Investigative the effect of stress factors on employee performance: A Study on Schools in Perak, Malaysia

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Abstract

Purpose: Over the past few decades stress is emerging as an increasing problem in organizations. Stress is vigorous state in which a person is confronted with an opportunity, demand, or resource related to what the individual wishes and for which the outcome is perceived to be both vague and vital. This study was intended to know the relationship between stress management and employee (teachers) performance in various schools in Perak. Assessing how these two latent constructs are being influenced by family matters, social support, work relationship, leadership style and time management.

Design/methodology/approach: The researchers have used quantitative approach to conduct this research and data were collected through questionnaire survey from 306 respondents (school teacher) in a personal contact basis. The research data were analyzed starting with reliability test and followed by correlation coefficient and regression analysis.

Findings: To be completed

Research limitations/implications: The result shows through correlation analysis that all factors are significantly related to employee performance and from the regression analysis, the result shows that, out of five factors, three factors are strongly related to employee performance and other twos are moderately related.

Practical implications: This result will contribute to the field of academy and also will be benefited to the school teachers to manage their stress in a great extent.

Originality/value: This study will give a new guideline on the effect of stress factors on employee performance: A Study on Schools in Perak, Malaysia and may help in contributing to the future research because of the limited literature.

Keywords: Stress management, Factors, Employee performance, Teachers, Malaysia.

Introduction

In this presence and fierce competition, organizations are striving to stay forefront of today's marketplace with significant amount of profit margin (Abbas, et al. 2020). Therefore, employee's performance is one of the essential aspects to maintain the profit margin in an organization (Naharuddin & Sadegi, 2013). Employees' performance lies in the willingness and openness of the employee to do the job given. According to Madan and Bajwa (2006), employee performance is fulfilling the work effectively with the accurate usage of resources according to prescribed standard and evaluation. Employees' performances cannot be constant and it gets affected by different factors.

However, there are several factors are barrier and one of the major causes that affect employees' performances is stress. The crucial problem that faced by organizations in developing nation is where they are not being aware of the consequences of stress on employee performances (Imtiaz & Ahmad, 2009). Work stress incurred cost not only to the organization, but the nation as well (Ching, et al. 2011). According to Ling and Bhatti (2014), work stress has become universal issues that affect employees' job performance and make them unable to perform well.

Thus, the main goal of this study is to assess factors of stress management on the performance of the employee. Employees should focus more on the stress management to ensure better employee performance.

Literature Review

Stress can be recognized as unequal demand placed on the person on one hand and their ability to cope with those demand with another (Cox, 2000). Therefore, it brings in a high rate of absenteeism, lack of satisfaction in job, organization inefficiency, and the extreme would be turnover (Olusegun et al., 2014).

The rate of stress among working population has been gradually increasing annually. According to Health and Safety Executives of UK government's statistics, around 440,000 cases of stress at work, depression or anxiety has been reported by their Labor Force (Health and Safety Executives of UK, 2015).

Another study says that stress has two sides on employees' performance where it can be positive or negative. The negative effect shows up when employee's extent of endurance exceeds the bearable limits (Iqbal, et al., 2015).

To overcome stress, the organization has to access and manage the level of stress of an employee (Agarwal, 2016). Stress management has been termed as an extended step where it is monitored, diagnosed and prevented from excessive stressor that adversely affects the employees (Raitano & Kleiner, 2004). In recent years, researchers considering job stress in the workplace have made great strides in understanding several aspects of the stress phenomenon in the field of organizational behavior (Kumaresan, et al. 2015).

Frequently, stress within teaching profession is associated with organizational components identified with the way teachers are relied upon to work. Work related stress among educators was firstly distinguished amid the 1930s in a review by Smith and Milstein. Later on, in 1955, (Travers and Cooper, 1997) have reported the historical backdrop of changes in the educational procedure and in addition the effect of these progressions on teachers' anxiety. In their daily occupation, instructors progressively confronted with assignments and requests that create work related stress and diminished employment profitability. In addition, a similar review by Johnson, et al. (2005) inferred that out of 26 callings, teaching speaks to the second most unpleasant occupation after the ambulance driver (Minov, et al. 2015).

