

Factors Affecting the Job Stress of Female Secondary School Teachers in Johor Bahru

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of stress is a common problem in human life that is increasingly busy in carrying out daily tasks. The increasing rate of work stress poses tremendous challenges to well-being in the work environment around the world. The study aimed to identify the factors that influence pressure of female secondary school teachers in Johor Bahru. There are six objectives involved; to determine the teachers' job stress level, the relationship between workload and teachers' job stress, the relationship between students' misconduct and teachers' job stress, the relationship between time and resource constraints with teachers' job stress, the relationship between interpersonal relationship with teachers' job stress, and to determine the main factors of teachers' job stress. Respondents consisted of 149 female teachers of five secondary school teachers in Johor Bahru. Descriptive analysis, correlation, and regression analysis were carried out using IBM SPSS. The findings found that the level of job stress of female secondary school teachers in Johor Bahru is at a moderate level. The results of the study also showed that workload, time and resource constraints, and interpersonal relationship are significantly related to job stress. However, the factor of students' misconduct has found not greatly influenced job stress among female secondary school teachers in Johor Bahru. Findings of this study provide insight to the top management of school to provide a better psychosocial work environment so that teachers' work stress can be reduced.

Keywords: Job Stress, Female Secondary School Teachers, Workload, Students' Misconduct, Resource Constraints, Interpersonal Relationship

1. INTRODUCTION

Stress is a global issue that has been identified as a disease since the 20th century [1]. Increasing rates of work stress cause significant challenges to well-being in work environments around the world [2]. According to [3], excessive stress can negatively impact human psychology, physiology, and behavior. According to a report in 2017, it was found that work stress accounted for 61 percent in the United States where adults experience high levels of stress and this stress increased by 75 percent from the previous year [4].

In Malaysia, the 2015 National Health and Morbidity Survey results showed that 29.2 percent of Malaysians experience stress [5]. This statement was also supported by Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye where he said that based on the National Health and Morbidity Survey in 2017, 29 percent of Malaysians suffered from depression compared to 12 per cent in 2011 [6]. The President of the Congress of the Union of Employees in the Public and Civil Services of Malaysia (CUEPACS) said that a total of 1.67 civil servants had been under pressure and this

had not diminished from the past few years. According to him too, work stress is one of the main factors that cause civil servants to continue to experience anxiety. Based on the report from the Employee Well-Being Index until 2019, it was found that this trend has not decreased and all levels, whether lower or upper, are affected, including in teaching institutions in Malaysia [7].

The teaching profession is an area that often faces a lot of stress [8]. This issue is increasingly becoming the attention of researchers in and outside the country as well as gaining the attention of the public from within and outside educational organizations [9]. Furthermore, the worldwide outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has called for a new norm where teachers are required to do homework (work from home) so that teachers' work routines and culture also change throughout the Movement Control Order (MCO) [10]. The global crisis due to the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic has not only resulted in conventionally delayed learning and learning, although attracting increasingly challenging tasks teachers need to adapt to new life norms and habits that

require the Teaching and Learning at Home (PdPR) process to be implemented online [11].

In Malaysia, studies on teacher work stress are increasingly studied and discussed among scholars [9], [12]. In fact, the findings of past studies prove that one of the most stressful occupations is teaching profession [13]. As mentioned by [14], the teaching profession is one of the most stressful careers and the issues and experiences of facing stress in the field of teaching are not underestimated. Numerous prior studies related to work stress problems highlighted there are many factors that cause stress in education setting [15]. Studies on teacher work stress have been extensively investigated by previous researchers related to the characteristics of strain such as workload, student frustration, time and resource constraints, and interpersonal relationships [16], [17], [18].

Excessive workload is one of the factors that cause teachers to become increasingly stressed [19]. The current scenario shows that the teaching profession is faced with various tasks and responsibilities that need to be implemented such as preparing lesson plans, implementing teaching and learning activities, providing teaching aids, performing organizational clerical duties, and also performing daily tasks such as attending workshops and meeting [20]. This is because teachers nowadays are demanded with a heavy burden both in academic and non-academic aspects such as demands from management, students, parents, families and even outsiders [21]. The burden on teachers is also increasing because as long as teachers work from home, teachers' work routines teach and teachers need to improve information and communication technology knowledge and skills when the country is hit by the Covid-19 pandemic [22].

