Factors Influencing Organisational Stress Among Educators in Higher Education in Brunei Darussalam

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Abstract

This study aims to understand the factors influencing organisational stress among teachers in higher education in Brunei Darussalam. The targeted population of this study were teachers of higher education in Brunei. The problem being addressed in this study is that organisational stress has increased and according to past research, organisational stress can be caused by the work environment, family-work interaction and professional and competence development. This research was a quantitative study and data were collected from a sample of 198 respondents, among teachers in higher education in Brunei, whereby the data were analyzed by the use of SPSS. The findings revealed that work-environment, family-work interaction and professional and competence development has a significant relationship with organisational stress. The findings in this study were also supported by the results of prior research.

Keywords: *Organisational Stress, Work Environment, Family-work Interaction, Professional and Competence Development.*

Introduction

Organisational stress has been very common for teachers in today's era. With an increased in roles and responsibilities, it can be said that teaching can cause stress to teachers. This is supported by Barabanshchikova, Meshkova & Surova (2014) as they stated that many factors can contribute to organisational stress among teachers which makes the teaching profession as one as the most stressful social activities among other jobs. Organisational stress has an impact on the student and to the contribution that such institutions can make to society.

Stress can affect the performance of the organization by reducing productivity and efficiency, which can affect the organization negatively (El Shikieri & Musa, 2012). According to Kakada & Deshpande (2018), in reference to Rose (2003), longer working hours, lack of organisational support, pressure from supervisors and colleagues as well as changing the organisational structure can reduce the performance of the employees and can contribute to a high level of organisational stress.

There is no past research that has studied organisational stress in Brunei Darussalam. The relationship between work environment, family work interaction and professional and competence development are still indistinct. Thus, this study will study the relationship between each of the

factors to organisational stress among teachers in higher education in Brunei. The general objective of this study was to identify the effect of the work environment, family work interaction and professional and competence development on organisational stress among teachers in higher education in Brunei. The objectives of the study include examining the relationship between work environment and organisational stress, examining the relationship between family work interaction and organisational stress, examining the relationship between professional and competence development and organisational stress.

Literature Review

The purpose of this research was to examine the factors that affect organisational stress among teachers in higher education in Brunei. In this chapter, past relevant literature related to the topic will be illustrated corresponding to the topic presented. In addition to that, three independent variables will be illustrated which are (1) Work Environment, (2) Work-Family Environment and (3) Professional and Competence Development will be discussed along with the research framework of this research.