Thus, stress has become a phenomenon in today organizations especially in teaching where the work nature has gone through drastic changes and still changing fast. Whenever there are changes, the stress is triggered eventually since teaching profession will be uncertain and attentional, socially, and emotionally demanding work. Therefore, not surprisingly, given these inborn requests, teachers see teaching as an exceedingly unpleasant occupation. Real employment stressors for teachers are incorporate working with students who may need preparation and inspiration, keeping up classroom train, and time weights and overwhelming workloads (Taylor et al., 2015)

Hence, workplace stress is a critical problem that has been faced by organization since it poses a threat to organization in terms of teacher's performance and the health of organization (Kotteeswari & Sharief, 2014). The performance of the teacher is probably going to be

impacted by stress confronted by educators. Work stress or stress that occurs at the workplace will cause unsafe physical, psychological and negative passionate reactions towards educators when their occupation necessities don't coordinate their capacities, assets and requirements. Stressed teachers will give significant but negative effect towards their own performance at the workplace. They tend to be undesirable, less gain and inadequately spurred at work (Park, 2007).Therefore, their performance at workplace will greatly affect by the stress they experienced due to the long working hours (Olusegun, Oluwasayo, & Olawoyim, 2014).

In Malaysia, teaching also can be categorized as one of the stressful occupations (Ching, et al. 2011; Kumaresan, et al. 2015) because teachers need to adapt to their assignments to provide knowledge, and in addition to instruct students to be great citizens. With the expanding request from students and parents, and in addition the occupation necessity made by Malaysia's Ministry of Education, the anxiety levels are relentlessly expanding. Teachers in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur territories have been classified as 'unpleasant educators' since they need to burn through 74 hours for each week in educating, and in addition required in educational modules exercises (Samad, et al. 2010).

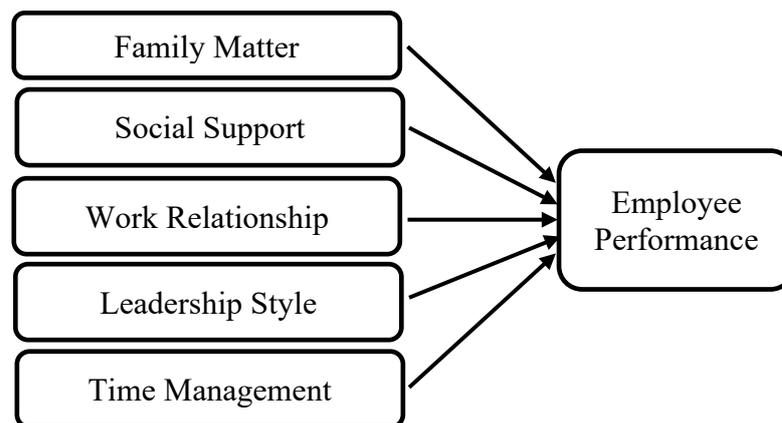## Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

Figure 1: Research framework (conceptual)

Method

The research of this study applied quantitative approach. Quantitative research is to infer the relationship between independent variables and others variable or the dependent variable in the population. The quantitative research has been used to run this research study due to the largest number of respondents (306) who participated and where evidence is evaluated and hypotheses are generated. According to the statistics, the approximate number of school teacher are 1500. The data were collected from 306 (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970).

This study collected primary data using a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire included open and closed ended questions for ease of administration. To enhance quality of data, Likert type questions were provided whereby respondents were required to indicate the extent to which the statements representing variables applied to their organizations. A five-point Likert scale was used (Nyanjom, 2013).

For data collection, structured questionnaire was used which contains 3 sections. Section one contains demographical information, second two contains questions related to stress management, the independent variable which are family matters, social support, work relationship, leadership style and time management and final section contains questions related to employee performance, the dependent variable.

The data were analyzed starting with reliability test and later the researchers have used correlation and regression analysis to test whether the variables have significant relationship with employee (teachers) performance. The entire research has done based on the following research framework.

Findings and Discussions
Results and Analysis
This study comprises four sections of data analysis. The first section is descriptive analysis based on the demographic information of the respondents. The second section discusses the reliability analysis, and third and fourth section are correlation and regression analysis.

Descriptive analysis
Out of 306 respondents, 225 respondents are female and 81 of them are male. Hence, it can be concluded that number of female respondents are more compared to male respondent. This situation occurs because there more female than male in teaching profession. There are five groups of age which consist of 18-25 years, 26-35 years, 36-45years, 46-55years and over 55 years. The majority teachers around Perak area falls under the group of 36-45 years (31%) and 46-55 years (29%). Out of 306 respondents, 80% respondents are married, single 16%, separated 3%, widow 1%, whereas widower and divorce are 0%. From marital status, it shows that the maximum numbers (234 which is 80%) of respondent are married and 57 are unmarried and 2 are divorced. The result above shows that most of the teachers in Perak have bachelor degree as their highest level of education. However, teachers with SPM, STPM, Master's degree and PHD are the least amount. Meanwhile, there is a considerable number of teachers with diploma. The figure shows that out of 306 respondents, 100 of them had been in service for 16 years and above. At the same time, teachers that have been on service below 15 years occupy 67%.

