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EXAMINING FACTORS LEADING TO TEACHERS WORK STRESS IN PAHANG: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

Today, in a challenging world, work stress has become a crucial and concern issue in any organization specifically for educational institutions. Work stress may affect teachers' health, wellbeing, and their performance. Thus, work stress among teachers in Malaysia becomes more important needed to be focused. The study was conducted to investigate such important aspects such as work role conflicts and work overload, which may potentially influence the work stress among secondary teachers in Pahang. Teachers in Pahang were selected as respondent for this study. The convenience sampling technique was used to select the respondents. Data collection was conducted using questionnaires; 120 questionnaires successfully collected and were analyse using SPSS. One of the main findings was that there was a significant correlation between role of conflicts and work overload towards work stress among secondary teachers in Pahang. Most of the study focuses on urban area, while this study will give another perspective that despite of different location the factors leading to teachers work stress still have the same effect. With this result, the Ministry of Education can take necessary actions to monitor, manage and control the work stress before it becomes more critical and affect their job performance.

1. Introduction

Globalization not only give affect the manufacturing organizations, but also have impact to the educational institutions. At the present time, the educational institutions have been undergoing extensive alterations in the activities. The education institutions have grown into more competitive sector because of the rise of the customers' need for better education. This situation creates stressful to employee associated with educational industry such as teacher (Lewin & Sager, 2009).

Recently, there have been such a large number of academic articles regarding work related stress which determine that any person especially within a work environment is disheartened and disappointed with their work. As the work stress continues drifting over employees, the administration is reluctant to adopt proper initiatives to highlight the issue. Based on Dyck and Roithmayr (2001), quality of employees' life might be influenced by any work related stress causes, which may lead to difficulty in completing work and upsetting and disappointing the employee to achieve the work performance, in any situation. Work stress may arise for different causes individually, socially, economically and family matters (Swanson et al., 2013).

Stress has been researched in almost every occupational, including education. Finding from Health and Safety Executive (2006), identify that teachers in secondary school was the most stressful job due to the changes of new standards of education such as new integrated curriculum. The modern world also requests teachers to adopt new technology to prepare the teaching aid materials. This new trend needs resulting in increased of workloads and responsibilities which may become pressure to them in order to enhance their job skills (Mosha et al., 2007). Teachers also involve in different role at school. Teachers are the middle person between students and school management. The conflict arises among teachers because lack of understanding between school management and teachers lead to work stress (Talmor et al., 2005).

Numerous academic scholars argue that work stress in any organisation can affect the performance of employees and organization. Dean (2002) observation concluded that work stress is a contributing factor responsible for poor productivity achievement in organization. Furthermore, Gaumail (2003) found that work stress affects the employees' work quality such as poor in performance, escalation in absenteeism and pitiable job satisfaction. In a similar broadness, Dessler (2000) agreed that the results of work stress could be extremely intruded the quality and quantity of job performance.

1.1. Stress in General

Stress is inevitable in an expeditious world. Substantial changes in the nature of work are an automatic cause of stress. The requirement to work long hours as to fulfil the increasing responsibilities makes stress a common occurrence faced by people in many aspects of life.

When the external' environmental-conditions places too much psychological, behavioural, and-physiological burdens on individuals, the response these outcomes are scientifically defined as stress (Ivancevich et al., 2006)

Other definitions of stress by the World Health Organization (WHO) (2016); when workloads and forces that are not matched to the knowledge, abilities and challenge the ability of people to cope, hence

the reaction is defined as occupational stress; Williams and Cooper (2011) stated similar definition on stress with an additional remark on the existence of struggle for employment in a place.

Stress is categorized differently by authors for better understanding. Ivancevich et al. (2006) summarized the unlike categories of-stress as enduring, hurtful, and important.

Arnold et al. (2016) identified-five-major-causes-of job-stress: factors intrinsic-to-the-job,-relationship-at-work,-career-development, -role-in-the-organisation-and organisational-structure-and-climate. Explanations on the different types of stress are as follows; chronic stress has no evident indication of discharge. It causes loss of energy to a person every day upon occurrence of stress. Chronic stress is the results of continuing experience to stressors such as unhappy marriage, distressing understanding, undeserved job, stress of poverty, relationship conflicts etc. Traumatic stress resulted from tragic event or experience of accidents or natural disaster. The effect of such incidences differs from one person to another, either able to recover soon or abnormality in life. Acute stress is most common and detectable. It is often short term and not permanent in damage.

