

Linking Gender with Job Stress, Job Satisfaction, Job Performance, and Turnover Intention

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v13-i11/19645> DOI:10.6007/IJARBS/v13-i11/19645

Published Date: 28 November, 2023

Abstract

Introduction: Job stress is one of the common psychological impacts due to demand and working environment in a workplace setting and the effect might be affected due to differences of gender.

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to study the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction, job performance, and turnover intention among government education sector employees, while testing the role of gender on the relationships between the variables.

Methodology/Sample: A total of 244 government employees in the education sector in Selangor, Malaysia were invited to be participants using an anonymous self-reported questionnaire. The Job Stress Scale, the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire 1.0 (IWPQ 1.0), and the Turnover Intention Scale were used as the instruments in this study. The data obtained were analysed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 while and hypotheses testing and moderation analysis by using the Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) via Smart-PLS version 4.

Findings: The results showed that job stress is significantly positively related to job satisfaction and job performance. As for turnover intention, job stress is significantly negatively related to turnover intention. Gender was found to have no moderation effect towards the relationships.

Originality/Value: We applied a theoretical explanation, which is the job-demand resource theory, to argue that excessive job demand will lead to stress and cause negative organisational outcomes, especially on job satisfaction, job performance, and turnover intention.

Keywords: Job Stress, Job Satisfaction, Job Performance, Turnover Intention, Gender, Partial Least Square, Pls-Sem, Government Employee, Selangor, Malaysia

Introduction

Stress is a common problem among workers either in government or private sector due to current economic needs, their working environment and also their relationship with their colleagues. The work-related stress causes various negative effect on the employees in terms of their physical and mental health. In addition, gender differences regarding negative influences of job stress on organisational outcomes such as satisfaction, performance, and turnover intention have been a subject of considerable interest in this study. Societal expectations which prescribed specific role of gender is an interesting topic to be examined. Construction of the role given by the society might have a prominent implication that may alter their response to stress.

Most government employees are facing stress especially in this economically demanding nowadays. The Presidential Congress of Employees in Public Service (Cuepacs), Datuk Azih Musa in an Astro Awani's article written by Azil (2017) stated that most workers in Malaysia were experiencing relatively high level of stress. If it is not treated can lead to severe mental health problems and in Astro Awani's article by Abu Bakar (2019), Datuk Azih Musa also stated that stress might lead to depression that would affect productivity.

Research in the education sector has been done concerning educators like teachers and school staff. However, there is a noticeable smaller number of studies being done encompassing organisations within the education sector that manage the schools in the district under the Malaysian Ministry of Education. Consequently, this study will be beneficial to the Ministry of Education in understanding job stress and its effect on job satisfaction, job performance, and turnover intention within the District Education Offices in Selangor, Malaysia.

This study proposes an awareness to foster understanding for both employees and employers regarding the effect of job stress on job satisfaction, job performance, and turnover intention. Although job stress is inevitable on a daily basis, especially in the working environment, policymakers can organise or create various countermeasures to reduce job stress to ensure the well-being of the employees and improve its impact on organisational outcomes.

Job stress is highly connected to job performance and it is essentials in finding a way to relieve job stress in order to ensure the good physical and mental health of employees (Chia-hao & Ting-Ya, 2018). Employees who have high job stress will cause them to have low job satisfaction (Safarpour et al., 2018), and work overload is one of the stress factors that have a significant relationship with turnover intention which mean higher the workload, higher the job stress, and this will lead to turnover (Hamzah, Hashim, & Rashid, 2011).

On the other hand, the inclusion of gender in this study was to see whether it can have a role as moderator on the relationship between jobs stress, job satisfaction, work performance and turnover intention. Past research found that there is no significant relationship between stress and gender (Ambotang, Pilus & Abdullah, 2015) which has been tested in this study to see if there is a change in the relationships in the present year.

The theory that we used in this study is the Job Demand-resource theory. The theory suggests that excessive job demand will lead to job strain and this will cause negative organizational outcomes and low job resources will lead to low motivation which will also cause negative organizational outcomes (Schaufeli, 2017). Schaufeli (2017) stated that the negative outcomes of excessive job demands will lead to exhaustion and affecting the employee's performance in the organization while lower job resources will lead to low motivation and will cause withdrawal from work (Bakker et al., 2003). As for gender, we use

the Social Role theory which suggested that gender role was defined by the socialization and cultural expectation which developed gender-specific behavior, attitudes, and preferences (Eagly & Wood, 2017). We included gender in the research to see the differences of perception of responsibilities between genders that might affect the relationships between job stress and others negative organizational outcomes.

