

Stress and Job Satisfaction Among Polytechnic Lecturers in Malaysia: A Need Analysis Study

Muhammad Firdaus Mohd Ramlee¹, Abu Yazid Abu Bakar^{2*)}

^{1,2} Faculty of Education, National University of Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

*Corresponding author, e-mail: yazid3338@ukm.edu.my

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Abstract: The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that stress is a global epidemic and that the United Nations (UN) is reporting workplace stress labeled as a 'disease' of the 20th century. The more complex and dynamic an organization is, the higher the source of stress. Work stress comes from many aspects such as job management characteristics, organizational relationships, workload, organizational structure and climate, job characteristics and more. Excessive work stress not only adversely affects the organization but also affects the physical and mental health of employees and family relationships. Failure to control work pressure will also affect job satisfaction. As such, This concept paper analyzes the need to conduct stress and job satisfaction studies among polytechnic lecturers in Malaysia. This analysis is not only intended to catalyze this research, but it also has the potential to assist polytechnic management in developing workplace stress management programs and improving job satisfaction among lecturers.

Keywords: Career counseling, job satisfaction, stress, polytechnic lecturer, Malaysia



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Introduction

In line with the National Higher Education Strategic Plan, the Ministry of Higher Education has stepped up its efforts by empowering polytechnics with a new image to compete and become the preferred institution for postgraduate students of the Malaysian Certificate of Education (SPM). Thus, the concept of the Polytechnic Transformation Roadmap has been developed where the main goal of the transformation agenda is to preserve human capital development to develop human resources beyond 2020 (Jasmi et al., 2010).

The Polytechnic Transformation Agenda was implemented during the Tenth Malaysia Plan period (2010-2015). These transformations focus on the four core areas of polytechnic empowerment towards university-based choice, developing niche areas of study and research based on the strengths of each polytechnic, empowering polytechnic faculty and staff with knowledge and skills and form excellent work image and culture. (Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi, 2009). Included in this agenda is to produce at least one polytechnic recognized as a leader in education and technical and vocational training, 85% of polytechnic graduates get a job after six months of graduation and 50% of SPM graduates choose polytechnics as the top choice of tertiary institutions (Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi, 2009).

The result of the implementation of this transformation plan has given new polytechnics a whole new role to enhance the skills and capabilities of the workforce in a more committed and competent manner within their scope of work and expertise. This effort has demanded the commitment and commitment of every politician to succeed in this transformation agenda.

At the polytechnic level, lecturers are educators who serve as catalysts and catalysts of excellence in the teaching and learning process and implementers of human capital development policy. The scope of the main task of the lecturer is to focus on teaching and learning. Included in this field of work is the production of innovation or creativity in teaching and learning, conducting *coaching-mentoring* with colleagues, conducting academic advisory tasks to students, and supervising student projects and scholarly activities. There are also other academic and co-curricular activities. In addition, lecturers are also involved in research and development such as conducting research and research, developing innovative projects and implementing collaborative and consulting and advisory services to the public, private and industrial sectors. They are also involved in the production and publication of scientific material such as writing and publishing research findings as well as presenting at seminars or conferences locally and abroad. In addition, lecturers also play important roles in the implementation of policy, organizational and human resources such as implementing policies set by the department head, managing human resources at the institution level and carrying out organizational management activities in finance, funds, ICT and polytechnic assets.

The rise of new duties, responsibilities, and burdens certainly puts high pressure on all polytechnics to challenge their functioning. However, stress is not only a negative impact on one's life but also a source of motivation for more proactive and productive actions. Although stress is often considered a negative thing, the elements of stress that can be addressed are necessary for human life because such pressure plays a role in motivating behavior. Stress that *exerts* a positive effect in particular that promotes positive behavior is known as *eustress* and, on the other hand, extreme pressure that is unmanageable and carries a negative effect known as *distress* (Haryati, 2013).

But in many cases, stress is usually experienced by all people when they are in a bad mood. Work stress is a phenomenon often associated with job performance, health and productivity (Nasir & Omar, 2006). Stress can affect work motivation, quality, and productivity if not handled properly and promptly. Problems that individuals face in the workplace can lead to stress because life is a major part of one's life. Thus, work stress can have a negative effect on one's career and thus the well-being of the individual. Excessive work stress can also have a negative effect on family relationships (Nasir, 2003).

