatening, or straining, and they have little control over these work environment aspects, there is an increased risk of experiencing job stress (Brough & Williams, 2007). In addition, the job satisfaction of employees will decrease over time due to the perceived negative work environment over which they have little control. Likewise, the negative perceptions of different aspects of work environment will affect the bond between the jail staff member and the jail organization. The jail staff will blame the organization for the current situation of a perceived negative work environment, resulting in the end in decreased organizational commitment.

In this study, perceptions of *professionalism*, *detainee control*, and *administrative support* are proposed to be important aspects of the work environment, and if staff members' perceive expectations in these areas as not being met, it places greater demands on them. In the end, these demands, in turn, can result in increased job stress and decreased job satisfaction and organizational commitment. As such, our research questions and proposed hypotheses are built around examining these relationships.

Perceptions of professionalism deals with the degree that staff members feel that a sense of professionalism is shared in the workplace. It focuses on a view that detainees and fellow staff members are treated in a respectful manner. Treating people with respect and dignity generally lead to a more peaceful and less confrontational work experience. On the other hand, if there is a lack of professionalism in the work environment, it will place greater demands and strains

on staff members. For example, if staff members treat other staff members in a humiliating (i.e., unprofessional) manner, the quality of work life will decrease for staff members. Similarly, if detainees are treated in an unprofessional manner by staff, it will probably result in greater noncompliance and disruptive behaviors by detainees, which in turn makes the job more stressful and less pleasant for staff; therefore, a sense that there is professionalism in the jail should lead to fewer demands being placed on the jail staff and result in greater level of their needs being met. This, in the end, should allow the staff member to see the jail in a more positive light and bond with it. As such, the following hypotheses were proposed:

- Hypothesis 1. Perceptions of professionalism being in place at the jail will be negatively associated with job stress.
- Hypothesis 2. Perceptions of professionalism will be positively associated with job satisfaction.
- Hypothesis 3. Perceptions of professionalism will be positively associated with organizational commitment.

According to Castle and Martin (2006), perceptions of control are important for jail staff. Control of the detainees is important for the safe and effective running of a jail. If staff members have a sense of control over detainees, they should feel less stressed. Conversely, if there is a perception that there is a lack of control over detainees, it will create situations where staff members are concerned about their safety, which, in turn, will affect how they approach and interact with detainees. This heightened sense and strained interactions will place greater demand on staff, and, in the end, may increase the level of stress from the job. In addition, there should be fewer confrontational and disruptive interactions between staff members and detainees if there is a controlled environment. In the end, perceptions of control should allow jail staff to view their jobs in a positive light. Conversely, a perception that there is low degree of control of detainees probably places greater demands on the jail staff member, resulting in decreased job satisfaction. By creating a controlled and safe work environment should also the organization to be seen in a better light, enhancing the level of organizational commitment for staff. Thus, the following hypotheses were proposed:

- Hypothesis 4. Perceptions of detainee control at the jail will be negatively associated with job stress.
- Hypothesis 5. Perceptions of detainee control will be positively associated with job satisfaction.
- Hypothesis 6. Perceptions of detainee control will be positively associated with organizational commitment.

Administrative support refers to the degree a staff member feels he or she is supported by the organization (Garland & McCarty, 2006; Griffin, 2002, 2006). Administrative support sends a message to jail staff that they are respected and valued by the organization. In addition, it provides support so the job is less demanding (Walters, 1999). Administrative support is important for many jail staff in order to them to be successful at work, as a lack of this support can hamper the ability of staff to carry out their tasks and duties effectively (Garland, 2004). Thus, a perception that there is no support by the administration can exacerbate the problems of a feeling of lack of control at work, leading to increased job stress and decreased

job satisfaction. Additionally, administrative support sends a message that staff are valued and respected by the organization, which increases the chances that the staff member will bond with the organization. In the end, the outcome of administrative support should increase the level of organizational commitment the person has with the jail; therefore, the following hypotheses were proposed:

- Hypothesis 7. Perceptions of administration support will be negatively associated with job stress.
- Hypothesis 8. Perceptions of administrative support will be positively associated with job satisfaction.
- Hypothesis 9. Perceptions of administrative support will be positively associated with organizational commitment.