Literature Review

Job Stress And Job Satisfaction

In terms of the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction, a study by Wu and Wong (2020) found that job stress was significantly positively correlated with job satisfaction among teachers. The study was using the data obtained from 322 vocational education teachers by using the online and field survey. They found that work stress significantly positively correlates with job satisfaction.

Next, Study by Viegas and Henriques (2021) was conducted in order to examine the relationship between job stress, work-family conflict, and job satisfaction. The respondents for the study were one hundred police officials of Goa Police Department in India. The results obtained indicated that job stress was significantly positively correlated with work-family conflict, while significantly negatively correlated with job satisfaction.

H1: Job stress has a significant relationship with job satisfaction.

Job Stress and Job Performance

Ahmad, Ibrahim and Bakar (2018) have conducted a study aiming to identify the possible factors such as work stress, social support and emotional intelligence in predicting job performance among 424 police personnel in Selangor. Surprisingly, the results of this study showed a positive side of stress whereby the work stress experienced challenges the police personnel to improve their job performances.

A study by Fahmi et al. (2022) was conducted to find the effect of the Work From Home (WFH) policy on work motivation and work discipline on teacher performance with work stress intervention. The study included 63 participants comprised of teachers from a school in Bekasi. The findings indicated that job stress has a negative effect on performance of the teachers. Employees deal with stress and this can decrease their performance over time. The organizations need to have an intervention method or plan to increase the employee's performance and work quality.

H2: Job stress has a significant relationship with job performance.

Job stress and Turnover Intention

A study by Shen, Li, Dong, and Fu (2021) was conducted to study the impact of work stress on turnover intention among school principals in the rural area in China. The sample included 490 participants comprising of school principals from the rural area in the mainland of China. The result obtained from the study showed that work stress had a positive relationship with turnover intention.

Similar study conducted by Fong, Chui, Cheong and Fong (2018) on the moderating effects of social support on job stress and turnover intentions. The participants involved was 200 hosts in Macao. It was found that hosts with higher level of stress have higher tendency on quitting their job rather than the hosts with lower level of stress.

A study was conducted by Yang, Ju, and Lee (2016), in understanding the effects of job stress on self-esteem, job satisfaction and turnover intention. The participant consisting of

244 of woman from the female inbound call centre counsellors in Korea were chosen for the study. It was found that job stress had negative impact on job satisfaction and turnover intention of the participants. However, it was stated that the participants were already have high level of turnover intention but in order to maintain their jobs, they ignored the facts that turnover intention is important and even the company itself referred turnover intention as normal. The study showed the reality of working environments in the selected population and this will open the eyes onto the readers upon the problems addressed in the study.

H3: Job stress has a significant relationship with turnover intention.

Role of Gender

There is not much of number of studies was conducted by having gender as the moderator role especially on the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction, job performance, and turnover intention together. The differences in terms of job stress between males and females come from the responsibilities that they hold, especially in household environments. Eagly and Wood (2017) explained in the Social Role theory that women are more into homemakers and caretakers, while men are more into providers. The theory also stated that the definition of gender role was determined through the society's expectations and stereotypes regarding the development of gender-specific behavior for both males and females. A study by Hernández-Rodríguez et al. (2022) indicated that the negative effect of job stress towards job satisfaction is much stronger in male when the study was conducted to professional drivers. In terms of job performance, Pandey (2020) found that there are no differences in the strength of relationship between job stress and job performance between gender. Other researchers also found that gender does not moderate the relationship between job stress and job performance (Medina-Garrido, Biedma-Ferrer, & Ramos-Rodríguez, 2019; Shamsuddin & Abdul Rahman, 2014). Lastly, a study by Akdemir, Sağbaş, and Sürücü (2022) found that gender does not moderate the relationship between job stress and turnover.

H4: Gender moderates the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction

H5: Gender moderate the relationship between job stress and job performance.

H6: Gender moderate the relationship between job stress and turnover intention.