Reliability analysis
According to Malhotra and Briks (1999), reliability refers to the extent to which measurements of the particular test are repeatable. Hair et al. (2010, p. 137) asserted that reliability is an "assessment of the degree of consistency between multiple measurement of variables". In other words, reliability is the degree of uniform results on repeated trials given by an instrument (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016).

In this study, Cronbach's alpha was used to test internal consistency of 34 points for all dimensions, family matters, social support, work relationship, leadership style and time management. Cronbach's alpha score ranges from 0 to 1, with values close to 1 indicating high consistency. Cronbach's alpha score is expressed as a correlation coefficient between two data sets. It is widely regarded that values of 0.70 or higher indicate good reliability (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Litwin, 1995). More specifically, George and Mallery (2003, p. 231) provide the following rule of thumb: "_ > .9 – Excellent, _ > .8 – Good, _ > .7 – Acceptable, _ > .6 – Questionable, _ > .5 – Poor and _ < .5 – Unacceptable". This means the outcome of the measurement, in repeated sequence of measuring, must be consistent. The greater the level of consistency in repeated sequence, the greater the reliability. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha was therefore conducted in this study.

Table 1 shows the individual dimensions of Cronbach's alphas for this study. The average Cronbach's Alpha of this research for six dimensions is 0.921 which is an excellent good according to the previous author.

Table 1: Individual dimension of Cronbach's Alphas

Variables/ Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha (Expectations)	Number of Items
Family matters	0.889	5
Social support	0.896	5
Work relationship	0.991	5
Leadership style	0.911	5
Time management	0.920	5
Employee performance	0.921	9
All 6 Dimensions	**0.921**	**34**

Correlation for Each Variable

The correlation was prepared by Karl Pearson and it is known as the Pearson correlation coefficient. It is use to summarize the strength of association between two metrics of variable like X and Y. For this current research, the correlation analysis was conducted to see the relationship of family matters, social support, work relations, leadership style and time management on employee performance.

Table 2: Relationship between independent and dependent variables using Correlation

Variables/ Dimension	Family matters	Social support	Work relationship	Leadership style	Time management	Employee performance
Family matters	1					0.678
Social support		1				0.675
Work relationship			1			0.645
Leadership style				1		0.513
Time management					1	0.580
Employee performance						1

From the Table 2, it indicates that the correlation between family matters and employee performance which is 0.678. It is positively related to the magnitude of 67.8%. This means the family matters has positive relationship with employee performance. Which is supported by Judith and Villard (2006). The second variable "social support" with employee performance which is 0.675. It is also has positively significant relationship of the magnitude of 67.5%. Similarly work relationship, leadership style and time management also have significant relationship with employee performance. The points are respectively 0.645, 0.513 and 0.580.

Regression analysis

The researchers have used ANOVA for regression analysis for this study.

Table 3: Summary of R-square and *p*-value

Variables/ Dimension	Employee performance (R square)	Employee performance Significant (*p*-value)
Stress management	0.589	.000
Family matters	0.460	.000
Social support	0.456	.000
Work relationship	0.417	.000
Leadership style	0.263	.000
Time management	0.336	.000

From the above table, the researchers have found two value which is R-square and p-value to check whether the items have any effects and significant relation or not. The result shows that the R-square of stress management, family matters, social support, work relationship, leadership style and time management are 0.589, 0.460, 0.456, 0.417, 0.263, and 0.336. According to the hypothesis, stress management is the key indicator and other five are the items of stress management. At the same time, the researchers have found the p-value which is significant as the value is .000.

Table 4: Hypothesis testing

No.	Hypothesis	Remarks
H1	There is significant relationship between stress management and employee performance.	Accepted
H2	There is significant relationship between family matters and employee performance.	Accepted
H3	There is significant relationship between social support and employee performance	Accepted
H4	There is significant relationship between work relationship and employee performance.	Accepted
H5	There is significant relationship between leadership style and employee performance.	Accepted
H6	There is significant relationship between time management and employee performance.	Accepted

From the above Table, it shows that all six hypotheses are hypothetically accepted.

Conclusion
Among all occupation, teachers are one of the most unpleasant occupation and dealing with high level of stress. This is due to various tasks that need to be handling involving dealing with a wide variety of people, especially children that need their outmost attention and care. Therefore, throughout this study, the researcher able to identify that there are several factors that can help in managing stress if these can address properly as well as increasing teacher's performance. From all the five factors the highest factors of managing stress are work relationship followed by time management, leadership style, social support and family matters. From discussion above, it is identified that all of these factors have a high relationship with employee performance.
The contributions that has been made by conducting this research paper which practically helps the academic institution and the teachers themselves to improvise the methods or procedure to manage their stress in their workplace. Moreover, this study also helps them to deepen their

knowledge in how to manage the stress in workplace since stress is a continuous disease that can harm not only them but also towards the pupils that they teach theoretically.

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