

The Impact of Job Stress Factors on Employees' Job Performance: A Proposed Framework

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to propose a framework on the relationship between job stress factors on employees' job performance at *Lembaga Zakat*, Kedah. Basically, the main challenge in *Lembaga Zakat* is the inefficiency of *zakat* distribution leading to the poor employees' job performance. Meanwhile, the problem of job stress is a common issue that has been immensely rising over the decades in the workplace in Malaysia. Many previous studies viewed job stress has a negative impact on employee's job performance. Further, previously also revealed numerous of these studies emphasize on the private sector and very scarce researches were done in religious institutions. Some of the job stress factors that have been considered in this study are role ambiguity, role conflict, work overload and time pressure. Most of the previous findings suggested that there were significant relationships among these variables. The result of this research is expected to have a significant relationship on employees' performance, subsequently enable different parameters for the four dimensions of job stress should be considered for better improvement of the employee's job performance.

Key words: Job performance • Role ambiguity • Role conflict • Work overload • Time pressure.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, in the era of rapid changing working environment, job performance is one of the crucial factors that determine the organization's outcome and reputation. The employees need to continuously improve their knowledge and skills to become knowledgeable worker and remain competitive. They would be able to perform better if they were given the opportunities to undergo an improvement and development program which will enable them to move forward towards the organization strategic goals [1]. According to the statistics revealed by the Department of Statistics Malaysia portal, the business performance in the fourth quarter of 2014 was inconsistent, from 4.60 per cent rather compared to 8.80 per cent for the third quarter in the same year. The prior statistics reflected the business performance of the industry and the service sector of Malaysia. As specified in the Regus's online survey 2015, almost 70 per cent of Malaysian employees were reported to encounter stress-related illness because of the challenging global economic landscape.

Other factors identified to have an influence on the rising level of stress among employees are the global financial crisis and recession that took place in 2008 [2]. An increasing research on job employees' performance has been noticed for the past few decades. The employees' job performance has become among the most important undergoing brisk change at almost any organizations. No doubt, job performance has become a priority in the organizational contexts [3]. Besides that, stress is one of the growing problems faced by the organizations that always brings adverse effects on employees' performance and organization [4].

Literature Review: Besides some crucial factors which have been highlighted in the workplace, many researchers found that employees' job performance is the most important issues in the organizations [4]. The effort, skills and types of working environment are the main factors that influence employees' job performance [5]. The research findings suggested that employees with high achievement have experienced low levels of stress in the workplace [6]. At the other spectrum, employees'

performance is crucial to the success of the organizational strategy implementation [7]. If employees are satisfied and happy with their work, definitely they will feel highly motivated to perform well to accomplish the organizational goals. Needless to say, in this new dynamic and highly challenging global environment, organizations are required not only to always figure out several affirmative steps to improve their employees' performance but retain them as well [8].

Many scholars believed that the employee stress level has a strong influence on their job performance. However, there was a fact that lower level of stress might be useful to encourage the employees to improve their performance in the workplace, as not all stress is bad and harmful to the organizations [9]. Initially, stress in the workplace has affected many employees around the world [10]. The employees who are experiencing high stress level tend to be less productive [11] asserted employees' performance in the workplace is influenced by several factors, including physical and psychological elements. When examining the role theory [12] suggested that role ambiguity and role conflict are the factors that determine employees' performance. Consequently, role theory relates to the stress issues in the workplace and in enlightening the effect of work stress on employees' performance [13].

Role ambiguity is defined as inadequate information within assigned roles regarding one's authority, power and the goal expected for each position [3]. According to [14] role ambiguity comes about when the employees are doubtful about their role in the organization. On the other hand, unclear instructions may cause confusions to them. Meanwhile, role conflict between employees and employer occurred as the result of incompatibility demands on their job performance [14]. Several findings indicated that employees are experiencing work-related stress due to the unworkable deadlines, assigned to multiple tasks and given excessive workloads [15].

