

The Impacts of Employees' Job Stress on Staff's Job Performance at Administrative Office in Bahagian Samarahan, Sarawak

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ABSTRACT

Job performance refers to an employee's proficiency to perform well in achieving goals and behaviors which involve deliberate arts that are useful to the organization. Job performance can be improved if the employees manage to handle their job stress. This study investigates the significant effects and the relationships between job stress factors and job performance among the staffs at Pejabat Residen, Bahagian Samarahan, Sarawak. This study utilizes Job Demands-Control (JDC) Model by Karasek, which focuses on job demand and job control groups. Job demand consists of two dimensions; workload and time pressure while job control incorporates skill discretion and decision authority. One hundred questionnaires were conveniently distributed, and only 91 were returned and considered usable. This study used correlation and Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) analysis using SPSS version 25. The results show that job demand, job control, workload and time pressure had a significant relationship towards job performance. When the candidates had adequate time, decision-making empowerment and task-related skills, the employees could perform better. Among the predictors investigated, workload and skill discretion showed a significant effect on job performance. The recommendation for future research was also discussed and highlighted.

Keywords: Workload, time pressure, skill discretion, decision authority, job performance.

INTRODUCTION

Job performance refers to an employee's proficiency to perform well in achieving goals that are essential for the organization. Several factors were proven to influence employees' job performance and one of them is job stress. Employees' job stress can have a big impact on the job performance (Bruggen, 2015).

If the employees could handle stress, they could perform better. According to Karasek (1979), stress occurs when a level of stress is used in the learning process. The model divided the job stress into two groups: job demand and job control. Job demand has two parts which are workload and time pressure, while job control consists of skill discretion and decision authority. A study done by Lopes, Helena, Lagoa, Sergio, Calapez, and Teresa (2014) revealed that the higher the workload, the lower job performance. Employees can perform better when they receive a lower workload to be completed within a time frame. In relation to time pressure, time factor is essential for the employees to perform. Working in a team where less time pressure is demanded proved that work can be accomplished before the due date. Therefore, the employees were able to overcome challenging job demand together and meet the allocated time given to them. A study conducted by Viotti and Converso (2016), revealed that employees who had high skill discretion could perform better in their job. The results showed that the positive effect on the employees made them be more confident, thus, would increase their job performance. To investigate the impact of decision-making authority on performance, Sia and Duari (2018) had proven that decision making had a positive effect on employees. When employees were given a chance to share their ideas and have a sense of control in making the final decision, they became more confident to perform their jobs. Hence, this would increase their job performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Workload

A study done by Akgunduz (2015) found that workload had affected the job performance of staff working at 4-star and 5-star hotels in Kusadasi, Turkey. The study confirmed that by reducing the workload among the employees at the hotel, their performance is improved. Ahmed and Ramzen (2013) also found that when employees are given more work, they become more stressed and showed poor job performance. However, when they receive an adequate amount of work, they can perform better due to lesser stress. Next, Calisir, Gumussoy and Iskin (2011) examined the influence of job stress and its impact on job performance. This proves that workload is an important factor that causes poor performance. The employees have a poor job performance when workload increases thus can cause exhaustion to the employees. As a result, they have the intention to quit. Likewise, Ahmed and Ramzan (2013) found that too much work given to an employee could reduce job performance. Besides, a study conducted by Karatepe (2013) discovered that workload had a negative effect on hotel employees' job performance due to the emotional stress and exhaustion that occurred. The work by Hafeez (2018) also confirmed that in hospitality industry, workload could negatively affect job performance, because the staffs are needed to deal with the expectations of patients, heavy assignments, and over time. A study done by Garrido, Aurelio, Ferrer, Maria, Rodriguez and Rafael (2017) examined the relationship between flexibility in working time and job performance on employees. Based on the study, the researchers found that people would perform better when they had a flexible working time. In this sense, working time flexibility has been reported to have positive effects on job performance.

While this may be true, a recent study carried out by Johari, Fee Yen, Tan, Zati, Iwani, Tjik, Zulkarnain (2018) found that workload did not have the effect on the job performance amongst schoolteachers, in fact, it helped them improve their performance. Teachers can perform better when they are under pressure since their workload are seasonal. This condition is also related to skill discretion where this factor has direct impact on workload. People who have variety skills are confident to perform the tasks given to them successfully even though the time factor took place.