Organisational Stress

Organisational stress occurs when an employee does not have the capabilities to fulfil environmental demand (Ongori & Agolla, 2008). According to Areekkuzhiyil (2014) in reference to Cooper & Marshal (1976), organisational stress includes the "environment factors such as work overload, role ambiguity, role conflict and poor working conditions associated with a particular job." Organisational stress is the outcome of when an employee could not keep up with his or her work, and when work demand and pressures do not match with their knowledge and abilities. It may be because of the little support they get from their supervisors or colleagues. Kyriacou (2009) highlights that stress is contributed by the experience of negative emotional states, such as, frustration, worry and anxiety, which will lead to depression in work-related.
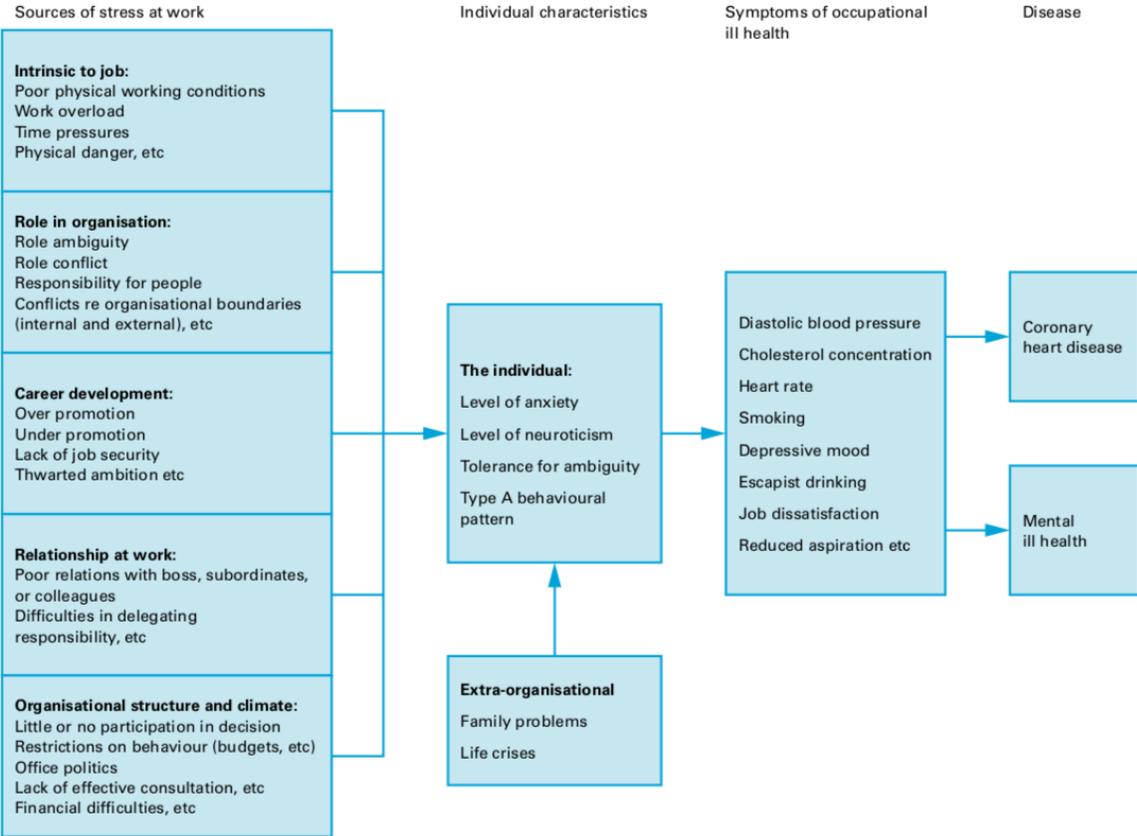
According to Dhar & Magotra (2018), daily workload, isolation, longer working hours, negative working environment and poor relationship between the co-workers and management can contribute to organisational stress. (Wen Xin et al., 2019). This statement is supported by the study of Chrito & Pienaar (2006) that work environment and organisational support can contribute to organisational stress. Moreover, Gulzar, Qamar, Arshad & Haider (2019) stated that many factors can contribute to teachers' stress, and it can be separated into individual and organisational stressors. According to Hastings & Bham (2003), there are physical stressor and managerial pressures. Physical stressor includes noise at the workplace, swarming, the large size of class and youth brutality. The consequences of organisational stress are conflict among the employees, changing jobs, burnout, decrease in work performance and less effective interpersonal relations at work.

Work Environment

The work environment can be defined as the location where the task is completed. Work environment comprises the physical geographical location as well as the immediate surroundings of the workplace. It usually involves other factors relating to the place of employment, such as the quality of the air, noise level, and additional perks and benefits of employment. (Dr. Aram Hanna Massoudi, 2017)

According to Oludeyi (2015), in reference to Briner (2000), work environment encircling the physical setting such as heat, equipment and the characteristics of the job itself (example: workload and task complexity), broader organisational features (example: culture, history) and even aspects of the extra organisational setting (example: local labour market conditions, industry sector, work-home relationship). Work environment encompasses the technical, human and the organisational environment in which the employees, employers and the environment are connected.