The second factor is the problem of student attitudes. The teaching profession is very challenging because in addition to teaching, they also have to deal with various student frustrations, including student discipline problems that cause pressure on teachers [23]. The main task of teachers in the process of teaching and learning in the classroom is disrupted due to student discipline so as to disrupt their focus while education, and a lot of time is spent on student discipline matters [24]. The increased teacher stress during the Covid-19 pandemic also made it difficult for teachers to monitor student discipline and focus online due to not being face to face with students as well as the presence of worrying online classes [25].

The third factor is time and resource constraints. Constraints of time and relatively limited resources while performing tasks are also a cause of teachers experiencing work stress [14]. In addition, limited resources in schools also cause stress to teachers such as narrow and uncomfortable teacher rooms, followed by lack of teaching aids, and places to do student activities [26]. Teachers also feel stressed because since Working

from Home (WFH) it is found that teachers need to follow various instructions and assignments to the maximum regardless of the time to complete assignments within the set time and the rest of the teachers have to perform clerical duties [27]. Indirectly, this many and prolonged tasks also cause teachers to feel tired and increasingly stressed [21].

In addition, the fourth factor that causes teachers to experience stress is due to poor interpersonal relationships. Poor relationships between co-workers can affect a person's feelings and drive the quality of the organization to deteriorate [28]. Teacher challenges also increase when teachers confront parents [22]. Interpersonal relationship conflicts that occur in schools are likely due to differences in academic achievement between fellow teachers [14]. This is evidenced where as many as 56 percent of the respondents agreed that some other teachers have an unpleasant attitude that puts work pressure [29].

This issue needs to be addressed well by all parties as the work pressure that is at a high level can have adverse effects in the world of education. For example, teachers were found to be more likely to leave their profession when faced with high work pressure [9]. When faced with high stress, feelings of frustration, anger, restlessness, dissatisfaction, and lack of interest in work are among the effects of high stress [21]. Thus, the problems faced by teachers about work stress need to be taken seriously due to the adverse effects mentioned. Based on that discussion, this study aimed to investigate the factors that influence job stress among female secondary school teachers. Specifically, the research objectives involve in identifying the teachers' job stress level, the relationship between workload and teachers' job stress, the relationship between students' misconduct and teachers' job stress, the relationship between time and resource constraints with teachers' job stress, the relationship between interpersonal relationship with teachers' job stress, and determining the most dominant factors influencing the job stress.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Stress is an unstable physical and emotional response that occurs when needs do not match employees' resources, needs, and abilities. It is an issue that needs to be given serious attention among teachers because a career as a teacher now makes a person more vulnerable to experience work stress, which has a significant impact on their professional and personal life [30]. There are several factors that drive a person to experience work stress such as workload, student frustration, time and resource constraints, and interpersonal relationships [16], [17], [18].

Workload can be defined as a responsibility performed by teachers regardless of whether it covers aspects of teaching in the classroom or tasks outside the

school and is measured by the total amount of time allocated to complete a study [12]. Before the advent of Covid-19, 90 percent of teaching and learning was done face to face (face to face), but after this epidemic hit the world, it changed to online learning (full online) which gave many changes in education [31]. This makes the workload of teachers increasingly increasing and this is the cause of the loss of quality and energy of teachers to prepare and implement the learning process [32]. Excessive workload factors cause a sense of fatigue in teachers and can lead to stress [33].

The problem of student discipline and behavior is a strange problem and is teachers' responsibility, especially today [34]. The role of teachers who need to provide teaching and learning and shape the attitude and personality of students and facing their frustrations is the cause of increased levels of stress or work pressure of teachers [23]. This is because the teaching and learning process can be disrupted as a result of uncontrollable student behaviors such as skipping school and fights [14].