[16] defined work overload as the combination of tasks and as the measurement of employees' responsibilities in the workplace. Work overload occurred when an employee's work demands exceed their abilities or resources to accomplish the task. According to [17] work overload could trigger workplace stress and definitely affect the employee's job performance. Literally, time pressure is defined as different time required and time available to perform a task that caused stress as most employees felt [18]. Time pressure is identified as a situational factor that may have influenced an employee's performance. The previous findings suggested that some employees may perform better while some may not perform

well under the time pressure contexts [19]. Similarly, [18] stated that the inconsistent findings were reported on the relationship between time pressure and employees' performance.

Hypothesis Statement: The main objective of this article is to propose a research framework on the relationship between job stress factors and employees' job performance among employees at *Lembaga Zakat*. As such, several research hypotheses are developed and proposed for further empirical investigation.

Numerous researchers have focused on job stress that affects many aspects of the organizations [20]. Job stress has become normal adverse consequences that make an increasing number of employees complaining about stress due to the job uncertainty, excessive overload and an increasing pace of life [20]. Stress clearly can reduce the performance of the organization either big or small. Low morale in the workplace, absenteeism from job and problem with cliques could be caused by job stress [4]. Hence, stress gave a big impact on employee's job performance and activities [10].

In this study, the four elements of job stress factors proposed, namely as role ambiguity, role conflict, work overload and time pressure were used as an independent variables and employee job performance as a dependent variable. Therefore, the following hypotheses are formulated.

Previous studies examined the relationship between role ambiguity and employee's job performance have engaged with the fact that the level of employee performance will be affected if the employee is less aware and not clear with the tasks and responsibilities given [21]. Besides that, there are two models of role ambiguity which related to the employee tasks, activities and feedback to job performance. Feedback is also crucial for the employee's performance evaluation process [22]. Thus, the first hypothesis was developed.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between role ambiguity and employee's job performance.

Several researchers claimed that the role conflict, which can come in various forms, happens when there are tensions that very much related to the employee's job performance [5]. Productivity and performance have an opposing relationship with the employee's role conflict. Sizeable numbers of findings have suggested role conflict as a source of poor employee performance. Hence, the second hypothesis was developed.

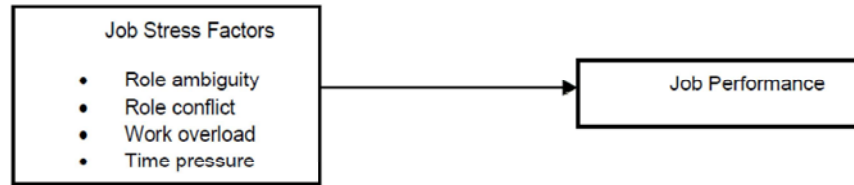


Fig. 1: A Proposed research framework

H₂: There is a significant relationship between role conflict and employee's job performance.

Also, research findings by [23] confirmed that there were significant relationship between work overload and employee's performance. The study was conducted among frontline employees at several companies in New Zealand. [24] examined a significant relationship of work overload and performance pressure with an employee's job performance in banking sector in Pakistan. The results revealed that, because of the economic downturn, employees faced a lot of issues such as no alternative jobs, unemployment and limited sources in Pakistan. Thus, the third hypothesis was developed.

H₃: There is a significant relationship between work overload and employee's job performance.

Next, [19] indicated that the relationship between time pressure and job performance occurs when an employee has limited time which in turn may affect employee performance. While, when quality of performance has shown less consistent, time pressure has demonstrated an increasing rate of a group or an individual performance [25]. Hence, the fourth hypothesis was developed.

H₄: There is a significant relationship between time pressure and employee's job performance.

A Proposed Research Framework: Based on the above discussion, the following research framework is proposed.

CONCLUSION

Over the past decade, the study of job performance has made a remarkable progress in this field. With regards to that, the primary objective of this article is to develop a research framework on the relationship between role ambiguity, role conflict, work overload, time pressure and the employee's job performance at *Lembaga Zakat*, Kedah as illustrated in Figure 1 above. Apparently, this framework will guide and give a comprehensive

understanding of the relationship between all variables and will lead to an empirical research in the future.

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