

## Assessing the Relationship Between Perceived Stress and Job Satisfaction among Secondary School Teachers in Kuala Lumpur

Aishah Bee Ahmad Tajudeen<sup>1</sup>, Norshidah Nordin<sup>2</sup> and Sahabudeen Mohd Gani

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Malaya, Malaysia, <sup>2</sup>Faculty of Education, UiTM, Malaysia

Email: <sup>1</sup>Aishahbee72@gmail.com, <sup>2</sup>shidah147@gmail.com, deenmg@yahoo.com

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### Abstract

In this era of constant changes and highly competitive environment, school effectiveness is considered as a determinant of successful organization. In order to ensure the success of the school systems and educational policies to be implemented smoothly, schools need motivated and satisfied teachers who are secured in their job and who are able to perform their duties to a high standard. On the other hand, constant monitoring in teachers' execution of new policies in curricula, assessment teaching and learning may reduce their sense of motivation, efficacy and job satisfaction. Furthermore, literature noted that teaching is considered a high stress profession. Hence, to what extent, teachers are satisfied with their job and having less stress? Therefore, this study was intended to investigate the relationship between perceived stress and job satisfaction among teachers in Kuala Lumpur. There were about 77 secondary school teachers participated in this study. The result indicated that majority of the teachers perceived moderate stress level towards their students and time management. Nonetheless, they also felt moderate satisfaction with their job. The finding also revealed that there was a moderate relationship between perceived stress and job satisfaction. This paper also addresses several practical implications and future research direction.

**Keywords:** Job Satisfaction, Perceived Stress, Time-Management, School Climate.

### Introduction

Many organizations are facing great competitive landscapes which are shaped by globalization, technology, economy and politics (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007). These competitions have put a lot of pressure on organizational performance, thus, creating new challenges. Hence, educational institutions such as schools, colleges and universities are no exceptions. The Malaysian ministry of Education has come up with policies, initiatives and

educational reforms in meeting those changes in the country. The education transformation policy was carried out as the main catalyst to contribute to the success of students and the nation. More importantly, under the new educational transformation plan, great effort have been emphasized to improve the quality of teachers and school leaders. The success of any educational process depend significantly on teachers' performance and effectiveness (Noordin & Jusoff, 2009).

Given this juncture, teachers are required to be equipped with modern teaching practices, greater administrative duties and other related tasks. Besides, corresponding to the advancement in ICT, the delivery style of teaching and learning need to change from teacher to students-centred, and thus, teachers need to undergo a series of profesional development programs to help the educational system to meet this requirement (Boholano, 2017). However, studies indicated that some teachers are fear of change, and hold to traditional teaching. They believe there is no urgent need for changes to a new educational model and resist to change (Jansen and Van der Merwe, 2015). Furthermore, Mansoor, Fida, Nasir, & Ahmad (2011) claimed that teachers are required to perform multiple jobs they and it will lead to the decreasing in the employees' job satisfaction. Having said that, literature highlighted that teaching can be a stressful profession with teachers' stress to be an increasing problem over the years (Antoniou et al., 2006; Karavas, 2010). According to Le Fevre et al (2003), if employees were not able to manage their stress can result in poor health effects such as exhaustion, physical pain, depression and sleep disturbances. Henceforth, studies pertaining to teachers' job satisfaction have received much attention due to the decline in popularity and status of the teaching profesion (Gendin & Sergeev, 2002), high rate of turnovers recorded in many countries over the past few decades (Buckley, Schneider & Shang, 2005; Kotterman, 2000), high incidences of burnout and general dissatisfaction among teachers world-wide (Tye & O-Brien, 2002).

### **Understanding the Concept Job Satisfaction and its Relationship with Perceived Stress**

The concept of job satisfaction has been defined differently by many authors, however, there were no general agreement concerning what job satisfaction is. (Aziri, 2011; Thiagaraj and Thangaswamy, 2017). Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as enjoyable or positive emotional state resulting from the evaluation of one's job experiences. Meanwhile, Griffin & Bateman (1986) and Hackman & Oldman (1979) claimed that job satisfaction as a cluster of positive and negative dispositions or attitude in which employees acquired and learned through experiences. On the other hand, Hoppock (1935) said that job satisfaction is any combination of psychological, physiological and environmental situation that cause an individual to satisfied with their job. Job satisfaction was also associated to individual's behaviour at work place (Davis et al.,1985). In this sense, Maslow (1943) suggests that individual or organisational behaviour is believed to have their own goals and motivations. Job satisfaction was also described as affective or emotional states responses towards various aspects of employees' works (Spector, 1997; Ellickson and Logsdon, 2002). It was said to has an impact on various aspects at work such as productivity, efficiency, absenteeism, turnover rates and employees' well-being (Maghradi, 1999). Nonetheless, job satisfaction can be explained under content motivational theories and process motivational theories (Thiagaraj and Thangaswamy, 2017). The content theories highlighted on the specific factors which motivate the individual towards job. On the contrary the process theory deals with dynamics of this motivational process. According to Brooks (2006) content theories explain the factors

that force and motivate people to do something. While, process theories seek on how personal factors can effects human behaviour.