Methods

Respondents

The present study used data from a survey that was provided to all available staff at the Orange County Corrections Department (OCCD), a large, county jail complex located in Orlando, Florida. The county contains one major city and 10 other municipalities, all of which exclusively use the county jail for local detention needs. The jail employs approximately 1,500 paid staff and typically houses in excess of 4,000 inmates. Ordered according to the inmate average daily population, the jail was among the 15 largest jails in the country at the time data for this project were collected (Beck, Karberg, & Harrison, 2002).

The original data collection effort was conducted in the fall of 2001 under the direction of an ad hoc oversight commission, which was interested in exploring concerns and issues among the jail's staff. To accomplish this task, the researchers first conducted a series of focus groups designed to understand more fully those problems that might be unique to OCCD employees. Research staff conducted 72-hour focus groups, with 48 OCCD employees from different organizational levels and facilities, during a 10-day period. Findings from the OCCD focus groups assisted in the development of a questionnaire that would be administered to staff at all levels within the department.

During five consecutive days, the staff members from the OCCD were surveyed. The staff members were informed that the survey was completely voluntary in nature and the responses would be anonymous. With the consent of the jail director, jail personnel received 2 hrs of overtime for participating in the survey. The administration of the survey took place across each of the three primary shifts (i.e., 6:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m., 3:00 p.m.–2:30 a.m., and 7:00 p.m.–6:30 a.m.), and staff were afforded the opportunity to take part in any of the survey times even if it was not their assigned shift or work day. Of the 1500 paid employees at the facility during the week the survey was administered, 1062 staff members participated in the survey, which resulted in a response rate of 70%.

Respondents represented all areas of the correctional facility, such as correctional officers, case managers, medical staff, industry staff, food service workers, and so

on. Moreover, the respondents represented various administrative levels of the correctional facility, from line staff to supervisors and managers.

In terms of demographics, approximately 39% of the respondents were Black, 10% Hispanic, 45% White, and 6% another race/ethnic group. Slightly under a half a percent of those surveyed had less than a high school diploma, 21% had a high school diploma or GED, 43% had some college but no degree, 15% had an associate's degree, 16% had a bachelor's degree, 4% had a master's degree, and slightly less than 1% had a professional or terminal degree. Approximately 4% of the respondents were less than 25 years old, 9% were between 25 and 29 years old, 17% were between 30 and 34 years old, 21% were between 35 and 39 years old, 19% were between 40 and 44 years old, 12% were between 45 and 49 years old, 11% were between 50 and 54 years old, and 6% were 55 years old or older. About 56% of the surveyed staff members were men, and 44% were women.

With respect to rank, roughly 10% of the respondents indicated that they were supervisors of other staff. Staff assignments also varied across the correctional facility, with 67% of those surveyed indicating that they worked in custody. Finally, in terms of months at the current job position, the median tenure was 72 months and ranged from 0 months to 336 months.

Dependent Variables

The measures used for the current study are displayed in the [Appendix](#). Each of the measures is comprised of multi-item survey questions, which were summed together to form additive indices. What follows is a brief conceptual description of each of these dimensions.

Job Stress

For the current study, job stress was defined as an individual's feelings of job related hardness, tension, anxiety, worry, emotional exhaustion and distress. Job stress was measured by six questions, which were adopted from Crank, Regoli, Hewitt and Culbertson (1995). The six items were summed to form an additive index, which had a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .78.

Job Satisfaction

A global, rather than facet, measure of job satisfaction was used (Cranny, Smith, & Stone, 1992). A global measure focuses on the broader domain of a worker's satisfaction with the overall job than with specific job facets, such as pay, supervision, and so forth. Job satisfaction was measured using five questions, which were adopted from Brayfield and Rothe's (1951). The five questions were summed to form an index, which had a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .82.

Organizational Commitment

Respondents were asked about their bond to the entire employing organization. The two survey items used were adopted from Mowday, Porter and Steers (1982). The

two items were summed to form an index, which had a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .72. The job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment items were all answered using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Independent Variables

Professionalism

Respondents were asked four questions to measure their perception of the degree of professionalism at the jail. The four questions were developed from the focus groups of staff that were conducted prior to the administration of the survey. The items were summed to form an additive index, which had a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .67.

Detainee Control

Respondents were asked about their perceptions of the degree of detainee control at the jail. Specifically, detainee control was measured using five. The five items were also developed from the focus groups of staff that were conducted prior to the administration of the survey. The five questions were summed to form an additive index, which had a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .72.