1.2. Work Stress

World-Health-Organization's (WHO) define, work-related stress or occupational stress "is the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope (p. 1)"

According to Williams and Cooper (2011) stress is resulted as a reaction of a worker when certain needs, densities and professional aspects have to be handled at the workplace which does not match their knowledge points there by posing a task and intimidation to the competencies of the worker which in turn would generate a struggle for presence in relations of being engaged in a place.

Work stress is associated with individual's surroundings that impelling the on-going process and need to overcome the difficulties (Rumbold et al., 2012). McCarthy et al. (2009) defined stress as a person's perceived inability to deal with an environmental demand.

Work stress affected both in term of physical effect and psychological (Michie, 2002). The impact of stress and symptom of stress due to various reasons cannot be separated. Role of conflict and work overloaded facing by the teachers will increase the stress level because of limited information.

Occupational Stress Model developed by Cooper and Marshall (1976), they have illustrious five (5) sources of work stress such as intrinsic to job, role in the organization career development, relationships at work, and organizational structure and climate. The overview of these sources with some examples of stressors is at table 01.

Table 01. Sources of Stress at Work (*Cooper & Marshall, 1976*)

Environmental Sources	Stressors
Intrinsic to job	Poor physical working conditions Work overload Time pressure Physical danger, etc.

Role in organization	Role ambiguity Role conflict Responsibility for people Conflict organizational boundaries (internal and external), etc.
Career Development	Over promotion Under promotion Lack of job security Thwarted ambition, etc.
Relationships at work	Poor relations with boss, subordinates or colleagues. Difficulties in delegating responsibilities, etc.
Organizational structure and climate	Little or no participation in decision-making Restrictions on behaviour (budgets, etc.) Office politics Lack of effective consultations, etc.

Based on the studies, any types of work have its own stress sources factors. Stress sources for teachers related to:

1.2.1. Role conflict

Role conflict is associated with incompatibility of expectations and demands. Rizwan et al. (2014) characterized role of conflict into two parts; who have to bend a rule or policy; without adequate resources and who receive conflicting requests. Stresses from role conflict arise when there are undergoing inharmonious or irreconcilable expectations linked with multiple roles, or with a single role (Zhao et al., 2011). Role conflict can be visible in all situations in the organization where demands are incompatible with the employee's goal, ability, value and belief. Role conflicts are the job stress antecedents that have been used by numerous researchers to analyse and measure the works stress (Ram et al., 2011; Rizwan et al., 2014).

1.2.2. Work overload

Longer work hours of work overload are another prime stressor. Long working hour and work overload have the highest potential to cause employee stress rather than work life balance issue (Priya, 2016). The amount of work for an employee and its difficulties may also be stressful. In this context the work psychology defines the terms of heavy workload and weak workload which have their quantitative and qualitative characteristics (Catheline & Devi, 2016).

Excessive work can lead to anger and frustration of workers toward people who are believed to be responsible for the workload (Marini et al., 1995). Cercarelli and Ryan (1996) show that fatigue involves a diminished capacity for work and that may bring attention, perception, decision-making, and skill performance, may need to be put down, fatigue may refer to tiredness, drowsiness, or fatigue (NASA, 1996).

Workload means the amount of work that a person must complete over a within certain time (Chen & Spector, 1992; Jex, 1998). Numerous researchers accept that the usual workload nowadays comes about in expanded work stress (Belal, 2009). Workload is related with numerous sorts of negative results. Cases

incorporate uneasiness, weakness, cerebral pain and gastrointestinal issues (Ganster & Rosen, 2013; Nixon et al., 2011).

2. Problem Statement

It has been argued very many researchers that work stress is considerably influencing performance. Here are some of findings by researchers; work related stress leads to low productivity (Dean, 2002); decrease in performance, increase in absenteeism and satisfaction are organizational outcomes due to stress (Gaumail, 2003); consequences of organizational stress are extensive, resulting reduced quality and quantity job performance; negative experiences at workplace caused hopes of diligent employees hopes and goals disrupted, and confidence weakened. Organization should attempt to detect emotional pain, take action as to safeguard from any harmful or destructive situations at workplace.

Numerous factors have contributed to the limitation in this study, namely in scope, which relates to other factors leading to teachers work stress such as role conflicts and work overload among secondary teachers in Malaysia.