Figure 1: A Model of Stress of Work (Baker, 1985)

Sources of stress at work | Individual characteristics | Symptoms of occupational ill health | Disease

Intrinsic to job:
Poor physical working conditions
Work overload
Time pressures
Physical danger, etc

Role in organisation:
Role ambiguity
Role conflict
Responsibility for people
Conflicts re organisational boundaries (internal and external), etc

Career development:
Over promotion
Under promotion
Lack of job security
Thwarted ambition etc

Relationship at work:
Poor relations with boss, subordinates, or colleagues
Difficulties in delegating responsibility, etc

Organisational structure and climate:
Little or no participation in decision
Restrictions on behaviour (budgets, etc)
Office politics
Lack of effective consultation, etc
Financial difficulties, etc

The individual:
Level of anxiety
Level of neuroticism
Tolerance for ambiguity
Type A behavioural pattern

Extra-organisational
Family problems
Life crises

Diastolic blood pressure
Cholesterol concentration
Heart rate
Smoking
Depressive mood
Escapist drinking
Job dissatisfaction
Reduced aspiration etc

Coronary heart disease

Mental ill health

Family Work Interaction

In today's working environment, the demands on the employees sometimes reach out into their homes and social life. The employees have to live up to the expectations of the company or organization. Long working hours, working from home, taking work home, high levels of responsibilities, job insecurity, and job relocation can affect family responsibilities and leisure activities. Employees have to bear the family responsibilities, financial worries and family problems to work, which makes them lose focus while doing their work; hence, the delayed in work submission and later caused stress. (Michie, 2002).

According to Enrique, J., Howk, H., & Huitt, W. (2007) in reference to Kozlowska & Hanney (2002) "A family system is a basic unit of society that has evolved along with changes in the needs and demands of the individuals and society." (Enrique et al., 2007). Family work interaction refers to experiences in the family (work) domain that impact experiences in the work (family) domain. Family-work interaction can have both positive and negative aspects of the family and work. Family-

work interaction can negatively affect the individual or employees if the employees do not know how to manage his or her time wisely. This perspective is based on the scarcity hypothesis, which argues that individuals have limited resources such as time and energy and by devoting resources to one role, they are depriving either tangible or intangible resources of the other role (Goode, 1960).

According to Eby, Lillian T., Maher, Charleen P., Butts & Marcus M. (2010), in reference of Greenhaus & Beutell (1985), there are three distinct types of family-work conflict; (1) Time-based work-family conflict which happens when the time spent in one role reduces the time available in the other role (2) Strain-based work-family conflict refers to "role-generated strain system such as anxiety, fatigue and irritability that are produced as the outcome of participation of one role and hinder the performance in the other role and (3) Behaviour-based which occurs when behaviours needed for both domains are not incompatible with one another. In contrast to the negative aspects of family-work interaction, Greenhaus & Powell (2006) explained the positive aspects whereby the experiences in the family (work) role have the potential to enhance and improve the experience in the work (family) life. The positive synergy among work and family roles provides a more balanced perspective on work-family interaction.

In the globalization era, the sphere of work and family roles has changed. Women now have joined the workforce to support the family. According to Neal and Hammer (2007), many families now have to become dual-earner couples. Furthermore, the nature of parenting nowadays is also changing where the parents now look after their children (Bianchi et.al, 2006). This generation is called the "sandwiched generation." Consequently, with the increased in competition, the work world has also changed. Individuals must become more efficient, and this can lead to pressure and later, stress.

According to Rabenu, Edna, Tziner, Aharon, Sharoni & Gil (2015), in reference to Waismel-Manor (2008), the demands of work has intensified with the advance of technology whereby the employees now can stay at work regardless of time or place by just using the PC and cellular. Managers always wanted the best for the business and workers. Productivity is very crucial for managers to achieve maximum job performance, and they are expected to work beyond the requirement of their work. On the other hand, the demand for the roles as parents are also increasing. Dual earners couples which have no interactions and understanding with one another can cause conflict. The stress of the employees is now doubled as the demands of one make it difficult to fulfil the demands of the other (Rabenu et al., 2015). Researchers also found that stressors at the workplace as the source of work-family conflict as the employees have little control over their work-life (Higgins & Duxbury, 1992).