Administrative Support

Respondents were asked five questions their perceptions of the degree of support by the management/administration of the jail. The five questions were developed from the focus groups of staff that were conducted prior to the administration of the survey. The survey items were summed to form an additive index, and this index had a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of .79.

Personal Characteristics

Seven measures of personal characteristics were included as control variables: race, educational level, age, gender, supervisory status, position, and tenure. These personal characteristics are typically included as control variables when examining correctional staff job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. For how the personal characteristics were measured, see Table 1.

Results

Descriptive statistics for the variables are presented in Table 1. As illustrated in Table 1, there was considerable variation in both the dependent and independent variables (i.e., none were constants). The majority of the respondents were Nonwhite, male, worked in custody, and were not supervisors of other employees. Additionally, the typical respondent was in his or her late thirties to early forties, had

Table 1 Description of variables and univariate statistics

Variable	Description	Univariate Statistics
Race	Race of respondent; 0 = Nonwhite, 1 = White	55% Nonwhite and 45% White
Educational Level	Education level; 0 = no college degree, 1 = college degree	64% no college degree and 36% college degree
Age	Age of respondent measured at an ordinal level; 1 = under 25; 2 = 25–29, 3 = 30–34, 4 = 35–39, 5 = 40–44, 6 = 45–49, 7 = 50–54, 8 = 55 and older	4% under 25, 9% between 25 and 29, 17% between 30 and 34, 21% between 35 and 39, 19% between 40 and 44, 12% between 45 and 49, 11% between 50 and 54, and 6% 55 and older
Gender	Gender of respondent; 0 = female, 1 = male	44% female and 56% male
Supervisory Status	Supervisor of other jail employees; 0 = no, 1 = yes	10% supervisor of other staff and 90% nonsupervisors
Position	Works in custody; 0 = no, 1 = yes	67% work in custody position and 33% work in a noncustody position
Tenure	Number of months in current position	Mean=95.33, SD=74.68, Median=72, Min=0, Max=336
Professionalism	Perception of degree of professionalism at the jail; 4 item additive index, $\alpha=.67$	Mean=10.64, SD=3.38, Median=11, Min=4, Max=20
Detainee Control	Perception of degree of control of inmates at the jail; 5 item additive index, $\alpha=.72$	Mean=10.64, SD=3.38, Median=11, Min=4, Max=25
Administrative Support	Perception of degree of support from the administration; 5 item additive index, $\alpha=.79$	Mean=11.44, SD=4.45, Median=11, Min=5, Max=25
Job Stress	Perceived level of job stress; 6 item additive index, $\alpha=.78$	Mean=18.20, SD=5.44, Median=18, Min=6, Max=30
Job Satisfaction	Degree of satisfaction from job; 5 item additive index, $\alpha=.82$	Mean=16.42, SD=4.92, Median=17, Min=5, Max=25
Organizational Commitment	Degree of commitment to the jail; 2 item additive index, $\alpha=.72$	Mean=5.98, SD=2.37, Median=6, Min=2, Max=10

SD stands for standard deviation. Min stands for minimum value. Max stands for Maximum value, and α stands for Cronbach's alpha coefficient for internal reliability. $N=1062$.

taken some college courses but no degree, and had been at their current position for approximately 6 to 8 years. A principal factor analysis for each latent variable (i.e., index) was conducted. Specifically, the items for a particular index were entered into a factor analysis using principal axis factoring, a type of test for construct validity (Gorsuch, 1983). Based upon the Eigenvalues and the Scree plot, a single factor was extracted for each latent concept. All the items for a particular latent concept had factor loading of .47 or higher. Thus, the factor analysis results suggested that the indices have convergent validity.

Table 2 presents the Pearson product moment correlations among the variables. The variables of supervisory status, position, tenure, professionalism, detainee control, and

Table 2 Correlation matrix

Variables	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.
1. Race	1.00											
2. Education	.02	1.00										
3. Age	.23**	.14**	1.00									
4. Gender	.14**	.09**	.15**	1.00								
5. Supervisor	.20**	.11**	.16**	.08*	1.00							
6. Position	.00	-.22**	-.07	.26**	.04	1.00						
7. Tenure	.12**	.01	.45**	.11**	.00	.16**	1.00					
8. Professionalism	.01	.05	.02	.04	.08*	-.07*	-.05	1.00				
9. Detainee Control	-.01	-.01	.01	-.04	.12**	-.18**	-.12**	.52**	1.00			
10. Admin Support	.01	-.01	-.05	-.03	.09*	-.17**	-.16**	.62**	.59**	1.00		
11. Job Stress	-.01	-.03	-.01	.05	-.10**	.13**	.13**	-.35**	-.41**	-.40**	1.00	
12. Job Satisfaction	.10**	-.02	.14**	.01	.15**	-.05	-.03	.35**	.36**	.40**	-.51**	1.00
13. Org Commit	-.02	-.05	.06	-.03	.10**	-.09**	-.14**	.46**	.45**	.53**	-.49**	.67**