Time constraint factors adversely impact individuals and teachers' time use and behavior, especially for teachers who have families and need to divide time between their families and careers [14]. Teachers are not only burdened with routine tasks such as teaching but also have to manage administrative and clerical tasks such as preparation of meeting minutes and also involvement with co-curricular activities of students to cause teachers to experience time constraints and rush to complete all tasks given in set time [35].

A study from Hasliza Hashim et al [36] found that infrastructure constraints and time constraints in the

implementation of Frog Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) in schools in Malaysia are challenges that teachers need to face. Inadequate infrastructure is the main problem that causes many students not to participate in the learning process in school. Sometimes, the existing infrastructure is damaged and cannot be replaced. There are also studies that prove that resource constraint factors such as equipment are a significant cause of teacher stress [26].

Apart from that, other factors that can influence teachers' work stress are interpersonal relationships or relationships among teachers whether teachers with principals, fellow teachers or teachers' relationships with administrative officers including parents [14]. Interpersonal relationships are relationships that exist between employers and employees as well as less encouraging relationships among co-workers [28].

2.1 Research Framework

Based on the highlights of previous studies, the researchers have constructed a research framework involving two variables; namely independent and dependent variables. Underpinned by the Job Stress Model which was developed by Boyle, G. J. et al [37], the independent variables of this study consist of workload, student behaviours, time and resource constraints, and interpersonal relationship, whereas the dependent variable is job stress. Based on the model, female teachers who experience stress in the workplace can be due to the factors namely workload, student misconduct, appreciation, interpersonal relationships and lack of time and resources [37].

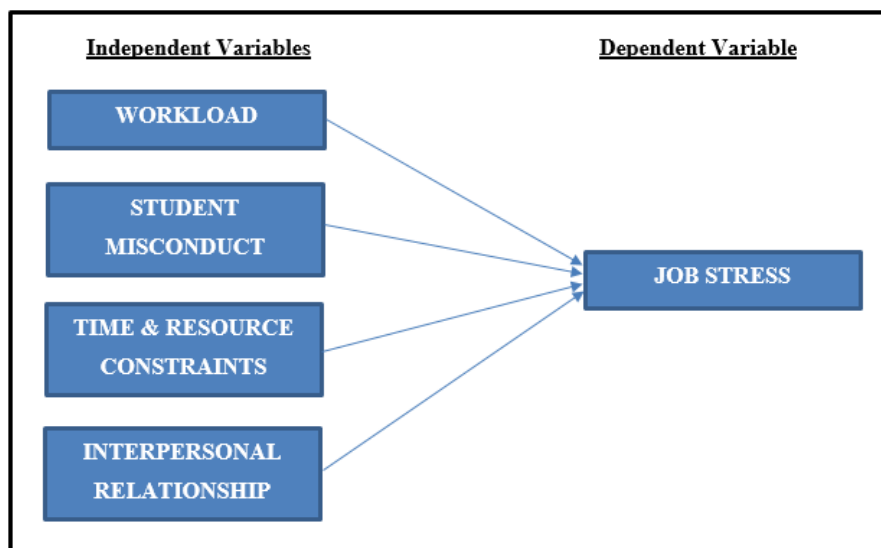


Figure 1 Research Framework

As illustrated in Figure 1, the framework of this study proposed that the independent variables (workload, student behaviours, time and resource constraints, and interpersonal relationship) have relationship with job

stress among female secondary school teachers in Johor Bahru.

3. METHODS

Data collection tools in this study involved a quantitative research method, including using Likert-scale close-ended questionnaire (with total of 36 questions). The questionnaires were distributed online to the population of 554 teachers from five secondary school teachers in Johor Bahru. Since the researchers used convenience sampling method in determining the respondents involved in this study, the data collection achieved responses from 149 female teachers as the focus of this research (job stress among female teachers). In ensuring the data collection is done ethically, a permission letter was sent to Johor State Education Department and the District Education Office of Johor Bahru to get permission in distributing the questionnaires to the secondary school involved. IBM SPSS version 26.0 was used to analyze the data gained from the respondents.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Respondents' responses were analyzed using SPSS 26.0 to obtain answers for each objective of the study. Three (3) types of data analyses were carried out in answering the research objectives, including descriptive analysis, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics

Overall, majority of the female teachers are at the age between 36 to 40 years old (41.6%), with married status (86.6%), and possess a Bachelor's Degree qualification (87.2%). Besides, most of them have teaching experience between 11 to 15 years (32.9%).