Time Pressure

A research carried out by Garrido, Matte, Preisser and Mache (2016) found that the employees who can adapt to working hours and duration can perform their job better. In other words, time pressure had a positive effect on job performance when they can manage the time allocated. Also, a study by Sharma and Bhatnagar (2017) was done to identify whether time pressure was the reason that the team engagement occurred. Surprisingly, each employee found that it was easier to work together to meet deadlines that were given by their employers when working in teams and thus increasing their job performance. Cho, Ju, Paek, Kim, and Jung-Choi (2018) stated in their research that employees in Korea worked more than 52 hours, where men had longer hours compared to women including those who have no education. The results show that working longer hours had a negative effect on employees since they had to work for a longer time to complete their job task. When employees work for a longer time, they became tired, thus would decrease their job performance. This scenario may harm the employees' performance and health.

Skill Discretion

Another study by Isafahani, Aryankhesal and Haghani (2014) found that half of their respondents agreed that skill discretion had affected their job performance. By providing proper training to improve their skills discretion, the employees were able to increase their job performance. On the other hand, Viotti and Converso (2016) found that nurses who have high skill discretion can perform their task well rather than those who have lower skills discretion. The results showed that the positive effect on employees had led them to be more confident, thus would increase their job performance.

Decision Authority

Lastly, a research done by Sia and Duari (2018) found that decision making had a positive effect on the employees since they were given a freedom to give ideas and this provides them with a sense of control in the final decision. Heponiemi et al. (2014) also found that decision authority was something positive in an organization, and employees can make their own decision to resign when they feel like their certain jobs are too stressful. This may increase their job performance in another organization and allow the previous one to replace them with new employees. Also, a study performed by Willimse, Jonge, Smit, Depla, and Pot (2012) examined the effects the decision authority has on job performance in nursing homes. The study revealed that staffs who make their own decisions could control their high job demands and activate healthcare staff. In a nutshell, employees who have a high number of tasks to perform can make their own decisions that are suitable in the situation that they have experienced.

The framework below derived by adapting Job Demands-Control (JDC) Model Framework by Karasek (1979).

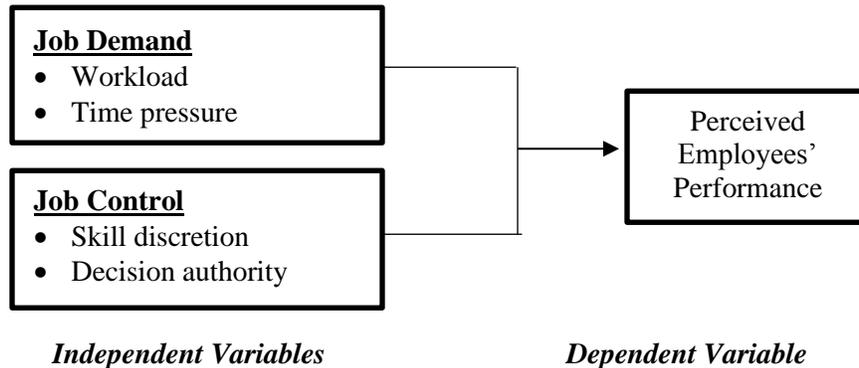


Figure 1: Adopted from Job Demands-Control (JDC) Model Framework by Karasek (1979)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a correlational design. This type of research is used to identify the relationship between job stress and job performance. Salkind (2014) defined it as the numerical index called correlation coefficient as to quantify the strength of the relationship in this study. The sampling frame for this study refers to the list of all employees from all levels of management in the organization. For this study, the name list of the employees working at Pejabat Residen Bahagian Samarahan used as the sampling frame. The population involved is the staffs of Pejabat Residen Bahagian Samarahan. This research used non-probability sampling strategy consisting of convenience sampling. This sampling technique is a suitable sampling to produce a sample for this research. As the population is 100, a suggested sample size of 80 is used as a guideline based on Krejcie and Morgan's Table (1970). A total of 100 questionnaires were self-administered and only 91 were returned and considered usable.