Method

Procedure and Sample

Five hundred set of questionnaires were sent to all of the District Education Offices in Selangor, Malaysia. A total of 244 (48.8% response rate) responded to the survey. The sample consisted of 61.9% females and 38.1% males, with average of 42.63 years. Majority (95.1%) of respondent are Malay and average of years of working of 18.92 years.

Measures

The set of instruments consisted five sections: Demographic information, Job Stress Scale, Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), Individual Work Performance Questionnaire 1.0 (IWPQ 1.0), and Turnover Intention Questionnaire.

Job Stress Scale

Job stress is measured by using 7-item questionnaire by (Crank, Regoli, Hewitt, & Culbertson, 1995). The questionnaire adapted the 5-point Likert's scale starting from 1 = *Sangat setuju*, 2 = *Setuju*, 3 = *Neutral*, 4 = *Tidak setuju* and 5 = *Sangat tidak setuju*. The item comprised of

positive and negative item. Some of the positive item include “*Lazimnya, saya merasa resah ketika bekerja*”, “*Biasanya, saya menzahirkan sifat yang tidak menyenangkan apabila bekerja*” and “*Sebahagian besar masa kerja saya menjadikan saya merasa sangat kecewa atau marah*” while the negative item is “*Saya lazimnya merasa tenang dan selesa ketika bekerja*”. The Job Stress Scale reported a good reliability score for Cronbach’s Alpha which is $\alpha = .845$.

Minnesota Satisfaction Scale (MSQ)

The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967) is a questionnaire that measure the dimension of job satisfaction. The 20- item MSQ measure a general satisfaction by using all of the scores of the 20 item as continuous scoring. The questionnaire is using the 5-point Likert’s scale ranging from 1 = *Sangat tidak puas hati* to 5 = *Sangat puas hati*. The item included “*Peluang untuk bekerja bersendirian di tempat kerja*”, “*Cara bos saya mengendalikan pekerjanya*”, “*Kecekapan penyelia saya dalam membuat keputusan*”, and “*Gaji saya dan jumlah kerja yang saya lakukan*”. This study used the continuous scoring of general satisfaction. The MSQ obtained a good reliability value of $\alpha = .926$.

Individual Work Performance Questionnaire 1.0 (IWPQ 1.0)

IWPQ 1.0 is a questionnaire developed by Koopmans et al., (2012) that measure work performance. The questionnaire will be used in this study to measure the variable of performance. The IWPQ used in this study consisted of two of the main sub-dimensions which are task performance and contextual performance. The instrument consists of 18 items and is a self-report questionnaire. The instrument will be scored in terms of 5-point Likert’s scale rating ranged from 1 = *Jarang* to 5 = *Kerap*. The reliability for all of the subscales, task performance, and contextual performance obtained a good value of Cronbach’s alpha at $\alpha = .708$, and $.839$.

Turnover Intention Questionnaire

Turnover Intention Questionnaire is a scale that measures the respondent’s tendency on quitting their job or organization. According to Yücel (2012), the Turnover Intention Questionnaire was adopted from Khatri, Fern, and Budhwar (2001). The questionnaire consists of three items that uses 5-point Likert’s scale rating from 1 = *Sangat tidak setuju* to 5 = *Sangat setuju*. The items include “*Saya bercadang untuk meninggalkan organisasi*”, “*Saya berniat untuk mengambil usaha yang tulen untuk mencari pekerjaan lain dalam tempoh beberapa bulan akan datang*”, and “*Saya sering berfikir tentang berhenti kerja*”. Dwiyantri, Hamzah, and Abas (2019) reported the Cronbach’s alpha for Turnover Intention Questionnaire is $.89$ which indicated that the Turnover Intention Questionnaire have a good in terms of reliability value. We ran the reliability analysis and obtained the value of $\alpha = .724$.

