Does Job Resources Really Matter for Educators in Klang Valley?

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Abstract
In addition to providing students with the necessary knowledge, teachers have an important role in education that is vital for the success of their schools. Lately, the topic related to stress among teachers which stems from the ludicrous expectation given to teachers has become a hotly debated topic and discussion in Malaysia. Apart from being given high expectations, teachers are also not provided with sufficient and suitable resources to facilitate them in carrying out and completing their work. Accordingly, this research was conducted to see if job demand and job resources have a significant relationship with stress among teachers in Klang Valley. Results show that both job demand and job resources have a significant relationship with stress with P-value=0.000. In addition to the correlation analysis, this research also proved empirically that job demand is the cause of stress among school teachers with P-value=0.000 and T-value=14.901. Moreover, from the results, it can be concluded that there is no difference in opinion between male and female teachers about job demand, job resources, and stress in schools in the Klang Valley. Because teachers' stress is closely related to schools' performance, this research was conducted with the hope that the research results can be used as a reference for schools' leaders (i.e., headmasters/headmistresses) in the efforts to improve the performance and quality of schools in Malaysia. The effort is believed important as it will indirectly help Malaysia not just towards the attainment of its National Education Policy's (NEP) goals (to ensure a robust and responsive education system via quality -instruction, mentoring and support to students) but the sustainable development goals too (SDG4 – ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education) that are highly depending on the school teachers.
Keywords: Job Demand, Job Resources, Social Constructivism Theory, Social Exchange Theory, Stress.

Introduction
Teachers play an important role in the school (Kelly et al., 2022). Apart from being one of the main resources to convey knowledge to the students, teachers are also the main contributor

to schools' performance (Carroll et al., 2022). Nevertheless, recently, many teachers in Malaysia have been reported to experience stress at work, causing them to be less motivated (Pau et al., 2022; Zarin et al., 2021). This situation has become alarming and worrying, as it is reported that teachers who lose their motivation will become less enthusiastic about providing quality education in the classroom, and will be less supportive of their students. (Falcon et al., 2023; Adarkwah, 2023). If this situation persists, it will not just tarnish the school's performance and reputation, but it can damage the entire education industry too. Furthermore, if this situation is not overcome, it is likely to cause Malaysia to fail in fulfilling one of its sustainable development goals (SDG4 - quality education) as well as Malaysia's efforts in achieving its NEP goals which advocate for quality education system through quality instruction, mentoring, and support to students. Although school teachers are often said to be one of the most stressful jobs, research on stress involving the education industry often focuses on students only and pays less attention to school teachers (Pau et al., 2022; Zarin et al., 2021). This has prompted the researchers in performing this research.

Literature Review
Stress
Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defined stress as an external factor that can upset people's emotions and make them fail to give the best response or answer to a situation if it lasts. Stress among Malaysian employees is not a new phenomenon, and this topic has long been passionately debated, according to a recently published study (Shaare et al., 2022). Some past studies (Sime et al., 2022; Usman et al., 2023) have also highlighted that the problem of stress among employees should not be taken lightly because it will cause many adverse effects on any organisation. One of the adverse consequences highlighted was that a stressful working environment might result in an organisation's performance falling as stressed employees are unable to concentrate and comply with their responsibilities (Usman et al., 2023).

Although discussions on stress and ways to overcome them have been ongoing for a number of years, unfortunately, there remain plenty of workers in Malaysia who reported that they continue to be stressed by their work (Ghazali & Amin, 2022; Law & Tiah, 2022). This has been the primary motivation to carry out this research. Moreover, there remains a lack of research on school teachers' stress and certain former researchers have already proposed it (Baliyan et al., 2018; Jain, 2021). Through the suggestion, the researchers have decided to conduct this research focusing on stress as the dependent variable and the school's teachers as the respondents.