FINDINGS

Demographic Analysis

Most of the respondents are female (58.2%) and married (57.1%). Majority of the respondents are between 20 – 40 years old (78%). For the educational background, most of them have tertiary educational (70.4%). The demographic statistic of this study is presented below.

Table 1: Summary statistics of respondent's demographic

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage
<u>Gender</u>		
Male	38	41.8
Female	53	58.2
<u>Marital Status</u>		
Single	39	42.9
Married	52	57.1
<u>Age (years old)</u>		
20 – 30	41	45.1
31 – 40	30	33
41 – 50	17	18.7
51 – 60	3	3.3
<u>Education Level</u>		
SPM	15	16.5
STPM/Matrix	10	11
Diploma	31	34.1
Degree	33	36.3
Others	2	2.2
Total	91	100

Reliability Analysis

Internal consistency of items under each predictor and response variable was examined utilizing reliability analysis. Nunally (1978) suggested that the reliability measure should exceed the minimum value of 0.6. As shown in Table 2 below, the values of Cronbach's alpha have exceeded the minimum value of 0.6. Hence, we can conclude that the items under each predictor and response variable in this study are reliable.

Table 2: Results of reliability analysis

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Workload	4	0.62
Time pressure	6	0.82
Skill discretion	5	0.82
Decision authority	4	0.72
Job performance	7	0.94

Test of Normality

The test of normality was performed first to ensure further analysis using parametric methods is valid. In this study, the graphical method of using a box plot was employed as well as skewness values as the indicator of normality. Figure 2 below exhibits the box plots for all the variables in this study. Noticeably, all box plots resemble a normality distribution. However, there are three outliers present in the decision authority variable. Test using Cook's distance has been examined, and it signified that these three points are not considered as influential observations (values Cook's distance < 1). Thus, by retaining these three data points, these would not markedly change the result of any calculation. Apart from this, skewness values also were examined to strengthen the normality requirement instead of graphical method only. Table 3 below summarizes the skewness values for all variables. Note that all skewness values are within the plausible value which are between -1.0 to 1.0.

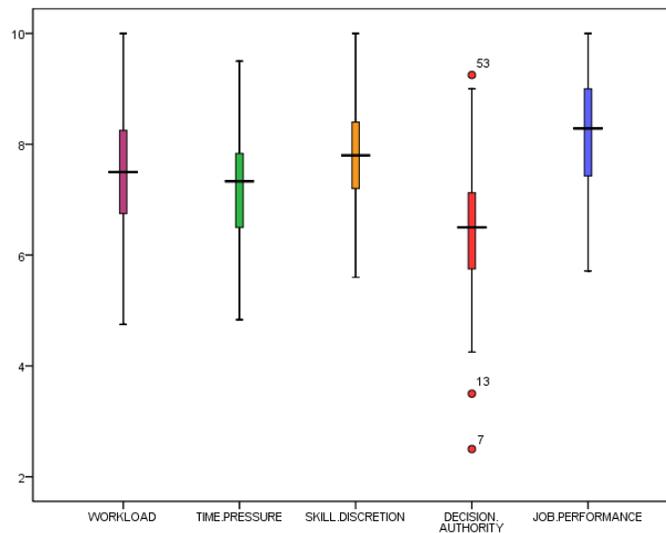


Figure 2: Box plots for predictors and response variable

Table 3: Summary of skewness values

Variable	Skewness
Workload	-0.267
Time pressure	0.004
Skill discretion	0.029
Decision authority	-0.228
Job performance	-0.468

Correlation Analysis

Table 4 below illustrates Pearson's correlation analysis in this study. It signifies that all predictors are highly significant at 1% level towards job performance. Among these four predictors, the strongest correlation towards job performance is workload ($r = 0.639$, p -value < 0.01). The result indicates that

when the candidates have adequate work, their job performance increases. Apart from this, time pressure has also moderately and positively correlated towards job performance ($r = 0.638$, $p\text{-value} < 0.01$). The results suggested that respondents were able to increase their job performance when a specific deadline is given to accomplish it. Similarly, skill discretion also has a moderate positive correlation towards job performance ($r = 0.624$, $p\text{-value} < 0.01$). It signifies that when they have the correct set of skills, it will increase their job performance. However, there is a weak positive correlation between decision authority ($r = 0.454$, $p\text{-value} < 0.01$) which indicates that decision authority does not have a major effect on the employees' job performance.