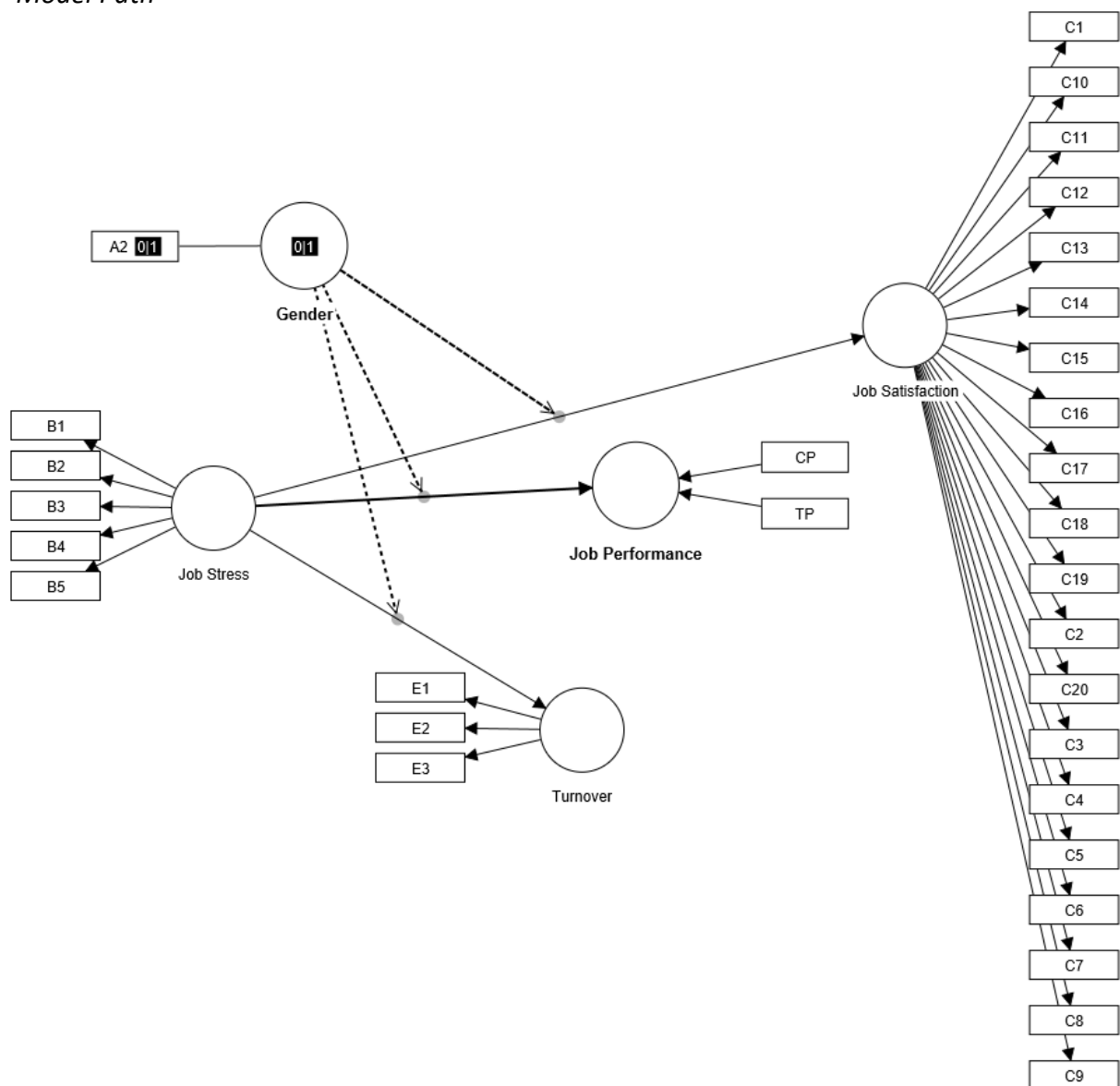
Data Analysis

SmartPLS version 4 was used to analyze the data set obtained for this study. Partial-Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) analysis were used to test the path coefficients to measure the relationship between the variables.

Results

The data obtained were transferred and analysed by using the SmartPLS 4 software and Figure 1 showed the model path for the research.

Figure 1
Model Path



Based on the analysis on table 1, it shows that job stress is positively related to job satisfaction ($\beta=0.412, t = 6.611, p<0.01$). As a result, hypothesis H1 is supported. Next, the results shows that job stress is positively related to job performance ($\beta=0.330, t=5.341, p<0.01$). Thus, hypothesis H2 is supported. Further, job stress is negatively related to turnover intention ($\beta=-0.393, t=6.639, p<0,01$). As a result, hypothesis H3 is supported. In summary, H1, H2, and H3 are supported.