3. Research Questions

3.1. Conceptual framework

The research framework for the study was based on the past study conducted by Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) and Weiss and Beal (2005) and can be referred in Figure 01.
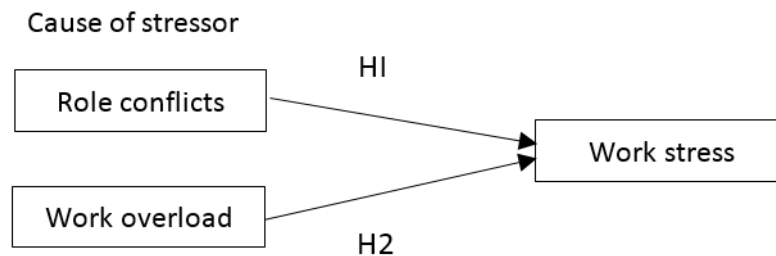

Figure 01. Conceptual Framework

Based on the past research and literature review, the study developed two-research question as follows:

RQ1: There is a positive and significant relationship between Role conflict and work stress.

RQ2: There is a positive and significant relationship between Workload and work stress

Hypotheses as follows:

H1: Role conflict has positive and significant relationship with work stress.

H2: Workload has positive and significant relationship with work stress.

4. Purpose of the Study

The principal purpose of this study was to explore factors leading to teachers work related stress such as role conflicts and work overload among secondary teachers in in Pahang. This study investigates the relationship of role conflicts and work overload on works stress among secondary teachers. Recognize the factor of work stress is important to promote a good understanding and it helps in contribute significantly for future research in educational stress models. This finding may also help the institution and management increase awareness about work stress among teacher especially in secondary school.

5. Research Methods

Data was collected starting from May until July (3 months). The data collected from targeted sample who were secondary school teachers. Total five secondary schools were selected in rural area of Pahang, Malaysia. This study collected data from 120 people who responded. The process used self-given lists of questions. The lists of questions were able to gather all the information desirable for meeting the goal of this study. Demographic analysis is given in Table 2.

Table 02. Demographic Analysis

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	43	35.8
	Female	77	64.2
Age	25-35	21	17.5
	36-45	55	45.8
	46-55	44	36.6
Marital Status	Married	108	90.0
	Single	10	8.3
	Divorce	2	1.7
Race	Malay	103	85.8
	Chinese	0	0
	Indian	5	4.2
	Others	12	10.0
Level of Education	Diploma	0	0
	Degree	112	93.3
	Master	8	6.7
	PhD	0	0

6. Findings

6.1. Reliability Analysis

It is utilized for common perception of the information for all factors.

Table 03. Reliability analysis

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach Alpha
Role Conflict	5	0.81
Work Overload	5	0.87
Work Stress	5	0.76

The result of Table 03 showed the Cronbach Alpha value on Role conflict (0. 81), workload (0. 87), and Work stress (0. 76). The range of reliability of all the variables were in 0.7 to 0.8, which were reflected adequate as the minimum accepted benchmark of the Cronbach's Alpha is 0.50.

6.2. Correlation Analysis

The results showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between role conflict and work stress ($r=0.639$, $p<0.01$). Here was also significant and positive link between workload and work stress with a correlation coefficient ($r=0.671$, $p<0.01$). All variables such as role conflict and workload have a strong relationship towards work stress (Guildford, 1973). The detail is shown in table 04 below.

Table 04. Correlation matrix of Study variables

	1'	2'	3'
Work stress	1		
Role conflict	0.639**	1	
Workload	0.671**	0.327**	1

**Significant correlation at 0.01 level (2-tailed)

7. Conclusion

Stress has become the most crucial elements in influencing the level of employee's resilience in any organizations. Stress can make an employee perform their work poorly productive and bad work performance. Positive working environment will be helpful to curb the work stress in organization. Teachers are employees in education institutions. Teachers are also exposed at a higher risk of work stress due to the nature of the service sector. Teachers as employees have direct interaction with students, parents and other important stakeholder and responsible for a significant role in the production and consumption of a service. The results can be concluded that role conflict and workload can affect the work stress among secondary teachers in Pahang, Malaysia.

Psychological stress on work-related stress leads to significant costs for educational institutions as well as for the country. When teachers are depressed from work stress and other psychological problems, they often miss a lot of work time and can affect the quality of their teaching process. Therefore, the administration of education institutions in Malaysia should pay more attention in dealing and managing the issues of work stress among teachers.

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