Finally, stress plays an important role in determining individual job satisfaction. People with high job satisfaction will lead to improved work quality and performance and longer work life (Lim Nan Chong, 2006). On the other hand, those who suffer from the opposite condition will face many negative effects not only on the individual but also on the institution or organization and society (Rambli, 2001). Therefore, job satisfaction should be emphasized because neglecting can be a source of stress or stress in the workplace that can adversely affect the employee's lifestyle and productivity.

In this regard, the study was designed to identify the level of work stress among Polytechnic lecturers. Researchers also studied the level and factors of job satisfaction among lecturers in terms of workload, relationship with colleagues, environment, pay and supervisory patterns. It also examined the differences in stress levels and job satisfaction levels according to selected demographics. In addition, the researchers also studied the relationship between job stress levels and job satisfaction.

Discussion

Although stress is often associated with disabilities, humans need less stress in life. Stress is a driving force in creating an 'energetic' action. A stress-free life makes one passive and difficult to move forward. Too low pressure makes one work without challenges because there is no pressure to move forward. On the other hand, too much pressure can lead to problems and harm for working people. There is no objective way to measure a person's level of stress. The individual must determine for himself or herself the optimal level of self-awareness and know whether or not the level of stress they are experiencing (Nasir, 2003).

From various studies on work, stress have found that the causes and effects of stress are very broad and other factors make the identification and analysis of stress studies more complex. Previous studies have focused on the use of research instruments such as *Job Descriptive Index (JDI)*, *Osipow Occupational Stress Inventory Work Stress Inventory* and *Occupational Stress Inventory-Revised (OSI-R)* in measuring stress and the effects of work stress.

According to Cooper and Marshall (1979), the study of (Asthma Bee Ahmad Tajudeen, 2004) which presented the theory of work stress stated that stress comes from two main factors: environmental factors and individual factors. Environmental factors include elements of communication, which are aspects of relationships with superiors and colleagues. In other words, the individual factors related to the structure and climate of the organization are aspects of engagement, poor communication and lack of belonging. This element will put pressure on the employees if they fail to manage and handle these aspects properly.

Stress also occurs when the demand for an individual is outside or exceeds the resources available to an individual (Bokti & Talib, 2010). For example, work stress can occur when an individual finds a lot of work to be done and the supervisor or leader sets a deadline for completing the task but fails to complete it by the person concerned. At the same time, the supervisor adds more work that needs to be completed in no time.

According to (Haryati, 2013) continued stress and tension will result in physical health (high blood pressure, increased cholesterol and heart disease) and mental impairment (lack of motivation and aspiration, emotional stress and decreased job satisfaction). This is in line with the study of (Desa & Subramaniam, 2002), who found that stressful people are in a state of anxiety, low concentration, confused and irritability. From a physiological standpoint, individuals with stress will experience muscle tension, headache, back pain, insomnia, heart attacks, and hypertension. It is also a leading cause of coronary heart disease, cancer, lung problems, accidents, and suicide. As a result of the pressure on the organization, employees who face high pressure will be less motivated, less likely to work, refuse to cooperate, refuse to adapt, be more negative, negative, often sick and many other things that may lead to decreased work performance (Haryati, 2013).

K spell relation to job satisfaction is also said to have started in the United States since almost a century ago in 1920 (Ahmad Jawahir Tugimin, 2009). Highlighting the meaning of job satisfaction, Mc Gregor (1960) states that job satisfaction for an employee depends on the value of the job based on its interpretation and assessment. The high value of a job is what makes a person always want to carry out his duties and responsibilities with sincerity, passion, and commitment to his career (Azurahani, 2004). In other words, job satisfaction is a positive or positive feeling that results from evaluating a job or work experience. It is the result of the perception of each worker that reflects the true values of their work.

The psychologist Locke (1976) in the study of (Nor Azida Mansor et al., 2015) defined job satisfaction as a result of one's interaction with the environment. It is a person's emotional state after he or she evaluates his or her job where the desired values of the job are achieved. While Hoppock says job satisfaction is a combination of psychological and environmental conditions that causes someone to say: "I am satisfied with my job". (Ilhaamie Abdul Ghani Azmi, 2005). The issue of job satisfaction factors arises when individuals seek recognition, want to improve their performance, and want to build their self-esteem. However, the desire is always changing according to the need and the passage of time.