This study utilized content motivational theory in the effort to understand job satisfaction and its relationship with stress factors. Some of the proponents of content theories include Maslow, Alderfer, Herzberg and McClelland. Maslow (1943) proposed that there are five different levels of needs people have to seek for satisfaction of their basic needs. For instance, individuals need to satisfy their basic needs first (such as food, cloth and shelter) in order to attain the higher needs until they reached to the highest level, that is self-actualization. Maslow's theory postulates that a satisfied need is not a motivator of behaviour. On the other hand, if the lower-order needs become satisfied, then the next higher-order level of needs becomes the most pre important determinant of behaviour. Hence, he claimed that a person's level of desire is closely related to the hierarchy of needs and attitudes will determine the individual route which the person takes for the satisfaction of his needs. On the other hand, Herzberg's (1968) viewed that employees who are satisfied with both motivation (i.e., nature of their jobs, achievement in the work, promotion opportunities, and chances for personal growth and recognition) and hygiene factors (i.e., company policies, supervision, salary, interpersonal relations and working conditions) are satisfied employees, while those who are dissatisfied with both factors would more likely to be poor performers. Meanwhile, McClelland's theory proposed that when a need is strong in an employee, its effect is to motivate the person to use behaviour which leads to satisfaction of the need. The main theme of McClelland's theory is that needs are learned through coping with one's environment. Hence, needs are learned behaviour which is rewarded tends to recur at a higher frequency. In sum, basically, these content motivational theories highlighted that employees are motivated to perform better when offered something they want, something they believe will be satisfying. On the contrary, offering the employees something they believe will be satisfying is necessary, but not enough. Hence, employees believe that it is possible to achieve what they want. Employees are not motivated to perform better when managers focus on the offering and ignore the believing. Employees may experience low motivation if they encounter severe stress at workplace. Work related stress is the body's response to work that may threatens to disturb the individual's balance. Therefore, in the process of experiencing stress, the employee's inner state changes and job dissatisfaction is a powerful source of work stress ( Lazarus, 1991).

Furthermore , in today's highly competitive environment have led to increases in stressful job characteristics and also may point to fundamental issues in stress-related such as psychosocial, physical and psychological problems. As a result such situation may affect employees' performance and their satisfaction towards work. Selye (1956) said that stress may happen as a result of an individual's reaction to an environmental force that effect an individual performance. He further noted that stress condition can also happen when individual realizes when their resources are not sufficient to cope with the demands and pressures of the situation Nonetheless, studies pointed out that work stressor in teaching environment may include level of job satisfaction, work overload , job control, role ambiguity and conflict, role's pressure, inadequate resources, poor working conditions, lack of professional recognition, low remuneration, lack of decision-making and communication, staff conflicts as well as learner misbehaviour(The Democratic Alliance, 2007).

