

Determinants of work stress and job performance among administration employees in education sector in Malaysia: Examining the moderating role of social support

Sai Mei-Ling¹, Sobanah-Dhevi, Tharmalingam²
And Vikniswari Vija-Kumaran³

¹ Faculty of Business and Finance, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman
Kampar, Perak, Malaysia

² School of Business, Olympia College, Penang

³ Faculty of Business and Finance, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman
Kampar, Perak, Malaysia

Abstract

The present study aim to examine relationship between role ambiguity, job stress and the social support as moderator variable with job performance among administrative employees in education sector. Researcher targeted administrative employees from Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), 215 questionnaires were collected to analyze data. Results indicate that negative and significant relationship was found between role ambiguity and job performance. The study established negative relationship job stress on job performance exists. Besides, results indicated social support moderate between job stress, role ambiguity with job performance. The study is contributing to organizations that they may have to concentrate and consider on employees' well-being to improve while maintaining high job performance. Besides, understanding the potential work stress determinants influence job performance has important practical implications for management and administrative employees in the educational field.

Keywords: *Job Performance, Job Stress, Role Ambiguity, Social Support, Malaysia University.*

1. Introduction

Work stress among employees become a universal problem that facing by employees from various field. According to Jalagat (2017) stated that "Stress is said

to influence employees' performance and efficiency". Generally stress has turn into one of the familiar component in organization and these days work environment turn out to be more confusing and complicated, stress which convey more negative effects to the employees' compared with positive effects. The overall performance of employees been affected since employees impacted by stress within the organization (Shah & Hasnu, 2013). Besides, Naqvi, Kant and Khan (2013) stated about work stress as unsavoury emotional circumstances faced by an employee, this situation happened when the capacity of an employee's imbalance with the task assigned to an employee. The nature of a work has met changes through years, nowadays most of the organization focus on their profit compared with the well-being of employees in organization. Organizations priority caused employees have to work for long hours, under pressure and some other worse situation faced by employees to achieve the target and boost up company performance. The purpose of organizations is correct by their approach towards employees is wrong because a normal human being unable to perform their best when they impacted by the negative stress level. Besides, organization should aware that stress level of employees definitely will cause decrease in job and organizational performance. Thus, Present study was conducted to identify the factors associated with

work stress effects on job performance especially employees who are working under pressure as administration employees in Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). Besides, the study will explore deeply more about factors of work stress affects job performance, examine which factor has positive or negative impact on job performance. Furthermore, there will be a moderating factor social support to examine that social support is significantly moderate between factors of work stress with job performance. Thus, this study will add more valuable knowledge about factors of work stress and job performance among education field.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Job Performance

Job Performance is about perceivable practices that workers achieve in their employments that are significant to objectives of the organization (Arvey & Murphy, 1998; Campbell, 1990). Moreover, Laeeque (2014) showed that the job performance have the capacity to make the flexible workplace, organized trainings, enhances innovation aptitudes with respect to production to influence the representatives to feel more comfort and ought to expand the employees' quality and contribute towards job performance. In reality the job performance allude to the employees' participation and the degree could accomplish with them by taking care of the considerable number of issues that happen in the work environment. The rewards that the organisation gives to representatives either can be in money related shape like rewards, increase in compensation or non-budgetary compose like get-away advantages, acknowledgment of testament for the specific accomplishment of a worker in an organisation influence the worker to encounter high employment fulfillment and inspired to accomplish high job performance. Also, the Zaki Dajani (2015) expressed that the most well-known factor that influence the worker performance and make stress to them is overwhelming workload and duration, which need to finish their enormous undertaking in brief period influence workers to encounter work stress in the working environment.

2.2 Job Stress

Job stress is define as an individual input and is not the same as general stress as it is additionally an organisation and job related (Yozgat et al.,2013). Mensah & Tawiah, 2016 said that there many elements that can be settled as regular side effects of pressure and stress will influence physical and mental of a worker (Ratnawat and Jha, 2014). The activity stretch turns into a major issue in organisation and test for the business to deal with

which cause low profitability, performance, an expansion in non-appearance and gathering to another issue like hypertension, cardiovascular issues (Riggio, 2014). Gomez-Mejia, Balkin, and Cardy (2015) said that when a worker faces stress in the working environment, it influences the individual to stop from the organization or quit from the activity. A contextual analysis of which did at bank division express the principle or high propensity of getting stress is at the work environment since a lot of the time they spend at their bank (Jamshed, Muhammad, Ayaz, Muhammad & Amjad, 2011). Giancola (2011) the uncertain inclination or stressing for misfortune work is fundamentally unpleasant, so despite the fact that they are not happy with the present place of employment, but rather they will attempt to keep on that activity too on the grounds that without a vocation is more upsetting.