4.2 Level of Job Stress

The findings reported on Table 1 revealed that the level of job stress among the female teachers is at a moderate level ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 0.627$).

Table 1. Level of Job Stress

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation (SD)	Level
C1. I found that I am easily offended	2.99	1.000	
C2. I feel worried	2.99	1.078	
C3. I find it hard to accept guidance from others	1.84	0.814	
C4. I am easily anxious when I get emergency news	3.23	1.085	
C5. I get angry quickly when I don't get what I want	2.60	0.985	
C6. I give a negative response when a co-worker asks something from me	1.77	0.894	
C7. I drive fast especially after work	2.03	1.124	
C8. I make mistakes in my daily work	2.39	0.786	
C9. I complete a lot of work in one time without a break	2.90	1.076	
C10. I don't like to be disturbed while doing work	3.41	1.033	
Overall Job Stress	2.62	0.627	Moderate

4.3 The Relationship between Determinant Factors and the Job Stress

The result shown on Table 2 indicated that there is a positive and significant relationship between workload ($r = 0.323$, $p < 0.05$), time and resource constraints ($r =$

0.250 , $p < 0.05$), and interpersonal relationship ($r = 0.247$, $p < 0.05$) and the teachers' job stress. However, there is no significant relationship between students' misconduct ($r = 0.082$, $p > 0.05$) and job stress among the female teachers.

Table 2. Correlation between Factors of Stress and Job Stress

Variables	Job Stress Level	
	r value	Sig. value
Workload	0.323**	0.000
Students' Misconduct	0.082	0.322
Time and Resource Constraints	0.250**	0.002
Interpersonal Relationship	0.247**	0.002

4.4 The Most Dominant Factor Influencing Job Stress

As shown on Table 3, the results revealed workload as the most dominant factor that positively influence job stress among the female secondary school teachers ($B = .319$).

Table 3. Results of Multiple Regression Analysis on Job Stress

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.491	0.274		5.435	0.000
	Workload	0.285	0.093	0.319	3.051	0.003
	Students' Misconduct	-0.177	0.082	-0.228	-2.160	0.032
	Time & Resource Constraints	0.100	0.097	0.108	1.031	0.304
	Interpersonal Relationship	0.143	0.081	0.184	1.756	0.081

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 The Level of Job Stress

This study was conducted with the intention to examine the factors that influence job stress among female secondary school teachers in Johor Bahru. Overall, the level of job focus among the female teachers is at a moderate level. This finding is consistent with previous studies conducted by Tajulashikin Jumahat et al [38] and Amalina, R., and Azita, A [26]. In line with the survey by Kumawat, K. [39], this study found that the level of teacher work stress that have similar findings with the findings of researchers such as Kumawat, K. [39] study which showed that the level of teacher stress during pandemic is at moderate level. Therefore, this study shows that teachers in Malaysia are still experiencing work stress. This is also supported by several studies that found female teachers are more at risk of experiencing high levels of work stress than male teachers [20], especially for married teachers because they have to deal with two significant commitments, namely family work [14]. The involvement of women who hold various important positions primarily in the academic sector and the dual role as mothers and working women demand a high commitment to ensure a balance between work and family that causes stress to them [40].