See Table 1 for a description of the variables. Education stands for educational level. Supervisor stands for supervisory status. Admin Support stands for administrative support. Org Commit stands for organizational commitment. $N=1062$.

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$

administrative support all had statistically significant correlations with job stress. Supervisors generally reported lower levels of stress compared to nonsupervisory jail staff. Staff who held a custody position reported higher levels of stress from the job as compared to non-custody staff. As tenure increased, job stress also increased. Increases in the professionalism index were associated with decreases in the job stress index. Similarly, perceptions on detainee control were negatively correlated with job stress. Perceptions of administrative support were also negatively correlated with job stress.

Race, age, supervisory status, professionalism, detainee control, and administrative support all had a significant correlation with job satisfaction. White jail staff generally reported greater satisfaction from the job than did Non-White staff. Age had a positive correlation with job satisfaction. Supervisors had on average higher levels of job satisfaction than nonsupervisory staff. The indices for professionalism, detainee control, and administrative support each had a positive correlation with job satisfaction. Supervisory status, position, tenure, professionalism, detainee control, and administrative support were all positively correlated with the measure for organizational commitment.

Finally, the measures of professionalism, detainee control, and administrative support had much larger correlations than did the personal characteristics; however, the bivariate associations may not continue once statistical controls for the effects of other independent variables are introduced. Multivariate analyses were therefore conducted, which allows for the effects of a variable to be estimated while controlling for the shared effects with the other independent variables.

Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression equations were estimated with the job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment indexes as the dependent variables. The independent variables were the seven personal characteristics and the three indices of professionalism, detainee control, and administrative support. The OLS results are presented in Table 3. Based upon the correlation matrix in Table 2,

Table 3 Regression results

Variables	Job stress		Job satisfaction		Org. commitment	
	B	β	B	β	B	β
Race	-.07	-.01	.62	.06	-.29	-.06
Educational Level	-.30	-.03	-.42	-.04	-.34	-.07*
Age	-.20	-.07	.49	.18**	.20	.15**
Gender	.56	.05	-.34	-.03	-.10	-.02
Supervisory Status	-.35	-.02	1.07	.07	.14	.09
Position	.07	.01	.19	.02	.15	.03
Tenure	.01	.07	-.01	-.06	-.01	-.13**
Professionalism	-.32	-.19**	.22	.15**	.13	.18**
Detainee Control	-.30	-.21**	.16	.13**	.09	.15**
Administrative Support	-.24	-.19**	.29	.26**	.18	.35**
R-Squared		.28**		.26**		.38**

See Table 1 for a description of the variables. Org. stands for organizational. B represents the unstandardized regression coefficient, and β represents the standardized regression coefficient. $N=1062$.

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$

the Variation Inflation Factor (VIF) statistics (not reported), and the tolerance statistics (not reported), there appeared to be no issue with collinearity or multicollinearity.

Based upon the R-Squared statistic, 28% of the variance in the job stress measure was explained by the independent variables. None of the seven personal characteristics had a statistically significant relationship with job stress. By contrast, professionalism, detainee control, and administrative support all had statistically significant effects on job stress, and each had a negative relationship with the job stress measure. That is, increases in each were associated with decreases in reported stress from the job. Looking at the magnitude of effects (i.e., values in the β column in Table 3), professionalism, detainee control, and administrative support had similar sized effects on jail staff.

Turning next to our second analytical model, approximately 26% of the variance in the job satisfaction index was accounted for by the independent variables. Among the seven personal characteristics, only age had a significant effect. That is, age increases were associated with higher levels of job satisfaction. Our three independent variable indices had statistically significant effects on job satisfaction. As views of the professionalism, perceptions of detainee control, and perceptions of support from management and the administration rose, so did satisfaction from the job. Looking at the magnitude of effects, administrative support had the largest effect, followed by age, professionalism, and detainee control.