H1: Job stress negatively influence on job performance

2.3 Role Ambiguity

Role ambiguity can be defined as the unclear perception regarding their own task, responsibilities and duties by Urien, Osca & Salmones, 2016. Role conflict has connection with role ambiguity mention by Ramos, Ales, and Sierra, 2014. Besides that, role ambiguity also stated as to understand the role expectation and affect the performance by Yongkang, Weixi, Yalin, Yipeng, & Liu (2014). Moreover, an organization or any top level management person does not provide the accurate information or training for the salesperson by Amyx, Sharma, Alford, 2014. According to Smith (2011), he has supported this statement by explaining that the blur situation which appear in managers to carry forward with their task in the organization. Glissmeyer, Bishop and Fass (2008), stated that role is an expectation from organization towards employees behavior that hold positions in an organization and role ambiguity mentioned as a prediction towards a person behavior responses and clarification of a person's role or behavior requirement.

According to Bako(2014), defined that unclear statement or instruction will mostly lead to the lack of job satisfaction. This statement has been supported by Olaleye and Arogundade (2013), where this situation can make people involve themselves with role conflict. Onyemeh (2008) mentioned that job performance of employees affected by role ambiguity and role conflict. High role ambiguity will give less job satisfaction went the leader was not able to deliver the ethical and norm in their organization. (Harijanto, Nimran , Sudiro & Rahayu, 2013).

A meta-analytic study of 169 independent samples from 104 published and 33 unpublished empirical studies which involved 35,265 individual participants, Gilboa, Shirom, Fried and Cooper (2008) conducted a study that examines the negative relationship between role ambiguity and job performance. The results provide strong evidence that role ambiguity was negatively and significantly related to job performance. Similarly, June and Mahmood (2011) conducted a study to examine the negative relationship between role ambiguity and job performance among 1500 employees from the service sector in Malaysia. The results showed that role ambiguity was negatively and significantly related to job performance. Similarly a study conducted by Celik (2013) reported a significant and negative relationship of role ambiguity towards job performance and job satisfaction among 200 principals in high schools in the city of Denizli and Manisa.

H2: Role ambiguity negatively influence on job performance

2.4 Social Support

According to Kim, Kirkman and Chen (2008) mentioned social support as giving beneficial help to individual, make sure help to reduce psychological distress and increase the emotional well-being. This statement has been supported by Hsu.S.H, Huang.K.C, & Huang.K.S. (2015), mention that positive social relations surely lead to the balanced psychologically of an individual which will reduce their negative thinking.

Furthermore, Burke, Moodie, Dolan & Fiksenbaum (2012), reduce in social support and low in personal accomplishment will reduce the individual accomplishment or job performance. According to Vigoda-Gadot and Talmud (2010), workers whom have low level social support reported the lower level of job performance but workers whom have high level of social support reported the higher job performance. According to Hasan, Batool, & Fatima (2015), everyone whom holding job have impact on social support and job performance especially towards teachers. Moreover, superior support and co-workers support also mention as an important key player to minimize the job stress by Mayo, Sanchez, Pastor, & Rodriguez (2012). According to Olsson (2016), high work stress with less school management support teachers has reported the dissatisfaction. OECD (2014) mention that with good and support school management or leaders will lead to the excellent decision making for all the teachers.

Social support also has been the indicator to moderate the workplace bullying and job

performance internally creates organizational stress by Nahum-Shani & Bamberger, 2011. Besides that, this statement has been supported by a study from Carroll, & Lauzier (2014), where in their study they used total 249 Canadian workers from different organization which is from private and public sector as the sample for this study. The study has used the multiple regression analysis to evaluate and analyses the results. The results show that the relationship of workplace bullying and job performance has been moderated by social support. So, with the high level of commitment in social support impacted the higher level of job performance.

This study has mention, Social support have significant and positive relationship on job performance by Hsu.S.H, Huang.K.C, & Huang.K.S.(2015). Study has been conducted based on social support in Taiwan southwest regions in high school military instructor's shows positive and significant relationship with job performance. Result shows that an increase in social support impacts the increase in job performance. Social support such as spouse, parents or siblings has given the high level of support to the soldiers, which reduce their worries at their work place and increase their job performance.

H3: Social support positively influence the job performance

H4: Social support moderate the relationship between job stress and job performance

H5: Social support moderate the relationship between role ambiguity and job performance

3. Materials and Methods

This study used survey questionnaire as the way to collect data. Besides Zikmund et al., 2010 defined survey as the essential research method in collecting information from the target audience of population from questionnaires. 322 questionnaires were distributed to administrative employees in whole UUM which located in Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia to identify the affect job stress, role ambiguity, social support on job performance. At a 95% confidence level based on 5% error in margin, a population of 1961 requires 322 samples (Sekaran, 2006). Hence, the number of samples is able to explain the populations. The data collected were analyzed by using SPSS (version 20). SPSS is able to handle large amount of data and capable to perform all of the analysis covered in the text. A research model was developed and it shows the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variable and employed convenience sampling (i.e., a non-probability sampling technique).