Professional and Competence Development

Professional competence is the extensive professional knowledge, attitude, and skills required to work in a specialized area or profession. Disciplinary knowledge and the application of concepts, processes and skills are necessary for a test of professional competence in any particular field. Nowadays and employer needs not just a qualification which depends on specific knowledge, but competence which combines teamwork ability, proactivity, creativity, ability to use the knowledge of other fields. (Leontyev et al., 2016)

Without professional and competence development in a constantly changing environment, one cannot endure in the higher education sector. Teachers working in the higher education sector always seek opportunities for professional growth and competence development. Furthermore, with the training given to the teachers in higher education, it can help the teachers to design and shape high-

quality learning experiences for the future of the students (Merkt, 2017). It is proven that academic teaching skills need an extended period to develop, so with the continuous education and training of academic teaching skills enable the teachers to perform well and improve the teaching styles and this also indirectly help them to achieve well. Moreover, education now is dynamic, so higher educators or teachers must always be prepared and trained in the latest techniques to keep up the pace of globalization and standards with the demanded responsibilities. Although it is a win-win situation, the students can perform well and the teachers can use their skills from the training to improve productivity and efficiency, all these demanded and loaded responsibilities and training, it can be a hassle and burden for the teachers as it took up their free time and this can lead to organisational stress.

Stress

According to Singh (2016), stress can be defined as excessive demand for roles beyond the capabilities of the mind and body of an individual. An excessive amount of stress can cause an individual to experience serious physical problems, such as heart disease, disorders of the digestive system, increase in blood pressure and headache. Individual who are under stress find it difficult to maintain a healthy balance between work and normal daily lifestyle. According to Dwamena (2012), in reference to Robbins (2004), which define stress as a "dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint or demand related to what he desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important."

Stress can either contribute to the positive or negative value, depending on how an individual reacts to it. American Psychological Association (2019) stated that there are different types of stress; acute stress, episodic severe stress, and chronic stress. The causes of stress are unpredictable and uncontrollable. It is the psychological and physical state that results when the resources of the individual are not sufficient to cope with the demands and pressures of the situation. According to Ruzungunde et al., (2016), in reference to Robbins and Sanghi (2006), stress occurs when an individual has certain expectations which they view it as a good opportunity for them, but they are also unsure whether they can achieve it or not. Stress can reduce the performance of the employees, lowers the quality of their work and can cause absenteeism.

Figure 2: Research Framework
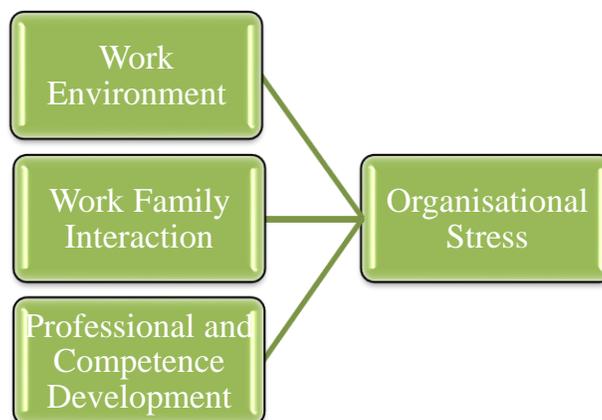
Methodology

This research study used primary data based on theoretical framework and literature reviews and was based on positivism philosophy. Primary data is acquired when the researcher is taking part in the data collection, or it is done through his command. Quantitative research is utilized to evaluate the problem by method for creating numerical information or information that can be changed into useful statistics. It is used to quantify attitudes, opinions, behaviours and other defined variables – and generalize results from a larger sample population. Moreover, quantitative research is more structured compared to qualitative research. (DeFranzo, 2011). The data for this study was collected through questionnaires which were managed electronically using the internet as it is more convenient, cost-efficient, no pressure, greater anonymity, and it can cover from a large audience. (Debois, 2016).

The survey enables the researcher to gather a vast amount of data from a sizeable target population. The data can be analysed using descriptive and inferential tools (Datt, 2016). The questionnaires will be written in English as English is the medium of instructions used in every school in Brunei. The main focus of the questionnaires will be on teachers in secondary schools without any limitation on the genders. The questionnaires will have five main sections. The questions in Section A, B, C and D are based on the factors affecting organisational stress meanwhile for Section E, the questions are based on the respondents' demographics such as age, gender and education level.