Job Demand
Job demand is defined as an aspect of any job that is imposed on employees. Job demand includes expectation, and workload, and is not limited to the costs incurred by the employees to complete their tasks (i.e., time, money, energy etc.) (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

According to Ghazali and Amin (2022), job demand is related and can cause feelings of stress among employees. This statement is also supported by other researchers like (Shaare et al., 2022). Other than that, qualitative research by Asplund et al (2022); Zarin et al (2021) also identified that job demand especially in terms of workload is one of the reasons that contribute to stress. Although these recent researches involve the subject matter of job demand and stress, however, these researches involve other industries besides education (i.e., hospitality, or health) and they were not conducted in Malaysia. This has become one of

the justifications for the researchers to do this research narrowing the scope to the school's teachers in Malaysia only.

Job Resources

Job resources are defined as any opportunities given to employees aimed at making it easier for the employees to meet the expectations imposed on them which at the same time can help the employees in achieving their goals. Job resources include elements like coaching, training, knowledge resources, and leader's support and are not limited to tangible items like facilities and equipment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Research by Arnold and Juriena (2021) proves that job resources have a significant relationship with stress. However, the significant relationship is a negative relationship where if employees are given sufficient resources, the feeling of stress will decrease. Therefore, job resources are believed to be one of the most important things in dealing with stress among employees. Despite job resources being deemed as one of the stress corrective actions, there are still many organisations that do not care about the importance of providing sufficient job resources to employees. This is proven by the stress issues among Malaysian employees that are worsening (Usman et al., 2023) and this has encouraged the researchers to proceed with this research topic and adopt job resources as one of the independent variables.

Underpinning Theory and Proposed Research Framework

This research has used two underpinning theories for the development of the proposed research framework. Besides, the underpinning theories were also used to assist the researchers in developing the research hypotheses. The first underpinning theory is the Social Exchange Theory ("SET") by (Homans, 1958). The SET discusses the reciprocal interaction between two individuals or parties. If the first individual gives something beneficial to others, he will also receive something beneficial in return, and vice versa. Therefore, the SET is to support H1, H2, and H3. Excessive tasks given to teachers by the school management will cause the teachers to feel unhappy and stressed. Nevertheless, if the school teachers are provided with resources or support that are suitable for the work they need to do, the reaction from the teachers will definitely be more encouraging. Apart from the SET, this research has also adapted from the Social Constructivism Theory ("SCT") by (Vygotsky, 1968). The SCT is to support the concept that gender can have a comparable thought or understanding of certain things because everyone makes his/her own life decisions through personal experiences (Vygotsky, 1968). Consequently, SCT supports H4 and H5 because each individual's opinion about stress, job demand, and job resources is dependent on their own experience at their schools and it is independent of the teachers' genders.
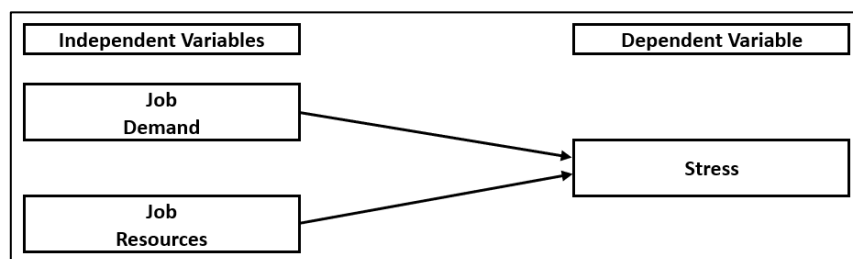

Figure 1: Proposed Research Framework

The underpinning theories and previous literatures have prompted the researchers to propose the following hypotheses:

H1: There is a significant relationship between job demand and stress among school teachers in Klang Valley.

H2: Job resources has a significant negative correlation with stress among school teachers in Klang Valley.

H3: Job Demand is the significant cause of stress among school teachers in Klang Valley.

H4: There is no significant difference in stress between male and female school teachers in Klang Valley.

H5: There is no significant difference of opinion about job demand and job resources between male and female school teachers in Klang Valley.

Methodology

This research is quantitative correlational and causal-comparative research. The population involved in this research are school teachers working at primary schools in the Klang Valley area. The researchers chose primary schools in Klang Valley only because Klang Valley is a densely populated area Nai & Siow (2022) hence obviously has the largest number of schools in Malaysia.