Table 1
Path Coefficients

	Standardised Beta	T-Value	P-Values	F ²
Job Stress -> Satisfaction	0.412	6.611	0.000	0.211
Job Stress -> Turnover Intention	-0.393	6.639	0.000	0.184
Job Stress -> Job performance	0.330	5.341	0.000	0.122

Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, and Ringle (2019) suggested that in order for the moderator to have an effect, the interaction terms need to be significant. Table 2 showed that the interaction term for Gender*Performance was not significant ($t = 0.975$), while for Gender*Satisfaction was also not significant ($t = 0.609$). Lastly, the interaction term for Gender*Turnover was not significant ($t = 1.219$). This indicates that hypothesis H4, H5, and H6 are failed to be supported.

Table 2
Interaction Term for Gender

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Gender*Performance -> Job performance	-0.088	-0.093	0.090	0.975	0.165
Gender*Satisfaction -> Satisfaction	-0.058	-0.060	0.095	0.609	0.271
Gender*Turnover -> Turnover Intention	-0.192	-0.007	0.158	1.219	0.111

Discussion

Relationship between Job Stress and Job Satisfaction

The results from the data analysis showed that job stress has a significantly positive relationship with job satisfaction. It indicates that employees with higher job stress will experience higher job satisfaction. The results obtained from this study contradict the literature review findings from research by Viegas and Henriques (2021) and Teong, Ng, Paraidathathu, and Chong (2019), which found that job stress has a negative significant correlation on job satisfaction. In addition, most of the research reviewed found that job stress affects negatively on job satisfaction which indicated that higher the job stress of employees will lead to lower level of job satisfaction (Akhtar, Naheed, Akhtar, & Farooq, 2018; Azizah, Rozainee, Nada, & Norhafizah, 2016; Khamisa et al., 2015; Ahsan, Abdullah, Yong, Fie, & Alam, 2009).

The results suggest that when an employee is in a situation where their stress level is increasing due to their workload, their level of satisfaction also increases among the employees. The data was collected during the pandemic, which resulted in a low workload since most of the work in the sector involved the administration of school programmes or issues. However, when the workload is increasing and the stress level rising, the employee might have developed a sense of satisfaction on handling the workload given. The employees job satisfaction can be evaluated through different elements (Howard, Donofrio, & Boles, 2004). On top of that, basic features or different elements for job satisfaction, such as appreciation, communication among employees, benefits, work conditions, salaries,

recognition, and organisational policies and procedures (Spector, 1997, as cited in Viegas and Henriques, 2021), might be met and be one of the motivations for high job satisfaction among the employees.

Relationship between Job Stress and Job Performance

The result of the data findings showed that job stress has a significantly positive relationship with job performance. When employees are experiencing high level of job stress, their work performance level are significantly increased. The result contradicted the findings from Fahmi et al. (2022), Jia et al. (2022), and Jamal (2016) which found that job stress affects negatively on job performance. Most of the past research found that when the workloads increased, the level of stress of employees will also increase and affect their performance in their workplace. The results of this study indicate that when an employee receives a high workload or task, the stress caused by the demand to complete the task or job will eventually motivate them to perform better in their workplace setting.

In contrast, the findings from the analysis of this study are in line with a study by Ahmad, Ibrahim, and Bakar (2018), which found that higher job stress improves the employee's performance. When the participants are under pressure caused by the workload and environment of the workplace, their performance will increase as the stress will motivate them to perform better in their work, which counts for the possibility of eustress, which helps in motivating the employees to perform better in a stressful working environment (Ahmad, Ibrahim, & Bakar, 2018). In addition, job stress can also be a positive motivational drive which is known as eustress that may increase the performance by categorising the stressors as challenging (Pluut, Curseu, & Fodor, 2022). Since the employees had control over the stress they were experiencing while completing the task and demanding workload, they increased their work productivity since they understood the pressure of the work itself and how to control and adapt to the environment.

Job Demand-Resource (JD-R) Theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) explains that higher job demands with low job resources will lead to strain and negative organisational outcomes. Bakker and Demerouti (2014) also explained that employees with high access to job resources can cope better with the high job demand. Therefore, it can be concluded that the results of this study indicated that the higher job stress due to job demand was associated with higher job performance due to access to job resources that the employees needed to adapt to the stressful work environment.