Finally, in our third analytical model, we find that the independent variables explained about 38% of the variance in the organizational commitment index. Among the personal characteristic variables, educational level, age, and tenure had significant associations. Those with a college degree generally reported lower levels of commitment to the jail. As age increased, organizational commitment also increased; however, tenure was inversely associated with commitment to the jail. Increases in the professionalism, detainee control, and administrative support were associated with increases in organizational commitment. Based on the standardized regression coefficients, administrative support had the largest sized effect, at least twice that of any of the other independent variables.

Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of the current study was to contribute to a growing area of correctional research on jails. As such, the relative impact of staff views of professionalism, detainee control, and overall administrative support were estimated on three separate outcomes that have been part of several correctional studies—job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. This research also considered a variety of statistical controls commonly used in corrections, as well as in research on other criminal justice practitioners in general (i.e., race, education, age, gender, rank, position, and experience).

Similar to other researchers' findings (e.g., Lambert et al., 2005; Lambert & Paoline, 2005; Paoline et al., 2006), there were few statistically significant associations among the personal characteristics (with the exception of age) and the outcome variables; however, in each of the analytic models (i.e., job stress, job

satisfaction, and organizational commitment), jail personnel perceptions of professionalism, detainee control, and administrative support were statistically significant. In assessing the degree of influence across the three independent variables, views of inmate control were most powerful with respect to job stress, while for job satisfaction and organizational commitment, the most powerful predictor was perceptions of administrative control; thus, this study provides support for the person-environment fit theory, which holds that there must be fit between the person and his/her environment (Edwards et al., 2006; Kristof, 1996). If there is agreement, there are positive outcomes for both the worker and the organization.

All of the proposed hypotheses were supported by the results. It would appear that perceptions of professionalism among jail staff in this study were associated with decreased job stress and increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment. As indicated earlier, under the job demands model in the person-environment fit theory, perceptions of professionalism may provide a staff member with a less demanding and better fitting work experience. The job demands model focuses on the fit between what the worker expects and wants from the job and what actually occurs in terms of the demands placed on the worker (Edwards, 1991). Professionalism may lead to more pleasant work experience. Part of professionalism is to treat both coworkers and detainees with respect. Being treated in a positive manner by coworkers likely leads to less stress from the job and greater fulfillment from the job. Likewise, treating detainees in a professional manner generally should lead to better staff-detainees interactions and relationships, and, in turn, reduce stress from the job and increase satisfaction from the job. Staff members are likely to see the jail organization in a more favorable manner for leading to reduced stress and heightened satisfaction. In the end, the result is increased organizational commitment. Furthermore, a sense of professionalism in the workplace may include a sense of being loyal to the organization. Regardless of the explanation, the results support the hypotheses that perceptions of professionalism are negatively associated with job stress and positively related with job satisfaction and organization commitment among the jail staff surveyed.

Similarly, perceptions of detainee control probably place fewer job demands than those areas where staff perceive that there is a lack of control among detainees. A lack of control can lead to feelings of strain and tension for employees in environment where chaos can lead to opportunities for conflict and even violence. It is probably less satisfying to work in areas perceived to be lacking in control. A feeling of control is probably a basic need among many jail staff. In theory, if the job does not meet a need, the degree of affective satisfaction from the job drops. In addition, detainee control may also be linked to more positive interactions and outcomes involving detainees. It is hard to have successful interventions without an orderly environment. If detainees are in a safer and more ordered environment, the detainees themselves are probably less stressed, which implies that their interactions with jail staff are probably more positive and productive. Staff members probably view the organization more favorably due to the detainee control, which increases their bond with the jail.

Likewise, the results of the study support the hypotheses that perceptions of administrative support are salient predictors of jail staff job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. If staff feel that they are supported by the jail

administration, they are less likely to experience job stress. A feeling of not being wanted can cause strain and frustration for staff; therefore, administrative support sends a message that staff are valued and respected by the organization (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). This appears to increase the satisfaction gained from the job. It is probably difficult to derive satisfaction from a job where a person feels unsupported or even unwanted (Lambert & Hogan, 2009). Administrative support probably partially provides the means for staff to be more successful at their jobs. Being more successful at the job for most people is a gratifying experience.