This research has adopted the self-administered convenience sampling method. Apart from being easy and fast, this method allows researchers to gain direct access to individuals who are willing to participate as a study sample (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). All questions used to measure each variable involved in this research have been adopted from previous studies. The measuring instrument to measure stress was adopted from (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), while the measuring instrument for job demand and job resources were both from (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The adoption of their measuring instruments is driven by the fact that operational definitions for each variable used in this study, such as stress, job demand and job resources also originate from them. That way, the measurement instrument is aligned with each variable operational definition.

Although the researchers have used the convenience sampling method and have direct access to the potential respondents, to respect privacy and everyone's human rights, all potential respondents are given the absolute right to decide whether or not to participate. Besides, to ensure that all questions will be answered fairly and openly, the researchers have included a statement in the questionnaire that the data collected will be used for research purposes only. The identity of all respondents who voluntarily answered the questionnaire will also be kept confidential and no questions containing personal information (i.e., email address, name) were asked in the questionnaire. The questionnaire used only one language which is English. After a certain period and upon reaching a total of 172 respondents who answered the questionnaire voluntarily, the researchers decided to continue to the next process which is data analysis. Data analysis that includes data screening, measurement model analysis, and structural model analysis was conducted utilising the SPSS version 26.

Results and Discussion
Data Screening and Cleaning
This research has carried out a data screening procedure as the preliminary stage to identify if there are any outliers in the data that can cause the research results to be unsound and inaccurate. Identifying the outlier is pivotal as an outlier is an anomaly that can distort the final insight. Figure 2.0 shows cases 38 and 39 as the outliers through the boxplot graph, thus deleted. Further to the deletion of case 38 and case 39, the remaining analysis was done involving only 170 respondents.
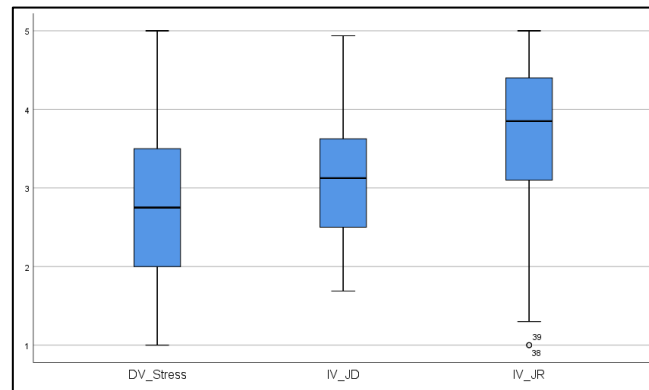
Figure 2.0: Boxplot

After the data cleaning procedure, the researchers performed a normality test to ensure that the dataset that has been cleaned is normal and most importantly the dataset is sound to undergo the next procedure. A normal dataset is vital because this research utilised SPSS 26 where the dataset will only be able to be accurately analysed if the dataset is normal. Based on the normality results in Table 1.0, it can be confirmed that all the data representing each variable is normal with the results of skewness (-2≤x≤2) and kurtosis (-3≤x≤3) within the acceptable range (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 1.0
Skewness and Kurtosis for Variables of Study

	Overall Mean	Overall SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Stress	2.6984	0.0847	0.190	-0.772
Job Demand	3.1337	0.0581	0.297	-0.732
Job Resources	3.6669	0.0731	-0.812	0.082

Measurement Model Analysis
For the measurement model analysis, this research has undergone the reliability test procedure that is basically to confirm that all items included in the questionnaire are connected to one another (internal consistency). In addition, the reliability test also aims to detect if there are items in the measuring instrument that are problematic and should be removed early before the analysis continues to the next stage. This is to ensure that all items left for structural analysis are reliable and will not prevent the researchers from getting sound answers to the research questions and finally hinder the researchers from fulfilling the research objectives (Hair et al., 2010). The results of the reliability test as shown in Table 2.0 confirm that there is no internal consistency issue because the Cronbach's Alpha reading for all the variables involved is more than 0.70 (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 2.0
Reliability Results - Cronbach's alpha