The Two-Factor Theory by Frederick Herzberg is used in determining this job satisfaction. This theory discusses two components: *motivator* and *hygiene*. *Motivators* or internal factors (internal) are achievement and recognition while *hygiene* or extrinsic (external) factors such as pay and employee safety will affect job satisfaction (Bokti & Talib, 2010). The presence of these two factors determines whether the employee is satisfied with the job or not. Raymond and Daniel (1975) in the study of (Hassan et al., 2012). and (Kosnin

& Jantan, 2010) relate job satisfaction to the degree to which an individual likes or dislikes their work. According to them, employees are satisfied when they have a positive attitude towards work and feel that their work is in line with their lifestyle. Smith *et al.* (1975) the study of (Azurahani, 2004) stated that the dimension of job satisfaction depends on two main factors namely organizational factors and demographic factors. Organizational factors are elements such as salary, rank, work environment, supervision, and co-workers. Demographic factors also refer to aspects of race, age, marital status and more. The work environment is also an important aspect of the workforce. The ability of individuals to adapt to the work environment will determine their level of job satisfaction (Puteh *et al.*, 2005) and (Mohamad & Yaacob, 2013). In the context of education in schools, Pearson and Moomaw (2005) and Ingersoll (2001) conclude that job satisfaction is viewed from factors involved in decision making, autonomy in the workplace, work environment and student progress (Mohamad & Yaacob, 2013).

Thus, it can be concluded that the meaning of job satisfaction varies by individual and is influenced by many factors and elements such as satisfaction, appreciation, recognition, achievement, adjustment, security, work environment, salary, promotion, workload, relationship with co-workers and supervisors and others.

Therefore, employees need to have the competence and satisfaction of the job so that they can perform their roles optimally. To perform this task, workers need to have high levels of job satisfaction to increase productivity. Individuals with high levels of job satisfaction will pay more attention to their work, be more motivated, be more diligent and less demanding and will work to improve their performance. On the other hand, individuals who are dissatisfied with their job may show symptoms of withdrawal, less motivation and no effort to improve their job performance (Nor Azida Mansor *et al.*, 2015). Likewise in schools, Bogler (2001) in the study of (Ling Ying Leh, 2011) stated that schools need to pay more attention to improving teachers' job satisfaction in maintaining quality individuals.

All the responsibilities that burden a lecturer can cause stress or stress that can be stressful from a psychological, physiological and behavioral standpoint. Work satisfaction for working individuals also greatly influences the well being of their daily lives. Herzberg (1959), Mc Gregor (1960) and Maslow (1970) in the study of (Azurahani, 2004) agree that job satisfaction is a key requirement that must be met to reach the level of self-fulfillment needs. According to the report of Shasha (2004) in the study, (Azurahani, 2004) reported that lecturers in higher education institutions nowadays not only have to teach in the classroom but also have to do extra work outside the field or scope of work. His research also reported that many lecturers in the IPTA are dissatisfied with the opportunity for promotion. These issues lead to the dissatisfaction of the lecturers at the IPTA. This discontent persisted despite the government taking several steps to try to meet their demands such as raising wages and providing several other facilities.

Therefore, based on this situation, researchers feel the need for a study to identify the level of stress faced by lecturers and their relationship with job satisfaction to assess the degree of stress and job satisfaction among lecturers in polytechnics in Malaysia. A proactive move can be planned immediately by drawing up the appropriate programs, plans and actions for those involved if they find that the level of stress and job satisfaction of the lecturers is at an unsatisfactory level.

Conclusion

The pressure is not something foreign to the people of this country. It is part of human life long ago without realizing it. Excessive stress can damage an individual's lifestyle and health and is believed to be the biggest contributor to chronic illnesses. Stress is also often associated with mental health and often attacks employees today. As a result, researchers have found that many organizations and industries concerned about their employees' well-being are taking initiatives to conduct surveys, studies, and research and to organize stress management courses to help reduce and manage the pressures faced by their employees to achieve job satisfaction.

As such, the increase in job satisfaction in particular lecturers is expected to motivate to further efforts to enhance teaching, student achievement, institutional image and create a more enjoyable and conducive work environment. On the other hand, declines in job satisfaction may lead to increased stress, poor performance and lower quality of work and thus affect the polytechnic institution itself (Nor Azida Mansor

et al., 2015). Therefore, job satisfaction should be given due attention so that the well-being of the faculty is maintained, the teaching and learning process is smooth and that all polytechnic missions and agendas can be optimally implemented.

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