Besides being positively related to job satisfaction, administrative support in this study was associated with increased organizational commitment. Administrative support sends a message to staff that they are respected and valued by the organization. It is more likely that a staff member will look at the jail more favorably and bond with it when he/she feels supported. There is a social exchange between staff members and the jail organization. If staff perceive themselves as being supported, the more likely they are to support the organization (Lambert & Hogan, 2009). Eisenberger et al. (1986) pointed out that workers “personify the organization, viewing actions by agents of the organization as actions of the organization itself” (p. 504). This suggests that staff view managers and administrators and their actions as representing the jail organization.

As with most research, there are limitations to the current study. First, this research was a single exploratory study. Additional studies are needed to confirm the findings presented here. With replication, the affects of perceptions of professionalism, detainee control, and administrative support will be better understood. In doing so, researchers should explore additional measures of the latent concepts (i.e., the concepts measured by indices) that were examined in this study. For example, organizational commitment could be measured with more than the two items utilized in the current study. Future research needs to examine whether more detailed and extensive measures of the latent concepts would yield the same results.

Additional research is also needed to determine how perceptions of professionalism, detainee control, and administrative support can be changed among jail staff. The current study only examined the effects of these variables. Research is needed to determine what interventions and changes could positively reshape these perceptions. This information is necessary for jails looking for methods of decreasing job stress and improving job satisfaction and organizational commitment among their staff.

Besides professionalism, detainee control, and support, there are other aspects of the work environment that need to be studied in order to learn how they affect jail staff. This research will provide a more accurate picture of how the work environment impacts jail staff job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Ultimately, this information is needed in order to help create better working conditions. Without knowledge generated by future research on jail staff, both administrators and scholars will be hampered in developing more positive work environments. There is clearly a need for much more research in this area.

In closing, jails are a critical element of the criminal justice system. A driving force for jails is their staff, which are responsible for a wide array of tasks and duties that are necessary for a safe, humane, and secure jail. Not only are staff a valuable

resource for jails, they are also an expensive resource. Unstressed, satisfied, and committed staff are important for jails to be successful. In an era of increasing detainee populations, rising costs, shrinking budgets, and personnel shortages, reducing job stress and increasing job satisfaction and organizational commitment of staff is paramount. It is therefore essential to explore the factors that may influence these outcomes; however, there has been little published research on how different aspects the work environment affect staff.

This study sought to expand the literature on how the work environment affects jail staff by looking at the relationship between perceptions of professionalism, detainee control, and administrative support and job stress, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment among staff at a large, urban, Southern jail organization. It was observed that perceptions of professionalism, detainee control, and administrative support all had inverse associations with job stress, and positive relationships with job satisfaction and organizational commitment. While this study attempted to add to the small but growing body of knowledge on jail staff, there is clearly much more work to be done. It is hoped that this study will spark interest in exploring how the work environment affects jail staff.

Appendix

Survey Item Measures

The questions used in this study, below, were answered by a five-point Likert-type response scale: *strongly disagree* (coded 1), *disagree* (coded 2), *uncertain* (coded 3), *agree* (coded 4), and *strongly agree* (coded 5).

Dependent Variables

Job Stress

1. When I'm at work I often feel tense or uptight.
2. A lot of time my job makes me very frustrated or angry.
3. I am usually calm and at ease when I'm working (reverse coded).
4. Most of the time when I'm at work I don't feel that I have much to worry about (reverse coded).
5. I am usually under a lot of pressure when I am at work.
6. There are a lot of aspects of my job that make me upset.

Job Satisfaction

1. I like my job better than the average worker does.
2. Most days I am enthusiastic about my job.
3. I definitely dislike my job (reverse coded).
4. I find real enjoyment in my job.
5. I am fairly well satisfied with my job.

Organizational Commitment

1. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization (jail).
2. This job really inspires the best in me in the way of job performance.

Independent Variables

Professionalism

1. Professionalism has improved over the past 5–10 years.
2. Employees are respected by senior staff.
3. Overall, senior-level officers support junior officer floor decisions.
4. Employees share a sense of professionalism.

Detainee Control

1. Officers have the necessary authority to discipline inmates.
2. Contraband is strictly controlled.
3. Internal inmate movement is not a problem.
4. Administration supports C.O. inmate disciplinary decisions.
5. Door malfunctions are rare.

Administrative Support

1. Management supports line staff decisions.
2. There is adequate leadership direction.
3. Management is proactive and addresses day-to-day operational issues.
4. Senior management respond to line staff suggestions.
5. Upper management is responsive to in-house problems.

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