The targeted group for this research were teachers in higher education in Brunei. Sampling will be on the overall population of primary and secondary teachers in Brunei. The main respondents for this study were teachers in higher education in Brunei, and the questions are based on how work environment, family-work interaction and competence and professional development influenced organisational stress. In this study, non-probability sampling will be used. Random sampling will be involved as there is no limitation on genders, as long as they are working in higher education in Brunei. The table below shows the research instrument for each of the variables. The questionnaire consists of 20 questions and five sections. Section E is a set of questions only for demographic details of the respondents. The questionnaires are based on a 5-Likert scale, and the questions are mostly designed with the interval scale of q.

Table 1: Research Instrument

Section	Variables	Item	Scale	Source
A	Organisational stress (DV)	5	5 Point	Sabherwal, Naina; Ahuja, Deeya; George, Mohit; Handa, Arjun (2015)
B	Work Environment (IV)	5	5 Point	Oteer, Rabee (2015)
C	Family-Work Interaction (IV)	5	5 Point	Erdamar, Gürcü; Demirel, Hüsne (2014)
D	Professional and Competence Development	5	5 Point	Akram, Dr. Muhammad; Malik, Muhammad Irfan; Sarwar, Dr. Muhammad; Anwer, Dr. Muhammad; Ahmad, Fayyaz; (2015)

Demographic Information

The total respondents of the study were 198. Based on the descriptive analysis, it shows that female respondents were 78.3%, and male respondents were 21.7%. Majority of the teacher respondents are from the age between 35 to 44 with 45.5%, followed by respondents between the age of 25 to 34 years old which accounted for 26.8%. The respondents who were between the age of 45 to 55 years old accounted for 25.3% and above 55 years old accounted for 2.4%. 197 (99.5%) of the respondents are local Bruneian, while only 1 (0.5%) is a foreigner. The result has Brunei citizens as the highest population of respondents.

Majority of the respondents are Malay with 87.4%, followed by Chinese respondents with 8.1% and lastly, 4.5% of the respondents are from races other than Malay, Chinese and Indians. This indicates that there are more Malay teachers in higher education in Brunei. Respondents are teachers from secondary school. It is followed by teachers from primary school with 22.7%, 19.7% from A-Level or University Foundation and the other 10.1% are from college or university in Brunei Darussalam. This study has secondary school teachers as the highest population of respondents.

Education qualifications for teachers in higher education in Brunei. 52% of the teachers have Bachelor Degree as their background, followed by Master Degree with 33.8%, 5.6% with A-Level qualification, 4.5% with O Level and other 4% with PhD qualifications. This shows that the majority of the respondents have a Bachelor Degree as their background. Experiences in teachings, whereby, the majority of the respondents has worked for 11 to 20 years with 47.5%, followed by respondents with the experiences of working 20 years and above with 21.2%, 16.2% are those with 0 to 5 years and l5.2% of the respondents have 6 to 10 years of experiences in teaching.

Data Analysis

Based on the table below, it indicates the correlation between independent variables which consist of work-environment, family-work interaction and professional and competence development with the dependent variable, which is organisational stress.

Table 1: Pearson Correlation Analysis

Correlations

		Org. Stress	Work Environment	Family-work Interaction	Professional and competence development
Org. Stress	Pearson Correlation	1	.409**	.206**	.402**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.004	.000
	N	198	198	198	198
Work Environment	Pearson Correlation	.409**	1	.411**	.298**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	198	198	198	198
Family-work interaction	Pearson Correlation	.206**	.411**	1	.277**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.000		.000
	N	198	198	198	198
Prof. and competence development	Pearson Correlation	.402**	.298**	.277**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	198	198	198	198

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Research Findings

Based on the findings of the study, there are more female than male, and most of the respondents are local Bruneians which indicates that there are more Bruneian teachers than foreigner teachers working in Brunei. Gender can be one of the strong predictors to organisational stress. For instance, in some country such as in Pakistan and Turkey, male teachers will be more likely to experience stress compared to female teachers, but this is not the case in Macedonia where female teachers will experience a high level of stress compared to male teachers (Brember, Brown & Ralph, 2002). According to the study of Wen Xin, Talwar, P., Tan Kock Wah, Mat Yusoff, Nur Fatihah, Oon Yin Bee & Abdul Ghani, Kartini (2019), in reference to Chan, Chen & Chong (2010), female teachers tend to complain more than male teachers. The stress faced by the male teachers is due to education reform and external school review whereas, for female teachers, the source of stress comes from the relationship with their colleagues in the workplace, reduced in salary and implementation of language proficiency requirements.