5.2 The Relationship between Workload and the Job Stress

In regards to the relationship between the determinants and the job stress, the findings indicated that the job stress among the female teachers is influenced by the factors of workload, time and resource constraints, and interpersonal relationship. On the contrary, there was no relationship found between students' misconduct and the teachers' job stress. The association between workload and the job stress explains that teachers feel very stressed because of the workload that is constantly increasing from time to time so as to disrupt the teacher's focus on the main task of teaching. This is also supported by Noraini Mohamad [41]'s study where teachers have to perform tasks outside their field of work so that the framework or duties of teachers are increasing. This causes a loss of quality and energy of teachers to prepare and carry out the teaching and

learning process in schools [32]. In addition, the increment of workload among teachers during Covid-19 pandemic crisis that hit the country also underwent many changes so that teachers have to learn various new things in the new norms. This is also supported by Touré, M. [42]. In his study, a large number of teachers feel stressed because they are too burdened with many online tasks to replace the previous face-to-face classes where teachers have to change existing lesson plans and activities. and need to rewrite their entire curriculum.

5.3 The Relationship between Time and Resource Constraints and the Job Stress

Besides, findings on the association between time and resource constraints and the job stress indicates that teachers feel very stressed with the time constraints they face while performing tasks. This is also supported by other studies because the factors contributing to teacher stress are time constraints [43], [44]. Furthermore, during the pandemic, teachers feel more stressed because since WFH implementation, teachers have to follow various instructions and tasks to the maximum regardless of the time to complete tasks within the stipulated time and the rest of the teachers have to perform clerical tasks [27]. This also puts pressure on teachers because of the problem of time constraints where teachers have to spend a lot of time to prepare to teach online as well as most teachers do not have much experience of teaching online. The increasing workload of teachers can cause conflict for teachers in terms of the division of time between career and family.

5.4 The Relationship between Interpersonal Relationship and the Job Stress

In addition, the association between interpersonal relationships and the female teachers' job stress explains that poor interpersonal relationships lead to increased job stress among teachers. Unclear communication relationships can lead to unhealthy communication as well as hinder the development of attitudes and thoughts towards each other [45]. Forming positive interpersonal relationships is essential for building teachers' emotional well-being on the job as well as reducing teacher stress [46]. According to a study conducted by Khalip Musa, and Hariza Abd Halim. [47], they also suggested that

teachers strive to improve the application of interpersonal skills as it is able to improve the effectiveness of learning and teaching. Efforts to improve interpersonal skills are among the options that must be seriously considered in order to reduce work stress [47]. Furthermore, strengthening good relations between teachers and parents of students can benefit both parties and lead to school success [38].

5.5 The Most Dominant Factors Influencing the Job Stress

Finally, the findings of this study revealed that workload is the most dominant factor influencing job stress among the female secondary school teachers. The findings of this study are in line with the findings of studies from Caruana, S., and Borg, M. [48] and Amalina, R., and Azita, A. [26] where the main factor causing stress among teachers is workload. Based on the findings of this study, the majority of female teachers who teach in five secondary schools in Johor Bahru feel stressed by the workload borne by them because there are many tasks that need to be performed in addition to their primary task of teaching. The mean score for the workload factor in this study found that teachers agreed that they were stressed because they had to do administrative work that was not in their field of work as well as teaching classes that had too many students. Teachers not only carry out essential tasks, but teachers are also involved in other matters such as co-curricular management, student affairs, clerical and administration, and other additional tasks that must be done in line with current needs. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic that hit the country starting 2019 also caused teachers to face pressure because the conventional education system had previously been transformed into an online learning system. The workload of teachers is increasing as they have to adapt to the new norms where all matters including PdPR have to be done online. According to Norehan Nasir, and Mahaliza Mansor. [22], this is seen to increase the burden of teachers because as long as teachers work from home, teachers work routine not only teach but teachers need to improve knowledge and skills of information and communication technology when the country is hit by Covid-19 pandemic. This is seen to have affected teachers' routine and work culture throughout the period of MCO [10].

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study indicated that the level of job stress among female teachers in Malaysia is only at moderate level. This finding indicated that the female teachers can still manage their focus to perform their duties at school. The most dominant factor that affect job stress among female teachers is related to their workload. Hence, top management of the school and the Ministry of

Education should look at the teachers' workload. There is a need to redesign the teachers psychosocial work environment in order to enhance teachers' well-being including reduce job stress level.

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