**The Relationship between Perceived Stress and Job Satisfaction**

Studies evident that there are many factors affected employees' job satisfaction. Liu and Ramsey (2008) in their study showed that teachers were not satisfied with their working condition, poor time planning and heavy workload. Neog & Barua(2014) noticed that factors such as compensation, working environment, job security salary were linked with job satisfaction. A study by Ololube (2005) stated that teacher dissatisfaction was associated with educational policies, administration, pay and fringe benefits, material rewards and advancement. Parallel, Mosammod & Nurul (2011) noted that apart from salary, relationship with supervisors and co-workers and efficiency in work may also contribute to job satisfaction. On the same note, studies have also shown that dissatisfaction among teachers can be caused by factors such as wages (Awoniyi and Tsitsi 2013; Abdullah and Hui 2014) and working environment (Zaroon et al. 2015; Zaheer et al. 2015). Besides, poor working relations, poor delegation, occupational-specific dispensation, annual increment, absence of meetings and lack of resources were some of factors that can cause job dissatisfaction. Hence, Moomaw and Pearson (2005) asserted that low job satisfaction may leads to stress and burnout if organization does not address the issues immediately. The associations between stress and job satisfaction is well acknowledged in the literature. For instance, Klassen and Chiu (2010) found that teachers with high overall teaching stress had lower job satisfaction. Besides, studies found that factors for being stress at work varies. For example, in a study done by Kyriacou and Chien (2004) found that being a teacher was either very or extremely stressful. They also found that the basis for being stress was due to the changing education policies of the government. Sattar and Jamil (2004) reported in their study that most of the head teachers at elementary level were experiencing high level of stress which negatively affected their job satisfaction. In addition, Apandi (2003) said that in his study that job satisfaction has a negative correlation with emotional exhaustion but correlated with the length of time a person is having a career. Literature also noted that personal variable such as gender, marital status, age, experiences may be affected by job satisfaction and level of stress. However, the findings were found to be inconsistent. Koustelios (2001) stated that female teachers (both primary and secondary) were more satisfied with working conditions than males. While some studies concluded that male workers have higher job satisfaction (Crossman & Harris, 2006, Fagan & Burchell, 2002). Nevertheless, studies indicated that females were reported to have higher levels of stress than their male counterparts (Kamper & Steyn, 2006; Ngidi & Siyaba, 2002). Rout and Rout (2002) also noticed that that female teachers experience higher levels of stress, while male educators report higher perceived social support from families and friends.

In sum, as mention in the preceding section, investigating job satisfaction and its relationship with perceived stress is worthwhile as teachers are important assets to the school organizations. Leaders and managers need to maximize teachers' performance in order to accomplish the school goals. Give such situation, schools need highly motivated, satisfied and psychologically balance teachers in order to increase their performance and productivity.

**Objectives of The Study**

The objectives of the study are four-folds, namely to determine (a) the level of job satisfaction and perceived stress,(b) the relationship between perceived stress and job satisfaction among (c) whether there is significant differences between job satisfaction and personal variables, (d) whether there is significant differences between perceived stress and personal variables the secondary school teachers in Kuala Lumpur.

## Methodology

This study was based on a conceptual framework that combines part of adapted motivational theories and stress. A survey method was used to obtain information about teachers' perceived stress and satisfaction towards their jobs. Hence, questionnaire on job satisfaction was adapted from Kassim (2003) with a 5-point Likert scale which consisted of 11 items. On the other hand, the stress inventory contained 18 items measuring three aspects of stress, namely students, time management and school climate. The Cronbach's alpha test for all the instruments range from 0.841 to 0.926, indicating high reliability. There were about 77 teachers from a secondary school in the area of Pudu, Kuala Lumpur, participated in this study. Pearson Correlation analysis was used as a tool to identify the significant relationship between the two variables. Besides, Independent T-Test was also utilized to compare between the variables and demographic profiles.

## Findings and Discussions

### ***Research objective 1: To examine the level of Job Satisfactions and Perceived Stress among teachers in Kuala Lumpur***

Table 1

*The levels of level of job satisfactions among teachers in Kuala Lumpur*

Job satisfaction & dimensions	Mean	Std deviation
Schemes of services	2.672	0.704
External factors	3.342	1.029
<b>Overall job satisfaction</b>	<b>3.007</b>	<b>0.866</b>

Mean indicators: low: (less than 1.66); moderate : (1.67- 3.32); High: (more than 3.3)

Table 1 reports the mean and standard deviation scores of teachers' job satisfaction and its dimensions namely schemes of services offered by the government and external factors. The finding reveals that the respondents felt a moderate satisfaction towards their job where  $m = 3.007$ ,  $Std\ Dev = 0.866$ . The result also indicates that the teachers felt satisfied with the external environment but were moderately satisfaction with the schemes of services offered to them where  $m = 2.672$ ,  $std\ dev = 0.704$ . In other words, they were moderately satisfied with the remuneration and benefit system. However, generally, the respondents were highly satisfied with the external environment where  $m = 3.342$ ,  $std\ dev = 1.029$ .

Further analysis was carried out to examine the level of perceived stress and its dimension as shown in the following table 2.