Furthermore, the majority of the respondents are aged 35 to 44 years old, followed by respondents aged 25 to 34 years old, 45 to 55 years old and lastly 55 years and above. This indicates that there is a high number of middle-aged teachers in Brunei. Moreover, most of the respondents are experienced teachers who have been in the teaching industry for 11 to 20 years. In Health and Safety Laboratory and Health and Safety Executive report in 2005, women aged between 25 and 34 years experienced the highest levels of stress meanwhile for men, the highest level of stress are between the age of 35 and 44 years old. It is found that younger and inexperienced teachers are more likely to experience stress compared to older and more experienced teachers. In addition to that, education qualifications also need to be taken into consideration.

Based on the findings, most of the teachers have a Bachelor Degree and above as their qualification background. According to Shkëmbil, Fleura, Melonashi, Erika, Fanaj & Naim (2015), in reference to Blaug Kenyon & Lekhi (2007), teachers with higher education may experience a higher level of stress than teachers will low level of educational background, but according to Darmody & Smyth (2011), there is no significant relationship between the education level and organisational stress.

Recommendations and Conclusions

The main objective of this study is to find the factors affecting organisational stress among teachers in higher education in Brunei Darussalam. In this study, three (3) factors have been examined to find the relationship between the independent variables; work environment, family work interaction, and professional and competence development with the dependent variable; organisational stress. The findings from this study have shown that work-environment has the strongest relationship with the dependent variable, organisational stress among teachers, and followed by professional and competence development and family-work interaction.

Based on the findings, it shows that work-environment has the strongest relationship with organisational stress compared to family-work interaction and professional and competence development. Therefore, to reduce the organisational stress, the working environment and facilities needed by the teachers should be improved, and scheduling for the training course also need to be managed properly. Supervisors' support for the teachers also plays an important role since the teacher's annual performance evaluation contributed to the highest factor to organisational stress for teachers in higher education in Brunei.

Lastly, professional and competence development also shows a positive relationship with the DV. To reduce the organisational stress, teachers must comprehend and understand with their colleagues, supervisors and students when communicating, and vice versa. By transmitting the information effectively between teachers and their supervisors or colleagues, it can improve their relationship with one another as well as their performance. In addition to that, proper instructional planning and strategies and improving the learning environment can also help in reducing the organisational stress among teachers.

Limitations and Future Research Recommendations

There are several limitations when conducting this study. First, this study only covered the three factors influencing organisational stress among teachers and was limited to only teachers in higher education in Brunei. In addition to that, only 198 respondents answered the survey even though it was acceptable based on Raosoft. Large sampling population will give better and accurate results because it will be well distributed to all age group with different race and nationality as the majority of the respondents are Malay and Bruneians. This could be one of the limitations in terms of population distribution and findings cannot be generalized to other demographic.

Secondly, this study is only focusing on the education sector; therefore, the findings from this study cannot be generalized to other industry such as oil and gas industry, hospitality, mass communication and banking. The last limitation can be the geographical location. This study was done in Asia, specifically in Brunei Darussalam and the findings cannot be generalized to other geographical location such as Europe, Africa and other parts of the world as they the factors influencing organisational stress may be different.

For future research, more studies should be done with other factors such as leadership, peer-to-peer relationship and role conflict as this study is only focusing on three variables – work environment, family work interaction and professional and competence development. Also, the sample size for future research should be larger with respondents from a different higher institution in Brunei. The sample must also be drawn from different nationalities, races, age groups and even gender.

Secondly, findings can also be done to other sectors or industry other than the education sector to find factors contributing to organisational stress. Factors contributing to organisational stress may differ in each industry. Lastly, future research study can be done to other geographical locations such as Europe, America and Africa to see with the same variables (work environment, family-work interaction and professional and competence development) to see whether there is a relationship between the mentioned variables and organisational stress.

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