	Cronbach's Alpha
Stress	0.935
Job Demand	0.896
Job Resources	0.953

Structural Model Analysis

After ensuring that there were no issues related to the data and items in the questionnaire, the analysis proceeded to the next stage, the structural model analysis. Other than to fulfil the research objectives of this research, the structural model analysis is basically done to answer the research questions. Nevertheless, before proceeding to the correlation and regression analysis, the researchers have carried out a procedure to ensure that there is no multicollinearity issue. The issue of multicollinearity should not be taken lightly because it can undermine the statistical significance of each variable, independently. In other words, it can cause the research objectives to be unfulfilled and the research questions to be unanswered. The multicollinearity issues can be spotted through collinearity statistics namely tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF). The VIF reading must be less than 4.0, while the tolerance reading must be higher than 0.30 (Hair et al., 2010). Results presented in Table 3.0 confirm that the multicollinearity issue does not exist between the variables involved.

Table 3.0
Multicollinearity

	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Stress (Constant)		
Job Demand	0.710	1.408
Job Resources	0.710	1.408

To fulfil some of the research objectives and to confirm H1 and H2, a correlation analysis was conducted. Table 4.0 summarises the results of the correlation analysis. Based on the presented results, job demands have a significant relationship with stress with P-value=0.000 (Hair et al., 2017), hence H1 is supported. However, despite job resources also showing a significant relationship with stress with P-value=0.000, the Pearson Correlations result (negative value) indicates it has a negative correlation with stress. A negative correlation indicates the two variables tend to move in opposite directions. In other words, when job resources (i.e., facilities, number of teachers, etc.) increase, stress will decrease. Therefore, H2 is supported.

Table 4.0
Correlations

		Stress	Job Demand	Job Resources
Stress	Pearson Correlation, r	1.000	0.832	-0.655
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000
	N	170	170	170

 **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

To confirm H3 as well as to fulfil the third research objective, regression analysis was conducted. Based on the results in Table 5.0, it cannot be denied that job demand is indeed the cause of stress among the school teachers in Klang Valley with P-value=0.000 and T-value=14.901. Hence, H3 is accepted or supported.

Table 5.0
Regression Analysis

	Beta	T Value	P-Value
Stress (Constant)**		2.418	0.017
Job Demand	0.676	14.901	0.000
Job Resources	-0.292	-6.431	0.000

**Dependent Variable: Stress

Meanwhile, to confirm H4 and H5, the researchers have conducted the Levene's Test for Equality of Variance analysis. According to Levene (1960), differences of opinion between two groups (i.e., male and female) will be detected if the significant value for the Levene's Test is below 0.05. However, for this research, all three variables (stress, job demand, and job resources) show significant values higher than 0.05 (per Table 6.0), thus H4 and H5 are supported. There is no difference of opinion between male and female teachers plausibly because all the teachers in the school regardless of gender have had the same experience. Therefore, all the teachers agreed that they need to be given tasks that are not only appropriate to their qualifications but also not excessively cost their work-life balance and their family time.

Additionally, the absence of differences of opinion is also possibly because all the school teachers agree that sufficient resources that are appropriate to the type of assignment given them can assist them in completing their tasks easily and efficiently with no stress. Furthermore, job resources such as a reasonable salary, and remuneration from extra tasks are important too, to boost their motivation level as well as help them to feel less depressed. The results of this research are aligned with the Social Constructivism Theory ("SCT") by Vygotsky (1968) which states that gender can have similar opinions and views on certain things. This is because everyone makes their own life decisions through their own life experiences.

Table 6.0
Independent Sample T-Test for Gender Differences

Variables	Group	N	Mean	SD	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	
					F	Sig.
Stress	Male	84	-0.01017	0.1698	0.044	0.834
	Female	86				
Job Demand	Male	84	0.05523	0.1165	1.023	0.313
	Female	86				
Job Resources	Male	84	-0.15465	0.1461	0.056	0.814
	Female	86				

The coefficient of determination result (R^2) for this research is 75.3% (per Table 7.0). Despite the regression results showing that job demand has a strong influence and is the reason for stress among school teachers in Klang Valley, the R^2 result suggests that there are other factors that influence stress, apart from job demand and job resources.