Table 2

*The levels of perceived stress among teachers in Kuala Lumpur*

Stress & dimensions	Mean	Std deviation
Students factors	3.423	0.696
Time-management	3.422	0.750
School climate	2.947	0.885
<b>Overall perceived stress</b>	<b>3.264</b>	<b>0.595</b>

Mean indicators: low: (less than 1.66); moderate : (1.67- 3.32); High: (more than 3.3)

Table 2 highlights the mean and standard deviation scores of teachers' perceived stress and its dimensions namely students factors, time management and school climate. The finding indicates that the respondents felt a moderate level of perceived stress, where  $m = 3.264$ ,  $Std\ Dev = 0.595$ . Interestingly, the finding shows that the teachers were more inclined to having high stress related students factors and time-management. However, they felt moderate stress with their school climate. Generally, this finding suggests that the respondents experienced stress regarding discipline problems and interaction with students. The finding also indicates that teachers were able to cope with their time. This study is consistent with the research done by Ghani, Ahmad & Ibrahim (2014)

***Research objective 2: to examine the relationship between job satisfactions and perceived stress among teachers in Kuala Lumpur***

Table 3

*Correlation Matrix between stress and psychological well*

	Job Satisfaction	
	r	p
Perceived Stress	-0.444	0.00

The finding from the above table 3 shows that there is a moderate and inversely relationship between perceived stress and job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Kuala Lumpur, where  $r = -0.423$ ,  $p = .00$ . This finding is consistent with the study done by Mansoor, Fida, Nasir & Ahmad (2011). In other words, this study suggests that teachers may find their jobs less satisfying when they have to undergo high level of stress and vice versa.

***Research objective 3: to examine the differences between job satisfaction and demographic variables***

Table 4

*Independent t-test between job satisfaction and gender*

		N	Mean	std dev	t	df	p
JS	Male	22	2.813	0.735	-1.468	75	.146
	Female	55	3.085	0.731			
JS	Married	62	2.978	0.728	-0.665	75	0.508
	Single	15	3.121	0.791			

Based on the independent t-test shown in table 4, there was no significant difference between job satisfaction and gender; where  $t = -1.468$ ,  $p = 0.146$ . Therefore, the result indicates that the gender does not show any significant effect on job satisfaction of the respondents. In other words, gender whether male or female respondents do not influence their job satisfaction. This study is consistent with the research done by Nigama, Selvabaskar & Surulivel (2018). Besides, the result also indicates that there was no significant difference between job satisfaction and marital status of the respondents where  $t = -0.665$ ,  $p = 0.508$ .

**Research objective 4: Analysis on the differences between perceived and demographic variables**

Table 5

*Independent t-test between perceived stress and demographic variables*

	N	Mean	std dev	t	df	p
Male	22	3.385	0.749	-1.134	75	.260
Female	55	3.215	0.522			
Married	62	3.317	0.577	1.609	75	0.112
Single	15	3.044	0.639			

Based on the independent t-test shown in table 5, there was no significant difference between perceived stress and gender; where  $t = -1.426$ ,  $p = 0.155$ . Therefore, the result indicates that the gender does not show any significant effect on perceived stress of the respondents. The result also shows that there was no significant differences between perceived stress based on marital status. In other words, whether the respondents are married or bachelor, their marital status do not influence their perceived stress. This finding is in line with the study done by Ghani, Ahmad & Ibrahim (2014).

**Discussions and Conclusions**

This study was aimed to examine teacher's job satisfaction and its relationship with perceived stress. The finding showed that teachers' perceived their level of satisfaction towards their job were moderate. This study also found that the secondary school teachers were moderately satisfied with remunerations and fringe benefits. This finding confirms the general views whereby the Malaysian school teachers are not satisfied over remunerations system (Abdullah, Uli, & Parasuraman, 2009). Nevertheless, literature noted that if teachers

were not happy with their job, thus it may have some implications to their performance and productivity. This study could be inferred that generally, teachers were slightly happy with their job. Perhaps, this implied that they were moderately productive. In this sense, Huang (2004) suggest that employers should attempt to find out more of the factors that may influence the level of satisfaction of work to do in the organization to improve performance. Apart from that, this finding also showed that these teachers were facing moderate stress level. In fact, the data showed that these teachers were stress towards the aspect of the students and not able to manage their time. Hence, this was not an impressive sign for the schools as literature noted that the cause of stress may bring consequences to teachers such as absenteeism, loss of productivity (Marilyn, 2003), health problems (McGinty, 2007) and increased job burnout rates (Chang, 2009). More importantly, this study found that there was a moderate but inversely relationship between stress and job satisfaction. the finding suggest that the level of teacher's stress need to be reduced in order to increase their satisfaction toward their profesion as teachers. A teacher can be productive and contended when there is no negative stress. Therefore, this study has several practical implications to school leaders and the Ministry of Education should consider on increasing teachers' job satisfaction in order to enhance students and school performance. The management should discover ways to create a favourable and conducive environment plus attractive remuneration for teachers in order to increase job satisfaction. Besides, the school administrators need also to review existing motivational policies and practices with a hope that they can enhance work performance and job satisfaction among the teachers.

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