4. Results and Discussion

The purpose of study is to examine the relationship among the job stress, role ambiguity, social support

and job performance, the existing study applies few methods. From the reliability test, the results showed that all the five independent variables tested by using the Cronbach's Alpha were reliable as they were all above the acceptable value between 0.7 to 0.8.

Reliability test

Table 1: Reliability Test Result for Each Variable

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Job Performance	4	0.80
Job Stress	5	0.84
Role Ambiguity	6	0.83
Social Support	4	0.78

Notes: Results from reliability analysis through SPSS and sample with 322 respondents' observation

As shown in Table 2 all the 4 variables were analyzed in term of mean, standard deviation and correlations. For the 5-likert point scales (job performance, job stress, role ambiguity and social support the standard deviation ranged from .54 to .73 (Table 2). From correlations analysis, between job stress and role ambiguity were negative significant correlation with job performance ($r = -.22$ and $-.56$ $p < .01$). However, the results also demonstrate that role ambiguity was positively significant and association job stress ($r = .29$, $p < .01$). As shown (Table 2) role ambiguity was negatively correlated with social support ($r = -.56$, $p < .01$). Besides, social support positively related to job performance ($r = .59$ $p < .01$).

Table 2 Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlations Analysis

Variables	Mea		1	2	3	4
	n	SD				
1 Job Performance	3.6	0.6				
2 Job Stress	3.15	0.7	-			
3 Role Ambiguity	3.57	0.5	.22**	.29*		
4 Social Support	3.56	0.6	.56**	-.4	-	1
		3			.56**	

Notes: Results from multiple regression through SPSS

Firstly, H1 stated as job stress is negatively related to job performance. As shown in table 3 the results indicated that a negatively related to and not a significant relationship between job stress and job performance ($\beta = -.04$; $t = -.71$; $p > .10$). Hence, hypothesis 1 not supported. Results shows that job stress was not significantly contribute to job performance. Their workplace is comfortable for workers since administration gave adequate facilities to their workers. In addition, the organisation and the top administration treat every worker reasonably or similarly so this circumstance drives the workers

does not influence by the job stress at working environment (Laeque, 2014).

Secondly, H2 suggested that role ambiguity is negatively related to job performance. As shown in Table 3, a negative and significant relationship was found between role ambiguity and job performance ($\beta = -.24$; $t = -3.18$; $p < .01$). This finding support the past studies, whereas shows negative connections between role ambiguity and job performance (Urien, Osca & Salmones, 2016; Yongkang, Weixi, Yalin, Yipeng, & Liu, 2014). Essentially, Bako(2014) likewise contended that role stress (i.e. role ambiguity and role conflict) are significant variables at work put with impact the estimation of workers performance, when the role ambiguity high the job performance will diminish. In this manner, the results shows that the entire outcomes support that role ambiguity may lead to unclear instruction to workers that affect their overall job performance.

H3 proposed that social support positively related to job performance. An examination of the results in Table 3 indicated that social support is positively and significantly related to job performance ($\beta = .31$; $t = 5.06$; $p < .01$). H4 suggested that social support moderates the relationship between job stress and job performance. As expected, results indicated in Table 3 that social support moderate between job stress and job performance showed a significant relationship ($\beta = .20$; $t = 3.01$; $p < .01$). H5 stated that social support moderates the relationship between role ambiguity and job performance. As shown in Table 3, social support does moderate the relationship between role ambiguity and job performance, the results shows that significant ($\beta = .13$; $t = 2.11$; $p < .05$). Past studies shows that social help as an autonomous variable that influence the job performance (Hasan, Batool, & Fatima, 2015; Carroll, & Lauzier, 2014) and decidedly related with job performance. The R-square value is indicated as 0.475 which mean the predictors are able to explain 47.5% of the variation in job performance.

Table 3 Result of the Multiple Regression Analysis

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-statistic	p-value
Constant	3.746	0.03	32.4	0
Job Stress	-0.04	0.05	-0.71	0.48
Role Ambiguity	-0.24	0.07	-3.18	0
Social Support	0.31	0.06	5.06	0
Job stress x Social Support	0.2	0.1	3.01	0
Role ambiguity x Social Support	0.13	0.12	2.11	0.04
R Square		.475		

Notes: Results from multiple regression through SPSS and sample with 322 respondents' observation.

5. Conclusions

This study examines the relationship between job stress, role ambiguity, social support and job performance among UUM administration employees. Results shows that job stress was not significantly contribute to job performance. Their workplace is comfortable for workers since administration gave adequate facilities to their workers. In addition, the organisation and the top administration treat every worker reasonably or similarly so this circumstance drives the workers does not influence by the job stress at working environment. Present study recognized several limitation, first of all, the sample size from UUM administrative employees (n = 215), the sample size for present study is small so the findings not generalized. For future recommendation researcher should choose bigger size sample and collect data from various University in Malaysia to make the results more valid. Future research also should try other variables which influence the job performance. Although, the present study included social support as moderator variable there is still a gap that mediator variable not included, researcher should utilize the gap and try mediator variable to find out new findings in present study.

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