Table 7.0
Coefficient of Determination

Variables	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Stress**	0.753	0.750

**Dependent Variable: Stress

To ensure that the model used or proposed for this research is significant or not, the researcher has conducted the ANOVA analysis. Based on the results presented in Table 8.0, it can be confirmed that the whole model used in this research is statistically significant (Hair et al., 2017), hence can be adopted for further or future research.

Table 8.0
ANOVA

Model		Mean Square	F	Significant
1	Regression	79.412	258.011	0.000[b]
	Residual	0.308		

a. Dependent Variable: Stress
b. Predictors (Constant): Job Demand, Job Resources

Conclusion
Just like other research, this research also has its limitations. The first limitation is that this research only involves school teachers in the Klang Valley area. Therefore, the results of this research cannot be generalised to other industries such as the hospitality industry, health, manufacturing, and others. In addition, even though the respondents were from the teaching sector, the generalisation of research findings into higher education institutions is still questionable as they all come from schools. However, the limitations have given space to future researchers to conduct the same research but involving respondents from other industries including expanding it to the higher education institutions. Future researchers can adopt the same research framework or model from this research because based on the ANOVA analysis, it has been proven that the model used in this research is statistically significant (per Table 8.0).

The second limitation is that this research has used the convenience sampling method where the main weakness of this method is that the results cannot be generalised. Future researchers may consider the same research but using other sampling methods such as simple random sampling or stratified random sampling which are reported to have the advantage that research results can be generalised. Furthermore, stratified random sampling is strongly encouraged because this method ensures that each school or organisation will be represented by an equal number of respondents, hence equally represented.

Future researchers can also consider other variables such as work-life balance, leader's support, working environment, or peer support as independent variables. This is because, based on the coefficient of determination results (R^2), the dependent variable (stress) has been explained by the model at only 75.3%. This indirectly means, there are other factors that influence stress and become an opportunity for future researchers to resume and extend this research.

Despite the limitation, this study also has noteworthy implications. The first implication is that the results of this research can be used as a reference for school leaders (i.e., headmaster/headmistress) about the importance of ensuring that the tasks given,

expectations and job demands put onto teachers are not excessive to avoid them from feeling stressed. Besides, ensuring the teachers are not overloaded with tasks is pivotal to ascertaining they can render their best performance and eventually be a good example to their students. This situation should not be taken lightly since a school's achievement is reported to be highly dependent on the performance of the school's teachers (Carroll et al., 2022).

Moreover, the results of this study also empirically proved that job resources have a significant relationship with stress and that every individual regardless of gender has the same opinion about the importance of sufficient job resources at schools. School leaders or the school's management need to understand the concept of reciprocation where if we want someone to do something favourable for us, we also need to offer something good to him/her, and vice versa. This is because every individual in the world is not a slave to us who can be treated as we, please. Every individual regardless of their race, status, position, and religion deserves to be respected. One of the ways is to respect our employees by providing appropriate and sufficient resources to enable them to perform their tasks comfortably, easily, and more efficiently.

It is hoped that the results of this research can be used as a reference not only among the school leaders (i.e., headmasters or headmistresses) but also the policymakers. Since the school's achievement is reported to be highly dependent on the performance of its teachers Carroll et al (2022), therefore, if the government wishes to progress the Malaysian education industry, policies related to job resources, and job demands like workload need to be revisited and monitored thoroughly. This effort is very important to help Malaysia achieves one of its sustainable development goals (i.e., SG4 - quality education) that can be obtained by having school teachers who are not only wise and competent but highly motivated as well as physically and mentally healthy.

Additionally, the results of this study are also expected to give awareness and be given serious attention by schools and the government because it is closely related to Malaysia's efforts to attain its National Education Policy (NEP) goals. One of the goals gazetted in NEP is to ensure a robust and responsive education system via quality instruction, mentoring and support to students. This effort depends heavily on the school's teachers. Therefore, school leaders and the government need to realise that the time has come for them to seriously look upon issues related to stress among school teachers and adopt the corrective action that has been suggested from this research, as it has been empirically confirmed.

Acknowledgement

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