Table 4: Results of correlation analysis

Variable	Workload	Time Pressure	Skill Discretion	Decision Authority	Job Performance
Workload	1	0.672 (0.000)*	0.520 (0.000)*	0.444 (0.000)*	0.639 (0.000)*
Time Pressure		1	0.718 (0.000)*	0.459 (0.000)*	0.638 (0.000)*
Skill Discretion			1	0.465 (0.000)*	0.624 (0.000)*
Decision Authority				1	0.454 (0.000)*

*Correlation is significant at 1% level of significance.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis (MLR)

Advanced statistical analysis then continues with MLR to determine which predictors have significantly affected the job performance of respondents in this study. To ensure the results produced by MLR is valid, all assumptions in MLR such as linearity between predictors and response variable (using scatter plot matrix), multicollinearity (using tolerance and VIF), homoscedasticity (using scatter plot of residuals against predicted values), normality of residuals (using normal Q-Q plot), independency of residuals (using Durbin Watson value) and influential cases (using Cook's Distance value) were done and confirmed so that the data met all the assumptions. MLR results is presented in Table 5 below. Only 54.2% of the total variation in job performance can be explained by all the predictors, as indicated by the coefficient of determination (R^2). Overall, the model is significant with F-test of 25.395 ($p\text{-value} < 0.05$). In detail, the results reported that only workload and skill discretion significantly affect the respondent's job performance ($p\text{-value} < 0.05$).

Table 5: Results of regression analysis

Predictor	Coefficient	Sig. (p-value)	R-Square	Sig. (F-Test)
Constant	1.099	0.128	0.542	25.395 (0.000)*
Workload	0.354	0.001*		
Time pressure	0.169	0.198		
Skill discretion	0.322	0.009*		
Decision authority	0.097	0.265		

*Significant at 5% level of significance

DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis, the workload has a significant relationship and effect with employees' job performance. The findings indicate that the employees can perform their task well when their employers give work in a tolerable amount. However when they have to do too many tasks, their job performance decreases. Management needs to allocate only a certain number of tasks to their employees so that they can perform better. The findings of this study is supported by Bruggen (2015) and Hafeez (2018) where their studies have statistically proved that job performance increases when employees are given a moderate amount of work. The result for time pressure shows it had a moderate positive relationship with employees' job performance. The respondents agreed that time affects how well their job is, as when they were given enough time for a certain task, they can give excellent results. When everyone knows the amount of time allocated to them, it can help them plan their work more efficiently. The result of this study is aligned with the findings from Sharma and Bhatnagar (2017) and Cho et al. (2018) where working longer hours also affected the employees' health and performance. Based on the finding, skill discretion also has a significant effect and positive relationship towards job performance. Respondents have agreed that when they have the correct set of skills, they can perform their task well and with less supervision. Proper training on acquiring skills and knowledge is essential in assisting the employees in performing their tasks more effectively and efficiently. Isafahani, Aryankhesal, & Haghani, (2014) studies confirmed that there was a fair outcome where with proper and more training, could help improve the employees' skills discretion, therefore improving their job performance.

Lastly, the result of this study shows a weak and positive relationship between decision authority and job performance. The results obtained have found that some of the respondents felt that they can perform their task well without their employer's guidance and request. This can also be supported by a study from Sia and Duari (2018) which found that decision making had a positive effect on employees since they were given a chance to give their ideas and have a sense of control in the final decision. When the employees have the empowerment in making decisions on the tasks they are doing, it can help them to be more confident and execute their jobs more effectively.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the main objective of this study is to investigate the relationships and effects between job demand and job control factors towards the employees' job performance. The study highlighted that workload, time pressure, and skill discretion had a significant positive relationship towards job performance. Among the four factors investigated, the study proved that workload and skill discretion had a significant effect on job performance. With all the factors found, employers and employees should know how to manage their stress levels. If there are things that contribute to poor job performance such as too much work, limited time given to perform a certain task, lack of skills, and inability to give feedback, these issues should be brought forward and discussed with the employers so that they can reach a level of agreement that would not jeopardize the employees' job performance.

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