Relationship between Job Stress and Turnover Intention

The third hypothesis for this study assumed that job stress has a significant relationship with turnover intention. The results from this study showed that job stress has a significant negative relationship with turnover intention. Consequently, higher job stress among the employees will cause a lower turnover rate in the organization. The results obtained contradicted the findings from previous research by Shen, Li, Dong, and Fu (2021), Fong, Chui, Cheong, and Fong (2018), and Omar et al. (2017), which found that job stress is the cause of high turnover rates in organizations.

Most of the past researchers found that job stress has a positive significant effect on turnover intention (Shen, Li, Dong, & Fu, 2021; Falahat, Gee, & Liew, 2019). However, the results from this study is quite unique since it showed that higher job stress will reduce the turnover rate among the employees. Possible explanations regarding the result might be caused by external motivation such as the job's benefits, rewards, and salaries, which were

being upheld by the employees to stay in their job even though they were affected by the job stress.

The Role of Gender

The results indicated that gender does not moderate the relationship between job stress and job satisfaction, job performance, or turnover intention. This might be explained that in this modern era, the women might still be involved in nurturing activities such as preparing food at home, taking care of their husband's and child's needs, and doing the chores at home, but the activities might be shared by their husbands since most women nowadays are working and provide for their household too. In terms of working environment, gender equality in terms of workload and resources might be accessible equally for male and female as evidence from Ministry of Human Resource (2022) showed evidence of 39% females in Malaysia works the same as the others 61% of males by 2020.

Implications

Firstly, in terms of implications for research, the research involving job stress, job satisfaction, job performance, and turnover intention has received less attention in the past few years, especially during the pandemics. It was found that the theoretical framework of this study is capable of explaining the relationship between the variables, even though the results obtained are a little bit unique compared to previous research. This study also provided a significant addition to the body of knowledge due to the limited study that has been done in this field in Malaysia previously. This study will be an addition to the literature in terms of the outstanding field and topic especially due to the unique findings.

Next, in terms of theory implications, this study uses the Job Demand-Resource (JD-R) and Social Role theory to explain the findings of this study. Previous research has found that job stress is often associated with negative organisational outcomes. Job stress has been seen as a negative trigger for employee satisfaction, performance, and turnover intention. In this study, the researcher tested the influence of job stress on components of organisational outcomes, which are job satisfaction, job performance, and turnover intention, and found that with better resource management, in the presence of stress will not affect the organisational outcomes negatively. Therefore, it implies that this theory is not suitable to be used in terms of Malaysian context. This might due to the different of norms and motivational factors that affect the employees in Malaysia compared to other countries.

Limitations and Recommendations

The first limitation that the researcher experienced during conducting this study was low response rate from the participants. Pandemic of Covid-19 had leads to introduction of the work from home might be the cause on the low respond rate and the analysis of the study. The participants took turns between the ones who were working from home and the ones who were working at the office. Therefore, some of the participants do not have access to the paper and pencil method, and even though the researcher prepared the online questionnaires for them to fill out, most of the employees might overlook the link given for the questionnaire due to high workloads and job demands. Moreover, even though the researcher were using an online questionnaire to overcome the issues, the participants might encounter several issues in completing the questionnaires, such as lack of access to technologies and internet coverage, time constraints due to workloads, or distractions in their home environments.

Therefore, the recommendation for future research to address the issues and improve the response rate might be to provide participants with clear instructions and an explanation of the purpose and importance of the questionnaire, with the help of the officers involved. Besides, incentives can also be offered for the participants who completed the questionnaire as a motivational support. Additionally, the researcher can also schedule a specific time for the participants to answer the questionnaire that is convenient for them.

The next limitation is that the sample involved in this study was only from Selangor, which is one of the 14 states in Malaysia. Therefore, the results might not represent all the District Educational Office employees in the country. Thus, for future research, the study can also be expanded to other District Education Offices in Malaysia so that the responses and results can be used to generalise the study's outcome. In addition, the study can also be expanded by including the private education sector among the respondents, since it would be interesting to see the differences in the results obtained between the government sector and the private sector.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to extend their gratitude to Sultan Idris University of Education (UPSI), which provided support in completing this research. We would also like to thank the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE), the Selangor State Education Department (JPNS), and every District Education Offices in Selangor that helped with the completion of this research.

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